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What to Say When Client Work Gets Stuck

10 ready-to-send messages for missing content, late feedback, extra revisions and scope changes.

How to use these

1. Replace every [bracketed field] before you send. A leftover placeholder undoes the care in the rest of the message.
2. Send the gentle version first. Swap in the firmer closing only after a date you gave has passed.
3. Use the terms you already agreed. If your agreement is silent on a point, ask before you state it as a rule.
4. After you send, record what you are waiting on and the date you asked, so a quiet inbox never hides a blocked project.

The ten messages

MISSING CONTENT

01 Ask for content with a list and a date
02 Say what is still missing and what it holds up
03 Offer a way forward: placeholders or a pause

LATE FEEDBACK AND APPROVAL

04 Ask for one decision by one date
05 Explain what late feedback does to the date
06 Ask for final approval in writing

EXTRA REVISIONS

07 Say the included rounds are used up
08 Handle a change after approval

SCOPE CHANGES

09 Offer options for a request outside the scope
10 Confirm an agreed change in writing

01 MISSING CONTENT

Ask for content with a list and a date

When to use it: Content is due within two weeks and nothing has arrived yet.

GENTLE VERSION

```
Subject: Content needed for [Project] by [Day, Date]

Hi [Name],

To keep [Project] on track for [milestone], I need these
items by [Day, Date]:

[Item, with the format you can accept]
[Item]
[Item]

Rough is fine. A draft I can place today is more useful than
a polished version next month.

If any item is hard to pull together, tell me which one and I
will suggest a shortcut.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Ask for: One reply that sends the items or names a date for each.

FIRMER VERSION

```
Subject: Content needed for [Project] by [Day, Date]

Hi [Name],

To keep [Project] on track for [milestone], I need these
items by [Day, Date]:

[Item, with the format you can accept]
[Item]
[Item]

Rough is fine. A draft I can place today is more useful than
a polished version next month.

The [milestone] date depends on these arriving by [Date]. If
they arrive later, the date moves by the same number of days,
and I will confirm the new one in writing.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Then record: Log each item as something you are waiting on, with the date you asked.

---

02 MISSING CONTENT

Say what is still missing and what it holds up

When to use it: The date you gave has passed and at least one item is still missing.

GENTLE VERSION

```
Subject: Still needed for [Project]: [number] items

Hi [Name],

Thanks for sending [what arrived]. I am still missing:

[Item]
[Item]

Until these arrive, [page or task] cannot move, and
[milestone] is at risk.

Could you send them by [Day, Date], or tell me a date that
works?

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Ask for: A delivery date for each missing item.

FIRMER VERSION

```
Subject: Still needed for [Project]: [number] items

Hi [Name],

Thanks for sending [what arrived]. I am still missing:

[Item]
[Item]

Until these arrive, [page or task] cannot move, and
[milestone] is at risk.

If they are not in by [Day, Date], I will move [Project] off
my active schedule and rebook the remaining work once
everything is here.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Then record: Update the waiting item with the new date. Note the day the milestone started to slip.

03 MISSING CONTENT

Offer a way forward: placeholders or a pause

When to use it: Two reminders have gone unanswered, or the content keeps slipping.

GENTLE VERSION

```
Subject: [Project]: two ways to move forward

Hi [Name],

[Project] has been waiting on content since [Date]. I would
like to get you to a finished result, so here are two
options:

Option A: I launch with the pages that are ready and mark the
rest as coming soon. You send the remaining content when it
is ready and I add it as a follow-up task.
Option B: the project pauses from [Date]. Once the content is
complete, I schedule the remaining work in my next open slot.

Which option suits you better? A one-line reply is enough.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Ask for: A choice: Option A or Option B.

FIRMER VERSION

```
Subject: [Project]: two ways to move forward

Hi [Name],

[Project] has been waiting on content since [Date]. I would
like to get you to a finished result, so here are two
options:

Option A: I launch with the pages that are ready and mark the
rest as coming soon. You send the remaining content when it
is ready and I add it as a follow-up task.
Option B: the project pauses from [Date]. Once the content is
complete, I schedule the remaining work in my next open slot.

If I do not hear back by [Day, Date], I will treat the
project as paused under Option B and send a short written
confirmation.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Then record: Record the choice and its date. If the project pauses, log what is needed to restart it.

04 LATE FEEDBACK AND APPROVAL

Ask for one decision by one date

When to use it: A deliverable is ready for review.

GENTLE VERSION

```
Subject: For review: [Deliverable] v[Number], reply by [Day,
Date]

Hi [Name],

[Deliverable] v[Number] is ready: [Link].

Please check [two or three specific things]. I need one of
two replies by [Day, Date]: approved as is, or one combined
list of changes from everyone on your side.

If that date is tight, tell me what works and I will adjust
the plan.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Ask for: Approved, or one combined list of changes.

FIRMER VERSION

```
Subject: For review: [Deliverable] v[Number], reply by [Day,
Date]

Hi [Name],

[Deliverable] v[Number] is ready: [Link].

Please check [two or three specific things]. I need one of
two replies by [Day, Date]: approved as is, or one combined
list of changes from everyone on your side.

[Next milestone] starts once I have your reply. Each day past
[Date] moves that start by a day.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Then record: Log the review as waiting on the client, with the version number and the reply date.

LATE FEEDBACK AND APPROVAL

05 Explain what late feedback does to the date

When to use it: The reply date has passed and the next step is blocked.

GENTLE VERSION

```
Subject: [Project]: decision needed to hold the [milestone] date

Hi [Name],

I am still waiting on your review of [Deliverable] v[Number]: [Link]. [Next step] cannot start without it.

The plan assumed a reply by [original date]. With a reply by [new date], I can still deliver [milestone] on [date]. After that, the delivery date moves.

Would a 15-minute call be easier than written notes? I can walk through it with you.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Ask for: The review, or a date for it.

FIRMER VERSION

```
Subject: [Project]: decision needed to hold the [milestone] date

Hi [Name],

I am still waiting on your review of [Deliverable] v[Number]: [Link]. [Next step] cannot start without it.

The plan assumed a reply by [original date]. With a reply by [new date], I can still deliver [milestone] on [date]. After that, the delivery date moves.

If I have no reply by [new date], I will send a revised schedule based on the day the review comes in.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Then record: Note the original and the new reply date next to the waiting item.

LATE FEEDBACK AND APPROVAL

06 Ask for final approval in writing

When to use it: All agreed changes are done and you need sign-off before launch or handover.

GENTLE VERSION

```
Subject: Final approval needed: [Project]

Hi [Name],

Every change from your last round is in: [Link]. Here is what changed:

[Change]
[Change]

To [launch or hand over] on [Date], I need your written approval by [Day, Date]. A reply that says approved is enough.

If you spot anything that is not right, send it in one list and I will tell you how it affects the date.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Ask for: The word approved, in writing.

FIRMER VERSION

```
Subject: Final approval needed: [Project]

Hi [Name],

Every change from your last round is in: [Link]. Here is what changed:

[Change]
[Change]

To [launch or hand over] on [Date], I need your written approval by [Day, Date]. A reply that says approved is enough.

Requests that arrive after approval are welcome. I will quote them separately as new work.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Then record: Save the approval with the version it applies to and the date.

07 EXTRA REVISIONS

Say the included rounds are used up

When to use it: The included revision rounds are finished and more changes arrive.

GENTLE VERSION

```
Subject: [Project]: revision rounds and next steps

Hi [Name],

Thanks for the new notes. Our agreement includes [number]
rounds of revisions, and round [number] finished on [Date].

I am glad to keep refining. Further rounds are billed at
[rate or fee per round], and this list would take about
[estimate].

Shall I go ahead on that basis, or would you prefer to pick
the two or three changes that matter most?

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Ask for: A written yes to the extra round, or a shorter list.

FIRMER VERSION

```
Subject: [Project]: revision rounds and next steps

Hi [Name],

Thanks for the new notes. Our agreement includes [number]
rounds of revisions, and round [number] finished on [Date].

I am glad to keep refining. Further rounds are billed at
[rate or fee per round], and this list would take about
[estimate].

I will start as soon as you confirm the extra round in
writing. Until then the current version stays as the approved
draft.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Then record: Count the round, log the request as client-requested extra work, and keep the confirmation.

---

08 EXTRA REVISIONS

Handle a change after approval

When to use it: The client approved a version, then asks for changes to it.

GENTLE VERSION

```
Subject: [Deliverable]: change after approval

Hi [Name],

You approved [Deliverable] v[Number] on [Date], and [next
step] has started from that version.

The change you describe is possible. Because it reopens
approved work, it adds [time] and [cost], and [milestone]
would move to [new date].

Would you like me to make the change on those terms, or keep
the approved version and note the idea for a later phase?

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Ask for: Change on the new terms, or keep the approved version.

FIRMER VERSION

```
Subject: [Deliverable]: change after approval

Hi [Name],

You approved [Deliverable] v[Number] on [Date], and [next
step] has started from that version.

The change you describe is possible. Because it reopens
approved work, it adds [time] and [cost], and [milestone]
would move to [new date].

I will keep working from the approved version until you
confirm the change and its new date in writing.

Thanks,
[Your name]
```

Then record: Log the decision next to the original approval so both stay visible.

09 SCOPE CHANGES
Offer options for a request outside the scope

When to use it: A request goes beyond what the agreement lists.

GENTLE VERSION

Subject: [Request]: options for adding it

Hi [Name],

Good idea on [request]. It sits outside what we scoped for [Project], so I want to give you clear options before I touch it:

Option A: add it now for [cost], which moves [milestone] to [date].
Option B: swap it for [planned item of similar size], with no change to cost or date.
Option C: park it for a second phase after launch.

Which one fits best? Happy to talk it through if that helps.

Thanks,
[Your name]

Ask for: Option A, B or C.

FIRMER VERSION

Subject: [Request]: options for adding it

Hi [Name],

Good idea on [request]. It sits outside what we scoped for [Project], so I want to give you clear options before I touch it:

Option A: add it now for [cost], which moves [milestone] to [date].
Option B: swap it for [planned item of similar size], with no change to cost or date.
Option C: park it for a second phase after launch.

I will stay on the agreed scope until you choose, so the current dates hold.

Thanks,
[Your name]

Then record: Add the request to your change log with the option chosen and who chose it.

---

10 SCOPE CHANGES
Confirm an agreed change in writing

When to use it: You agreed a change on a call or in chat and need it in writing.

GENTLE VERSION

Subject: Confirming the change to [Project]

Hi [Name],

To confirm what we agreed on [Date]:

Added: [item]
Removed or swapped: [item or none]
Cost: [amount or no change]
New date for [milestone]: [date]

If this matches your understanding, reply confirmed and I will start. If I got something wrong, correct it here so we have one record.

Thanks,
[Your name]

Ask for: The word confirmed.

FIRMER VERSION

Subject: Confirming the change to [Project]

Hi [Name],

To confirm what we agreed on [Date]:

Added: [item]
Removed or swapped: [item or none]
Cost: [amount or no change]
New date for [milestone]: [date]

Work on the change starts once I have your written confirmation. Until then I will continue with the original plan.

Thanks,
[Your name]

Then record: File the confirmation with the project and update the scope baseline or change log.

AFTER YOU SEND

Keep track of what each message is waiting on

Sending the message is half the job. The other half is remembering, a week later, that a reply is still owed. Write down three things every time, in the same place as the project they block.

01

What you asked for

One item, decision or approval, in a few words.

02

Who owes it

A named person, not "the client".

03

The date you asked

So the age of the wait is a fact, not a feeling.

A waiting list you can copy

WAITING ON	FROM	ASKED ON	BLOCKS	NEXT STEP
About page copy	[Name]	[Date]	Build About page	Message 2 on [Date]
Review of homepage v2	[Name]	[Date]	Inner page designs	Message 5 on [Date]
Yes or no on extra round	[Name]	[Date]	Logo round 3	Firmer closing on [Date]

See a waiting list with ages next to each item

Noddis is a project management app that keeps tasks, follow-ups, and related project details connected. Its Follow-Up workspace lists Needs From You and Waiting on Others, with an age in days on every open item. Follow-Up works on one selected project on the Free plan and on every project on Pro.

Try it with sample data, no account needed: **noddis.com/demo**

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