Introduction

Business communication rarely goes beyond the borders of formal speech and writing, particularly in the B2B niche. Sometimes it's reasonable to add a slight touch of humor as an icebreaker, but most of the time you should stick to the regular business language. According to the report, over 80 percent of B2B decision makers think sales reps are unprepared. Such impression partly comes as a consequence of improper communication.

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Phrases to Avoid

To whom it may concern

In the age of the internet, it's not allowed to send introductory emails starting with this phrase. The reason is simple – you can easily find a recipient's name online. Not doing it only proves that you were too lazy to do the homework.

Using 'I' instead of 'We'

You are not the only representative of the company, so you shouldn't speak in the first person. Use 'we' instead of 'I' to show that your entire organization is supporting the project.

No worries/Not a problem

A client is happy to realize that you can solve his problem, but it doesn't mean you should use colloquial language. Phrases like "no worries" or "not a problem" are breaking the norms of business communication and show that you might as well be too self-conf‐ ident.

We can't do that

On some occasions, you just have to find a way to overcome obstacles or bypass standard procedures. If an important client is asking you to improvise, you shouldn't break the law, but you shouldn't tell him "We can't do that" either. You can do everything – you only need to find the right tactic.

We are not sure, but...

We are not sure, but we can check it out. How does this sentence sound to you? If you were a client, would you believe that these guys could help you? Probably not. You don't want to let the client see you are confused.

Always, never, absolutely

Words like "always," "never" or "absolutely" are too firm and vigorous. Using them, you basically promise everything is going to be alright 100 percent. But things could go wrong. As a matter of fact, things usually go wrong, so you need to avoid definitive statements.

Think outside the box

Phrases to Avoid (cont)

Clients want you to be creative and intuitive. However, using phrases such as "thinking outside the box" do not prove that you are different than the crowd of competitors. On the contrary, the expression is so widespread that it only shows your language limits.

Phrases Continued

To be honest

This phrase doesn't sound too good in business communication. Why do we say that? It's because "to be honest" suggests you disprove a client's statement. The customer is always right, so you need to find another – more subtle – way to express disapproval.

It's not possible

When it comes to business, there are only two types of organizat‐ ions. The first type can do whatever it takes to get the job done, while the second type uses phrases like "Not possible." If you want to maintain long-term profitability of your business, you need to eliminate this sentence from the glossary.

ROI, KPI, and other acronyms

Acronyms can speed up B2B communication, but only if your clients are highly skilled and proficient. However, the truth is that most clients aren't familiar with acronyms like ROI, KPI, SEO, etc. For this reason, you shouldn't make them confused but instead try to use everyday language to explain your ideas.

You have to…

Sometimes you ask a client to do something before you move on with the project, but you can't do it by saying "You must" or "You have to." It sounds too aggressive and pushy, which is not suitable for B2B interactions.

Listen to me

This phrase has pretty much the same connotation as the previous one. You can't order clients to listen to you. Instead, you need to address them politely and calmly explain your ideas.

With all due respect

"With all due respect" represents an introduction to the conflict. You might as well replace it with "I think you are a good guy, but your ideas are terrible."

It's not our fault

If something goes wrong, you should determine the cause and try to solve the problem. But you never want to say things like "This is not our fault." After all, you were the one working on this project, so who else is to blame for the failure?

Calm down

Phrases Continued (cont)

You are going to face an angry client every once in a while. In such circumstances, telling him to calm down is the worst option. Angry persons want to express their feeling, so let them do it and then try to set things right.