

Do you think perhaps maybe possibly we could help you sound a little more confident?

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Based on that opening question, of course you don't! What makes that sentence so unconvincing? A lack of confidence! Words convey a powerful message about your professional presence, which is so important in today's business world. Are you using words that undermine your confidence and credibility? Consider the following:

- **Just.** "I just wanted to check..." sounds insecure, tentative, even apologetic! Nix *just* to make your sentences more competent, direct, and determined.
- **Like, Um.** Filler words suck the value from your speech. A few may go unnoticed, but too many will break up your thoughts and make you sound like a gossiping teenager. *Like-um* be gone!
- **Maybe.** "Could you maybe..." cedes all your power and certainty. Adding *maybe* to a request sounds like you're bracing for (and opens the door for) rejection, so get rid of it!
- **Actually.** The sure-sounding *actually* seems confident, but it can actually make you sound like a know-it-all. (See what we did there?) It can also sound like a cover up for a lack of knowledge or certainty.
- **Sorry.** You're hurting your career if *sorry* is your go-to. Every statement you start with an apology makes you subordinate, and can make you seem insincere, insecure, or powerless. So, use *sorry* only when you need to heal a relationship, not to preface requests, refusals, or your opinion.

Vague or passive language is counterproductive in the ebb and flow of daily business. Be conscious of your words and choose ones that convey confidence!