

Use Phrases that Build Relationships

Replace a negative phrase with one that will help build a relationship.

NEGATIVE PHRASE	CONSTRUCTIVE PHRASE
I can't handle this.	Let's build a bridge and get over it.
What's your problem?	How may I help?
We've never done it before.	We have the opportunity to be first.
It's too complicated.	Let's look at it from a different angle.
We don't have the resources.	Necessity is the Mother of Invention.
It will never work.	We'll give it a try.
It's not the way we do it around here.	I understand your concern.
There's not enough time.	We'll re-evaluate some priorities.
You can't do this.	Here are some options.
We already tried it.	We learned from the experience.
I can't do it.	I know someone who can help.
There's no way it'll work.	We can make it work.
It will never fly.	We'll never know until we try.
It's a waste of time.	Think of the possibilities.
That would be impossible.	Get out the duct tape.
It's a waste of money.	The investment will be worth it.
We don't have the expertise.	Let's network with those who do.
It's not my job.	Here's what I can do for you.
We don't have enough money.	Maybe there is something we can cut.
We're understaffed.	We're a lean, mean machine!
We don't have the equipment.	Maybe we can sub it out.

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NEGATIVE PHRASE	CONSTRUCTIVE PHRASE
We don't have enough room.	Temporary space may be an option.
It's not going to be any better.	We'll try it one more time.
I don't have any idea.	I'll come up with some alternatives.
Let somebody else deal with it.	I'm ready to learn something new.
I don't know.	I'll find out.
It's contrary to policy.	Anything's possible.
We've always done it that way.	Which do you prefer?
It can't be done.	It'll be a challenge.
Can this wait until...?	I'll find someone who can help.
No one communicates.	Let's open the channels.
No problem.	It's my pleasure.
It's good enough.	There is always room for improvement.
I'll transfer you now.	I'll connect you with...
You have to...	Here's what you can do.
You must do...	Which do you prefer?

Bear in mind that it is easier to be positive in good times than in bad. But, it is especially in bad times that a positive attitude is needed. Displaying a negative attitude in bad times can add momentum to a business or family that is in a downward spiral. On the other hand, maintaining a positive attitude during difficult times can help steer the business or family in a positive direction.

So, remember that attitudes can drag you down or propel you forward. Stay focused on using positive language to reflect your positive attitude. Attitudes are like viruses; they are contagious.