What's new in 2016?

2015 has been another good year for our business. Business confidence in the UK showed signs of recovery, with businesses being prepared to invest conservatively in ongoing projects. Previously suspended technical documentation projects were given the go-ahead in 2014, resulting in a steady stream of technical documentation projects.

The market is still cautious and companies are seeking a combination of value for money and reliability in their choice of supplier. Companies are also more willing to spend time shopping around for a suitable supplier.

Our income in 2015 came mainly from long-term projects from existing clients as well as the acquisition of new clients.

The Global Market

The UK market for technical communication remains robust, despite the recent recession. In 2014-2015 we noted an increased demand from the private sector. Regulatory projects remain an area where both private and the public sector will continue to need expertise from technical communication specialists.

Germany has been the powerhouse of Europe, but experienced slow growth in 2014/2015*. We noticed an increased demand for recruitment of technical communicators in German and Austrian companies. We have also seen interest in recruitment further afield, in eastern European countries such as Poland, where there has been sustained economic growth*.

based on a report in The Economist

International companies, in particular those based in the US, have a key, strategic interest in UK, and are targeting companies operating in the financial and government sectors. US companies are interested in using a local supplier who understands the local market and can supply communication services adapted to this market.

E-commerce and Gaming

The market for e-commerce services continues to grow rapidly as more and more consumers choose to shop online. Online purchasing now accounts for over 20% of all UK sales*. This has been expressed in interest in e-commerce companies in technical communication services. Online gaming is another fast-growing channel where there is a need for technical communication services.

UK companies are targeting their e-commerce solutions towards the fast-growing BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China), in order to gain entry into these vast, lucrative markets.

We foresee a continued demand for technical documentation solutions in this area.

according to a Guardian report

Finance and Legal

The need for technical communication services in the financial and legal sector remains strong. In addition to customer-facing instructions, organisations need documentation to cover their internal IT infrastructure, policies and disaster recovery plans.

Transport and Utilities

Companies operating in this sector remain buoyant, despite the recent fall in oil prices and increased regulatory pressures. There is a continued need for documentation of software products and services and other regulatory-type documentation.

CTC Initiatives during 2015

We are continually seeking to improve the services we offer to clients and increase our involvement in the community. Below are some of our initiatives during 2015.

Technology and trends

In 2015 CTC invested in updating our applications and equipment, and looked at new technology trends:

- **Web design trends** – the explosion of the Smartphone and tablet market has meant that technical communicators need to rethink how they deliver information to customers. Responsive design enables content to be optimised dynamically to the end-user's device. Technology such as parallax scrolling enables delivery of engaging and dynamic content.
- **Single sourcing, multi-channel publication** – applications, standards and tools that enable information chunking and multi-channel publication from a single source content, such as XML and DITA, continue to offer a powerful means of delivering just-in-time content to customers in the way they want it. Off-the-shelf tools such as the Adobe Communications Suite enable implementation of responsive, multi-channel content from a single source.
- **Integrated, dynamic content** – applications and software are now available to enable the delivery of integrated dynamic content within standard technical writing publications (e.g., embedded video and demos within PDF manuals).
- **Content management systems** – we've explored a number of systems for managing content

Move to cloud-based services

Cloud-based services have now matured to the point where they offer a reliable and cost-effective solution for a small business such as CTC.

We can now access a range of business services directly from the cloud, from virtual meetings and teleconferencing, online calendars, digital asset management and file storage, to software and applications.

Charitable Contributions

In 2015 CTC was proud to contribute to charities such as Oxfam, World Vision and the British Red Cross.

Our charitable donations programme is now up and running. Clients are able to nominate a charity of their choice and we will donate 5% of our income from their project to their nominated charity.

Graduate Training Programme

In 2016 we will be developing our graduate training programme, to enable potential technical communicators to gain entry into this profession.

More details about this program to follow.

Forecast and objectives for 2016

We believe that 2016 will be a good year for technical communication services in the UK, given the sustained economic recovery in the UK and US and continued investment by overseas investors in UK companies. We await the outcome of the UK EU referendum to see what impact this will have on businesses in our sector.

To remain competitive, CTC will need to continue to offer a high quality service at affordable and competitive rates. We are also seeking to expand our partnership efforts, in particular with those organisations that offer complimentary services to our own.

Our website remains our main advertising portal for customers. Our current website needs revamping and work is underway to develop a new look and feel, a new company logo and a fully responsive design. We will also be developing a new set of company collateral.

CTC is hoping to expand operations into Europe, the US and South Africa. More details about this and other developments in our next newsletter.

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