Category

Consulting

Managing Difficult Conversations & Giving Candid Advice Playbook

Delivering unwelcome truths in a way the client can actually hear and act on

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
- Template Included

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- 4 minute(s)

Overview

A framework for delivering candid, unwelcome advice or difficult news in a way the client can genuinely hear and act on — structured delivery, appropriate directness, and follow-through — rather than either softening the message into ambiguity or delivering it bluntly without regard for how it lands.

Isn't it safer to soften difficult news to protect the relationship?

Excessive softening often backfires — the client may not fully register the seriousness of the message, which can be more damaging to the relationship long-term than direct, well-delivered candor, especially if the softened message leads to a worse outcome the client

feels wasn't clearly flagged.

How direct is too direct when delivering difficult news?

Direct enough that the core message is unambiguous, delivered with genuine care for how it's received — bluntness without regard for delivery can be as counterproductive as excessive softening, and this playbook's framework addresses both failure modes.

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