# Author's Commentary on "The Incomplete Technical Presentation"

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The Incomplete Technical Presentation

*Question 1.* Peter was added to the case to simulate a frequent occurrence at technical conferences -- salespersons attending conferences to promote products. Many conferences are complemented by trade shows that invite industrial researchers to promote their products. This practice is not problematic as long as the attendees are notified of and aware of the presenters' agendas. However, sales pitches by research associates/salespersons can be biased and should be accepted with caution, especially if proceedings are published.

In this case, the conference was designed for the presentation of theoretical papers. This distinction raises the issue of attendees not knowing the presenter's agenda. This question was added to create an awareness of the possibility that biased results may be presented at a conference. It may also be noted that attendees can usually tell the sales pitches from the true research, which causes the attendees to become uneasy and angry toward the sales staff. Therefore, companies should not use technical conferences for sales promotion.

*Question 2.* Katherine decided to ignore the findings of William and his team and present an "incomplete" technical paper. William had the same problem but decided to tell Katherine. Or was he just passing the responsibility onto someone else? Either way, Katherine and William were responsible for evaluating the new analyzer, and they found something wrong. Should Katherine have retracted William's abstract? That would have raised concerns with management since Peter was scheduled to attend the conference with William and Katherine. If Katherine had told her supervisor, would she have been fired? Can Katherine and William continue to ignore the problem that they found?

*Question 3.* Katherine and William's option of continuing to ignore the problem has been eliminated by the professor's question. William must decide what to do. He can

pass the responsibility to Katherine, as he did before, by directing the question to her. However, this option would probably get him fired by Katherine.

Will he lie? Should he tell the professor that he looked into the accuracy between the overlapping size ranges and found comparable results? Should he tell the professor that they haven't looked into that aspect of the evaluation? The first lie would be blatant and would create misplaced trust in the analyzer. If William pretends that he did not look into the evaluation, he could delay the inevitable discovery that the analyzer is inaccurate between the size ranges. At least he and Katherine could leave the conference without publicly disclosing the problem before they had a chance to inform management.