Checklist for SunCam Authors

First, a few suggestions for authoring a course for SunCam:

- Write about what you know. Prospective authors often ask what topic they should select. The simple answer is that you should write about the issues that you know best.
- ALWAYS be gender-neutral and gender-inclusive in your writing. Since at least the late 19th century, women have engaged in engineering and now comprise 13% of our ranks. Ignore this important market, and you will hear about it in your course reviews and sales results.
- To maximize sales start with a course that appeals to the broadest possible audience. For example, the title "Inspection and maintenance of freight rail ballast" will appeal to a very narrow market, but "What every engineer should know about railroad engineering" will find a much broader audience. The larger the market, the more your course will sell.
- Personalize your examples by giving the engineer solving the problem a name rather than writing an impersonal description of the engineering design. Try setting up your cases by giving names to the people and places such as, "The town council of East Haven engaged the services of Emily Hansen, P.E. to design a new water treatment plant . . ." Customers will praise the course for using "real life" examples even though the people and places are fictitious.
- Divide outsized topics into a series. A 16-hour course will be off-putting, but if you break it into 4, 4-hour lessons and label them part 1, part 2, etc., they will sell well as a 4-part set. We offer set discounts to encourage set sales.
- Illustrate your course with crisp, clean, well-composed original photos, charts, and graphs. Don't ever use your scanner, instead recreate that table or chart. Think of your course document as a lengthy technical article in a professional journal.
- Never use anything to illustrate your course except royalty-free, unless you created it or have written permission from its owner. Text and illustrations on the World Wide Web are free to read, but most are not free to reuse. You may not use the material harvested from the work of others in your course without written permission from the owner. SunCam will terminate any author who plagiarizes. For an extensive collection of royalty-free photos that *are* acceptable, try https://commons.wikimedia.org.
- Put the important stuff in the captions. Publishers know that the caption space under an eye-catching illustration is solid gold because people are more likely to read and remember it.

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Now we turn to the perfunctory stuff. Before we can take your course "live" on our website, we will need all of the following:

- ☐ OPTIONAL! Before you begin work on your course, you may benefit from asking us to review a sample of your writing to make sure that your writing style is suitable for our audience. An article or report that you authored would work well. Please don't send us coauthored work unless the same person is a coauthor of your course.
- ☐ Select a Course Title/Subtitle that contains the fewest possible words to attract a buyer's attention. Remember that the only job of the title is to entice a mouse click. That click will land your customer on a web page where they can see a course's objectives, description, reviews by other customers, and any notes about approvals. We limit course titles to 44-characters and subtitles to 66-characters. That's what fits on our certificates of completion.
- ☐ Course document formatted, proofed, and ready for publication (Microsoft Word). Note that we do not proofread or edit your work, but customers do, and they will give you poor ratings for a course document with spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors. Termination of courses is almost always due to poor reviews, and poor reviews are almost always related to poor writing. We strongly recommend finding someone skilled in English composition and Microsoft Word to do the final reading and proofing of your course document and test.
  - Use one of our course templates for writing your course document. You may download the "Course Template" at: https://www.suncam.com/CourseTemplate.docx for Word 2007 users or https://www.suncam.com/CourseTemplate.doc for Word 97-2003 users.
  - Use 1" margins all around, a 12 point font (Times Roman or Arial), and 1.15 line spacing for readability [right click/Paragraph/Line Spacing/Multiple/ then delete "3" and type in 1.15]. The templates linked above already have this formatting set.
  - Don't use embedded links like this; instead, use an inline link like this http://www.suncam.com. Embedded links don't survive when creating .pdf documents.
- ☐ Test and answer key (in plain .txt format or Word if you have pictures, math formulas, or special symbols in the questions or answers)
  - Code questions to work with our testing software (see the sample question format. (Don't worry too much about this. We can fix any mistake)
    - Each test question must begin with the code: Qn: or Qn. (where n is the question number). Don't forget the colon or period. Use a carriage return at the end of each question, answer, and explanation but don't use any tab or carriage return within any question, answer, or explanation. Don't add tabs or spaces before the questions or the +/- signs (further explained below), and don't use the

Sample question format:
Q5: What is the area of a 3-4-5 triangle?
-3
+6
-15
Explanation: A 3-4-5 triangle is a right triangle with base and height of 3 and 4.The area of a triangle is (b x h)/2 = (3 x 4)/2 = 6

"Number or Bullet List" functions to format the test. Inserting one or more empty lines after each question or explanation is okay.

- Use only multiple-choice questions. (True/False questions are okay but please use them sparingly.) All answers begin with a minus (-) sign except the correct answer, which must start with a plus sign (+). There has to be one and only one correct answer. The software assigns a,b,c, etc. to the answers, so don't number or letter the answers. Please remember not to insert any space or tab before the + or -.
- You must write an explanation for each test question. A "Results Email" with test results and explanations will be automatically sent to the customer, the author, and SunCam when a customer passes a test. The "Explanation:" for each question may be in the form of a statement, a quote from your course document, a math formula, or anything that will aid in the customer's understanding of why they missed a question. Be smart! Answering phone calls or emails from customers can be time-consuming, so you will want to write explanations that do an excellent job of anticipating their questions and satisfying them without the need to contact you.

☐ IMPORTANT: Test questions should be in the same order as the answers appear in the course document. Test questions should be meaningful but not complex. Do not use trick questions or double negatives and use true/false questions sparingly.

☐ Course description (1-3 paragraphs). The description should include learning objectives. Think of the course description as your "sales pitch" for taking the course. Tell the customer how they will benefit from taking your course and tell them about any prerequisite knowledge that they should have.

☐ In addition to the course description, you may include a list of keywords that will help customers search to find your course. These keywords will not be visible except to search engines. There is no need to repeat any keywords that you have included in your course description.

☐ Photo of the author(s) for the web page. A head-and-shoulders (mug shot) works best but try not to make it look like an actual mug shot or a passport photo. Smiles sell!

☐ A short biography of the author(s) (1-3 paragraphs). Only include education, experience, and publications that qualify you to author your course(s). Status as a disadvantaged, women-owned, or minority business enterprise will not be beneficial here.

☐ SunCam will prepare the Author Agreement, sign it, and send it to you for your signature when the course is in final form. Provide us with the following:

- Name(s), address(es), phone number(s) and email address(es) to be in the agreement
- Are you an individual, corporation (what state), partnership, trust, etc.?
- Your Social Security number for individuals or FEI number for your business. NOTE: It is best NOT to email your Social Security Number, call it in or send it via fax. We'll tell you where to send it when we send you the agreement.)

☐ A list of future courses. (optional)

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- ☐ We will display a logo or URL of any organization (such as a university or company) on your webpage. The organization doesn't need to be a party to the agreement.
- ☐ If you have authored any books on the subject covered by the course, you may wish to put a thumbnail photo and description on the website. We can also link the thumbnail to Amazon or any other site where a customer may purchase the book.
- ☐ Any other photographs or illustrations that help tell the story about you or your course(s).

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

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