

5 Things to Say Instead of I'm Sorry at Work



Instead of: *I'm sorry, can I ask a question?*

Say: *I have a question. or I'd like to clarify something.*

Why?

- You don't need to **apologize** for needing information.
- Asking questions shows **engagement**, not incompetence.

Instead of: *Sorry for the delay.*

Say: *Thank you for your patience.*

Why?

- Flipping the script keeps the conversation positive and **reinforces that your time is valuable, too.**

Instead of: *Sorry, but I disagree.*

Say: *I see it differently. or Here's another perspective.*

Why?

- Apologizing before sharing your opinion **undermines** your authority.
- You have the **right to your perspective**—own it.

Instead of: *I'm sorry for bothering you.*

Say: *Do you have a moment? or I'd like to discuss something when you have time.*

Why?

- You're not a bother—you're a **valuable contributor**.
- Instead of shrinking yourself, **respect their time while asserting yours.**

Instead of: *Sorry, I didn't understand.*

Say: *Can you clarify that for me? or I'd like to make sure I have this right.*

Why?

- You don't need to apologize for **seeking clarity**.
- It's a sign of **strong leadership** and