

The Changing UI of Tech Comm

Moving from commodity...to
communicator...to profit
maker...to strategic contributor

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About Andrea

- Technical communicator since 1983
- Areas of expertise
 - Information architecture and design and interaction design for products and interactive information
 - Information and product usability—from analysis through validation
 - User-centered design and development process
- Certificate coordinator for two UC Santa Cruz Extension programs
- STC Board of Directors



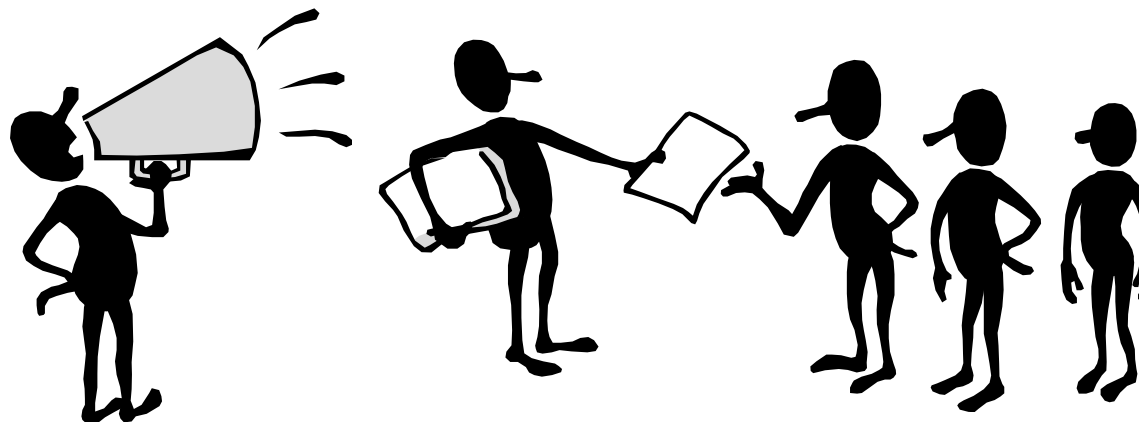
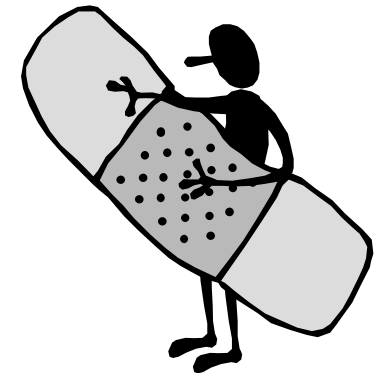
Discussion Topics

- Current profile of our industry
- Our industry is changing—don't get left behind
- Moving in the direction of change—staying ahead of the curve
- Discussion



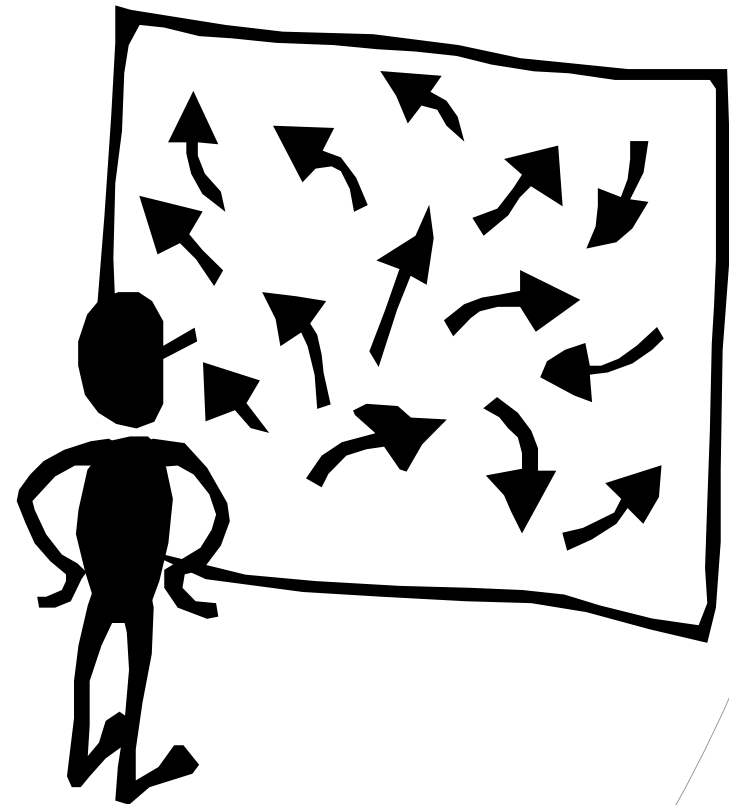
Current profile of our industry

- Reactive
- Passive
- Take direction--assignments handed out
- Patch and put "bandaids" on bad products
- Becoming a commodity and work moving offshore
- Experienced communicators moving away from STC and the field



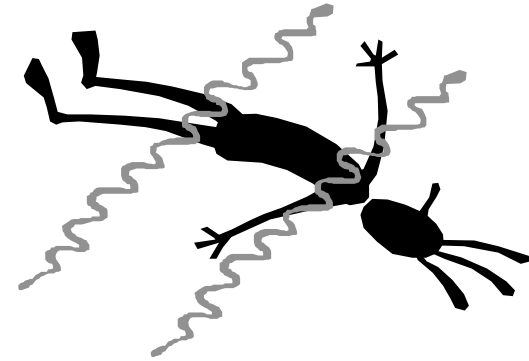
Our industry is changing

- Can you anticipate those changes?
- Are you keeping up?
- Are your members?
- Rather than reacting, shouldn't you be *leading* that change?

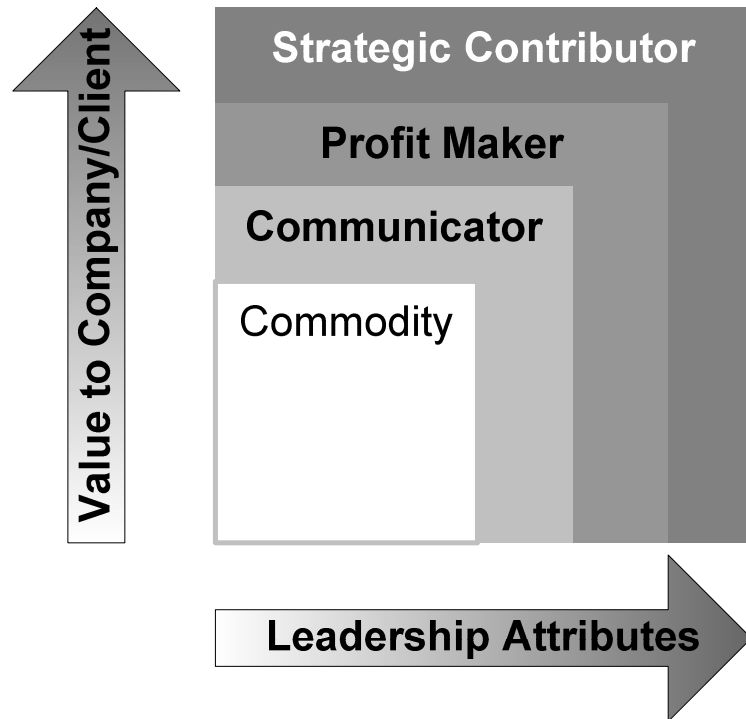


Don't get run over...or just tread water

- The economy is killing us
- Just "getting better" isn't good enough
- We need to lead the industry and drive the changes



Moving in the direction of change— staying ahead of the curve

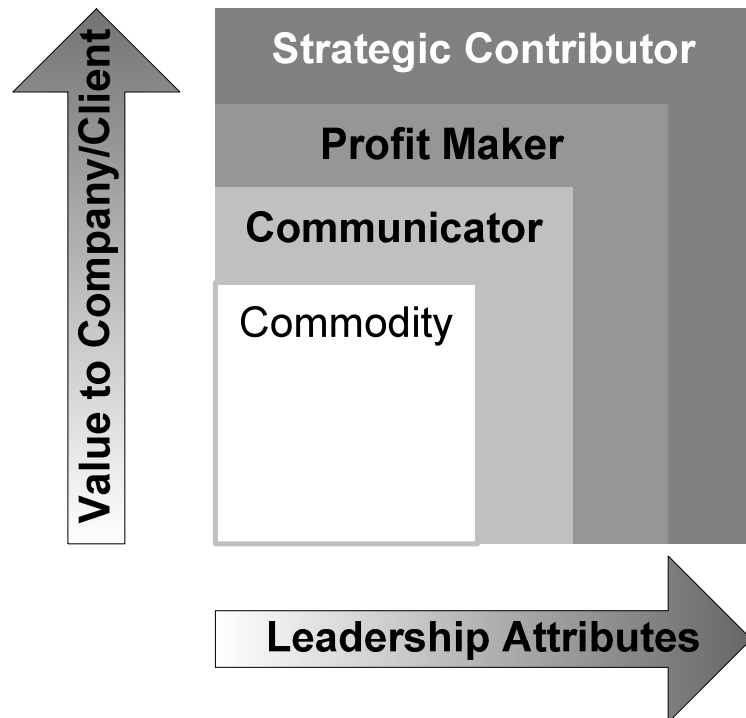


Commodity

- Cheap
- Offshore writers are even cheaper
- Deliverables are formulaic "documentation"
- Nearly clerical
- Oh, and... "anyone can write"



Moving in the direction of change— staying ahead of the curve

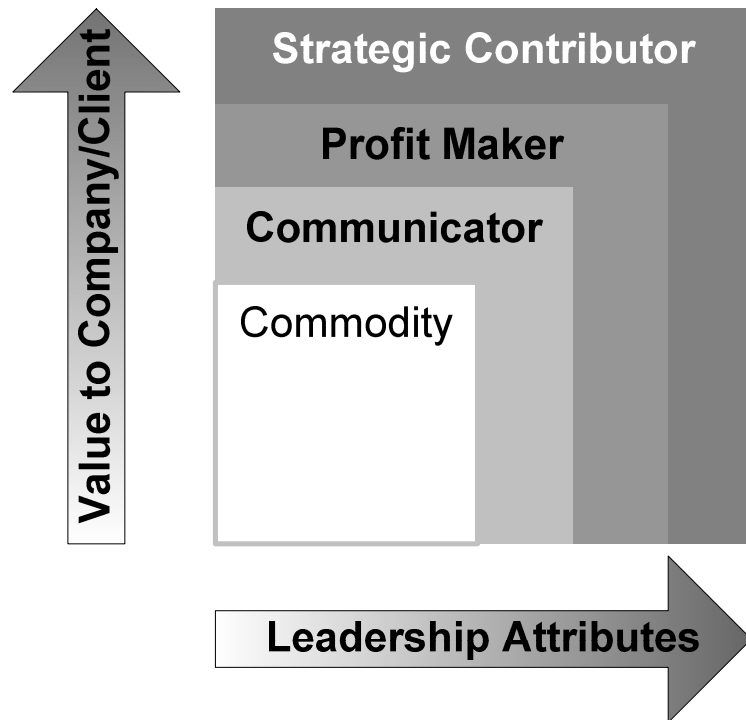


Communicator

- Understands
 - Humans, in general
 - Audience for product
 - Information architecture
 - Information design
 - Information usability
- Designs solutions to communication problems, not "standard deliverables"
- Develops user assistance, not documentation



Moving in the direction of change— staying ahead of the curve

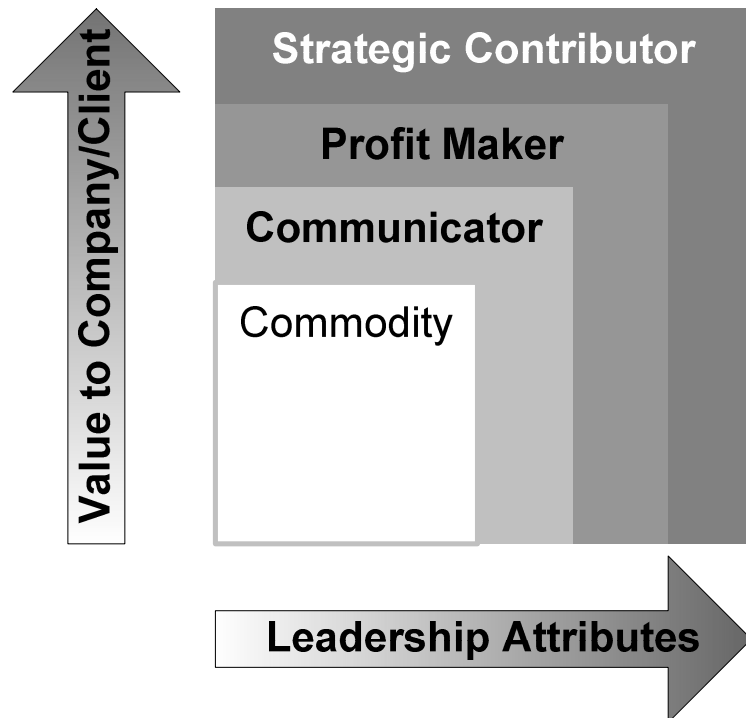


Profit Maker

- Understands
 - Product development process in depth
 - Tools used to develop product, in depth
 - Technologies associated with product, in depth
- Designs product solutions, not just communication solutions
- Contributes to overall product usability



Moving in the direction of change— staying ahead of the curve



Strategic Contributor

- Understands business, customers, and competition
- Contributes to strategy and business process improvement
- Ensures customers/users are successful
- Can demonstrate financial impact of information and usability on bottom line
- Can make business case for new initiatives
- Visionary; leads multidisciplinary teams to improve customer/user experience



The bottom line...

- The formulaic assembly of standard documentation deliverables is *not* where our value lies
- We are communication *problem solvers, process improvers, and contributors* to business strategy and the bottom line



Discussion

- What changes are you seeing— evolution/trends?
- How are you responding?
- Why not take the lead and drive that change?



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