



# Managing Documentation Reviews

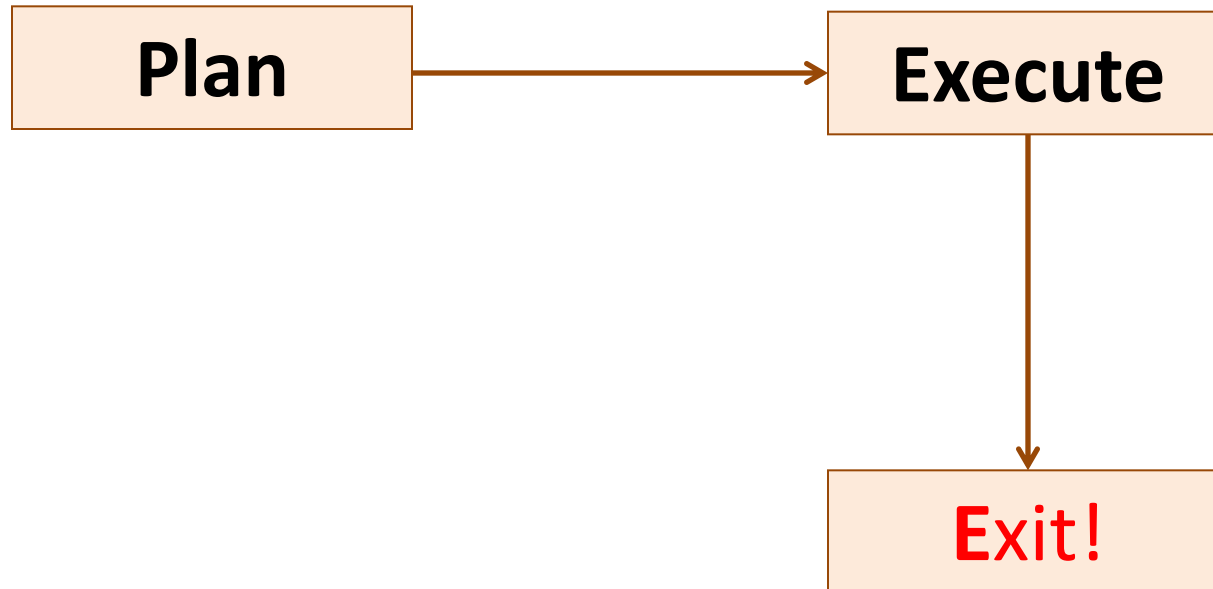
Kumar Dhanagopal

# The big problems

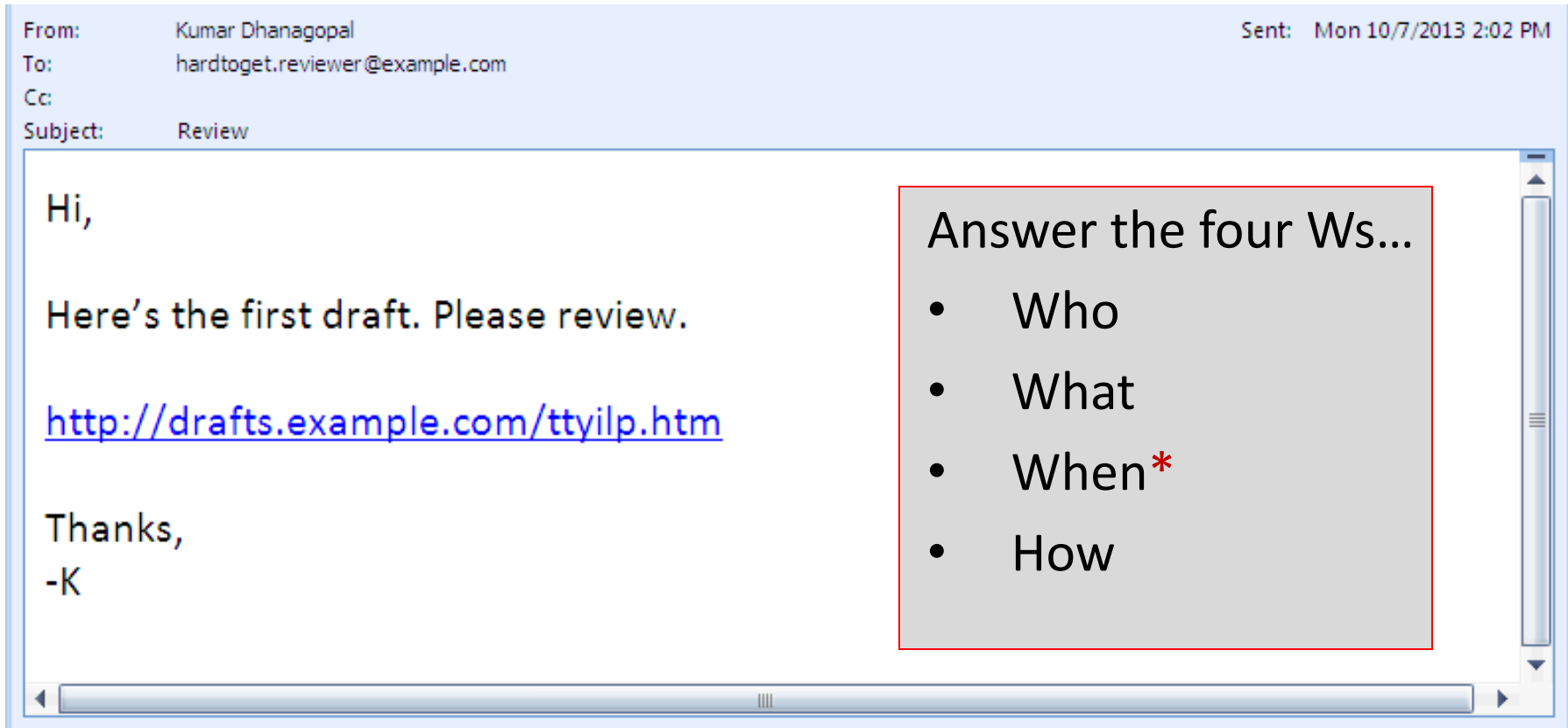
- Comments coming in too late – 66%
- Zero feedback – 50%
- Inadequate or unclear input – 43%
- Contradictory feedback – ?

*Data based on a survey conducted in September 2013*

# The review process



# Planning doc reviews



**\*70% of reviewers prefer to schedule a focused review** (based on a survey conducted in September 2013)

# Offline vs. f2f reviews

- Time to review
- Face time
- Politics of presence
- Talk-to-type preferences

# Advantages of online reviews

- Workflow
- Reminders
- Collaboration
- Status
- History

**85% of reviewers prefer an online review system**  
*(based on a survey conducted in September 2013)*

# Executing doc reviews

- Watch reviewers' **priorities**
- Reiterate expectations: **who, what, when, how**
- **Monitor** progress
- **Facilitate** reviews



# Follow up

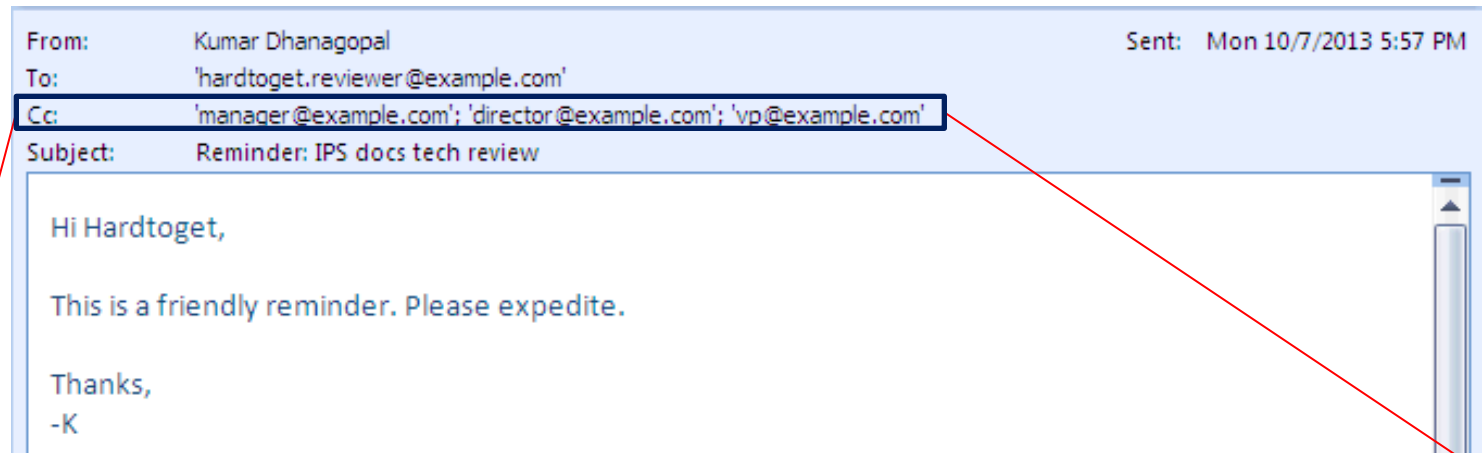


**Be relentless, yet polite — it's part of the job description**





# Is escalating ok?



Cc: 'manager@example.com'; 'director@example.com'; 'vp@example.com'



# Dealing with late/zero response

- Escalate – 77%
- Put the doc on hold – 30%
- Assume the review is done – 27%

*Based on a survey conducted in September 2013*

Do the following work?

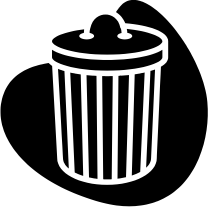
- Beg
- Bribe
- Blackmail



# Resolving ambiguous input

- Ask the reviewer for more info – 89%
- Do some research – 59%
- ...

*Based on a survey conducted in September 2013*



# Preempt useless feedback



**Tell the reviewers to focus on the content!**



# Separate facts from opinions

Consider this text:

**The number of VMs has been reduced from five to three**

**S:** We should add: ...resulting in better performance

**W:** Are you sure?

**S:** Yes, the performance team showed us slides.

**W :** Was that data cleared for publication?

**S:** Ah.. I remember seeing Confidential on the slides.



# Be assertive

Consider this term:

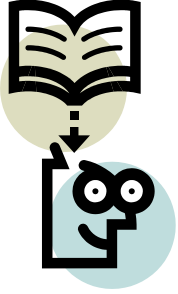
**[product] Life Cycle Toolkit**

**W:** Lifecycle is one word when used as an adjective.

**S:** I'm using it as a noun. Also, it is a potential brand.

**W:** Toolkit is the noun here. FWIW, see the [official TM list](#).

**S:** We'll go with your proposal for now.



# Aim for *useful* information

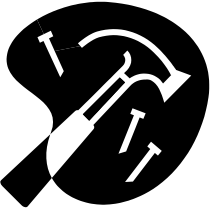
`maxConnections`: Use this parameter to specify the maximum number of concurrent connections that the server can handle.

**Correct**

(minimum: 1, maximum: 65536, default: 16384) **Complete**

Note that, as the number of concurrent connections increases, the server consumes more CPU and memory resources.

**Useful**



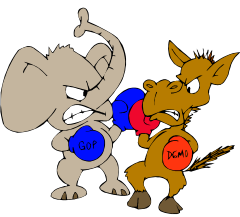
# Get technical!

*If the SME believes my knowledge is below par, I am certain that he/she won't help, at least in most cases!*

*\* Anonymous respondent, in a survey conducted in 2012*

**Try to get to the audience's level!**





# Working with difficult SMEs

- **Respect** their time\* and priorities, and *show* that we do
- Ask specific, open-ended questions
- **Facilitate** reviews
  - Organize multiple, small review cycles
  - Steer focus toward technical issues
- Assert **rights**
- Say **I don't know**

**\*92% of reviewers cite inadequate time as the reason for not reviewing docs** (from a survey conducted in September 2013)



# Exiting a review cycle

- Set quality goals before the review starts
- Prioritize issues during the review
- Defer toward the end



# The psychology of reviews

- **Ego**

My doc is perfect

- **Fear**

They'll know that I don't know

***The sooner you fall behind, the more time you'll have to catch up.*** - Steven Wright



# Three myths ...

~~The perfect doc~~

~~The perfect product~~

~~The perfect SME~~