

Negotiation hypothetical.

ROTO Partners has the contract for the HealthCare Sustainability Report. HealthCare is a Private Health Care Fund listed on the Australian Stock Exchange. As an ASX report, the deadline for lodging the report is non negotiable.

Rob is the founder/owner, creative director and client service manager for HealthCare. He handles the account because HealthCare is one of ROTO's main clients. Apart from the Sustainability report, ROTO also handle the Annual Report, monthly online newsletter and internal stakeholder communications for HealthCare.

Rob has handled the account from the beginning and knows the client well, however the communications manager is new on the job and this year's report has not gone as smoothly as previous years.

As studio manager, it is Skye's responsibility to manage all the workflow of the studio. Reporting season is always busy and Skye needs to juggle the competing demands of Rob and Toni. They each service a set of clients and on occasion promise deadlines without checking what other work is in the studio.

While Rob has set the direction for the report, as senior designer it is Mark's responsibility to maintain the theme throughout each page of the report. He has other work as well, but is good at juggling jobs. He is very protective of the file and doesn't like to delegate to Greg, the designer. Mark prefers to do all the artwork himself.

Greg is a proficient designer, and he tends to plow through many smaller projects leaving Mark to concentrate on the longer, more challenging reports.

Things get a bit testy at the weekly WIP meeting. ROTO prefers to have WIP meetings on a Friday afternoon, using them to plan the commitments needed for the next week.

Rob has come to the meeting with a set of amendments that he picked up from HealthCare on Friday morning.

They are extensive. It is clear that the earlier draft copy had not been circulated to key stakeholders and some of the management at HealthCare are seeing the content for the first time. Pages have been shuffled and a full page infographic on page 5 has been deleted, throwing out each spread for the rest of the report.

Rob hasn't understood the implications of the change, and promised delivery of the next set of pages as scheduled on Tuesday morning. (All client amendments are an additional cost, so he isn't worried about budget.)

Skye estimates there are 20 hours of amendments/checking procedure before it will be ready for client eyes.

Mark is booked Monday to work on a report for one of Toni's clients. That is also due to go back to the client by Tuesday COB. That schedule doesn't have flexibility either –any slippage could be dangerous because the cover is embellished and has a long production time.

Greg has a full week of work juggling the other clients but there is some flexibility in their deadlines.

Cara, the web designer is not proficient in Indesign but has a good eye for detail, and could help with the checking procedure.

Betty, the senior designer is working on a strategy for another report that is due on Thursday.

Mark suggested he works two ten hour days over the weekend to do the amendments, leaving Monday to do Toni's project as planned. To meet other deadlines, Mark has worked until 7pm three nights this week already and Skye is concerned he will burn out before the end of the reporting season.

Greg is available to help, but Mark can't see how he can delegate the project. Betty is also available but her strategy skills are usually costed at a higher hourly rate than artwork.

Rob doesn't care who does the work, just wants it done.

What do you think is a solution to the predicament and how and with whom should Skye negotiate?