

# Oak Hill CASE STUDY

## CISCO SYSTEMS

### INNOVATING COST SAVINGS FOR CISCO SYSTEMS

**The Client:** Cisco Systems, Inc. is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet. Cisco's Internet Protocol-based (IP) networking solutions are the foundation of the Internet and are used by most corporate, education, and government networks around the world. Cisco provides the industry's broadest line of solutions for transporting data, voice and video within buildings, across campuses, or anywhere in the world.

Frank "Spank" McCoy, Documentation Manager for high-end router products at Cisco Systems, faced a complex job of producing technical documentation for a new product launch. The information to create the technical documentation came from two separate divisions, yet required seamless integration. He had no hesitation in hiring Oak Hill Corporation to handle the job.

"I had known Oak Hill for about ten years," Spank said. "I knew their work, and I knew they had a great deal of experience with Cisco. Oak Hill had the right skill set for the job."

As he began working on the project, Spank McCoy and Oak Hill President Val Swisher reviewed the existing documentation that formed the basis for the new documentation set. They noticed that numerous documents shared a great deal of information in common.

"The problem in updating this common information is that each document must be researched and updated independently," noted Spank, "and there is a danger of overlooking something, because of the huge quantity of material. It's very time-consuming."

It was clearly not feasible to re-engineer the entire archive of Cisco documentation. Perhaps a methodology could be developed to modularize new documentation, making all future updates easier and less expensive. Updating a module would update all documents where that module was used. But the new method had to be one that employed Cisco's existing publishing tools, and it had to satisfy Cisco's requirement to deliver documentation using multiple end formats such as .pdf, .html, and so on.

"I took a little bit of time to experiment with FrameMaker to see if we could make a modular approach work," Spank said. "Val and I discussed a function called 'text insets,' and we thought this might have possibilities. I tried it and it seemed to work in a limited situation, so I asked Val to take 30 days to see if it satisfied all of our requirements."

After 30 days, Oak Hill had produced ample proof that the new methodology, modular text insets, worked and satisfied all of Cisco's publishing requirements. Val and Spank presented this solution to other documentation managers about the new method. Word spread, and soon other documentation groups across Cisco were asking for information and training.



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Spank says that productivity improvements and savings are realized in the maintenance, revision, and update cycle. “If you had a \$300,000 project, you could save \$25,000 to \$50,000 over a one-year cycle. During a product’s life cycle you might have as many as five revisions. Now you’re looking at \$125,000 to \$250,000 in savings over the product’s lifetime.”

Spank said that innovating the new methodology represented some risk, because every new approach requires an investment in time and money to prove. “We [Oak Hill and I] were in a partnership, based on my prior experience with Oak Hill, and their success on my team and with Cisco. We were willing to innovate and willing to share the risk. The results speak for themselves.”