



## Daily Encounters of All Kinds *by Sridhar Machani*

**H**ow Technical Communicators can deal with frustrating moments at work.

*One of the topics at STC India's 10th Annual Conference (2008) in Pune, India dealt with the emotional train of thoughts that the Technical Communicators ride on during their daily activities. This article presents further commentary about the same subject.*

### Oh, God!

Did you go crazy at the last-minute inputs to be included in the documentation? Did you doubt your proficiency of English writing skills when you saw the numerous editorial scribbles on your document? Did you throw up your hands when your documentation set had the review comments incomplete or inaccurate? Did you give up trying to convince your seniors about organizing the content the way you think is better? Have you wondered why your team is using the mainframe-age tools when the World has moved on?

### Understand Your Scope

All in a day's work, isn't it? Well, in the movie *Seven Years in Tibet*, the young monk says, 'There is a saying in Tibet. There is no use worrying about things that have no solution. There is also no use worrying about things that already have a solution.' Seems contradictory? Think again. Like with everything else in life, you need to focus your attention on things you can do, and try to live with things you cannot control.

Once you identify the things beyond your control, you would probably worry less. The same goes for events that occur outside your scope. For example, if your work is reviewed as inaccurate and/or incomplete, it doesn't mean you've failed alone. The inputs from the Subject Matter Experts (SME), the delay in receiving the inputs, technical reviews - all of them have failed to a degree. Perhaps, the next time, you could ask better questions to SMEs to gather better information. You could fix deadlines for sending inputs.

### Accountability

The ancient Romans had a tradition: whenever one of their engineers constructed an arch, as the capstone was hoisted into place, the engineer assumed accountability for his work in the most profound way possible: he stood under the arch.

Likewise, the Technical Communicators are the owners of documentation. You need to account for your deliverables. Across cross-functional teams, you may not like the way certain individuals or processes work. If you cannot get along with someone, try to maintain professional decorum. That is fair enough, as not everyone can be your buddies.

### Customer Focus

What you need to understand is everyone is mandated to work with customer as the focus. All the teams function for a better deliverable to the customers. If you get this fact right, you'll probably understand why the editor, being ever so unpopular, still goes about his/her job, diligently. You might also not squeal at the last-minute changes, knowing that they ultimately benefit the customers.



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