

# Leveraging STE to Decode Archaic Words Into Clear, Unambiguous Text



## Industry

Engineering

## Our Role

Converting archaic text to improve ease of use, translations, and comprehension

## STE

Simplified Technical English

## SITUATION

### Outdated text was transformed for an engineering association struggling with the reality of a new, diverse audience

Our client, an engineering society with published standards for pressure vessel construction, was an international organization that administered the standards in the United States. The standards are translated for use in countries with affiliate associations.

The primary issues that were identified in collaboration with all stakeholders:

- Translation costs were slowing the progress of knowledge globalization
- Archaic phrasing and convoluted presentation limited the audience and made translations more difficult and costly
- Nonmembers governed by the code initiated formal complaints when ambiguous wording resulted in rulings against them
- Ambiguous wording led to inconsistent enforcement and interpretation.

“

**This was very difficult at first. Many of our members were glad that the text was hard to understand--fewer questions or complaints. Clear, unambiguous text was an alien concept. They wanted *shall* instead of *must* because it seemed more authoritative. But they were involved at every step of the conversion and the text was so dramatically easier to read that most members were glad it was done. International member were a lot happier with the translations.** - Secretary, Pressure Vessel Committee

# APPROACH

Our process is a collaborative one and, in this case, that was especially important:

- **Stakeholder Input:** Input was gathered from US and international affiliate members, accounting staff, and those that had initiated Code cases.
- **Technical Terminology:** These Codes used technical terminology that could not be simplified without changing the meaning. We built a dictionary of terms that would be excluded from simplification.
- **Project Scope:** We presented recommended changes and how we would make them.

# SOLUTION

The solution in this case needed to reduce translation costs and create clear, unambiguous text. Ease of translation and comprehension had to improve.

- **STE Text Conversion:** Once agreement was reached on the scope and types of changes, conversion began on several sections.
- **Feedback and Monitoring:** Feedback was obtained from all stakeholders about the conversion. Changes were made insofar as possible. This conversion was presented--and accepted--as a dynamic document that would evolve as circumstances required.

# RESULTS

## STE Conversion Excerpt

### Original

The rules in this Part PR-1 are applicable to boilers and component parts thereof that are fabricated by riveting. These rules shall be used in conjunction with the general requirements in the applicable Parts of this Section and Mandatory Appendix V that pertain to the type of boiler under consideration.



### STE Revision

The rules in PR-1 are applicable to riveted boilers and parts. These rules are applied with the parts of this Section and Mandatory Appendix V for riveted boilers.



**53%**

Less ambiguity in text per stakeholders



**42%**

Savings realized for translation costs



**60%**

Fewer Code cases from ambiguous wording

# CONCLUSION

This conversion was done initially on parts of the Code where archaic and ambiguous wording had cost the organization the most time and money. The text as it was did not translate well into other languages, which resulted in needlessly high translation costs. There was also an issue with simplification that was specific to this project. Some of the technical content could be simplified only so much so the degree of simplification was agreed upon before the Project began. Outcomes were verified by actual financial results and stakeholder input. The decision was made to incrementally convert the rest of the Code.

# Case Study: STE Conversion

## About This Case Study

This case study was done in the two-page format document format. It was also done as a four-page case study and published online as a case study. Our expertise for this project includes both the [case study](#) and [STE conversion](#). We are skilled at both. If you would like more information on these services, please use the contact information shown below.

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