

# Session 5

## Successful Leaders Can Never Say .....

You want to be successful. Everybody does. But your actual words might be undermining your chances of success. The things you say in the office, no matter how innocuous they seem to you, might be knocking you down the career ladder and putting the top position you dream about out of reach.

Your career is too important to be tanked by a few negative phrases. Here are the seven things you should strike from your workplace vocabulary if you want to achieve the success you richly deserve.

### 1. “That’s not in my job description.”

When you accepted your current position, you had a good idea of what the responsibilities and workload of the role would entail. Throughout the months or years since you settled into your job, however, your role has expanded and changed shape. Some of these changes have probably been good, while others have made you wish for simpler times. When a boss or manager piles another responsibility on your already sore shoulders, it might be tempting to pull out this classic gem of work avoidance.

The better option, however, is to schedule a time to talk to your boss about your role. A specific conversation about your place in the organization is a good time to bring up the particulars of your job description, not when you’re asked to get something accomplished. No matter how stressed you are or how valid the complaint, dropping this phrase only makes you look lazy and unmotivated.

### 2. “It can’t be done.”

#### Very little is truly impossible

Throwing in the towel makes you look like a quitter – and quitters don’t get promoted. Instead of giving up on a project entirely, frame your response in terms of alternative ways to get the work accomplished. Very little is truly impossible, and most managers and executives want forward-thinking problem solvers to climb the corporate ladder. If you offer solutions instead of giving up, you’ll be seen as a valuable member of the team.

### 3. “It’s not my fault.”

#### Take ownership of your mistakes

No one wants to work with a blame shifter. After all, it’s just a matter of time before this person eventually shifts the blame onto you. Take ownership of your mistakes instead of pointing out where others have fallen short. Admitting to a mistake shows character and the ability to learn and grow from problems. Pointing the finger at someone else strongly implies you’ll never truly learn from your errors.

#### **4. “This will just take a minute.”**

##### **Don’t overpromise and underdeliver**

Unless something will literally take only 60 seconds, don’t overpromise and underdeliver. Saying something will only take “a minute” also has the side effect of undermining your efforts. Most likely the reason the particular task won’t take long is due to the benefit of your professional experience and acumen. By saying it will “just” take a minute, you’re shortchanging what you bring to the table.

#### **5. “I don’t need any help.”**

The rugged lone wolf might be the hero of most action movies, but they’re unlikely to become the hero at your company. You might think you can go it alone on a project or in your career, but teamwork is essential. Being able to work with others is the hallmark of a good leader; you’re unlikely to climb your career ladder always flying solo.

#### **6. “It’s not fair.”**

##### **Life isn’t fair**

Life isn’t fair, and often your career won’t be as well. Instead of complaining, you should look for specific and actionable workarounds to the problems you encounter. Is it unfair a coworker got to run point on the project you wanted? Maybe, but instead of complaining, work harder and go the extra mile. Finding a solution will always be preferable in your professional life to whining about a problem.

#### **7. “This is the way it’s always been done.”**

Doing things the way they’ve always been done is no way to run a business. Just ask some of the companies which toed the line, accepted the status quo, and went under. Adapting to an ever-changing marketplace is really the only way to survive in an economy constantly being disrupted by the next big thing.

You don’t have to be a slave to the trends, but you also can’t stick your head in the sand and hope things go back to normal. Instead, come up with creative solutions to new problems and innovate, and you’ll soon be in the driver’s seat taking your organization into the future.

Everyone wants to be successful, so make sure your words aren’t holding you back. These seven phrases are career kryptonite – by avoiding them, you can fly into your future and become a successful superstar.

Pozin, I. (2014, April 2). *Successful Leaders Can Never Say...* Retrieved April 2014, from LinkedIn.