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'Stuff' Clientek Says

PART 1: DISAPPOINT EARLY

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At one point, not long ago, my colleagues created a spoof site called "S\$!t Craig Says". In it were some of my, well, funnier/more unique statements and phrases (at least I found them quite humorous). Using this as a catalyst, over the next few weeks I'd like to share some of the phrases commonly used here at Clientek. I believe they do a great job describing our culture and approach while hopefully also providing you with some valuable ideas.

This week's statement: "Disappoint customers at the start, not the end".

Our teams, much like everyone else, hate to say no; but failure to say no can quickly lead to difficult circumstances down the road. When our teams fail to say no, we end up committing to more work than is feasible in the timeline. This leads to a situation in which we are sure to disappoint the customer in the end.

To combat this, we focus heavily on providing as realistic and accurate an estimate as we can at the start of a project

- given the information we know at that time. The good thing is that with almost 30 years of experience doing this as a company, our estimates are pretty good, but we are constantly looking for ways to get better.

For instance, when we conduct sprint planning, we ask the team to break down all the tasks into activities that are a day or less of effort. We then ask them to create a sprint timeline; where they coordinate all their activities and dependencies to create a day-to-day level plan for the sprint. This helps identify if any stories are going to end late in the sprint, or if we are planning to have too many stories open at any given time - both of which are useful indicators of risk within a sprint.

Our goal is to be honest and transparent with our customers throughout the entirety of the engagement. Sometimes that means we disappoint them early on with our estimates, but the key is that we complete the work we committed to in the timeframe we agreed upon. And to do that every time.