

IT Leaders: There is an art to saying “No”
Part 3
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Note: This concludes the three part paper.

Tradeoffs

Many times an easy alternative to saying “No” is to offer options to the requestor. For example, if someone wants to add features to a project that is already in flight, the answer doesn’t have to be “No” in the form of a two-letter word. Helping the requestor understand the implications of a change request or additional work will often help them make their own “No” decision. For example:

- “We can add the feature requested but at this point in the project it will delay the delivery date.”
- “We can add the feature requested but at this point in the project we would need to sacrifice <these features> in order to still hit the delivery date. Which features have the highest priority?”
- “Adding features at this point in time will require X additional personnel, which adds \$Y in cost. Is that a variance that you can get approved?”
- “Adding features at this time will jeopardize the quality of the project. As close as we are to delivery, our recommendation is to keep the team focused on current work and add this feature in the next phase.”

The authors of this paper have grown weary of IT leadership receiving blame for nearly all problems / issues related to technology. We are tired of business media publishing multiple articles describing problems related to IT leadership, almost none of which offer practical steps to bridge the gap between IT and the rest of the business.

We want to be part of assisting IT leaders in developing skills where many struggle. We also want to be part of helping executive leadership understand that they have to be part of the solution in order for their company to take full advantage of technology.

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