Chapter 6  Conclusion and Recommendations

The main objective of this research was to find the extent of the contribution of technical communication towards achieving corporate objectives.

The concept for this research was initiated by several formal discussions with the corporate managers, numerous informal debates with the practicing technical communicators, and a lot of casual conversations with end-users.

The research methodology was formulated after deliberations with the guide and senior specialists. It must be mentioned here that the data collection received a favorable response that can be taken as an enthusiastic beginning for further research.

6.1 Conclusion

After the extensive analysis, the research outcome has confirmed the contribution of technical communication towards achieving corporate objectives, and has assessed the extent of contribution as average.

The key findings are:

1. The end-users are enthusiastic about technical communication products, and though their usage is moderate, the mean of their perception of value of technical communication is 3.72 out of a maximum of 5. The mean is closer to 4 on a scale of 1-5, indicating high value.

2. The end users attribute high value to the contribution of technical communication towards both the financial objectives, 3.88 out of a maximum of 5; as well as the non-financial objectives, 3.56 out of a maximum of 5.

3. The perception of the end-users regarding the contribution of general technical information such as information on popular media is perceived to add only average value, 3.13 out of a maximum of 5, possibly because it had no specific focus.

4. The product-specific as well as general technical marketing information scores well with the end-users, their value attribution placed at 3.83 out of a maximum of 5. The attribution is closer to 4 on a scale of 1-5,
indicating high value, perhaps because the technical marketing information helps them to make a buying decision.

5. Social and environmental information, though not directly relating to the immediate needs of end-users, is still very much appreciated and rated 3.59 out of a maximum of 5, corresponding to high value.

6. The end-users consider that product manuals add high value, 4.02 out of a maximum of 5, from the perspective of overall information, as well as from the perspective of usage related information.

7. Product manuals are also believed to add a high value for influencing repeat sell, according to the end-users. They rate it value 3.83 out of a maximum of 5.

8. There is a significant difference in perception of value, based on the age, education level, and employment status of the end-users. However such differences depend on the purpose and the specific form of the technical communication, and cannot be generalized.

9. Technical communicators are not fully aware of the extensive spectrum of formats they can create, and of their possible contribution from the business perspective.

10. From the viewpoint of technical communicators, the value added by technical communication to the financial objectives is 2.57 out of a maximum of 5, and the value added to non-financial objectives is 2.52 out of a maximum of 5; both very close to each other and both corresponding to average value.

11. The technical communicators give a higher rating to internal technical communication such as support documents, process documents and training material, rating those 2.72 out of a maximum of 5; probably because they have more access to assess its contribution from within the organization.

12. Technical communicators tend to relate value of formats to the time and efforts spent on them, being partial towards product documents on which they spend the majority of their efforts, rating the value contribution as 2.79 out of a maximum of 5. This value is closer to 4 on a scale of 1-5, corresponding to high value. However, from the viewpoint of end-users and corporate managers, product documents do not rate high.

13. There is a significant difference in perception of value, based on the education levels of the technical communicators. However such differences depend on the purpose and the specific form of the technical communication, and cannot be generalized.
14. Corporate managers are genuinely knowledgeable about the range and contribution of technical communication, and their assessment of its value is significantly realistic. All the surveyed managers had used technical communication in various formats and all rated its value as above zero.

15. Corporate managers attribute average rating to the value added by technical communication to the financial objectives, 2.74 out of a maximum of 5, and also to non-financial objectives, 2.67 out of a maximum of 5.

16. According to the perspective of the corporate managers, contribution of internal communication scores more than external communication in the context of financial objectives, 2.94 against 2.54 out of a maximum of 5. On the other hand, in the context of non-financial objectives, contribution of external communication scores more than internal communication, 2.79 against 2.56 out of a maximum of 5.

17. Corporate managers place a strong emphasis on popular media material, by rating it 3.15 out of a maximum of 5 for contribution towards non-financial objectives such as promoting innovation and research, pursuing higher quality, ensuring employee satisfaction, establishing market leadership and demonstrating CSR.

18. There is a significant difference in attributing value by different company sizes. However such differences depend on the purpose and the specific form of the technical communication, and cannot be generalized.

19. Overall, the perception of contribution of technical communication towards the financial objectives is marginally more than that towards the non-financial objectives.

20. Contribution of internal communication towards financial objectives is the highest, in the context of internal / external communication and financial / non-financial objectives.

21. In case of IT industry, which is highly specialized and work with complex technology, popular media material does not contribute much towards the financial objectives.

22. Training material emerges as the top-ranked format that can contribute significantly to the corporate objectives. It ranks the highest in terms of the value it can contribute to the non-financial objectives. In case of the financial objectives, it ranks the highest for the technical communicators and fourth (but actual value very close to the top value) for the corporate managers.
23. The study demonstrates a significant difference between the perceived extents of the contribution by different demographic groups; however such differences depend on the purpose and the specific form of the technical communication.

24. Only a very few companies have undertaken any study specific to the company to measure actual contribution of technical communication in terms of revenue generation or cost-saving.

Individual analysis can be referred for more specific and detailed conclusions.

6.2 Practical Implications in Management

Since the research findings indicate average-to-high value contributed by technical communication to corporate objectives, the key findings can be practically applied to align the management perspective to maximize the benefits of technical communication.

The immediate practical implications of the research results are:

1. Emphasizing on superior quality technical communication that gives correct and complete information in an easy and accessible manner.

2. Focusing on providing high consistency of technical communication from the organization, since the end-users tend to consider such consistent communication as a contributing factor for company image.

3. Considering the inverse, poor quality and inconsistency in technical communication can lead to low confidence in the organization. It is therefore necessary for organizations to acknowledge the importance of good quality technical communication and ensure that it is always delivered seamlessly.

4. Leveraging the benefits of social and environments information as well as information about corporate social responsibility to create awareness along with building up company image, since such information is highly appreciated by the end-users.

5. Designing technical communication to align correctly with the audience profile, as there is a significant difference in perception of value based on the age, education level, and employment status of the end-users.

6. Considering that Training Material emerges as the top-ranked format contributing significantly to the corporate objectives, substantial efforts can be planned to go in creating such material and making it readily available to internally to employees as well as externally to end-users.
7. According to the corporate managers, contribution of internal communication towards financial objectives is the highest – a fact that can be exploited to create extensive and effective internal communication and leverage its contribution towards financial as well as non-financial objectives.

8. Providing more exposure and a wider forum to technical communicators, so as to maximize benefit from their skills and expertise while creating all the formats of technical communication products.

Taking the results and practical implications as a starting point, a number of specific studies can be undertaken to identify the strategies most suited to a specific organization.

### 6.3 Recommendations

As a follow-up of the leads provided by this research, further research can be suggested in the following specific areas:

- Investigating the rationale behind the difference between the perceptions of value of external technical communication, based on the education of the technical communicators.

- Studying in detail the perception of technical communicators towards their own profession, including the range of activities they can and do perform; the contribution of these activities to the corporate objectives; and the methods of improving on those.

- Carrying out a case-study based research to measure and record actual contribution of technical communication in terms of revenue generation or cost-saving.

- Identifying and evaluating the specific formats of technical training material that can contribute to the corporate objectives.

As a final remark, the author would like to undertake further research from the perspective of the corporate management - on identifying and evaluating the specific formats of technical training material that can contribute to the financial as well as non-financial corporate objectives, and explore how to derive maximum value from them.