



accountabili-buddy

— CLARITY. COMMITMENT. FOLLOW THROUGH. —



CASE
STUDIES

CASE STUDY 29

PERFECTIONISM VS. LEGITIMATE QUALITY REQUIREMENT

1. TRAINING OBJECTIVE

Distinguish an unnecessarily high performance standard from a genuinely necessary quality requirement.

The trainee should determine whether additional review represents excessive self-imposed checking or work that is legitimately required before completion.

2. CLIENT PROFILE

Client: Claire

Goal: Submit a regulatory compliance report

Current Commitment: Submit the report by Friday.

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

Claire has delayed submission twice.

She says several sections still need verification.

The report will be used in a formal regulatory process where factual errors may have significant consequences.

4. CLIENT MESSAGE

Accountabili-Buddy: Is the report going out today?

Claire: I don't think so.

Accountabili-Buddy: What's still holding it?

Claire: There are three numbers I haven't independently verified and one paragraph where I am not confident the language matches the regulation.

Claire: I know I have a tendency to overcheck things, but this is not a casual internal memo. If I send something inaccurate, that matters.

5. TRAINEE TASK

What are the two strongest competing formulations?

What evidence supports each?

What information is necessary before determining whether Claire's review standard is excessive?

What would you say next?

6. EVIDENCE ANALYSIS

FACTS

- Claire has delayed submission twice.
- Claire reports that she has a tendency to overcheck.
- The report will be used in a formal regulatory process.
- She identifies three unverified figures and one unresolved concern about regulatory language.
- Errors may have meaningful consequences.

- The actual standard required for appropriate submission has not yet been established.

CLIENT INTERPRETATION

Claire believes additional verification may be substantively necessary before submission.

She also recognizes that her own tendency to overcheck could be relevant.

ACCOUNTABILI-BUDDY INFERENCE

Perfectionistic overchecking is plausible given Claire's self-reported history and repeated submission delays.

Legitimate quality control is also plausible because the task has consequential accuracy requirements and Claire has identified specific unresolved issues.

The Accountabili-Buddy does not have sufficient evidence, or the appropriate professional expertise, to determine independently whether those issues must be resolved before submission.

7. PRIMARY FORMULATION

Perfectionistic overchecking versus legitimate professional quality requirements remains unresolved.

8. ALTERNATIVE FORMULATIONS

PERFECTIONISTIC OVERCHECKING

Claire may be extending review beyond what the applicable professional or regulatory process actually requires.

Under this formulation, additional checking is delaying completion without materially improving whether the report meets the required standard.

LEGITIMATE QUALITY REQUIREMENT

The unresolved factual and regulatory-language issues may genuinely require verification before the report can appropriately be submitted.

Under this formulation, additional review is necessary task completion rather than excessive checking.

MIXED FORMULATION

Some of Claire's verification may be required while other review may extend beyond the legitimate submission standard.

The presence of a real quality requirement does not establish that every additional check is necessary.

9. MISSING INFORMATION

The Accountabili-Buddy needs to establish:

- What standard actually governs readiness for submission
- Whether an established review process or qualified person determines when that standard has been met
- Whether Claire's identified unresolved items are required for appropriate submission

The Accountabili-Buddy does not need to determine personally whether the report is legally or regulatorily adequate.

10. RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

“Because this is a regulatory report, I don’t think we should assume the additional review is unnecessary. What does the actual submission standard require, and are these unresolved items required before the report can appropriately go out?”

11. REASONING

The Accountabili-Buddy avoids treating Claire's self-reported tendency to overcheck as proof that the current delay is perfectionistic.

High standards are not inherently excessive when the work has meaningful accuracy or compliance requirements.

At the same time, the existence of legitimate quality requirements does not establish that every additional review step is necessary.

The discriminating evidence therefore comes from the applicable professional standard, established review process, or appropriately qualified judgment rather than from Claire's anxiety about accuracy or the Accountabili-Buddy's opinion.

This keeps the inquiry within accountability scope while still examining whether the performance standard is contributing unnecessarily to delay.

12. PLAUSIBLE ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE

“Your tendency to overcheck may be relevant, but this report also has real accuracy requirements. Is there an established review process or qualified person who can determine what actually needs to be verified before submission?”

This response preserves both formulations while directing the decision toward an appropriate external standard.

13. WEAK RESPONSE EXAMPLES

WEAK RESPONSE A

“This is your perfectionism again. Send it.”

Problem: The response treats Claire's self-described tendency as proof of the current formulation and potentially encourages submission of consequential work before legitimate requirements have been satisfied.

WEAK RESPONSE B

"Keep checking until you feel completely confident."

Problem: Subjective confidence is not an appropriate readiness standard and may allow unnecessary checking to continue indefinitely.

WEAK RESPONSE C

"I think it sounds good enough."

Problem: The Accountabili-Buddy lacks both the evidence and the domain expertise required to determine whether the report satisfies the applicable regulatory standard.

14. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

If the identified checks are genuinely required, the next accountability decision should account for completing them before submission. Claire can then determine whether the existing submission commitment remains workable or needs revision.

If the report already satisfies the applicable submission standard and Claire continues adding review that is not required, perfectionistic overchecking gains explanatory weight.

If some review is required and some exceeds the legitimate standard, both factors may remain relevant.

Claire retains responsibility for the submission decision and for obtaining any specialized professional judgment the report requires.

15. RECORD / UPDATE

Goal: Submit regulatory compliance report

Current Commitment: Submit report by Friday

Result: Not yet submitted

Unresolved Items: Three unverified figures and one regulatory-language concern

Relevant History: Two prior delays; Claire reports a tendency to overcheck

Quality Context: Formal regulatory use with potentially consequential factual errors

Current Formulation: Perfectionistic overchecking versus legitimate quality requirement remains unresolved

Boundary Issue: Accountabili-Buddy cannot determine regulatory adequacy

Missing Information: Applicable submission standard and whether the unresolved items are required under that standard

Next Step: Establish the legitimate readiness standard before determining whether additional review is excessive

16. SCORING CRITERIA

Full-credit responses should:

- Maintain both perfectionistic overchecking and legitimate quality requirements as plausible formulations
- Treat Claire's self-description as relevant evidence without accepting it as proof of the current barrier
- Recognize that consequential work may legitimately require a high performance standard
- Avoid assuming that all additional review is necessary simply because the work is consequential
- Identify an established professional standard, review process, or appropriately qualified judgment as the relevant discriminating evidence
- Remain within the Accountabili-Buddy's scope of competence

- Avoid recommending submission without adequate evidence that legitimate requirements have been satisfied
- Avoid allowing subjective confidence to become the standard for completion
- Leave the submission and resulting commitment decisions with Claire