# Making the Samsung Support website a little uglier and a lot more user friendly



I was the sole Content Strategist at Samsung Australia from 2013-18 and contributed significantly to improvements in internal and customer facing content.

Samsung operated customer service as an outsourced cost centre (small phone support team in Sydney, massive outsourced call-centre in Manila serving APAC region).

I was hired to improve self-service content with a focus on our knowledge base (copy, chat, video and visuals), live and accessible 24/7 on our website. Two major changes helped me improve content quality, but only after breaking through a silo-mentality by negotiating my way with management using multiple business cases.

I resolved layout first issues first followed by content by breaking large problems into smaller ones and prioritising them according to priority. My version was similar to the Eisenhower decision matrix



Challenges with layout

During onboarding, I learned that the online Support site used a uniform layout for every country website across the APAC region, with slight variations. This was not a branding requirement.

Our outsourcing partner in Manila requested a minimalist design to make training easier despite:

- differences in regional language orientation (Left-Right, Right-Left, Top-Bottom)
- the fact that each country-team had a dedicated squad and staff were not shifted between country-teams (or from squad to squad, unless applying for a new team role)

I identified the following issues with Australia's support site layout:

- main page dominated by content marketing carousel, not support information
- you needed to scroll below the fold to access support content
- Support did not have access to the website content management system and did not challenge displacing support links with marketing collateral (carousel layout)

Content Management System (CMS)

- Grid-based system with modules of varying size that slot into place
- Owned by marketing. Access not requested by or granted to Support until my appointment
- Marketing used Support website to promote its own interests

Challenges with content

Our site content was written by subject matter experts who understood technology rather than customer service. Information was jargon-heavy and alienated audiences who knew little about their product except that 'it's not working'.

This was a longer term issue and would take time to work through so I decided to address the layout issue first.

Resolving layout issues

Tools used: HotJar (heatmapping software), WCMS (internal content management system)

I went with my manager to meet the marketing team on their floor. We introduced ourselves and outlined our intentions and goals. Despite some resistance we were able to gain access to the CMS after showing them the results of some research I'd conducted with in-house digital agency (Cheil).

Cheil uses a product called Hotjar, which tracks page impressions using heat maps to identify where users click and focus their on-page cursor time. We determined which links were of primary interest to customers looking for support and presented our findings, clearly showing that the most important links were below the fold and needed prime placement.

Carousels are a distraction and hinder accessibility. They can also increase page load times so my priority was to remove ours and replace it with static links, which we did. We tested various elements (image choice, tile size, tile colour and others) before settling on this layout using tiles borrowed from our regional neighbour websites.

The most important distinction here is that the original design was pleasing to the eye but frustrated users, whereas the revised version was easier to use and maintain, but uglier.

**Before**                                                    **After**
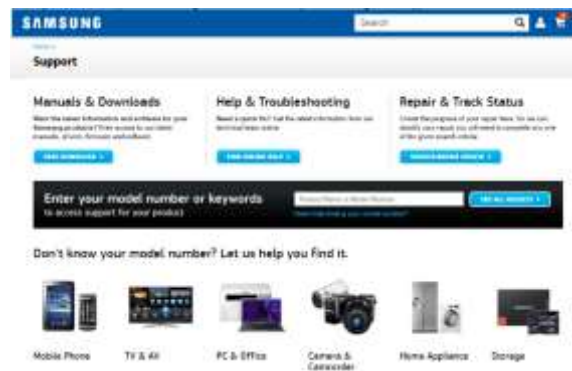


Resolving content issues

Tools used: CS-Portal (knowledge management portal), MS Office, Outlook, Adobe suite

The Australia support team in Manila is large, well-funded, and knows how to help customers resolve all kinds of technical issues using friendly, common language. Their ability to relate to the customers was the key to improving written content.

We held an open call for aspiring writers across Samsung support to upskill as content writers. Many of our staff are university educated in the liberal arts. Some even freelanced as writers, journalists, bloggers and virtual assistants. I created multiple guides for each of our content types, to give teams the most comprehensive tools possible for this new way of working.
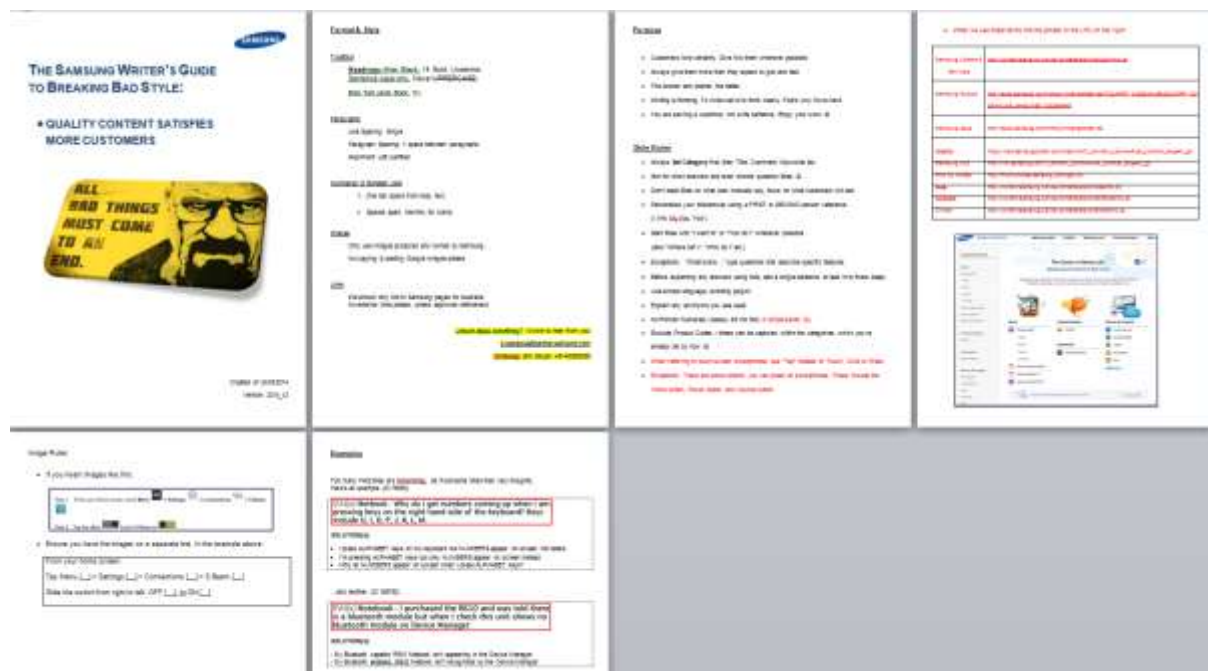
We attracted a large group of people who specialised in our various product ranges (white goods, brown goods, audio-visual, mobiles, and computing) and matched them with a mentor from our technical writing team. They were able to use a technique called pair-writing to simplify problem resolution into manageable steps.
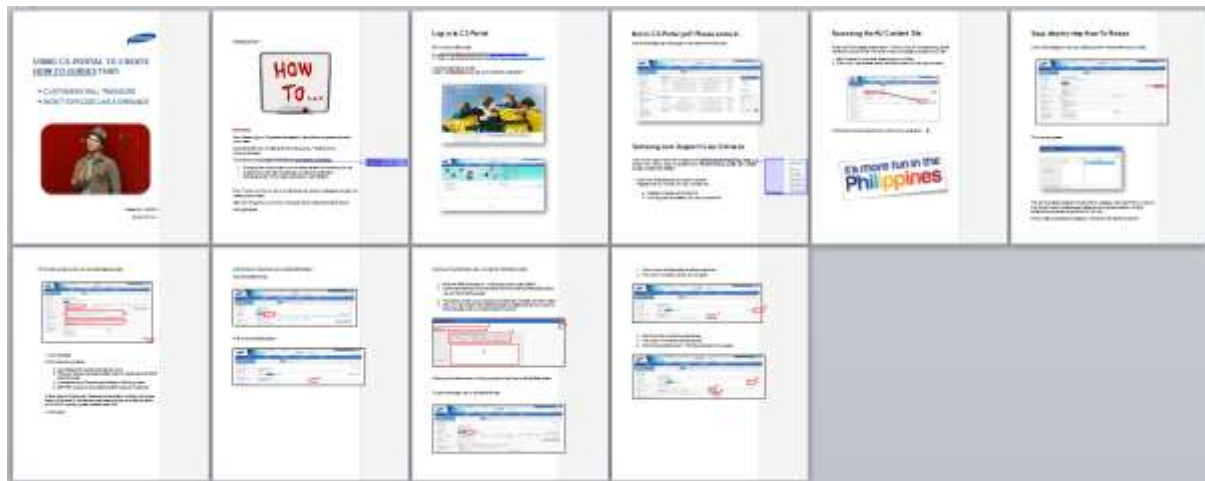


We prioritised the order of articles by looking at call logs and email support tickets to determine the most common issues. These were high priorities and largely handled by me and a select group of the best writers in our ranks. Once the teams were up and running we used our training budget to ensure a mentor from Australia was able to visit every Manila 6 months to run in-country training, or bring leading content writers from Manila to Australia for additional training. The latter program was an incentive to reward the best performing writers, whose content consistently ranked highly among users.
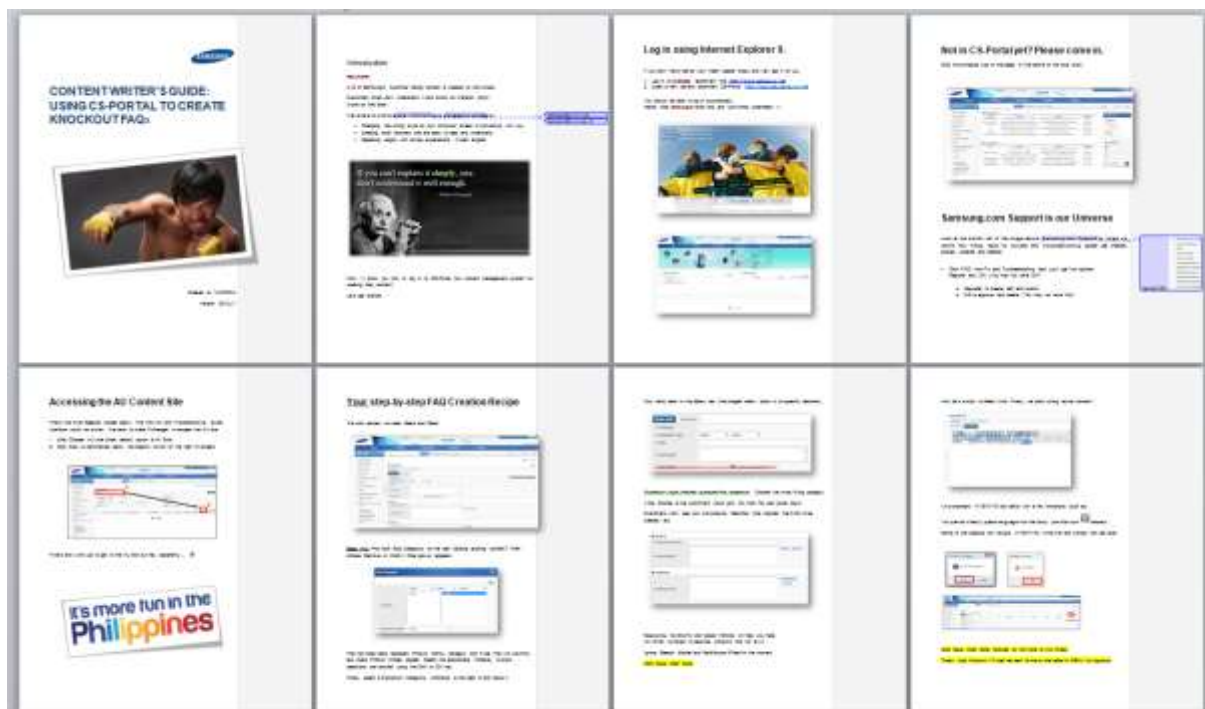


We managed content quality by creating a system that allowed us to gauge the authenticity of user sentiment. Instead of asking whether an answer was good or bad (binary decision), we implemented call-back options, comment fields and invited users to include ticket numbers or Samsung user IDs (this was a loyalty program, which gamified participation on site for discounts).

The end result was a more comprehensive record of whether and answer is working or not, where it was confusing customers, and how it could be improved. Our call-back numbers increased significantly but it also meant we were able to gain additional feedback to improve answers over time, until we were able to develop a customer-driven community help centre and integrate it within our support website.

We started at 69% approval for our content and by the time we implemented the new system, reached peak satisfaction of 93%.

We also took steps to prevent artificially inflating content scores by removing Samsung IP addresses from consideration and limiting all other IP addresses to a single vote. Even if someone clicked a hundred times, it would only count the first click.

Responding to a new threat

In mid-2013, months after I joined Samsung, washing machines began exploding in homes and apartments throughout Australia. We investigated and discovered 6 models that were potential fire hazards. We urgently reprioritised our content writing schedule, moving washing machines to the top of the list. We hadn't anticipated this but the writing team we'd assembled and trained saved us a significant amount of time, money and hopefully, family homes.

We produced this document appealing to Aussies to check their laundries and contact us immediately. At the same time we were tracking down affected users through their warranty documents. Despite significant negative press, we were able to recall over 84% of 144,000 machines.



By 2018, we'd recalled 128,000 machines and set an Australian record for the largest mass consumer product recall. The notice above and our campaign remains active and relevant to this day, a decade after we created it.