

The art of the letdown: Don't *just* say no

Sometimes, you have to say no to your customers. But there's a huge difference between "No, I won't help you" and "No, because, unfortunately, we've exhausted all our options." Answer these prompts through the three Rs—Research, Reason, and Redirect—before broaching bad news.

- **Research.** Describe the problem in your own words.

What questions did you ask to better understand the issue?

- **Reason.** You've hit a roadblock and can't deliver. Explain why.

Were you honest and positive about all teams involved? How?

- **Redirect.** What was your "No, but..." solution moving forward?

How did you build a stronger relationship with this customer?
