Polite project decline email

From the free scoping kit by Netling Digital. Guide: How to Scope a Client Software Project. File > Make a copy to edit. Text in [brackets] is for you to fill in.

Subject: [product name]: our answer

Hi [name],

Thank you for the time you put into the questionnaire and the call.

We've looked hard at how to make [product name] work within [budget band]. Built properly, the version you described needs more than that budget, and cutting quality to fit would leave you with something that's hard to launch and harder to grow. So we won't quote for the full scope.

What we could do within your budget is a much smaller first version: [the one core flow, for example "sign-up, the booking flow and Stripe payments, with the admin work done by hand at first"]. That would let you test the idea with real users and come back to the rest with evidence.

If that's useful, reply and we'll send a short proposal for it.

If the smaller version isn't what you need, we're not the right team for this one right now. [One useful pointer: a no-code tool for a first test, or a kind of partner who fits a fixed budget better.]

Either way, if things change, reply to this email. We'd be glad to look again.

Best, [name]

If they've already said no to a smaller version

Hi [name], thanks for considering the smaller version. As it doesn't fit what you need, we'll step back from this one rather than quote a full build we can't deliver well at this budget. [One useful pointer.] If your plans change, reply here and we'll pick it up from the recap.