

How To Say 'No' Without Using The 'No' Word



I wish I could . . . (repeat their words)
or
I know you would like . . .

< e.g. have the contract to you by Friday >



BUT . . . (give a neutral reason)

< e.g. but it can take two weeks, depending on that division's workload >



BUT what I CAN do is . . . (action)

< e.g. if it hasn't arrived by Friday, let me know and I'll chase it up for you >



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It's good to be flexible with customers and make exceptions to rules. But how do you say 'no' to someone when you just cannot agree to what they are asking for? How can you manage client expectations?

How you say 'no' can make all the difference between keeping a customer or losing them. Here is a 4-step process using the example of a customer wanting you to extend an expired warranty on a camera so it can be repaired at no charge:

Step 1

Don't say 'no', instead tell them you wish you could do what they are asking for ...
(*'I wish I could ...'* OR *'I know you would like us to ...'*)

Step 2

Use the word 'but' and blame it on a third party

Step 3

Use the word 'but' again, and this time tell them what you can do for them - (*'... but what I **can** do is ...'*).

Step 4

Diarise what you say you are going to do and deliver whatever you have promised. **Remember to:**

- speak with confidence
- have empathy ... and sound empathetic
- deliver the action you promise.

Example:

1. **'I wish I could** extend the warranty on this camera so it can be repaired at no charge' or
'I know you would like us to extend the warranty on this camera so it can be repaired at no charge'
2. **'... but** the manufacturer doesn't allow us to ...'
3. **'... but what I can do** is arrange for a quote from the workshop at no charge, so you only pay if you decide to go ahead with the repair.

Deliver what you promise. Most reasonable clients know it isn't always possible for you to say 'yes' every request. If you give them a reason, explaining in friendly fashion, with empathy, then they are more likely to accept a 'no'.

