

Approach to Designing a Manual

Step-by-step plan and checklist for creating a clear, safe and user-friendly manual:

Step 1 – Define the Target Audience

- Determine who will use the manual (e.g. consumer, installer, technician).
- Identify the user's knowledge level.
- Determine which information is required for safe and correct use.
- Choose a tone and style that match the target audience.
- Consider the intended publication format.

Step 2 – Establish the Structure

- Define a logical chapter structure.
- Ensure that the table of contents aligns with NEN 5509.
- Make the information easy to scan (use clear headings).
- Ensure that safety information is easy to find.

Step 3 – Collect Information

- Gather relevant input from different departments (such as R&D, marketing and support).
- Ensure that all technical information is available.
- Identify the applicable legal requirements.

Step 4 – Write and Illustrate the Content

- Use short, active sentences.
- Convert technical jargon into clear instructions.
- Use illustrations to clarify actions.
- Maintain a good balance between text, images and white space.

Step 5 – Compile and Publish the Manual

- Use a modular structure so that content can be reused.
- Develop a visual design that matches the content and target audience.
- Create the final documents by combining content and layout.
- Ensure that, for multilingual manuals, the content is properly localised.
- Review and check the manual.
- Publish and distribute the manual. Publication can take place in printed or digital form.

Single source software is a tool that enables both printed and digital versions of content to be generated from a single source. Manualise also offers this software under licence.

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