



Your quick guide on... Finding your voice at work

Some of us aren't built to make speeches, strike up conversations with strangers or generally draw attention to ourselves, but that doesn't mean you can't speak up when you need to at work.

If you feel the need to make a comment, request or complaint to a colleague or your boss, it's important to first clarify and reevaluate the situation. Make sure you've fully grasped what's going on and haven't misunderstood the circumstances. From there you can figure out exactly what you want to achieve from speaking up and what the potential consequences might be.

If you're feeling a little nervous, consider what might happen if you were to say nothing at all. It could really motivate you to acknowledge what you might miss out on or what you may experience as a result of staying silent. Perhaps you've missed out on something before for the same reason?

There's always a chance things won't go your way or the conversation may take a rather difficult turn. Although it's best not to expect the worst, you should prepare for it. The key here is to remain calm and focused and never allow the experience to put you off from speaking out again. If you think you are being unfairly treated, don't give up.

It may be worthwhile to script what you want to say and read through it a couple of times. Don't learn it word for word as you may put unnecessary pressure on yourself and sound stiff and robotic, but if you have a rough idea of how the words will sound it could help build your confidence. Saying it out loud will also help you to select the best phrasing to express how you're feeling.

It's not only important to know what to say, but where and when to say it as well. Find somewhere quiet and private away from other co-workers at a time when you're not busy. It's also a good idea to hold off from starting a conversation at the very beginning or very end of the day.

Finally, think positively and aim for success. Take your time and visualize a successful outcome. You may not be a natural speaker, but that's only because it comes with experience.

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