

## Compiling Operation and Maintenance Manuals from a mother's point of view

This article has been written by Alison, a working mother who successfully juggles school runs, meetings, holidays and other kid-related stuff with working as an O&M Manual coordinator.

### **Why motherhood and O&M Manuals work together.**

Compiling Operation and Maintenance Manuals is work that is well suited to today's mother. The main benefits are the flexibility of work hours and the ability to work remotely from home or even when on holiday using a tablet or laptop. All you need is a good internet connection. This gives me the ability to earn whilst the kids are on holiday and to see projects through to the end without having to hand work over to a colleague. Some might see this as a negative, but the average child has 12/13 weeks off school a year and not earning during these times will have a significant impact on your finances. Plus there's the peace of mind of knowing that you can deal quickly with little emergencies without either the project or the holiday being ruined.

### **What characteristics a mother needs to work successfully as an O&M Manual compiler / coordinator.**

At first the amount of work involved and the knowledge that you need to put a good manual together can be daunting, but the different aspects of the job make it far more interesting than you might think and well worth the effort. On top of that, as a mum, you will probably already have some or all the attributes that are required of a good manual compiler.

The most important things are having good communication and organisational skills because of the amount of information you have to gather in. Firstly, you have to get people to send stuff to you which is where the communication comes in. Then you need to include it in the manual(s) and keep a precise record of what has been received and what is outstanding. This requires the organisation.

Expanding upon the organisational skills, there is a real need for clear prioritising. This plays a key role in producing a successful manual as all the projects will have deadlines and you may be facing many of them within a particular week.

Another useful skill is computer literacy. A reasonable knowledge of MS Word and Excel and some experience in producing PDF documentation is needed but can be learnt more easily than the inherent qualities listed above. The ability to put a comprehensive but concise email together is also important if you are going to receive the correct information.

Finally good interpersonal skills are really important because you can be wonderfully well organised but of no use if you aren't able to get people to supply information.

All in all, this type of work goes pretty well with motherhood and provides a welcome break from home life.