

Validator Complexity

EVALUATE. PRODUCT EVALUATION.

Details Tatiana Fernandes was a highly regarded HCI consultant with extensive experience in evaluating web sites and graphical user interfaces (GUI). They had won an evaluation contract for a new accounting product made by AAA Accounting.

The work involved assessing the training requirements and the usability of the system. During the initial configuration of the usability laboratory Fernandes became aware that that software to be evaluated contained a GUI already patented by a rival of AAA Accounting, BBB Bookkeeping.¹

When this was brought to the attention of Silvia Kikot, AAA Accounting's head of product development, Fernandes was reminded of their contract conditions: they were not allowed to discuss the evaluation of a product with anyone not named in the contract.

Several days later Kikot informed Fernandes that the amount time allocated to evaluating the training needs was being reduced from four weeks to two and that GUI evaluation was no longer needed. GUI evaluation was to not appear in the final report. Reason: the product launch had been moved up and there was no longer any time to do it. Kikot assured Fernandes that they would be paid the full agreed contract price.²

Thinking that Kikot was acting on their own, Fernandes then approached the CEO of AAA Accounting, Simone Moor, to advise them of the recent events. The advice Moor gave was: "Accounting is a small world but there is plenty of work for a valued consultant".

What Fernandes did next was instructive: they gave notice to quit the contract citing the *Conflict of Interest* clause.³

Moor⁴ worried that Fernandes would spill the beans instructed the firm's solicitors to send a letter to Fernandes threatening legal action if any of the information Fernandes became aware of while under contract to AAA Accounting became known, *by any means*, to James de Beauvoir, the CEO of BBB Bookkeeping.

The product launch launch was postponed indefinitely.

Cast	Role
James de Beauvoir	BBBB CEO
Tatiana Fernandes	HCI consultant
Silvia Kikot	Head, Product development
Simone Moor	AAAA CEO

Table 1: V_1 Cast

¹ Fernandes had evaluated BBB Bookkeeping's software several months earlier.

² So long as Fernandes' report was "approved".

³ Which Fernandes insists upon having in all contracts. Did we say that Fernandes was experienced and highly regarded?

⁴ Remember, the CEO of AAA Accounting? Are you keeping track of the players?