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How we Learned & Developed Flash Presentation in 10 Days

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It all started with an email from Brandon-Hall announcing the 2004 Excellence in Learning Awards. We have always believed that our decision support tool ADVISOR Enterprise is exceptional and decided it was time ADVISOR received the recognition it deserves - and so our journey began.

With a March 15th early submission deadline on the horizon and the need for submitting the entry in a video flash format, it was time to pick an authoring tool. Since we are not a courseware development firm, and our need for such a tool would be limited, we quickly realized that the authoring tool should be easy to use and affordable. Luckily, we had experience with a screen capture tool that produces short videos and upon further investigation found out that the company TechSmith also developed Camtasia a video screen-recording program that met our needs and priced within our budget.

Next came the storyboard. How are we going to inform the judges of our great tool? We anticipated that judges will be looking at tens of entries and may not be kind to long-winded presentations. We were also warned that some judges might not have high-speed connection. In other words, the video clips should adequately run on a 56K modem. And of course, there was no way to find out how familiar they are with the theory behind ADVISOR - which in-turn implied that our message should be clear (focus on ADVISOR unique features) and simple (avoid using jargon), but not simplistic (insult judges intelligence).

Once the storyboards were in place, we proceeded with the recording of the ADVISOR video clips to support our message. We did not have a formal script at the time. The intent of the initial recording was to demonstrate ADVISOR's unique features. Technically, it was very simple to do. However, you quickly learn that Camtasia is recording every move you make and in-turn there are things you should and should not do. For example, only move the mouse to make a point, otherwise you will be distracting the reviewers.

Next came the script. Using the storyboard and initial recordings as guidelines, the script was written and rewritten to reflect the exact message we wanted to convey. Our next big challenge was recording the script. The first lesson, headsets used for virtual classroom produce poor quality recordings. So off we go to the office supply store to purchase a high quality microphone. The next lesson, narrating in a clear and calm voice is much harder than it appears - and suddenly it dawns on you why studios pay millions for actors in animated movies.

Of course, once the audio clips are overlaid on the screen recording, you quickly realize that they do not match. And so, the recording of the ADVISOR video clips recommences, but this time with the narration in the background to guide you. After a few more tries, you are ready to overlay the audio clips on the video clips and enhance with modest special effects.


So what did the project cost? Camtasia \$299, microphone \$40, combined effort from subject matter expert, instructional designer, information technology and narrator to

produce 6 short video clips (approximately 13 minutes in length) 50 hours, completing the project on time priceless!

You can judge for yourself whether the project was worthwhile, by clicking on the **ADVISOR Enterprise** to view the video clips. We would very much like to hear from you!

Contributions

Contributions, on what worked and didn't - including practical tips, advice, white papers, case studies, articles, reviews, online seminars, software tools and research reports - are welcomed. Please send to bahlis@bnhexpertsoft.com. Full credit will be given to author.

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