

...It's ***HOW*** You Say It®

You need to “**S.H.O.C.**”

MEETINGS

You've gone through your list of considerations and have decided this is a “NO.”

Situation

“I've been coming to the XYZ project meetings each Monday for several months.”

Have a Reason for “No”

“I've noticed I don't have an active roll and often no real involvement or input that couldn't be handled with a quick call or email. I attend, mainly, because I'm on the meeting maker.

Outcome

I am going to need to make a change. I still want to have insight into this. The difference is, I won't be coming each week. I will still come to the last meeting of the month, if needed. There are minutes that are sent out each week that I can read and respond if there were any questions or issues for me, and of course, if something changes or there's an escalation, feel free to come over and let's talk about it.”

Confirm/Collaborate

“So I'm not leaving, I'm just taking a side step.”

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Ethical Issues

Ethical issues are touchy ground. “HOW You Say It,” should depend upon, in part, the severity of the situation, and your own personality and communication styles.

Let's say, on your expense account policy, you are not able to write off cocktails or alcohol. We'll use that as our first example.

Situation

(in this situation the situation step is background, not actually spoken)

You're out-of-town on business. A co-worker suggests drinks and putting them on the dinner check. They really aren't that expensive after all, and you've worked hard, you deserve it.

Have a Reason for “No”

“You know, I just wouldn't be comfortable doing that. If, somehow, they did find out, we could lose our jobs, or get in some real trouble. More importantly, as you said, it's not that expensive.”

Outcome

I'd feel better just getting a separate check for the drinks.

Confirm/Collaborate

“That way we don't have to worry. Besides, I'm not going to have many. I can't afford it!”

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Ethical Issues (more critical)

In this example, we'll take an extreme situation. Hopefully, this will never happen.

We'll use the example of someone stealing, intentionally inaccurate reporting, etc.

You'll need to decide two things: 1) Does someone else need to be told 2) How should you phrase it. Remember, "just the facts."

Situation

(this discussion should be held in private. Bring documentation if you have it).

"I wanted to come to you because something has happened that I feel is unethical. I wanted you to be aware of what the situation is as it may also be a legal issue. I feel this is something important enough to be brought to the attention of someone at your level (or someone in HR if that is who you share this with).

Have a Reason for "No"

Share what happened. Not emotionally or with a lot of opinion. Don't share what you think should happen as a result unless you are asked.

Outcome

"I appreciate you keeping my name in this confidential. I'm concerned if anyone finds out I'm the one that came to you, it could cause a real concern for me."

Confirm/Collaborate

I knew you would want to be aware of this though. This is something I know the company wouldn't want to go unaddressed. Thanks for your help.

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Admin

Situation

“I see you had sent that and asked for a quick response. I get, like many people, an enormous amount of email a day.”

Have a Reason for “No”

“When I sit at my desk with my computer on my email, I tend to stop what I’m doing when they come in. As a result, I’m not making the progress on what I need to get done.”

Outcome

“Because of that, I have made a change. I check email three times during the day. Usually, for half an hour when I come in the morning and again around lunch time. I’ll also check it right before I leave for the day. That way emails don’t sit longer than a couple hours. I’ll get back to you as soon as I check. If it’s urgent, feel free to stop by or give me a call.”

Confirm/Collaborate

“I’m trying to manage my time better this year. Thanks for understanding.”

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New Projects

If you have decided you are going to say, “No” to a project, make sure you have looked at the considerations we talked about and have decided this is not a career limiting decision.

Remember, It's not just what you say, “It's HOW You Say It.” In the case of projects, when you “S.H.O.C.” them, it's not about what you “can't” do, it's what you “can.”

Situation

“The project sounds good. It sounds like something different than anything I'm working on. I can see how this could help...”

Have a Reason for “No”

(This depends on who's asking. Here are several approaches. No matter who it is, remember to respond without an “attitude” or sarcasm).

“I'm happy to help with that. I have “X number” of projects that are in process right now for you. With the deadlines that you've given me, I'll either need to extend the deadlines, put this new one on hold for a few weeks, or pull in more resources to make this happen for you. Is this new project more urgent than “Y project?”

Outcome

“So, whichever project has the least urgency, I'll put on hold for a few weeks. If you're telling me they all need to be done now, I'll try to pull in other resources. If we aren't able to do that, I'll do what I can.

Confirm/Collaborate

“I want to give you the quality you need. With this load, I'll focus on what you've said are priorities and let you know which deliverables may be in jeopardy of falling behind.”