**Scenario**

You are an engineer at Omni-Tech, a firm that manufactures and markets small electronic devices, primarily related to the sports and leisure industries. You are the leader of a project team that is working on a solution to a problem with the Omni-Tech 1000, a wireless heart-rate monitor for bicyclists. This device, which consists of a monitor attached to the rider’s chest and a computer attached to the handlebar, enables riders to monitor their heart rates to ensure they are getting the desired level of aerobic workout. The problem with the Omni-Tech 1000 is that the signal fails unexpectedly, causing the computer to reset and thereby provide inaccurate information. Some devices fail only occasionally; others fail every two or three minutes, although never in a predictable pattern.

You are called to a meeting with Kevin Jonakin, the Director of Research and Development at Omni-Tech. Kevin oversees five or six project teams at any given time, each consisting of three or four engineers. Your project team has submitted to Kevin a draft of its project report, which analyzes the problem and recommends a solution. You don’t like the look on Kevin’s face.

“Thanks for letting me have a look at the draft. I think you’ve identified the problem and come up with a good fix,” Kevin says. “But here’s the problem: this report has to go up to Caroline for her approval, and she reads everything. If she sees something she doesn’t like or doesn’t understand, she’ll kick it back to me.”

You are vaguely worried. “What’s wrong with the report? We put a lot of time into it.”

“Yes, I know you did,” Kevin says, “and, as I said, I think you did good engineering, but the report is awfully hard to read.”

“I don’t know what you mean,” you reply. “We spell-checked it, and even ran it through the grammar-checker. We fixed everything that was wrong with it.”

“Let me explain what I’m talking about,” Kevin says. “Let’s take a look at the introduction.” He hands you a copy of the introduction. “You’re right, there are no spelling errors or grammar mistakes. But it’s hard to follow. First, I’d like you to work on the writing. You need to break the intro into paragraphs and make sure each one has a clear topic sentence. And the writing is often choppy and sometimes awkward. But the most important thing to remember is that readers need to understand the context of what you’re writing about.”

“I assumed everyone signed off on the project,” you say.

“Yes,” Kevin replies. “I did, and Caroline did. But you need to remember that Caroline spends most of every day reading and writing and talking about new products and new versions of existing products. We’ve probably got thirty different projects at various stages of development. She simply doesn’t remember what you guys are doing.”

“So you want me to go back and make sure I explain the context better.”

“Yes, that’s right, and try to make sure it is written as well as possible.”