

## Chapter 3

# In a Nutshell

You have to plan, draft, and edit your document, either by yourself or in a group.

**Plan by establishing your relationship with your audience and your document.** Situate yourself by determining your knowledge of the topic and your goal for the audience. Also determine whether legal, ethical, or global issues are involved. Create a clean document design, both for physical appearance and for content strategy. Develop a realistic production schedule. You want your audience to accept what you tell them. They have to accept you as credible—because they know “who you are” or because you have performed the “right action” to familiarize yourself with the topic.

**Draft by carrying out your plan.** Find your best production method. Some people write a draft quickly, focusing on “getting it out,” whereas others

write a draft slowly, focusing on producing one good sentence after another. Keep basic strategies—for instance, the top-down method of first announcing the topic and then filling in the details—in mind as you write. If the writing causes you to see a new, better way to present the material, change.

**Edit by making the document consistent.** Look for surface problems, such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Make sure all the presentation elements—heads, captions, margins—are the same. Set and meet quality benchmarks.

**Work in a group by expanding your methodology.** For groups, add into your planning a method to handle group dynamics—set up a schedule, assign responsibilities, and, most important, select a method for resolving differences.