



JANUARY 2026 · TECHNICAL MANUALS

Write manuals around real operator tasks

A manual is easier to use when its structure follows the reader's work. Operators usually need to locate a control, understand a condition or complete a task; they should not have to read the entire document to find a routine instruction.

Clear information. Confident next steps.

Eight-page reading booklet
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01 / UNDERSTAND

Start with a clear foundation

Separate reference information from procedures

Put equipment identification, control descriptions and operating limits where they can be found quickly. Write procedures as clear sequences with a defined start and end. Keep supporting explanation close enough to be useful without burying the action. Equipment-specific instructions and limits must come from the responsible customer or OEM.

Use illustrations purposefully

A numbered photograph can identify controls more clearly than a long paragraph. A sequence of views can explain access and orientation. Match the labels in the illustration to those in the text, and check that the image shows the intended machine configuration. Decorative imagery adds little if it does not answer a reader's question.

**02 / APPLY**

Turn information into action

Review with a realistic task

Ask an appropriate reviewer to locate information for a common task and explain how they interpret it. Record unclear wording, missing references and incorrect labels. This is a usability review of the documentation, not permission to operate unfamiliar equipment or bypass training and approved procedures.

When there is no usable manual

An operator who cannot find the meaning of an alarm may rely on a colleague's recollection. Another shift may receive a different explanation. A task-oriented manual creates a consistent place for the approved information, including the limits of what an operator should do and when to stop or escalate. The writer must obtain these requirements from the responsible technical authority. A documentation team should not invent a reset sequence or operating limit merely because the source material is incomplete.

**03 / LOOK CLOSER**

Write for use beside the equipment

A useful procedure has a recognisable title, an applicable equipment identity and a clear completion condition. Supporting illustrations should show the correct configuration and use the same control names as the machine labels. Test the information-finding experience in the intended format, including screen size and printing where relevant. Keep the review safe: a newcomer can evaluate whether a heading is findable without attempting equipment work. Final validation of operating instructions belongs with competent, authorised personnel.

- Which user needs this information most urgently?
- Which source is authoritative, and who can approve it?
- What would make a small pilot useful to your team?

**04 / WORKSHOP**

Make it a team conversation

Use one small, approved example from your own organisation. Nominate a document owner and a reviewer, then apply the checklist below. Record the initial problem, the proposed improvement and the evidence needed to confirm it. Keep the exercise separate from any live equipment activity or production change until the appropriate authority approves it. Discuss what became clearer, which inputs were missing and whether the same approach can be repeated. A modest improvement that your team actually uses is a stronger starting point than an ambitious system with no agreed owner.

- Name the document owner and technical reviewer.
- Write down one unresolved source-information question.
- Agree one measurable information-finding task.
- Record what changed after the review.



05 / WORK WITH CDX

A practical delivery partnership

CDX can help organise the source material, prepare a representative layout, produce the agreed CAD or documentation outputs and maintain a comment register through review. Offshore production is coordinated by Australian management under a defined scope. We do not provide engineering sign-off or create evidence of inspections that have not occurred. Bring the approved source information, your intended audience and the required deliverable list to the discussion. We will identify the preparation work, unresolved questions and review responsibilities before agreeing the production scope.

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- CAD / drafting support · current rates online.
- Technical documentation · cdx.net.au/pricing.
- 12-month work warranty; scope and conditions apply.



06 / CHECK & ACT

Your next step

Choose one frequently used procedure and rewrite its headings as the questions a reader is trying to answer. Test whether the revised structure is easier to navigate.

- Define the reader and their expected knowledge.
- Use consistent names for controls and components.
- Keep one clear action per procedural step where practical.
- Confirm illustration applicability.
- Have the technical authority approve the instructions.



07 / TAKE IT FORWARD

A one-page improvement brief

Use these prompts to start a focused discussion with your team. Keep confidential equipment details inside your approved project channels.

- Problem: what information is difficult to find or trust?
- Reader: who needs it and at what point in their work?
- Source: which approved files and records exist?
- Deliverable: what would make the information usable?
- Review: who will confirm the technical content?
- Success: how will you check whether it helped?

Start a scoped conversation

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General educational material. CDX prepares work for review and does not provide engineering sign-off. Your responsible authority approves equipment-specific instructions and technical decisions.