

Let's Table That

Happy Spring! After being stuck inside by Old Man Winter, we join the masses in a fit of spring cleaning. We are dusting, scrubbing, and moving things around. One thing we've noticed is that Word tables always need a bit more polish than everything else. This issue of *KB CommEntary* tells you how you can make the shiniest tables ever.

What's Up at KB COMM?

At KB COMM, we provide mission-critical communication and learning services to clients in a variety of industries. Thanks to our established and new clients for keeping us busy. Recent and ongoing projects include:

- Revising the website and promotional materials for a startup bioinformatics company specializing in genome-analysis technology
- Revising the website and writing technical documentation for an engineering services company
- Writing and editing numerous information products for a healthcare diagnostics manufacturer, including communications to employees from the CEO and executive leadership team, customer presentations and letters, product marketing brochures and data sheets, and training materials
- Formatting and revising periodically reviewed manufacturing standard operating procedures and work instructions for a pharmaceutical company
- Writing manufacturing reports for a pharmaceutical company
- Drafting CMC modules for electronic submission to health authorities on behalf of a pharmaceutical company
- Reviewing and editing for consistency and accuracy response documents and associated modules for electronic submission to health authorities on behalf of pharmaceutical companies

KB COMM LLC is a certified Women's Business Enterprise. We are officially qualified to participate in corporations' woman- and minority-owned vendor programs.

Please keep us in mind for your communication or training projects.

Tips and Tales

Set the Table

Tables are often the best way to present text or numbers with consistent alignment. But in our experience, the table editor is perhaps the most frequently misused feature of Microsoft Word. We have seen all manner of missteps in Word tables, including use of text boxes (for which we almost disowned one of our kids!) and criminally excessive use of tabs in an attempt to align information.

Here are a few common problems and their solutions to help you make your tables shine.

There's text wrapping around my table. How do I move the text?

Right-click within the table and select:

Table Properties > Table tab > Text wrapping > None

Note that, if you move a table by dragging from one place to another (rather than cutting and pasting at a paragraph mark), the properties automatically change from None to Around. Bill Gates apparently thought this was a good idea. It isn't.

How do I add rows?

To add a row at the bottom of the table, click in the last cell and press Tab. If you need a row somewhere else in the table, right-click in a row > Insert > Insert Rows (Above or Below).

How do I add columns?

This is easy if there are no merged cells or you are adding the columns to the right of the table. Simply right-click in the column next to where you want to add one and select Insert Columns to the (Left or Right). Praise Bill!

If there are merged cells, things get trickier (thanks, Bill!). You must first deconstruct the table, add the column(s) to each piece of the table, and put it all back together. To deconstruct, put your cursor in the row beneath the first row with merged cells and press Ctrl + Enter to add a page break. Repeat for all rows that have merged cells. Add your columns to each table piece and make sure each piece is the same width (either as a percentage or a fixed measurement). Then put the table back together by deleting the page breaks. Breathe deeply and be grateful that Bill is no longer in charge.

How do I stop my table from resizing column widths?

Right-click within the table and select"

Table Properties > Table tab > Options > uncheck *Automatically resize to fit contents*

Note that this option is automatically checked when you add a table, another of Bill's great ideas.

How do I keep a table that is not longer than one page from spilling onto the next page?

Select the entire table > Home tab > Paragraph > Line and Page Breaks tab > Keep with next.

These are only a few of the fun things we have learned about formatting tables. If your tables need some polishing, give us a call.

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

Kathy

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