

# Why Your Senior Leader Keeps Saying No

Translate the idea through the leadership lens they already use.

## EPISODE THESIS

Sometimes the answer is no because the idea is weak. Often the answer is no because the idea was pitched in the wrong leadership language. Senior leaders evaluate return on investment through different lenses.

## THE FOUR P'S

- **People:** driven by stories, life change, outsiders reached, and spiritual or emotional impact. Lead with who is helped and how people will grow.
- **Progress or performance:** driven by vision, momentum, improvement, and taking the hill. Lead with what gets better, bigger, clearer, or unstuck.
- **Pennies:** driven by stewardship, budget, cost, sustainability, and return on investment. Lead with the financial plan, tradeoffs, and why this is wise now.
- **Process:** driven by systems, fairness, precedent, and whole-organization impact. Lead with safeguards, ripple effects, and how this helps rather than jams the rest of the church.

## HOW TO REFRAME A PITCH

- Identify the primary lens by listening to what your leader celebrates and the questions they repeatedly ask.
- Write the same request four ways: people, progress, pennies, and process. Then choose the version that matches your leader.
- Practice with an analog: find someone wired like your leader and ask them to poke holes in the pitch before the real meeting.
- Pre-game the concerns. List where they will get hung up, then build ramps before those concerns become roadblocks.

## TRAINER EXERCISE

Give a team member one ministry idea, then make them pitch it four times: once for each leadership lens. Debrief which version would land with your senior pastor, executive pastor, board, or ministry supervisor.

## DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

- What does this leader celebrate first: life change, momentum, wise spending, or clean systems?
- What question do they almost always ask before they can relax and listen?
- What concern can you answer before it becomes the reason they say no?

## TEACH-BACK FLOW

- Teach the four P's as translation work, not manipulation. The goal is to lower friction so the idea can be judged clearly.
- Give one ministry idea and make the learner pitch it through all four lenses before choosing the strongest version.
- Finish by writing the first two sentences of the real pitch in the leader's primary language.