

# Holding Your Ground Under Pressure

The ANCHOR Framework - five moves to stay firm without damaging the relationship

## WHY WE'RE SHARING THIS

We've noticed that the part clients find hardest to maintain after assertiveness training is holding their ground in the moment - especially with senior stakeholders. We've put together this short framework around it and a lot of people have found it useful.

The ANCHOR Framework - use this sequence whenever pressure to concede starts to build:

**A** **ACKNOWLEDGE**  
**Name what they've said; before you push back**  
Show you've heard them: *"I completely understand the pressure you're under with this timeline."* This is not agreement. It's the door-opener that keeps the conversation rational. People who feel heard are far less likely to escalate. Skip this step and almost everything that follows is harder.

**N** **NAME YOUR POSITION**  
**State it clearly, and only once**  
Resist the urge to over-explain. Say your position plainly: *"My recommendation remains X."* Repetition of a clear position signals certainty. Over-elaboration reads as wobbling. Say it, stop, and wait for a response.

**C** **CITE YOUR EVIDENCE**  
**Give the reason, not the feeling**  
Move from opinion to data: *"The reason I'm holding here is..."* Use tangible anchors - budget, risk, precedent, timeline impact. Evidence doesn't need to be perfect; it needs to be more concrete than the pressure being applied.

**H** **HOLD THE PAUSE**  
**Silence works in your favour**  
After restating your position, stop. Most people rush to fill silence - don't. Holding a pause signals confidence and forces the other party to respond, not you to fill the gap with a concession.

**OR** **OFFER A TRADE**  
**If movement is needed, make it conditional**  
If genuine concession is required: *"I can flex on X if we agree on Y."* Never give something without getting something. Frame every move as a trade, not a cave - this protects both the outcome and your credibility.

## HINTS & TIPS FOR MANAGERS

- **Prepare your anchor:** Before any high-stakes conversation, write down your non-negotiables. Knowing them in advance stops you being caught off-guard.
- **Watch for false urgency:** 'We need this by Friday' is often a desire rather than a constraint. Probe it: "What happens if we move it to Monday?"
- **Use 'and' not 'but':** "I hear you and here's my position regarding this..." keeps the door open. 'But' sounds adversarial.
- **Don't personalise pressure:** 'The board wants it done faster' is a negotiating tactic, not a reason to concede. Separate pressure from logic.