



# Society for Technical Communication (STC) Huntsville/North Alabama (NA)

*STC-NA helps volunteers grow their careers.*  
Summer 2021

Next Virtual Meeting: *Effective Listening* by Monica Tucker

**What:** “Effective Listening” by Monica Tucker.

**When:** Thursday, September 2, 2021

**Presentation Start Time:** 6:00 pm Central (If possible, please log in 10 minutes before the presentation.)

**Where:** Zoom Online/Virtual Meeting

**How:** This virtual event requires **RSVP by Tuesday, August 31, 5:00 pm Central**. To RSVP, send an email with your Name and Org Affiliation (STC-NA, UAH, or Friend) to [STC-NA\\_RSVP\\_Speaker\\_Meeting@Outlook.com](mailto:STC-NA_RSVP_Speaker_Meeting@Outlook.com). You will receive a confirmation email within a day that contains information on accessing the meeting online.

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Monica Tucker is a certified John Maxwell Coach as well as a health advocate. Monica is very active in Toastmasters International as a current district officer and she also does educational presentations for the local Alzheimer’s Association.



During her Toastmasters affiliation, she learned about active listening, and realized most people listen to respond and not listen to the conversation, meanings and signals. **Effective Listening** will help you realize how you are listening and how to be more active.

Engaging and funny, Monica delivers a high impact and impactful message that is light and entertaining. You will walk away with knowledge and will be empowered to make changes.



# Approach Your Next Career Search with Confidence! Interview Strategies with Rosilyn Rayborn

Article written by Natalie Falkenberry.

Article published in the STC-NA Newsletter with permission by Natalie Falkenberry and Rosilyn Rayborn.



Rosilyn Rayborn, May 2021  
STC-NA Speaker

Searching for a new job and navigating the interview process can be stress-inducing; however, staying at a job you do not enjoy is a waste of your precious time and potential. Recently, Rosilyn Rayborn gave a

talk at STC-NA on how to do your best during an interview. Rayborn is an established entrepreneur, marketing strategist, and copywriter. Some highlights in her career include founding the startup *Smackages*, an online cosmetic service for makeup samples and video tutorials, and creating the charity event *Singles: Remixed*, an event that encouraged young singles with disposable income to give back to the community. Rayborn's expertise in marketing is extremely helpful in communicating your skills and selling yourself during an interview. She believes that "Marketing is a part of everything we do," and this applies no less when searching for jobs.

Many people will experience a variety of workplace environments in their lifetime and not all jobs will be enjoyable. Before you completely dismiss the job you don't like, take some time to consider what it is that you don't enjoy. According to Rayborn, "when you don't like something, it's really important to articulate why." Identifying the reasons why you do not enjoy a certain job will help you know what to avoid and prevent you from getting caught in a cycle of unfulfilling jobs. For example, after Rayborn graduated college, she worked as a guest services representative at a hotel in addition to being a copywriter. She noticed that her work environment was competitive in a superficial way and did not allow her to showcase her individuality. Think about what is important to you in a career and see if the job you want aligns with those values before making any commitments.

Finding a job listing that interests you is not difficult, but for many people the interview process can be. Rayborn points to imposter syndrome as one of the most common concerns people may have while interviewing for a new job position: "One of the biggest [concerns] that I've seen from different friends is not thinking that they're going to be smart enough." One way to improve your confidence is by keeping a collection of performance reviews and kudos from supervisors. It is not likely that you will remember every instance of your success, so having written reminders will help build your confidence. Rayborn communicated this perfectly by saying, "You can't fight with data. There is evidence of me being successful." Before an interview, revisit some of your old evaluations to remind yourself what you are capable of.

Another way to take the pressure off of an interview involves rethinking your approach to them. Rayborn observes that many people are too concerned about being likeable, and they forget that an interview isn't a one-sided conversation. While the recruiter is analyzing you as a prospective employee, you should also be analyzing them and the company in return. Acquiring the job you want is a valid goal; however, it should not come at the expense of performing duties that do not complement your skill set or adhering to a company culture that does not mesh with you. According to Rayborn, "A bad fit is bad for everybody. Understand that you need to listen for red flags yourself." If you are just beginning your career journey, do not feel compelled to accept a job position that doesn't fit you just for the sake of getting the job.

When people think of interviews, they imagine a one-on-one conversation that's typically with a human resources representative. However, you may get the chance to meet a few current employees during the interview process.



Rayborn considers this opportunity extremely valuable: “If you get an opportunity to meet the team, the folks you’ll be working with...you find out what working there is really like. The team will tell the truth.” Unlike HR representatives, these employees will likely give their honest opinion rather than PR-approved language. Not only will you discover what working at the job is really like, but these employees may also ask you questions that will hint at what to expect from the work environment.

For example, if someone asks you how you feel about working on Saturdays, this may mean that you will have to work on Saturdays.

As your career path progresses, it is very important to devote some time towards developing your personal brand. Rayborn stressed the significance of authenticity. Of course, you are free to seek guidance from friends, colleagues, and any other professionals you may know, but don’t expect your experiences to exactly reflect those of another person. Rayborn encourages you to “embrace the uniqueness of your journey.” Your personal brand should reflect your specialties and values, while also meeting the expectations of professionalism for your career field.

Rayborn’s final interview strategy simply involves considering the needs of your potential employers and focuses on making their jobs easier. The interviewing process is just as stressful for HR supervisors as it is for applicants. Making interviewers’ jobs easier could mean making your contact information readily accessible in your thank-you email after the interview or providing a link to your LinkedIn profile in a follow-up email. Both of these actions help eliminate any uncertainty your employers may have before hiring you. Another way to make yourself memorable is to give your interviewer a leave-behind. This could be a thank you card, business card, portfolio, or a packet of all three. Rayborn has used this strategy and the recruiter who interviewed her still has the leave-behind years later.

Interviewing is like any other skill; it can be improved with practice. Over the course of your career journey, you will be presented with many opportunities to hone this skill. The next time you find yourself searching for a job, consider adopting some of Rayborn’s interview strategies and remember that marketing is a part of everything that we do.

Many thanks to Rosilyn Rayborn from the STC-NA for her May 2021 virtual presentation! Listen to the [podcast](#).



## WINNER

***Our own Julie Blair, STC-NA Membership Chair and Past President, and the TechComm Knitting Cabal Team were recognized at the 2021 STC Summit, Closing Celebration STC Talent Show.***

## My Thanks and Thoughts on Attending the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual STC Summit by Heather McCain

First and foremost, thank you to STC for organizing the event and to STC-NA for enabling me to attend. Over the past three years of my volunteering as an officer of the STC-NA Chapter, I learned that an STC chapter can offer funding for one of the chapter officers to attend the Summit on behalf of the chapter. As the funds had not been allocated to another officer this year as they had in previous years and as I have been a volunteer officer for the STC-NA Chapter since 2017, I jumped at the opportunity to attend the Summit in 2021! ***I am so thankful to the STC-NA for helping me attend.***

I had a number of reasons for wanting to attend the Summit: **1.** I wanted to learn about implementations of practical technical communication efforts in the workplace; **2.** I had never been to an entirely virtual conference, so I wanted to see first-hand how the STC organized, promoted, and facilitated it in order to find ways to better develop, communicate, and run STC-NA virtual meetings; and **3.** I had never been to an STC Summit and wanted to be able to have the experience for my own continued growth in technical communication.

In attending, I was impressed by the variety of topics, experience levels of attendees, and knowledge level of the speakers. Regardless of the presentation being a live virtual presentation or a pre-recorded presentation, the speakers and their assistants were on hand to answer questions via chat during the presentations.

On June 8, I attended a seminar called, ***Develop Engaging, Interactive Online Training Sessions***. It was given by **Mark Kleinsmith, Director of Technical Communications at MiTek Inc.**, and **Steven Morgan, Software Training Manager at MiTek Inc.** Their presentation was live. While one person presented, the other answered audience questions. While I originally attended to learn more about what was stated in the title of the presentation, I found that I also had the benefit of hearing and seeing their case study and lessons learned in converting from a traditional and on-location software training program format to an online training program format. They talked about the history of traveling weekly to train customers on the use of their construction software. They talked about the pre-2020 training program plan used for onsite training, the delivery of content in person at customer sites or hotel conference rooms, the setup of physical test machines for each trainee to use during hands-on training, and the provision of hardcopy documentation for each trainee to use during and after training.

On the week of March 12, 2020, the pandemic changed everything for MiTek Inc. As they had started week 1 of a multi-week training session at a customer site, the immediate need for remote operations by their customer and their own business required that they quickly define and implement a virtual training program without losing the benefits of in-person training. They needed to keep the course running, provide all materials to the attendees, and provide a test environment that would enable trainees to see and use the software to learn specific lessons critical to becoming a beginning and intermediate user of their software.

They reviewed their process for delivering online training modules, setting up virtual software training environments, and monitoring trainee engagement by tracking completion of course lessons. As training environment setup, training materials, and training delivery was planned, reviewed, tweaked, and updated in near-real-time, they had numerous lessons learned to share in what worked and what didn't work for them. There is no way that I could review everything they did to implement their virtual training program in this article. It was one of the best presentations (virtual or otherwise) that I have seen. They used tools that were easy to implement, access, and maintain by everyone involved. They talked about their process for migrating existing content into the virtual format. Overall, I found their presentation to be a hands-on, practical and timely approach to developing a technical training program for dispersed audiences.

For more information about the STC Summit, see [2021 Conference Overview – Technical Communication Summit \(stc.org\)](https://stc.org).



## Looking Forward – Networking Event

# October 2021

*Better late than never!*

We hope you can join us for the first in-person networking event of 2021!

It is long overdue, so we hope we can catch up with you.

This will be the first in-person networking event since February 2020.

We would like to share progress made by our chapter and gather your feedback on potential programs you would like scheduled in the new year.

More to come...

Learn more about **STC Membership** here: [Membership Levels and Benefits | Society for Technical Communication \(stc.org\)](#).

### About STC-NA

#### About the Society for Technical Communication (STC) Huntsville/North Alabama (NA) Chapter

The Huntsville/North Alabama Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) has been a leading professional resource for area technical communicators since 1959. We hold Fall, Winter and Spring meetings to help technical communicators and other professionals network. *We hope you can join us!*

#### 2020-2021 STC-NA Volunteer Officers

We strive to serve the North Alabama technical communication community by providing opportunities for learning, networking, and volunteering. If you have an interest in STC-NA and/or in building your community by volunteering, then please respond to this email. *We look forward to hearing from you...*

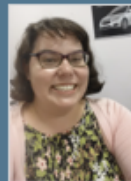
### Society for Technical Communication (STC)-Huntsville/North Alabama (NA) 2021 Chapter Officers



Heather McCain is the STC-NA President and has held the role since January 2020. She previously served as Secretary for STC-NA in 2018 and 2019. Heather became a professional technical communicator and an STC member in 1996. Despite breaks in her membership, Heather has been a volunteer for most of her membership across three chapters. Past roles held include president, secretary, membership manager, newsletter editor, online meeting coordinator, and webmaster. Heather currently works as a project support analyst in the Birmingham area.



Eric Brittingham is the Secretary/Treasurer of the STC-H/NA chapter and works as a Principal User Assistance Consultant with Hexagon PPM (formerly Intergraph) developing documentation and training for the company's engineering and construction information management software products. Before 2007, he lived in northern Delaware and was a member of the Philadelphia Metro chapter, working as an instructional designer, business analyst, solution analyst, and documentation writer for various corporations. He currently lives in Madison County, Alabama.



Julie Blair is the current Membership Chair of the STC North Alabama Chapter. A member since 2011, she has held multiple offices and roles in the chapter. In her service to STC, Julie attended three Summits. She has presented at the STC mini-con, which she never misses. Under her Presidency, the Chapter flourished with professional development and networking opportunities. Julie has met with tech comm college students and others interested in tech comm for the last 10 years. Twice, Julie earned a Team IBM coin. Julie has experience in both software and hardware writing.



Beverly Watson is the current STC-NA Chapter Webmaster. She has been a member of the Society for Technical Communication since 2011 and has served as Chapter Secretary and President for STC-NA. Beverly has over 25 years of professional experience in the aerospace and defense industries. She currently works as a technical editor in North Alabama.



Ryan Weber is an Associate Professor of English and the Director of Business and Technical Writing at The University of Alabama in Huntsville. His research has appeared in *Technical Communication*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, and other publications. He edits the Student Perspectives column for the STC Monthly Magazine *Intercomm* and also hosts the podcast 10-Minute Tech Comm.

