

# 12 ADVOCACY ACTIONS FOR SUCCESS

## 7. COMMUNICATE FOR ADVOCACY

From the list below, identify how can you make your language more agentic and collaborative:

- Swap “I worked really hard” → “This drove [metric/outcome]”
- Pair we for team wins + I for owned outcomes
- Replace apologizing with appreciating: “Thanks for the time—two decisions to make...”
- Evidence first, adjectives later
- Combine warmth + competence: “I’d love your input, and here’s my recommendation”
- Pre-empt the likability penalty with communal framing: “This helps the team hit Q4 targets”

The list below includes common ways people erode confidence through their communication. Highlight the points you might want to work on:

- Starting sentences with “I’m just...”
- Saying “Sorry to bother you...” (when you’re not actually at fault)
- Writing “This might be a stupid question...”
- Overusing “I think,” “I feel like,” or “Maybe...”
- Ending statements like questions? (uptalk in writing or speech)
- Adding unnecessary qualifiers: “kind of,” “sort of,” “a little bit”
- Excessive hedging: “It seems like,” “It could be that...”
- Asking for permission to speak: “Can I jump in?”
- Over-apologizing before delivering feedback
- Softening opinions with too many disclaimers
- Using too many exclamation points to appear agreeable
- Smiley faces to cushion neutral information
- Downplaying achievements: “It was nothing,” “I got lucky.”
- Giving credit away reflexively (when you led the work)
- Explaining competence instead of demonstrating it
- Over-explaining simple points
- Speaking quickly to “get it over with”
- Avoiding eye contact (in person or camera)
- Sending long justifications for reasonable boundaries
- Using passive voice to avoid ownership
- Asking rhetorical permission: “Does that make sense?”
- Framing needs as inconveniences: “If it’s not too much trouble...”
- Preemptively lowering expectations: “This is a rough draft...”
- Laughing after stating a serious point
- Using self-deprecating humor reflexively
- Over-thanking to the point of diminishing presence