

Template:

Communicating Your Timeline Needs

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As an illustrator doing client work, chances are you've encountered your fair share of tight turnarounds. Most of us can relate to memories of sleepless nights and stressful, last-minute revisions—but these pain points, while common, don't need to be the norm. Whether you're looking to ease the pressure of a demanding deadline or simply could use just a little more time, these adaptable email templates are designed to help you communicate with clients about exactly what you'll need to create work you'll both love.

Note: Each references a specific tip in our Warm Up, which can be found [here](#).

1. Use this template if you feel a client’s proposed timeline is too tight.

Hello _____,

Thanks for sending over your proposed production schedule.

Before getting started, I’d like to address a concern I have about the project’s tight turnaround. My goal with every assignment I take on is not only to create a beautiful illustration, but also to make sure that I produce work that fully meets the needs of each brand I partner with. Getting to know what those needs are requires additional time on my end, but it also may require time on yours, too, as we move into feedback and revisions.

If we’re working under a restrictive deadline, I worry we may be missing out on an opportunity to create work that is truly unique to your brand.

Would you be willing to schedule a quick phone call to discuss this further?
Let me know!

2. Use this template if you need to provide context on complexity levels.

Hello _____,

Thank you for providing examples of work that reflect what you’re looking for in this project—that’s really helpful.

While I’d be happy to produce something similar, these illustrations involve a level of complexity that requires more time than what’s proposed in your production schedule.

I’ve attached a document [insert link to [timeline template](#)] that outlines what types of illustrations are possible within specific time frames.

Take a look and let me know what you think.

Happy to discuss over the phone if that’s easier!
Thanks!

3. Use this template if you'd like to set realistic expectations about revisions.

Hello _____,

Thanks so much for sharing your production schedule.

Due to the tight turnaround for this project, I wanted to touch base about the time we'll devote to revisions. In my experience, receiving same-day feedback on drafts helps keep the revision process on track.

If this isn't possible, I would suggest extending the timeline to give all necessary stakeholders enough time to submit their thoughts. I should also mention that in order to maximize efficiency on a tight deadline, I cap the number of concept and color options I provide at [insert number here].

You can read more about what I offer here [insert link to timeline template]. Ultimately, I want to be sure I can meet your deadline and deliver the strongest possible work for your brand.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions!

4. Use this template if you you need to do some strategic streamlining.

Hello _____,

I'm looking forward to getting started on this!

Before I begin concepting, however, I'd love to have a clearer picture of exactly what you're envisioning for this project.

Clarifying as many details as possible at this early stage will help minimize confusion and back-and-forth along the way, and ensure that the project stays on schedule.

Would you mind telling me more about [insert topics of interest here]?

Any information you can provide will allow me to be more strategic about the work that will follow.

Thank you!

5. Use this template if you're in danger of missing your deadline.

Hello _____,

This is a challenging email for me to write, as I pride myself on delivering illustrations on time.

Above all, though, it's my goal to produce the best work I can—and as we're nearing the end of this project, I'm realizing I may need more time to do that. Would it be possible to receive an extension of [insert number of hours/days]?

With that extra time I'll be able to [insert what you'll accomplish in that period]. If the timeline can't shift, I'd be happy to discuss simplifying the illustration to meet our original deadline.

Let me know if you'd like to hop on a quick call to discuss the best way to move forward.

I appreciate your patience!