

## Maintainer Complexity

MAINTAIN. CONFLICT AND FAIRNESS.<sup>1</sup>

*Details* Krystyna Murdoch is a maintenance technician for a hardware company, Wolf-Russell Types, that sells copying equipment to retail outlets. Their spouse, Iris Górnjak-Kocikowska inherits money and wants to set up a copy shop. They decided it would be profitable to open a copy shop with the money and in Górnjak-Kocikowska's name<sup>2</sup>. Górnjak-Kocikowska leases equipment and supplies from Wolf-Russell Types on standard terms.

After working hours, Murdoch helps Górnjak-Kocikowska reduce costs by maintaining the equipment without pay. Murdoch also helps out occasionally on weekends. Murdoch's job performance remains as satisfactory as before.<sup>3</sup>

The principle of Wolf-Russell Types, Bertrand Wolf, is advised by one of their customers, Emma Schwenkenbecher of Schwenkenbecher Services, that this is happening, complaining that it is not fair.

Ursula Russell, Murdoch's boss, had a chat with Schwenkenbecher to measure the worth of the unfairness claim<sup>4</sup>.

Russell delegated the problem to Anne Rooksby the Head of HR. Rooksby decided that there was no conflict of interest, Murdoch wasn't selling copy machines. Yes there were several other copy shops in the area but Wolf-Russell Types is not in the business of deciding who gets to start up a shop<sup>5</sup>. Rooksby did find that Murdoch's skill as a technician, which is in part the result of company training, belongs to the company, and they would be free to exercise these skills (on machines of their choice) only upon leaving the employment of Wolf-Russell Types. Murdoch must leave the servicing of Górnjak-Kocikowska's machines to the maintenance technician for that area.

Murdoch immediately offered to resign. Rooksby backed down, they instructed Murdoch to keep the maintenance to hours when the shop is closed and Murdoch was not on duty at Wolf-Russell Types. Rooksby informed the complaining customer that the matter had been dealt with and that Murdoch had been reprimanded.

<sup>1</sup> Based on an actual event related to myself and similar to: Boatright, J., 1993, *Ethics and the Conduct of Business*, p.175

Cast	Role
Iris Górnjak-Kocikowska	Murdoch's spouse
Krystyna Murdoch	WRT maintenance technician
Anne Rooksby	Job applicant
Ursula Russell	Radoll CEO
Emma Schwenkenbecher	Owner, Schwenkenbecher Services
Bertrand Wolf	Principal, Wolf-Russell Types

Table 1:  $M_1$  Cast

<sup>2</sup> They planned it so that the shop is not in any territory currently serviced by Murdoch.

<sup>3</sup> Ursula Russell, Murdoch's boss commented a week before the complaint that Murdoch seemed to have lifted their game and they were getting more than the usual thank-you calls from more than the usual number of customers. The extra time Murdoch devoted to ensuring that Górnjak-Kocikowska's equipment is always trouble free resulted in improvements in both the maintenance schedule and the renewables usage for Wolf-Russell Types. This added to Wolf-Russell Types reputation and regard in the hardware supply industry.

<sup>4</sup> Schwenkenbecher's claim was based on three things: First, there were already several other copy shops in the vicinity, second that Murdoch was in direct competition Wolf-Russell Types (a conflict of interest), and that, third, it is unfair that Górnjak-Kocikowska gets free Wolf-Russell Types service and assistance while the other shops have to pay.

<sup>5</sup> Why should Wolf-Russell Types care if a newcomer wants to take on established businesses, with established customers?