



Things you should never say at work

Avoid these eight common phrases to protect your relationships and your career – it's wise to watch your words

An off-the-cuff remark that you think went unnoticed might be the first thing your boss remembers when he or she thinks about you. "Certain phrases can damage your reputation," says behavioural specialist Justine Jackson-Fraser of Psychology at Work. "These phrases or words are also known as serious Career Limiting Moves (CLMs)." Avoid the following CLMs to climb the corporate ladder:

"That's not part of my job"

"As soon as you're in a situation where you are re-evaluating job descriptions, there could be a serious breakdown in your relationship with your manager, which may need some repairing," says Jackson-Fraser. If someone comes to you with a problem, use the situation to prove you're a team player. "Opportunities often come wrapped up as problems," says Annette Kinnear, author of *Your Career, Your Life* (Penguin Books). "Average attitudes and behaviours can't lead to above-average results. Your actions should match your ambitions."

"Yeah, no problem" (if you don't mean it)

"Make it a priority to limit instances of overpromising or underperforming," says Jackson-Fraser. If you take on a task with no intention of completing it you're going to earn a reputation as an unreliable person. Rather be honest about it. Your colleagues are relying on you and your decisions will affect them too.

"I just didn't have enough..."

Everyone is pretty busy these days and moaning does not send the message that you can cope effectively. "Rather put your energy into providing your boss with alternatives to the problem. Spend 20 percent

"In business we're expected to behave like adults. The more mature we are, the better our decisions and the greater our success"

"Don't tell anyone, but..."

If it's a secret, keep it to yourself. "During career counselling we often find that one person will say terrible things about a particular manager," says Kinnear. Gossiping is a building block for ugly corporate politics. You're likely to stand out as highly professional if you avoid talking maliciously about someone.

of your time describing the issue, and the other 80 percent on illustrating solutions," says Jackson-Fraser.

"I'm so hungover"

You're probably not the only person in the office to indulge in a drink now and then, but it's safer to leave the most personal issues at home. If you can't show that you can manage your personal life, moods and drinking habits effectively how can you be expected to manage a team of individuals? "In business we're expected to behave like adults. The more mature we are, the better our decisions and the greater our success," says Kinnear.

"I need a raise"

"Asking for a raise when it is not merited will only send the message that you want more money – not that you deserve it," says Jackson-Fraser. Instead, a couple of months before your performance review make sure you assert your proactiveness. Then, when annual increases come along, highlight the accomplishments you've made.

"It's not my fault"

When your boss comes to you with a problem the last thing you want to do is to blame someone else. Jackson-Fraser explains that when you engage in scapegoating you risk coming across as a game-player and as unprofessional. You make yourself look worse if you spend more time finger-pointing than problem solving.

"To be honest with you"

This is a serious red flag. Any time this phrase is used, you know something negative is about to follow. Kinnear explains that it raises the question of whether you have always been dishonest. Instead, without being rude, say what you mean in a straightforward manner. ☺