Client-Ready PM

FREE PRACTICE SHEET

Tell Your Manager About a Difficult Client: Friendly, Neutral, or Firm

A difficult client and your manager

PRACTICE THESE LINES

Read each sentence aloud, in order. When you reach the end, read the whole email once more, start to finish.

A. Friendly.

Hi, could I get your advice before Thursday's call?

The client raised their voice on our last two calls, and questioned our cost forecast in front of our team.

Then the client called our coordination sloppy in an email copied to our design team.

I have rechecked the forecast, and the figures are correct.

I also spoke privately with the client after each call, and nothing has changed.

I think it would help if you contacted the client before Thursday, to hear the client's concerns and tell the client you stand behind the numbers and me, and then joined our next three calls.

Could we talk on Wednesday, so you can decide before the call?

B. Neutral.

Before Thursday's call, I want to brief you on a client issue.

On our last two calls, the client raised their voice and questioned our cost forecast in front of our team.

Then the client called our coordination sloppy in an email copied to our design team.

The forecast is correct, and I spoke privately with the client after each call.

The behavior has continued.

You can contact the client yourself and join the next calls, or I can keep handling this and send you notes.

I recommend that you contact the client before Thursday, to understand the client's concerns and stand behind the numbers and me.

I also ask that you join the next three calls.

Read the full script. Scan the code, or go to https://clientreadypm.com/t/29

Watch on YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkWilWMc06I

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Could we meet on Wednesday, so you can decide before the call?

C. Firm.

I recommend that you contact the client personally before Thursday's call.

The client raised their voice on our last two calls and questioned our cost forecast in front of our team.

The client's email, copied to our design team, called our coordination sloppy.

The forecast is correct, and my private conversations with the client have not changed the behavior.

Please hear the client's concerns, stand behind the numbers and me, and join the next three calls.

Please keep 15 minutes free with me on Wednesday, so you can decide before the call.

MAKE IT YOURS

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

A. Friendly. Hi, could I get *what you need, and by when*? The client *what happened on the calls and in the email*. I have *what you checked and tried, and the result*. I think it would help if you *what you ask your manager to do*. Could we *when to meet, and why then*?

B. Neutral. Before *when, and what you need to brief*. *what happened on the calls and in the email*. *what you checked and tried, and the result*. You can *your manager's two options*. I recommend that you *what you recommend*. I also ask that you *what else you ask*. Could we *when to meet, and why then*?

C. Firm. I recommend that you *what you recommend, and by when*. The client *what happened on the calls and in the email*. *what you checked and tried*. Please *what you ask*. Please keep *when to meet, and why then*.

KEY PHRASES

“stand behind the numbers and me”
Asks your manager to publicly back you and your work.

“so you can decide before the call”
Gives the reason for the date you ask for.

“or I can keep handling this”
Gives your manager a real choice.

“have not changed the behavior”
Shows you tried to solve it privately first.

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