

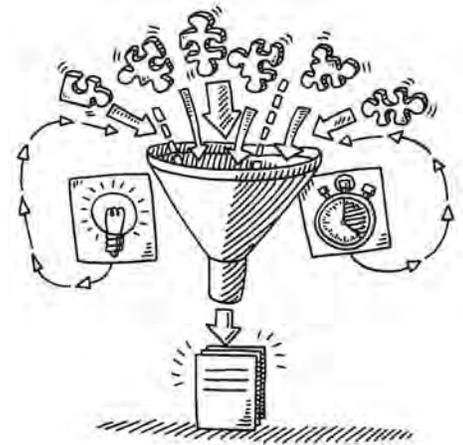
WRITING A CORPORATE HISTORY: THE HISTORY ASSOCIATES APPROACH



History Associates INC.
THE BEST COMPANY IN HISTORY®

At History Associates we have the pleasure of helping people tell the story of their life's work, work that seldom involves writing and publishing history. If you are interested in having your corporate story told but do not know how to do it, here are the basics, drawn from our years of experience.

We believe that good history is something of an art—it takes creativity as well as careful study to meld seemingly unrelated events into a seamless narrative with dramatic appeal. History is also a craft, and there are a series of steps that we follow to build up the essentials of a corporate story, carefully consider them, and then to create an authoritative account.



Chapter One: The Plan

A project usually begins with discussions about what kind of book you would like, the intended audience, and sources available. We'll also want to go over the ins and outs of the generally understood company story, discussing how potentially sensitive or controversial issues or events might be handled.

After these initial conversations, we can work as independently or as collaboratively as you like—we do not require a major commitment of your time. At a minimum, you should plan on providing us with access to your historical material,

Chapter Two: Research

Next comes historical research. We begin by collecting information that is readily available (from your website, newspapers, and perhaps trade literature) to put together a company and industry overview. Researching your company along with related history helps us to fit your story within a larger context of business, economic, social, and cultural history—showcasing your accomplishments on a richer canvas. Then we'll review your company records for the details that will give the story life. We will be particularly interested in documents like annual reports, client newsletters, or employee bulletins that help tell pieces of the story.

The capstone of the research effort will be interviewing those who lived your company history. The number will vary from dozens for a major book to a handful for a smaller pamphlet. Top managers will of course have a broader view of the company than lower-level employees, although close perspectives on every major corporate function—from sales



and on helping us identify and gaining access to oral history interviewees. You will, of course, need to supply feedback and approvals along the way.

and marketing to production and HR—will be valuable.



We do not expect interviewees to respond to scripted questions. Our philosophy is that a good interview should be a wide-ranging and open-ended conversation that provides not only the answers to predictable questions, but also elicits information that no

one thinks to ask about. The most invaluable product of the oral history interviews are not really “answers” at all, but reflections and insight which will inform the historian’s understanding and breathe more life into the story.

Chapter Three: Writing

In the next step of the process we’ll review documents, go over transcripts, make notes, and formulate a story. The production of a historical narrative is a creative act. There can be no “correct” story, but in the process of doing research in company records and in interviewing people who have dedicated their lives to the company, our historian will develop the empathy required to craft an account that resonates with company veterans. Most importantly it will have a dramatic arc—a beginning, middle and end—that all readers look for in a story.

We will present the story concept in an outline that identifies the events that will be covered, themes that will be developed, and provides a clear sense of that dramatic arc. Anyone can pile up facts: a good historian will be selective, highlighting particular themes and stories to build a coherent and meaningful narrative. This outline should provide a good sense of the choices that will be made.

The writing process itself can be time-consuming and tedious, but it is inevitably invigorating and enlightening as well. Often the full implications of combinations of events or decisions do not become evident until the historian has actually worked them out on paper. For that reason you can expect the resulting first draft to differ somewhat from the outline—a good historian always learns as he or she writes.

This main text will be the authoritative core of your book, but we’ll also tell the story in other ways, including captioned photographs and sidebars. While many of the images we use will likely come from your company’s collection, there may also be photographs in the public domain that help evoke the context of key periods in your company’s history. It is

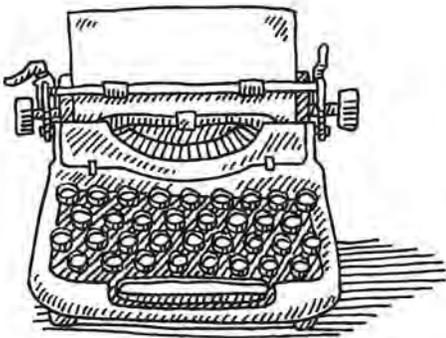


usually impossible for each picture to directly correspond with the text so we’ll probably include images that are

tangentially related to the story or that evoke the context of a particular section, using creative captioning to pull them all together. Sidebars will add yet another dimension to the book, presenting anecdotes, illustrations, and first-person accounts that complement or amplify the core narrative.

Chapter Four: Revision

Once we've pulled together all of the pieces, fine tuning begins. We'll provide all text in double-spaced manuscript form for you to markup. We'll put the images into tabular format so that you can view them, edit captions, and review information about potential use in the finished book, and consider implications such as acquisition and usage rights fees.



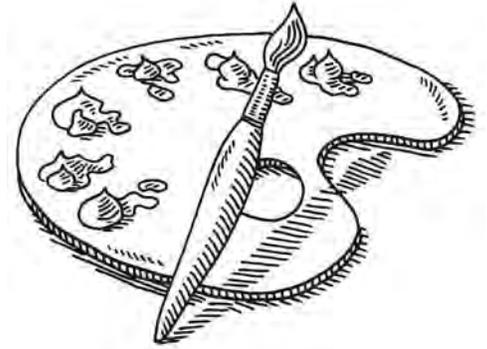
The revision process can be one of the most unpredictable parts of the project. We try to reduce it by

working hard to faithfully reflect the perspective and priorities of company veterans. But much will also depend on how comfortable the history committee is with an outsider's view of their story. We will work with you through one substantial revision (whole new passages and paragraphs, new images, and sidebars) and one less-comprehensive

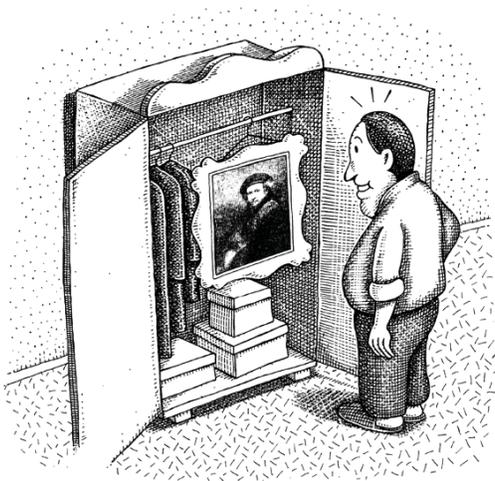
revision of the overall package. The process is concluded with a painstaking proof of all the text, sidebars, and captions.

Chapter Five: Design and Printing

Some of our clients choose to be closely involved in design and printing, others ask us to direct the process. We have relationships with a



number of accomplished book designers and printers. We have years of experience assembling and directing design print teams. We always welcome as much, or as little, of your input as you wish to contribute in the process of turning your story into a book that everyone can be proud of.



“Would you keep a Rembrandt in the closet?”

Epilogue: Bring Your History to Light

There is a nettlesome question that most corporate leaders ask themselves at one time or another. It goes, “We prize our story and we’d like to tell it, but should we devote corporate resources to something like that?” Some dwell on the question of cost (what’s the return on investment?), others focus on a matter of principle (we succeed because we look forward, not backward). But also consider this: when people ask about your company, how do you answer?

If you are like most people you give them the history in thumbnail. Your company’s story is the invaluable product of years of work, dedication, and expense. Like a fine Rembrandt, it is your masterpiece. Would you keep a Rembrandt in the closet? Probably not, so don’t hide your company’s story either, bring your history to light.

Contact

Ken Durr
Director, History Services
301-279-9697
E-mail: kdurr@historyassociates.com



300 N. Stonestreet Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

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