



The OSUAP Connection

Issue #65

April 21, 2021

Know an Admin
who is new to
The Ohio State University?
Please forward this
Newsletter to her or him!

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OSUAP Goals

- ◆ Encourage professional development
- ◆ Develop leadership skills
- ◆ Network with peers

Special Notes:

- Free Webinar—**Leverage LinkedIn to Win** presented by ASAP and DELL Technologies on April 27—[Learn more](#)
- OSU is promoting kindness with the **Mask On/Mood Up Movement!** [Learn more](#)
- Registration for the May 14 annual Ballam Symposium is **Free for ASFW Members and only \$40 for Non-Members which includes a One-Year Membership to ASFW!** To learn more and register, [click here](#)



13 Ways to Say No in the Workplace *by Bonnie Evie Gifford*

None of us like being ‘that guy’ – the one who’s always saying no and letting people down. But sometimes, for our own mental health and wellbeing, we need to learn how to set healthy boundaries, manage our workloads, and discover how to say no

Saying ‘no’ can feel hard in any situation. You don’t want to let people down, you don’t want to be the bad guy who makes more work for other people, and you definitely don’t want to disappoint others who are relying on you. We’re taught to be yes-people - to come up with solutions, not problems; to always have a positive attitude, an affirmative answer, or an alternative solution ready and raring to go.

We won’t deny the power positive visualization can have in helping us achieve our goals, but it’s also time we started recognizing the positive impact a well-placed ‘no’ can have in protecting our own sense of wellbeing.

When we start to feel like we can’t say no, or when we start saying yes too much, we can start taking on too many new tasks or responsibilities without minimizing an already packed workload. Before we know it, we feel stressed, overwhelmed and under-appreciated. Our work/life balance goes off key and we may find ourselves heading towards burnout.

Just saying ‘no’ isn’t always that easy. When we share what can be perceived as a negative opinion too often, we can risk colleagues and teammates viewing

us in a more negative light (no matter how valid your concerns may be). Finding the balance between when and how you say no is key.

It’s time to stand up and embrace the power of no, and how it can benefit not only us, but can help create a happier, healthier workplace.

How to say no without damaging work relationships

1. Recognize the value of no

It’s not just a powerful word. ‘No’ allows us to take back ownership and highlight the value of our time. A well-placed no can acknowledge an already full schedule. While an outright refusal isn’t always possible, it can be a segue to start discussions about the priorities of new tasks compared to existing projects and responsibilities.

Phrasing your response to ask what other tasks can be put on the back burner or redistributed to be replaced by the latest project can be a simple way of reminding colleagues or team-leaders of ongoing tasks that may have been overlooked or forgotten. This can lead to acknowledgement of ongoing achievements, reassessing team workloads and priorities, and refocusing on core objectives.

2. Be confident

Show your confidence in how you speak or present your response. Deciding to say no is difficult enough.

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OSUAP Member Spotlight—Featuring Nicole “Nickie” Helton, Our New Vice-President!

How long have you been with OSU? Tell us about your current position.

I've been with OSU for 6 years, not consecutive. OSU created the MSK Administration in 2019 and I was the second one hired. I am an academic assistant for Ortho Trauma and have taken on the administrative responsibilities for Dr. Laura Phieffer in her Medical Director of UH Perioperative role and mentor one of the Perioperative AA's. I LOVE the team I work for and have a great support system with them as well as the other MSK AA's/Supervisor.

What is your favorite family tradition?

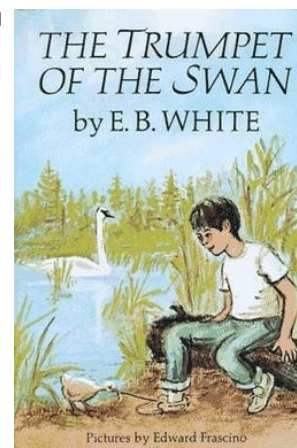
Sharing Christmas Eve with my uncle, aunt and their 2 kids (mom's side). This is a tradition that we have kept for 30 years now. We play games, watch movies and of course eat. We usually pick a theme for the meal and all contribute to it. It's always so much fun and now that my grandparents are no longer with us, we enjoy sharing stories about them!

What is your favorite book? If you don't have one, tell us about the last book you read.

The Trumpet of the Swan was my favorite book growing up. Now, I love self help books and love all of Tony Robbins books.

What are you most proud of?

I created everything that the National Fraternal Order of Police uses for the Labor Services Division. I created a workbook that would house all the divisions we support, who pays for Legal Services, the billing process and the creation of the billing invoices. That was a great accomplishment for me and was so pleased that they still use it to this day!



Nicole's favorite book when she was growing up

10th Annual 2021 OSUAP Annual (Virtual) Conference Adapting to Change / Resiliency — June 15-18, 2021

**Tuesday, June
15th @ 9:00-
10:00AM**

Mindfulness: An Effective Path towards Adaptation and Resiliency

Dr. Maryanna Klatt
Professor, College of Medicine at Ohio State University, Department of Family Medicine

**Wednesday, June
16th @ 9:00-
10:00AM**

Leading in the New Normal

Dr. Tracy Dumas
Associate Professor, Fisher College of Business, Management and Human Resources

**Thursday, June
17th @ 9:00-
9:45AM, Part 1**

Resume Building

Jillian Fair
Human Resources Generalist, College of Dentistry

**Thursday, June
17th @ 10:00-
10:45AM, Part 2**

LinkedIn Workshop for Professionals

Kelly McDonald
Senior manager of social media at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

**Friday, June 18th
@ 9:00-10:15AM**

Cultivating Awareness and Activating the Radical Activist within Administrative Professionals

Jasmine Marks
Director of Diversity & Inclusion at Equitas Health and Doctorate Student in Higher Education & Student Affairs at The Ohio State University

Note: Due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and social distancing requirements, the 2021 OSUAP Professional Development Conference will again be held virtually for our members. The conference committee is hard at work planning this event. Additional details about the conference presentations and the respective presenters as well as the registration information will be coming soon. Please check OSUAP [website](#) for updates.

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Although giving an unclear answer such as “I’ll try” or “I’ll get back to you” can feel helpful in the moment, it can also build a sense of false expectation. If you already know the answer or have reasonable misgivings you feel able to articulate, it could be worth discussing things in the moment rather than using delay tactics.

If you feel like getting a little more time to explain your concerns could be beneficial, it can be worth giving examples such as “I’ll give it some thought, but I am already working on X and Y projects at the moment.” or “Can I get back to you on that? It sounds like an interesting idea, but I believe X has tried something similar before.”

3. Be firm

If a colleague is persistent and continues to try and find creative ways to urge or cajole you into saying yes, stand your ground. Go over the reasons why you chose to say no in the first place. If things haven’t changed, try to remain firm with your decision. Offering other solutions or redirecting them to somewhere or someone else who may be able to help can be a good way to still offer your support without dramatically increasing your workload.

4. Be specific

Ensure you tailor your response to the situation at hand. While your direct colleagues may understand how much you have on your plate, your boss (or your boss’s boss) might not. It can feel intimidating to push back on new tasks from those in positions of power.

To get around feeling awkward or worries that your response may sound passive-aggressive, it can help to frame your response in a more flattering way, such as:

“Thank you for thinking of me for this opportunity/project. I was planning on spending this week/next few days on X, Y and Z.”

This can create the opportunity to reprioritize your planned workload, as well as to allow them to reassess if this new task is as time-sensitive or important as previously thought.

5. Be inquisitive and thorough

Before saying no to a colleague or supervisor, make sure to ask the right questions. Ensure you fully understand the task – this can include the timeframe, parameters, how success will be measured, how it may impact your work (or others). It’s OK to ask for a few hours or days to consider things and formulate valid reasons for your answer.

While a task may sound overwhelming or impossible to complete today or this week, discovering it isn’t actually expected to be completed for another three or four weeks may make it seem more manageable. Other tasks, such as implementing new workflows or strategies may seem daunting at the outset. Understanding how these will be evaluated weeks or months down the line can help increase motivation or turn a reluctant yes into a more enthusiastic one, at the thought of the overall time and stress it may save in the long run.

6. Offer alternatives

It’s not always what we say, but how we say it, that our colleagues remember. Developing the ability to say no in a constructive way (or masking it outright) can go down much better with colleagues. Through offering alternative solutions that may take less time or resources, you may still be able to provide assistance without taking on additional stress or strain mentally, physically, or emotionally.

7. Consider the impact

Instead of focusing on the negative, reframe your decision to say no by acknowledging the hidden yes’s. Each time you say no to a new task, you are also saying yes to something else: whether that’s freeing up time to help other team members or work on other projects, decreasing your stress levels, or easing the emotional pressure on you.

No can be a powerful tool to help address your work/life balance, and

decreasing the impact workplace stresses can have on time spent with family, friends, or addressing your own wellbeing.

8. Build (and maintain) your reputation

Your reputation can have a huge impact on the reception your responses receive. While saying no can be empowering, making sure you first have a strong reputation for your good worth ethic, enthusiasm for your job, and a willingness to say yes is important.

Make sure to create a reputation as a reliable, dedicated employee who can deliver. This can help build a level of trust and goodwill that can help support and validate the instances where you do choose to make a stand and highlight other priorities or responsibilities.

9. Weigh up the cost (and benefits)

If a coworker is asking for help with something you have little experience or interest in, it can be worth taking into account your skillset. If you have the time to spare, helping out regardless of your personal interest can be a good way to strengthen team bonds and show yourself to be a team player whilst gaining experience in a new area.

If you do decide against helping with this particular task, make sure that your no is polite and honest. Saying you are too busy to help, then being seen to support with more exciting projects or opportunities could risk damaging working relationships.

Instead, try a polite version of the real reason why you are saying no; for example, you may say that sounds like an exciting opportunity, but you are inexperienced with social media so you may not be the best person to help set-up a company Instagram account or manage their Twitter feed in this instance.

Try to consider both the immediate cost (in time, stress, or energy) against the long-term gain (increased skills, easier processes in place, stronger team bonds). A short-term cost for a significant long-term gain can be worth switching to a yes in some instances; give yourself the time to weigh these up if possible.

10. Consider why you avoid saying no

What is it that stops you from saying no? Are you worried about hurting a colleague’s feelings? Perhaps letting your team down is your biggest concern, creating distance or damaging how others perceive you?

We all feel the pressure to say yes when we know we should really be saying no for any number of reasons, but that need to be seen as the go-to person can override our misgivings. Identifying the reason behind our misgivings is the first step towards addressing them.

11. Be mindful of your language

How you say something can be just as (if not more) important than what you say. Although a ‘no’ face-to-face may be the more professional way to articulate things, it can also be worth considering expressing yourself by email, through work chat channels like Slack, or calls. Different methods can be more convenient for everyone involved if you have busy or conflicting schedules, or if you struggle to express yourself when nervous or under pressure, it can help make the conversation seem less daunting.

If you do opt to respond via a written or message based method, be mindful of the overall tone or any ways in which what you have written could potentially be misinterpreted. Without the benefit of physical body language or the inflexion with which things are being said, it can be easy to have misunderstandings.

12. Resist your gut reaction

It’s easy to fall into a pattern of automatically saying yes. Before you know it, you’ve got deadlines piling up, an overflowing inbox, and a calendar packed full of meetings. Learning to resist the urge to say yes

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THE OSUAP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Effective Sept. 1, 2020

President: Roxann Damron
Vice-President: Nicole Helton
Secretary: Sherrie Kauffman
Treasurer: Heidi Hamblin
Membership Chair: Christine OConnell
Member-at-Large: Alice Gardner and Kristina Toliver
Immediate Past President: Quenetta Batts

Have suggestions for the Newsletter?

Want to share some good news?

Let us know!

Email: [Michelle Pennington](mailto:Michelle.Pennington@osu.edu)

Chair, Communications Work Group

Please be sure to submit suggestions by the 20th of each month to be included in the Newsletter!

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<http://u.osu.edu/osuap>
Columbus, Ohio 43210



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

"Be so good
they can't
ignore you."

~Steve Martin

Upcoming Important Dates

4/26-4/30	Final examinations for semester and second-session classes (<i>Corrected Dates</i>)
5/9	Spring Commencement (<i>Corrected Date</i>)
5/12	Summer Sessions begin
5/31	Memorial Day — Offices Closed

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can be tough, but worthwhile. Try focusing on the reasons to say yes or no, over your emotional reaction.

Consider your other commitments, your workload, and the wider impact on your team; weigh these up against your emotional bandwidth, and how the addition of this new responsibility could impact your ability to continue with existing tasks.

If the benefits seem significant while the personal impact seems minimal, it may be worth considering saying yes; however if the emotional or mental impact seems significant after reflection, it could still be worth finding a balanced and well thought out way to explain your no based on the whole picture, rather than purely your gut reaction.

13. Consider what you really want

When someone asks us to do something, it can feel like we are under pressure to answer immediately. While this isn't necessarily a bad thing, it can push us to give an answer before we have really considered all of the variables such as existing workloads, other priorities, responsibilities, and deadlines.

It can feel a little awkward at first, but try taking time to assess the situation or request before giving a firm answer. A simple 'can I get back to you on that?' can be a good way to give yourself a buffer to assess the request before you respond.

We all have less enjoyable aspects of our work lives. It's important to recognize the difference between wanting to say no (because something doesn't interest us), and benefiting from saying no (protecting our energy or motivation, reducing stress, or having a full workload).

If we are unsure of when or how we can say no, the added pressure can begin damaging our

workplace relationships, may cause feelings of resentment to build, or increase our stress levels. Taking time to assess your priorities and how you feel first can have a huge impact on your productivity, help minimize workplace stress from impacting your time outside of the office, and protect your sense of wellbeing.

Reframing our reactions

One of the biggest challenges when it comes to learning to say no is reframing our own negativity around the word. No doesn't have to be a bad thing. Our refusal today doesn't have to show a lack of dedication or team-spirit; it shows we value our time and commitments. Saying no doesn't have to mean we have a negative attitude or a defeatist view; it can mean we recognize our own limitations, value our wellbeing, or feel comfortable and confident in expressing when additional help or support would be beneficial.

Deciding when to say no can feel like a fine line between self-actualization and selfishness; between looking after yourself and your wellbeing, and putting additional stress and strain on colleagues who could benefit from our help and support. Reclaiming our ability to say no can help us to remain focused on our goals, and greater support the overall aims of our team or company.

However tactful we may be, it's good to remember that saying no can still damage working relationships in the short or long term. Try to remember: you can't please everyone, but you can put self-care, wellbeing, and a healthier work/life balance at the heart of what you do.

Article by [Bonnie Evie Gifford](#) originally appeared on happiful.com. Thanks Nicole H. for sharing!

A Special Note from Our President and Executive Committee Wishing YOU Happy Professionals Week!

Happy Administrative Professionals Week! The OSUAP Executive Committee is getting excited about our 10th annual conference this summer and working on additional programming for the coming year as well. We are listening to your comments from the survey and incorporating those into our plans. We are here for you, so please don't hesitate to reach out. As John F. Kennedy once said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them".

Professional Development Links and OSUAP Opportunities

- BuckeyeLearn - <https://buckeyelink.osu.edu/task/all/buckeyelearn>
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - <https://hr.osu.edu/benefits/eap/>
- Leadership Center - <https://leadershipcenter.osu.edu/>
- Learning and Development - <https://hr.osu.edu/services/learning-and-development/> and gatewaytolearning.osu.edu.
- Diversity, Intercultural and Community Engagement (DICE) - go.osu.edu/dice