Client-Ready PM

FREE PRACTICE SHEET

Telling a Client About a Delay? Do Not Make These 3 Mistakes

You have to tell a client about a delay

PRACTICE THESE LINES

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

One apology is fine.

I apologize for the delay.

Done.

If you keep repeating it, the client starts wondering whether you actually have a plan, or you are just hoping the situation fixes itself.

Do not blame someone else by name.

Even if the vendor caused the delay, you do not say they failed, or it is their fault.

State the fact.

The vendor delivered three days late.

Do not bring a problem without options.

That is not their job.

Your job is to bring options.

MAKE IT YOURS

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

how many apologies are enough

I apologize for the delay. Done. *what repeating the apology tells the client* Do not blame someone else by name. *what you never say about others* State the fact.

the fact, with no blame

Do not bring a problem without options. That is not their job.

what you bring with a problem

Read the full script. Scan the code, or go to https://clientreadypm.com/t/75

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KEY PHRASES

“hoping the situation fixes itself”
Expecting the problem to go away without action.

“the vendor caused the delay”
Someone else is the reason for the delay.

“bring a problem without options”
Tell the client the issue and offer no choice.

“bring options”
Give the client choices to pick from.

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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