

SAVE
THIS
ONE

CONSULTING MOVES 002 • TOOLKIT

Yes, and.
Yes, if.



Two moves that change the
conversation.

Every request is an invitation to **partner.**

How you respond in the first minute shapes the relationship that follows.

The order-taker

Says yes to everything. Fast and agreeable, and rarely trusted with the real problem.

The gatekeeper

Says no to protect the work. Principled, and often left out of the next conversation.

The partner

Says **yes, and** to build on the request, and **yes, if** to protect the outcome.

ORIGINS · IMPROVISATIONAL THEATRE

"Yes, and" started on the improv stage.

It's often traced to the improv tradition of the 1950s and 60s: Viola Spolin's theatre games, the Chicago scene around The Second City, and later Keith Johnstone's work on accepting offers.

ACTOR 1

"We've landed on Mars!"

ACTOR 2 · YES, AND

"Yes, and I think we've just woken something under the surface."

ACTOR 2 · BLOCKING

"We're actually in a supermarket."

Yes accepts the offer. **And** builds on it. Blocking collapses the scene.

AND "YES, IF"? →

ORIGINS • NEGOTIATION

"Yes, if" comes from the negotiating table.

Negotiators call it a conditional yes. You agree, and you name what needs to be true for it to work: "If you can do this, then we can do that."

THE SHAPE OF THE MOVE

Yes, **if** [the condition that protects the outcome].

In consulting, the condition is usually evidence, a measure, a pilot or the right people involved.

MOVE 01 • YES, AND

Open the possibilities.

Accept the request. Build on it. Keep the problem open long enough to explore.

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- 01 "Yes, and let's look at what people will need around it to use it at work."
 - 02 "Yes, and before we shape it, can I spend time with the people doing the work?"
 - 03 "Yes, and what would we hope to see people doing differently afterwards?"
 - 04 "Yes, and could we test a small version first?"
-

Use it early: when the request lands and when you need access and goodwill.

MOVE 02 • YES, IF

Make the conditions visible.

Keep the possibility alive. Name what needs to be true for it to work.

01 "Yes, if we agree what we'll see people doing in 90 days."

02 "Yes, if we can pilot it with one team first."

03 "Yes, if we focus the first release on the moments that matter most."

04 "Yes, if the managers are part of it from the start."

A GOOD CONDITION IS

MEANINGFUL

ACHIEVABLE

TIED TO THE OUTCOME

SEE THEM TOGETHER →

WORKED EXAMPLE

Same request. Two **moves**.

STAKEHOLDER

"We need a new leadership workshop."

YOU • YES, AND

"Yes, and let's explore what would help leaders use those skills when the hard moments come up."

STAKEHOLDER

"Great. Can we roll it out to everyone next month?"

YOU • YES, IF

"Yes, if we start with the moments that matter most, pilot with one team and agree what success looks like before we scale."

Neither reply dismisses the request. Both build the partnership and improve the decision.

WHICH MOVE, WHEN →



FIELD GUIDE

Which move, when?

WHEN THIS HAPPENS	REACH FOR
The request has just landed	YES, AND
You need time with the people doing the work	YES, AND
The cause sits outside learning	YES, AND
There's a tight deadline	YES, IF
They want it rolled out everywhere	YES, IF
Success hasn't been defined	YES, IF
A vendor or solution is already chosen	YES, AND YES, IF



AI PROMPTS

Rehearse the conversation.

FIND THE MOVES

Here's a request: [paste]. Write three "yes, and" openers and three "yes, if" conditions I could use.

TEST THE CONDITIONS

Are these conditions meaningful, achievable and tied to the outcome? Rewrite any that sound like a polite no.

ROLE-PLAY IT

Play a busy stakeholder who wants this delivered next month. I'll practise both moves. Push back realistically.

Practise before the meeting. Leave out names and anything confidential.



CHEAT SHEET · SCREENSHOT THIS

Eight lines for your next meeting.

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- | | |
|----|--|
| 01 | YES, AND
"...let's look at what people need around it to use it at work." |
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- | | |
|----|---|
| 02 | YES, AND
"...before we shape it, can I spend time with the people doing the work?" |
|----|---|
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- | | |
|----|--|
| 03 | YES, AND
"...what would we hope to see people doing differently?" |
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- | | |
|----|---|
| 04 | YES, AND
"...could we test a small version first?" |
|----|---|
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- | | |
|----|--|
| 05 | YES, IF
"...we agree what we'll see people doing in 90 days." |
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- | | |
|----|--|
| 06 | YES, IF
"...we can pilot it with one team first." |
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- | | |
|----|---|
| 07 | YES, IF
"...we focus on the moments that matter most." |
|----|---|
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- | | |
|----|---|
| 08 | YES, IF
"...the managers are part of it from the start." |
|----|---|
-
- THE MAP →

THE CONSULTING MAP

How the moves play out.

01

The request lands

"We need a leadership workshop."

YES, AND

...let's see what helps leaders use it.

02

Explore the work

Talk to leaders and teams. Sort known from assumed.

03

Find what's shaping it

Skill, motivation, systems, clarity. Usually a mix.

YES, AND

...add a manager check-in and a decision aid.

04

The push to commit

"Can we roll it out to everyone next month?"

YES, IF

...we pilot with one team and agree the measure.

05

Pilot, measure, then scale

Learn from the pilot. Loop back to 03 if the evidence says so.



Yes, and opens the conversation. Yes, if makes the next move possible.

DANNY BATTS • PRACTICE —UPGRADE

Launch the site ↗