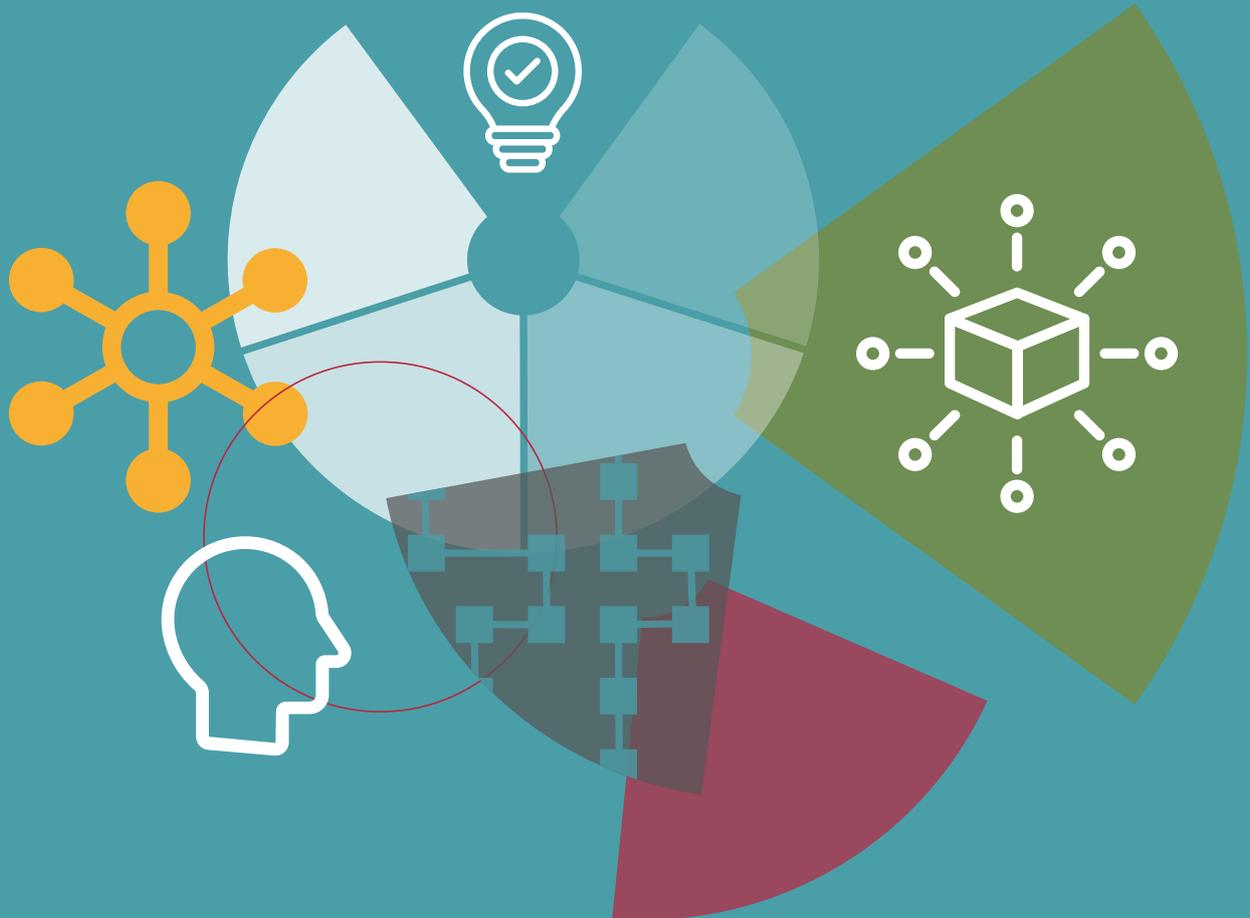




The 5 Rules for Delivering Bad News



5 rules for delivering bad news

Introduction

Over my Product Management career there have been times when I've had to deliver bad news. This could be to a customer, a colleague, an employee or a manager and on any topic from a late feature to a poor financial performance, to a bad employee performance review.

It's never easy, but it can be made a little less painful if you follow some simple rules outlined in this paper.



5 rules for delivering bad news

Rule 1: Never delay

Many Product Managers hold on to bad news. Sometimes in the hope the news will change, sometimes because they don't want to confront the issue.

It all likelihood, the delay will make the bad news worse and will antagonise the recipient even more.



Rule 2: Have clear reasons

You don't make up an excuse, but you do need to clearly explain how the situation arose. If you can't explain why it happened, the recipient will have justifiable concerns about the situation. Have clear and precise reasons for the bad news

Explain
Everything



5 rules for delivering bad news

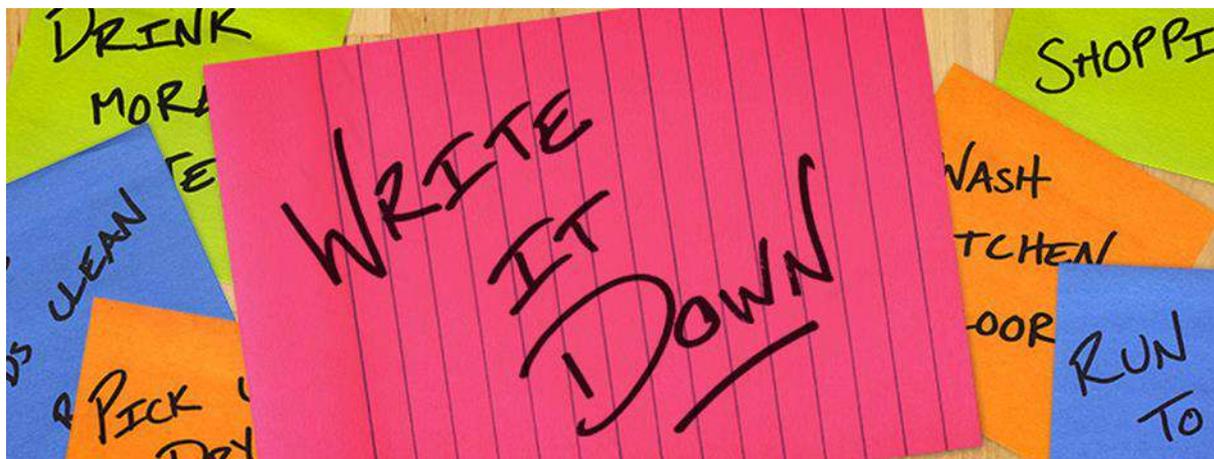
Rule 3: Bring options and solutions.

You need to show a resolution plan that solves or mitigates the problem as much as possible, or at least shows a clear path through. If you simply deliver bad news with no resolution plan, you leave the problem unsolved and open.



Rule 4: Write it down.

Conversations can get misinterpreted. Don't leave room for doubt by clearly documenting the situation.



5 rules for delivering bad news

Rule 5: Follow up

After the bad news is delivered and solutions are identified, track any progress made in solving the problems that led to the bad news. Early and frequent feedback on progress is critical. Bad news involves cleaning up a mess. After cleaning, let everyone know. Now the news is no longer bad; it is good.

