

Saying No to a Client: The Exact Words That Keep It Professional

The date they asked for is not achievable

PRACTICE THESE LINES

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

Thanks for the update on the timeline.

Based on our current scope and resources, the earliest realistic completion date is March 28.

There are three options.

A. Option A. Reduce scope.

B. Option B. Add resources.

C. Option C. Hold the current plan.

I recommend Option B.

It hits the date you need and the cost impact is contained.

I need your decision by Friday so we can coordinate with the structural team.

If you would like to discuss this on a call, I am available Thursday or Friday afternoon.

MAKE IT YOURS

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

Thanks for what you are replying to .

FACTS

Based on what sets the limit , the earliest realistic completion date is the earliest realistic date .

OPTIONS

There are number options.

A. Option A

B. Option B

C. Option C



Read the full script. Scan the code, or go to <https://clientreadypm.com/t/9>

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RECOMMENDATION

I recommend Option letter . It why it is the better choice .

NEXT STEP

I need your decision by date so we can
what the decision unblocks . If you would like to discuss this on a call, I am
 available when you are available .

KEY PHRASES

“Based on our current scope and resources”

Ties your no to facts the client already knows.

“It hits the date you need”

An idiom: it meets the deadline you asked for.

“the earliest realistic completion date is”

Says no to the date by naming the real one.

“I need your decision by”

Asks for the decision with a date.

ONE CARD TO KEEP

Before You Hit Send

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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