



accountabili-buddy

— CLARITY. COMMITMENT. FOLLOW THROUGH. —



CASE
STUDIES

CASE STUDY 12

OVERSIZED TASK

1. TRAINING OBJECTIVE

Recognize when the unit of commitment is so large or insufficiently structured that it interferes with initiation and useful progress.

2. CLIENT PROFILE

Client: Javier

Goal: Prepare a business proposal

Current Commitment: "Finish the entire proposal this weekend."

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

The proposal requires:

- Pricing
- Service description
- Case examples
- Design

- Proofreading
- Final review

Javier has not yet begun the document.

4. CLIENT MESSAGE

Accountabili-Buddy: How did the proposal go?

Javier: It didn't.

Accountabili-Buddy: What happened?

Javier: I opened the blank document Saturday morning and immediately thought about everything that had to go into it.

Javier: I had no idea where to start, so I answered email for a while and then basically avoided it the rest of the weekend.

5. TRAINEE TASK

What is the primary problem?

Is avoidance present?

What should the next intervention address?

6. EVIDENCE ANALYSIS

FACTS

- The commitment bundled multiple substantial components into one completion target.
- Javier had not yet begun.
- When he confronted the full scope of the proposal, he could not identify where to start.

- He then disengaged and substituted another activity.
- Javier describes his later behavior as avoidance.

CLIENT INTERPRETATION

Javier reports that confronting everything the proposal required left him unsure where to begin.

He describes avoiding the proposal after that point.

ACCOUNTABILI-BUDDY INFERENCE

The commitment bundled too many components into a single completion target without establishing a usable starting point.

That structure appears to have contributed to Javier's initiation difficulty.

Avoidance followed, but the current evidence supports addressing the commitment structure before treating avoidance as the primary intervention target.

7. PRIMARY FORMULATION

Oversized, insufficiently structured commitment contributing to initiation difficulty, followed by avoidance.

8. ALTERNATIVE FORMULATIONS

Task-specific avoidance may remain relevant after the commitment is better structured.

Other barriers may also become visible once Javier has a workable starting point.

Perfectionistic standards are possible in superficially similar cases but are not currently supported here.

9. MISSING INFORMATION

The Accountabili-Buddy needs to know how Javier sees the proposal breaking into meaningful components and which component provides a workable starting point.

10. RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

“The whole proposal was functioning as one commitment, and you didn’t have a clear place to begin. How does it break into meaningful pieces, and which one makes sense as the first deliverable?”

11. REASONING

The intervention changes the unit and structure of the commitment rather than merely encouraging Javier to try harder.

The objective is to establish a commitment small enough to be actionable but substantial enough to advance the proposal meaningfully.

The Accountabili-Buddy helps Javier create usable commitment structure without deciding the proposal's workflow for him.

12. PLAUSIBLE ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE

“You were trying to hold the whole proposal as one task. Let’s separate it. What would count as one meaningful first deliverable?”

13. WEAK RESPONSE EXAMPLES

WEAK RESPONSE A

“You just need to start somewhere.”

Problem: The statement is directionally true but does not help Javier define a usable commitment or starting point.

WEAK RESPONSE B

“Commit to only ten minutes.”

Problem: A ten-minute commitment is arbitrary and may not address the need for structural decomposition. Smaller is not automatically better.

WEAK RESPONSE C

"You avoided it because you're afraid of failing."

Problem: The evidence supports initiation difficulty followed by avoidance, not fear of failure specifically. The response invents a cause that Javier has not reported and the evidence does not establish.

14. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Javier should break the proposal into meaningful components and choose a workable first deliverable.

The Accountabili-Buddy can help ensure that the resulting commitment is clear, appropriately scoped, and substantial enough to produce useful progress.

Depending on the proposal's actual structure, a commitment might look like:

"Draft the pricing and service-description sections by Wednesday."

Future behavior will provide evidence about whether improved task structure changes Javier's initiation and follow-through.

15. RECORD / UPDATE

Goal: Complete business proposal

Prior Commitment: Finish entire proposal over weekend

Result: Not started

Observed Sequence: Confronted full scope, could not identify a starting point, disengaged, then avoided the task

Current Formulation: Oversized, insufficiently structured commitment contributing to initiation difficulty, followed by avoidance

Next Step: Javier identifies meaningful components and chooses a workable first deliverable

Pattern to Watch: Whether initiation difficulty or avoidance continues after commitment structure improves

16. SCORING CRITERIA

Full-credit responses should:

- Identify task size and structure as relevant
- Recognize avoidance without assuming an unsupported cause
- Address the commitment structure before assuming avoidance is the primary intervention target
- Avoid arbitrary miniaturization
- Help establish a meaningful, appropriately scoped next commitment
- Preserve Javier's ownership of how the proposal is structured and what he chooses to complete next
- Use subsequent behavior as evidence about the working formulation

