



Developing a Workshop for the EPDP

by Alison McIntosh

Not only did I attend the annual EMWA conference for the first time in May 2002, but I also attended as a new workshop leader. The previous year I had been a participant at the Common Technical Document seminar held in Brighton, and when I mentioned to others that I was planning to lead a workshop at the meeting in Prague, I was surprised at just how many members were unaware of what was involved in developing one.

Most were also unaware of tools that the EMWA Professional Development Committee (EPDC) had put in place both to help workshop leaders, and to ensure a high level of quality and consistency across the EMWA Professional Development Programme (EPDP). Because of this experience, I thought it might be of use to other EMWA members who could be toying with the idea of developing a workshop, to outline the process that I followed in the months leading up to presenting in Prague.

I had initially volunteered through reading an advert in *The Write Stuff*. The organisers had asked for leaders on specific workshop topics and the one that caught my attention was Quality Control (QC). At that particular point I was developing a quality control procedure for my own use, and thought developing a workshop would be a useful way to combine my previous experiences, with what was then, my current need.

After my preliminary inquiry, I was given a copy of the workshop leader's handbook which provided a detailed outline of the workshop format. As well as this, a series of templates were available for the preparation of the needs analysis questionnaire, the abstract, the pre- and post-workshop assignments, and the workshop itself. A check list template was also supplied to help enable all the elements of the workshop to be considered together.

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Initial proposals for workshop topics are submitted to the EPDC for consideration as a workshop outline. After having my workshop outline accepted, I was assigned a "mentor" to guide me through the process and to keep me up to date with both the progress of the developing workshop, and feedback from the EPDC review. This meant that as a new workshop leader I was not left entirely on my own. Through having one-to-one discussions with my mentor, I received direct feedback from the committee during both the development, and the appraisal processes.

If a workshop meets the EPDC criteria then it can be presented at an EMWA conference as "under assessment" and assessment at this point is conducted using several routes. One is participant feedback (both during, and after the workshop), which plays a major role in deciding the likelihood of the workshop becoming accredited. All attendees are

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asked to complete an evaluation form, and it is through analysis of this information that all workshop leaders receive necessary feedback. For a workshop under assessment, the feedback is used in the accreditation process, while for those already accredited the continuous evaluation verifies that the workshop is still meeting members' needs, and being presented in an acceptable manner.

For the second part of the assessment process, observers are assigned to participate in the workshop. My two observers were sitting near the front, scribbling notes through the presentation (particularly when I tried bribery and corruption with sweets!). The report from observers together with the workshop evaluation forms, are studied in detail by the EPDC immediately after the EMWA conference ends. As a result a workshop leader receives feedback in a very quick timeframe. In my own case, within a month I was informed that my workshop had been accredited and as such would form part of the Foundation section of the EPDP.

Anyone considering developing a workshop should realise that it does take a lot of time preparing the workshop, creating the slides and identifying relevant hand-outs or exercises. In my own case, it's a balance between continuing to complete work for clients on time, hence still earning a salary, and finding enough time to meet the EMWA workshop deadlines and commitments. The payback comes from the enthusiasm of the people who attend the workshop, both from those who are new to the profession and want to learn more, and those who are more experienced and want to share best practice.

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I found the whole experience tremendously worthwhile and am hoping to repeat my encounter and present the QC workshop (this time for credit) at the upcoming EMWA conference in Lisbon next year. So finally, if anyone out there is musing over the possibility of volunteering to be a workshop leader - go on give it a whirl! All the templates and information you need can be found at <http://www.emwa.org/> under the EPDP section.

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