English for Project Managers

Ready-to-use phrases for the moments that matter most in a project: kick-offs, updates, risks, scope changes and stakeholder conversations.

1 · KICKING OFF A PROJECT

Set direction and ownership from day one.

- The goal of this project is to …
- By [date], we want to have …
- Let's agree on who owns what.
- Are there any constraints we should know about before we start?
- Who else needs to be involved in this?

2 · GIVING A STATUS UPDATE

Be clear, brief and specific.

- We're on track for the [date] deadline.
- We're slightly behind schedule, mainly because …
- Overall we're in good shape, with one exception.
- Here's where we stand and what comes next.
- The main thing I need from you this week is …

3 · RAISING RISKS AND PROBLEMS

Flag early, bring options.

- I'd like to flag a potential risk.
- It isn't urgent yet, but I want it on your radar.
- If we don't resolve this by Friday, it will affect the launch date.
- I see two ways we could handle this.
- What would you need to see to approve this?

4 · MANAGING SCOPE AND PUSHING BACK

Say no without saying "no."

- I see why that's important. Let's look at what it means for the timeline.
- We can do that, but something else will need to move.
- That's outside the current scope. Shall we log it as a change request?
- Can we park that and come back to it after the release?
- What's driving the request? That will help me find the best way to fit it in.

5 · GETTING STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN

Put their concerns at the center.

- Before we decide, I'd like to hear your concerns.
- How would this affect your team?
- What would make this work for you?
- We agree on the goal. Where we differ is the timing.
- Can I count on your support for this?

6 · RUNNING THE MEETING

Keep it moving and keep people aligned.

- Let's get started. We have 30 minutes and two items.
- Let's keep this to five minutes so we can cover everything.
- Good point. Let's take that offline.
- Just to make sure we're aligned: …
- [Name], I'd like to bring you in here.

7 · CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS

Every meeting should end with clear actions.

- To recap the decisions we made today …
- Who's taking this action, and by when?
- I'll send a summary by end of day.
- Let's check in again on Thursday.

8 · WRITING PROJECT EMAILS

Short subject, clear ask, a deadline.

- Quick update on [project]:
- Could you confirm by Wednesday whether …
- I'm following up on my email from Monday.
- Attached is the revised timeline.

Sound more senior: small swaps, big difference

INSTEAD OF	TRY
~~Sorry, I have a question.~~	Can I ask a quick question?
~~We have a big problem.~~	We have an issue that needs a decision.
~~I think maybe we could…~~	I recommend we…
~~It's not my fault, the supplier is late.~~	The delay is on the supplier side. Here's how we're handling it.
~~Do you understand?~~	Does that work from your side?
~~I will send you the file.~~	I'll send it over by 3 p.m.
~~Let's make a meeting.~~	Let's set up a meeting.
~~We need to discuss about the budget.~~	We need to discuss the budget.

Learn each phrase as one block, not word by word. Say it out loud before your next meeting, and it will be there when you need it.

9 · BUYING TIME WITH A HARD QUESTION

You don't have to answer on the spot.

- That's a good question. Let me check and come back to you today.
- I don't want to give you the wrong number. I'll confirm by tomorrow.
- Can I make sure I understand? You're asking whether …

10 · DISAGREEING POLITELY

Respectful, clear, and still firm.

- I see it a little differently.
- I understand the reasoning. My concern is …
- Could we look at another option before we decide?

Know the phrases, still freeze in the meeting?

That's a confidence and delivery challenge, and it's exactly what coaching works on. Let's look at where you are.

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