Expert Consilium

FREE GUIDE / A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

Before You Say YES

Seven checks before accepting a supplier, major customer or business partner proposal

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Multiple expert angles. One clear decision.

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Seven questions. Two examples. One worksheet.

Define the decision before seeking an answer

This free guide is for owners and managers with a concrete proposal and time to change its terms or direction. Use it independently, with your team or to prepare for further analysis. You do not need to buy any service to use the questions.

The seven checks are a practical worksheet, not a validated test that guarantees success. The examples are fictional. Where regulated professional judgement is needed, involve an appropriately qualified adviser.

1. What exactly am I accepting?

Write the decision in one sentence. Distinguish accepting the whole proposal from continuing negotiations, running a pilot or obtaining information. Flag unclear obligations before responding.

Write: I am deciding whether to _____, by _____, in order to _____.

2. What do I know, and what am I assuming?

Identify a source for each important claim. Separate promised volume from committed volume, forecast demand from confirmed orders, and assumed costs from an actual calculation. A data gap is a finding, not something to hide.

3. What is the total commitment?

Alongside price or revenue, consider inventory, collection, staff time, extra support, capacity and exit conditions. Ask not only what we gain, but also what we must do and fund to gain it.

An attractive feature of a proposal is not the same as a sound decision about the whole package of terms.

Dependencies, alternatives and conditions

4. Who or what will I depend on?

Consider the supplier, major customer, key person, technology and data required to make the arrangement work. What happens if that party changes price, quality, timing or availability? Do not assume that an easy replacement exists.

5. What could undermine the plan?

Choose three relevant causes of failure, not twenty generic risks. For each, identify an early signal, who monitors it and a check before acceptance. Do not invent probability percentages to make the analysis look precise.

6. Is there a path between yes and no?

Consider a smaller initial scope, trial period, phased investment or changing a critical term. These are not always available; check the other party's willingness and obtain appropriate professional review.

7. What would change my choice?

Define the critical evidence or condition and the next action: who checks what, and by when. If no new evidence could change your view, consider whether you want analysis or justification for a decision already made.

A short prompt for AI or your team

Using this description, identify the strongest counterargument, missing evidence and conditions under which acceptance makes sense. Separate facts from assumptions. Do not invent data or treat agreement with me as the goal.

A good result is not always yes or no. Sometimes it is: check this one thing first.

Example: a discount that increases purchases

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE. You currently buy as needed at EUR 100 per unit. A new offer is EUR 90, with an annual minimum of 1,200 units. You expect to need 1,000 units. We assume equal quality and exclude tax, finance, storage and payment-timing differences.

Item	Current offer	New offer
Unit price	EUR 100	EUR 90
Annual purchases	1,000 units	1,200 units
Annual expenditure	EUR 100,000	EUR 108,000
Excess above need	0	200 units

A lower unit price does not automatically reduce total expenditure. Here, you buy more and spend EUR 8,000 more that year. That is not automatically an EUR 8,000 loss: extra stock may be useful later. Assess its value and holding cost separately.

Which checks change the decision?

Is the expected need of 1,000 realistic or optimistic? How long does the product remain usable? Can the minimum be adjusted? When are payments due? Does exclusivity restrict other products? Which exit conditions are acceptable and professionally reviewed?

A more useful next step

Do not accept or reject solely because of the discount. Check consumption and the full commitment, then discuss the minimum or a trial period. If evidence supports higher consumption and the terms fit, the offer may be attractive.

What is the discount in your proposal, and which obligation have you not yet compared with it?

Example: a large customer, good business?

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE. A potential customer offers higher volume but asks for a lower price, longer payment terms and a special service level. We lack complete costs, committed volume and a capacity plan. An unconditional recommendation would be premature.

What is known and what is not

We know what the customer is asking for. Actual order volume, the cost of extra requirements and the effect on existing customers are unconfirmed. Large revenue is only part of the picture.

Three questions before quoting

Which volume is committed and which is a forecast? Who funds the period between purchasing and collection? Which resources must be added or reassigned? Assign a source and accountable person to each question.

Three possible directions

Accept if the evidence and terms support the firm’s objective. Negotiate if the opportunity is attractive but a condition changes the economics. Limit initial scope or postpone if evidence is insufficient. These are not automatic recommendations; they define the actual choice.

Write before the discussion

I am willing to accept if _____.
First I need to verify _____.
I will propose changing _____.
I will not commit until _____.

The purpose of scrutiny is not to stop you. It is to clarify what you are accepting and under which conditions.

Worksheet: before I respond

Use this for one decision. Record the date and revisit the sheet when new evidence arrives. Do not enter sensitive information into an unapproved service.

1. What exactly am I accepting, and by when?

2. What evidence do I have, and what am I assuming?

3. What is the total commitment of money, people and capacity?

4. Who or what will I depend on?

5. Which event or evidence could undermine the plan?

6. Which change, alternative or pilot could I consider?

7. Next step: who checks what, and by when?

Date: _________________ Accountable person: _________________

From questions to a clearer next step

One AI tool can help with drafting and challenging arguments. More models do not guarantee accuracy. Important decisions require reliable inputs and assumptions checked before applying a conclusion; the number of answers does not replace these.

When another kind of help is needed

If a fact is missing, obtain it. If the issue is technical, test it with the appropriate people. If the decision depends on legal, tax, accounting, investment or other regulated judgement, consult a qualified professional. This is a separate engagement and is not part of the Expert Consilium service.

Where Expert Consilium fits

Expert Consilium automatically analyses a specific business decision through AI perspectives, AI-to-AI comparative review (peer review) and final synthesis into a report. Fast, Consilium and Grand Consilium use 4, 9 and 15 perspectives. Human review of reports is not included in any tier. Exact scope, timing, price and delivery format are confirmed before ordering.

Before purchasing, examine a sample deliverable and decide whether it fits. You do not necessarily need the broadest tier; you need an appropriate review.

Describe the decision in a few sentences or view a sample report on the website. You do not need to send confidential documents in the first enquiry.

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Companion reading

For a broader introduction: “How AI Helps Businesses”, Expert Consilium, edition 3, 2026. It includes additional examples, sources and a small-pilot framework for business use of AI. For the question of when a free AI answer is enough: “Why Pay When Free AI Tools Exist”, edition 2, 2026.

Informational material, not regulated professional advice. Examples are fictional. The framework does not guarantee analytical accuracy or a business outcome.