

Critique of a Printed Manual

Solar Powered Fountain 1J1AS01A021

ORGANIZATION & LAYOUT

- The manufacturers name is missing.
- The product's name, model/serial number are missing.
- The manual lacks a table of contents.
- The manual lacks an introduction for its users
- The manual lacks contact details and a telephone number for its users to refer to.
- The manual lacks page numbering. There is no page numbering in this document. 'A0' is written at the top right-hand corner of each page. This is confusing.
- 1J1AS01A021 is written at the bottom right of the title page. It is unclear what it refers to.
- Instructions requesting customers remove the protective film from the solar panel should come early in the manual, rather than towards the end of it.
- The 'Accessories' heading should be renamed '*List of Parts*' or '*Parts List*'.
- The orientation of the manual is not consistent. Unlike the manuals other pages, the last page (specification) is oriented sideways in landscape format.
- The manual lacks numbered step-by-step instructions to guide the user when assembling the solar powered fountain.
- The manual needs to display the cleaning instructions under a distinct and separate heading.
- Warnings should be represented by signs rather than with only text.

GRAPHICS

- The front-page graphic of the fountain and a black sun, do not look realistic. The picture of the fountain does not resemble the finished product. The Black sun is unnecessary.
- The table should have used a different Letter and number for connecting pipe B7, to clearly distinguish it from the nozzles.
- The graphics for the accessories are inconsistent because some of the accessories are drawn as three dimensional, but others (A, B4, B5, C) are drawn as two dimensional.
- In Installation Step 4: Install the fixed rod, instructions say "Put D into C". Meanwhile the graphic (Fig 2.) indicates the user should "put C into D".
- In Installation Step 5: "Put H into G", the lettering is so small, it is difficult to distinguish between 'H' and 'G'. (Fig 3)
- The attachment of the anti-collision poles and fasteners to the bottom of the solar panel pump was poorly described, and the pictures are not clear. I found the process confusing to understand.
- The figure drawn between figure 3 and figure 4, is blurred, and does not have a title
- There should be a disclaimer indicating that accessories are not drawn to scale.

CONTENT & STYLE

- The print is not of high quality.
- The sentences are occasionally too verbose instead of being simple and clear.
- The instructions are inconsistent, not well organized, and fail to achieve their purpose. Parts of the manual were difficult to understand.
- Incorrect formatting of figures/diagrams. Standard format requires figures to have a brief description and to be left adjusted.

REFERENCES

Tufte, E. (2001) *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. 2nd Ed. Graphics Press.

Markel, M. and Selber, S.A. (2021). *Technical Communication*. 13th ed. USA: Macmillan International.