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The Board's decision to purchase the software package is inappropriate. Boards are supposed to govern the organization, and not step into management role. The idea and process of purchasing any item is purely a management decision. The board has absolutely no role to play in it. Instead they should have played a role in creating policy wherein members of management are supposed to declare any conflict of interest. Had the board had such a policy in place, it would have prevented a situation like this, where Jack was able to favour a particular vendor.

As far as this decision is concerned, Mary had the expert power as she was able to gather credible evidence and compare the vendors. Jack had the coercive power as he coerced Mary to add Standard Software to the list, and turned down her idea of including boards in the review committee. It seems the president of Standard Software possessed reward power. It seems it is likely that he would have rewarded Jack in some way, upon been awarded the contract.

I believe Mary did her very best to influence the decision in the right way. She followed due diligence in preparing list of credible vendors. She didn't confront Jack when he coerced her into adding Standard Software to the list. Knowing well the relations between Jack and the president of Standard Software, she recommended inviting board to the presentation. Also, in order to prepare a comprehensive report, she visited other similar facilities. She not only presented the report to Jack, but also read it out to him. Also, at the time of the presentation, she asked probing question even though Jack didn't seem interested.