



## Executive Insights

### Say “Yes” - Start a Positive Revolution at Your Organisation

**Boost your organization's culture and performance by saying "yes".**

A movie starring Jim Carrey called *Yes Man* is a reminder of a simple way to improve a company's culture: just say “yes.” It can be in a business' best interest to be bold, and not to balk. Positive action powers innovation... and negativity is contagious.

During the recession of 2008, Chris ~Dyer, CEO and IT software company recalls how he was struggling to survive. A drop-off in orders and poor financial outlook drove him to scrutinize how he did business, and he uncovered an embarrassing truth. His hesitancy to move forward during this difficult time had stymied his business operations and he had become a leader known for saying “no.”

In *Yes Man*, Carrey's character, a downtrodden loan officer, experiences a string of good luck every time he resists his negative tendencies. It's a variation on an improvisational comedy trick—to keep his performance going indefinitely, the players answer “yes” at every opportunity, no matter how absurd.

In business, this principle becomes a psychological tool that can defuse conflicts, encourage innovation and improve morale. “Yes” opens doors to dialogue, introspection and collaboration. “No” cuts off the conversation before it can even begin.

When faced with new ideas or plans that diverge from yours, apply the positive approach. Suppose a staff member asks you for a pay raise. Most bosses just say “no” or delay a response. Try saying:

- **“Yes, and ...”** Draw the employee in by making a pay discussion mutually beneficial. Try, “yes, and I’ll authorize that when you meet these goals.” This lets you explore ways to increase that person’s performance or introduce new duties. By saying yes, you’ve invited the employee to respond positively as well.
- **“Yes, but ...”** Some people need firmer boundaries. Suppose that an underperforming team member says, “I want a raise too!” You might respond, “Yes, but you’ll need to reach the goals we agreed upon at your last review.” You’ve shown a willingness to raise pay—but you’ve insisted that existing criteria be met first.
- **“Yes, in the right circumstances ...”** Clearly, you can’t approve raises in every case or say “yes” to everything. But you can change your negative inclinations. Fortunately, you’re not Jim Carrey stuck in a movie where you can never say “no.” Take some time to think about when you *could* be more positive at work. Maybe it’s agreeing to try a new vendor or relaxing the dress code on Fridays. When you say “yes” to easy stuff, you’ll be more likely to at least consider doing so at other times.

Chris concludes that, when he adopted this mindset, the business began to see incredible results and has earned kudos for record-breaking growth and employee-friendly working conditions.

So, start a positive revolution in your company and build up your organisation’s culture and performance. You’ll find that, like saying “no,” saying “yes” is contagious—in a good way.