Client-Ready PM

FREE PRACTICE SHEET

Saying No to a Client? Do Not Offer Fake Options

You have to say no to a client

PRACTICE THESE LINES

Read each sentence aloud, in order. Then read the whole passage once more, start to finish.

They are you disguising your preferred answer as a choice.

Give them real trade-offs.

Less scope, more time, more budget.

Do not use vague language.

How much time?

What is the new date?

What does it affect if we proceed anyway?

Be specific.

Do not over-explain or get emotional.

The client does not need to hear why you think they are being unreasonable.

They need the impact and the path forward.

MAKE IT YOURS

Now say it about your own project. Fill each blank with your details.

They are you disguising your preferred answer as a choice.

what to give instead of fake options

Less scope, more time, more budget. Do not use vague language. How much time? What is the new date? What does it affect if we proceed anyway?

the fix for vague language

Do not over-explain or get emotional. The client does not need to hear why you think they are being unreasonable.

what the client needs to hear

Read the full script. Scan the code, or go to https://clientreadypm.com/t/76

Watch on YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNHKzDmX65k

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KEY PHRASES

“disguising your preferred answer as a choice”
Making your own answer look like one of several options.

“real trade-offs”
Choices where the client gives up one thing to get another.

“over-explain”
Say more than the client needs to hear.

“the path forward”
What happens next.

ONE CARD TO KEEP

Before You Hit Send

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Four lines, in this order, every time.

1 FACTS	What happened, in one sentence. No blame and no apology.
2 OPTIONS	Two ways forward. Call them A and B so the client can answer with a letter.
3 RECOMMENDATION	Say which one you would choose, and give the reason in one clause.
4 NEXT STEP	Who does what, and by when. Put a date on it and put yourself in it.

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