

Scope Creep Scripts

Scope creep, where a client requests additional work, is a common concern. If you don't address it, then you end up doing more work without compensation. This often happens when you don't have the right words to say.

These 5 responses give you the right words for out-of-scope requests.

1. Little Requests Add Up

The first time a client asks for something extra which requires a small chunk of your time you're likely to go ahead and do it. After all, it's a small request and you want your clients to be happy with your accounting services.

Small requests, over time, do stack up. Eventually you realize you're now doing a lot more for the same fee. So, here's what to say when you receive that first request.

Thanks for letting me know this is something you want. Normally the fee for this would be [fee], but since you're a great client, we're happy to do this one-time request for you without charge. And, if we find your needs have changed, then let's meet to update our work agreement and fees

2. The Reason Behind the Request

It's easier to say yes than to say no. But, over time you experience resentment. Plus, you unknowingly teach your client that these additional requests are acceptable.

Your clients; however, don't understand the financials as well as you do. So, get curious and discover the reason behind the request. There may be a solution already available and your client simply didn't realize this other option existed.

You mentioned that you'd like this additional [work/information/report]. Before I get started, let me know why you're requesting this – that's because sometimes there's a better alternative. Then if you're still interested, we can discuss the additional work and pricing for that. Does that interest you?

3. Review Your Client's Original Needs

With business growth comes expanded needs and increased complexity. If that's the case, it's an ideal time to meet with your client to review your original work agreement, celebrate the success and make any adjustments to accommodate the new growth.

Since we've started working together, your business has had steady growth. Because of your success, what you need now is different than when we first started. Let's meet to review your current needs and get on the same page about how our firm can best support you. Then we can discuss how to update our work agreement and pricing. Are you available to meet on [offer two dates when you're available to meet]? Let me know which time you prefer.

4. Buy Yourself Some Time

You may feel the need to immediately respond. Quickly agreeing to a client's request may backfire over the long term. Buy yourself some time – it's a better solution. Then you can consider the request, how these fits with your workflow and if there needs to be any changes to the original work agreement.

Thanks for sharing this with me. I can see why it's important to you. First, I need some more information from you. Did something happen and that's why you want this done? How will this help? Since this isn't part of our current work agreement, we'll need to adjust that as well as the pricing. Would you like to set up a meeting to discuss this further?

5. Set Client Expectations Up Front

It's easier to prevent something before it occurs than attempt to correct it after the fact.

Communicate expectations during the onboarding process. This teaches them how to communicate with you and the process for dealing with out-of-scope requests. Getting them on the same page up front avoids frustrations later on.

Now that you have 5 ways to address scope creep, which one will you use?

6. Let's Talk Further

If this appeals to you, and you wonder how to apply this to your accounting firm, then let's talk.

Take advantage of the complimentary Path to Profits Strategy Session. We'll discuss how to increase your income without working additional hours.

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