

12 THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT SAY AT WORK



Summary: In order to keep your workplace relationships strong, there are 12 things you should avoid saying.

Do you want to keep your job or at least a decent relationship with your boss and colleagues? If you do, then there are certain things you need to be doing and not doing. The workplace can often have a number of office politics, guidelines, and relationships that must be handled carefully. To make the handling of those sometimes stressful and complicate matters easier, there are things you can be doing. Here are 12 things you should not be saying at work and what you should be saying instead.

1. It's not my problem – It may be easy to dismiss things that aren't directly your problem but you are part of the workplace, thus part of the solution. Saying something like makes you sound selfish and not a good team player. A better way to handle this situation is to say "I recommend talking with (insert name of appropriate person)."
2. But things have always been done this way – Change can be scary. A lot can be gained by changing things up but sometimes the change is not a good one. Even though the adage: "Don't fix something unless it's broken" is a legitimate reason, you saying this to someone at work makes you sound inflexible and "stuck in your ways." A better thing to say is "Can you tell me why it is better?"
3. There is nothing I can do – Even though you may feel like there is nothing you can do after exhausting all possibilities, a "can-do" attitude is going to go over a lot better with your employer. Admitting defeat says to your boss that you will give up when things get tough. A better thing to say in a situation when you are stuck is, "I'm a little stuck. Can you help me find any other options?"
4. That makes no sense – It is okay to get confused. Everyone does at one point or another. Jumping to a conclusion that their idea or point is messed up can ruin relationships. Instead of immediately being negative about the situation, try to find a way of recognizing what they are saying by asking "I'm not sure about that. Can you explain to me why it is a better option?"
5. You're wrong – This statement often slips out before we realize it. The problem with letting it slip so carelessly is that it crushes unspoken office etiquette rules and can offend some. Just like in almost any circumstance, there is a diplomatic way of handling it. A better thing to let slip from your mouth is, "I disagree and here's why... what do you think?"
6. I haven't had time – Everyone wishes for a few more hours each day every now and then. Be proactive and state when you will have the task done instead of that it is late. You may need to find a way to organize and prioritize so that you are maximizing the time you have each day and getting things done. Tell them, "I will be able to get this done by..."
7. I just assumed that – Mistakes happen, and quite often because of miscommunication. Avoid expressing your assumptions and clarify what it is you are supposed to do. This is exactly what you should be saying too. Ask "Could you clarify what your expectations are for me?"
8. I may be wrong, but – When you have an idea but lack confidence in it, your idea will not sound as strong. Don't worry about how others might think of your idea or that they may dismiss what you have to say. Give yourself some credit and tell people what you are thinking. A simple way of doing this is saying, "Here's an idea..."
9. I did my best – It is highly unlikely that you gave your best, there is always room for improvement because we all make mistakes. We are taught from a young age to always try our best, but sometimes our best is just not good enough. Take your shortcoming and learn from it. Say "What could I do better next time?" to improve your relations with colleagues and supervisors and to improve yourself.
10. You should have – When we get frustrated, we often say things we don't mean in a way that is very unkind. This includes pointing out mistakes but blaming someone and finding fault in them or their work does not improve your frustrations. Find a constructive way of dealing with your frustration. Try saying, "It didn't work. Here is what I recommend next time..."
11. I'm sorry but – Saying sorry but following it with an excuse negates the power of a true apology. If you want someone to believe you are actually sorry, keep it sincere and avoids justifications. Try saying, "I'm sorry about that. Next time I will..."
12. This will only take a minute – Very few things take only a minute. Sometimes you will have a demanding colleague or boss so you try to reassure them that what you have to say or do will not take long. However, trying to hurry things to meet their rushed demands does not help a point effectively get delivered. A better thing to say is "Let me get back to you on a timeframe."

Remember, if you have done or said something you now regret, there are three simple steps to recover. Start off by apologizing for what you did or said. Be sincere in acknowledging what you did and that you did something wrong or caused confusion. Explain what you actually meant to do or say in a clear, friendly way. Avoid being confrontational or hostile in how you approach them to correct your behavior.

Have you ever said something at work that did not go over well but you don't know why? Share your experiences with us in the comments below.

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