10 office faux pas you've committed for the last time

1. Attacking your environment. There's probably not a workplace in the world where everyone feels like they're at the perfect temperature all the time. It's tough to heat and cool large buildings, and vocal complaints about being too hot or too cold get old very quickly. Do what you can to take matters into your own hands through layering, desk fans, etc. before you become known as a complainer.

2. Getting "namey." Ever notice that when someone is speaking to you in a slightly tense conversation, the use of your name has the effect of putting you slightly on the defensive? ("Well, *Susan,* as I said before...") While it's a personable thing to do when things are casual, it can come off as an aggressive means of speaking when a problem is being discussed, so be very careful of your tone when you name-drop.

3. Handing out memory assignments. When you agree to complete a project of any size, never drop the old "Remind me if I forget" bomb on the person who requested it. When you do, you create an obligation for *them* to have to deal with, and you set up a situation where they have to play the thankless role of the pest at some point. Agreeing to a task carries with it the responsibility of finishing it without having to be needled about it.

4. Creating false narratives. Ever played the game called Telephone, where a message is relayed along a chain of people to see how accurately it comes out after passing through all those connections? The office is like that, and those who play Telephone poorly are doing their co-workers a real disservice. Paraphrasing, dramatizing or re-imagining someone's words usually isn't fair to anyone; we tend to remember a tone or underlying message that suits our cause rather than the one that actually happened. There's no better way to generate resentment and misunderstanding than distorting what someone has said to you.

5. Bending time itself. What's the most common lie we accidentally tell each other every day? That we'll be home in 10 minutes, or a phone call will just make us five minutes late, or it'll only be a half hour before a project is done. When we speak to others, we chronically underestimate the amount of time things will take because we seek to avoid conflict and put their minds at ease, but the opposite can happen if we're not honest enough. Think of your credibility when making such wobbly guarantees.

6. Interrupting. One of the most subtle ways to undermine your own credibility is to be an interrupter. At a meeting or presentation, make sure a clarification is something you truly require in order to keep from getting hopelessly lost, and refrain from offering anecdotes to either support or challenge the speaker in mid-speech. Chiming in with anything but the most game-changing fact can make you seem more like a stage-grabber than a valuable contributor. Almost anything can—and should—wait until the Q & A.

7. Telling too many tales. It's another groggy Monday morning and the coffee's barely started brewing in the kitchen. When you first come across a co-worker who you know well, what do you say right after "Hello"? Immediately springing into anecdotes of your weekend struggles at Costco, or exhausted sighs about your workload, is not a good pattern to fall into. People are delighted when you ask about them and then kick back and truly listen, so become an absorber. Remember, we ourselves are only about 34 percent as interesting to others as we think (just a wild estimate) ...

8. Winning the 40-meter dash. One type of employee who definitely does *not* inspire confidence is the rusher—someone who physically moves much faster as he tackles a task or tears down the hallway at a sprint because he feels rushed. This type of frenetic movement doesn't save any significant time, but it does broadcast to everyone that you're not in control, panic easily and possess an unfortunate flair for office drama.

9. Writing like a chatbot. Living the office life means you're going to sign a lot of special occasion cards for fellow employees. You don't have to be a standup comic or drive-by philosopher when the card is passed your way, but be aware that only signing "Best wishes" again and again does make it seem like you care not at all about your colleagues' big days or accomplishments. Try some very brief expression of unique enthusiasm once in a while—or even fall back on the tried-and-true triple exclamation points to make it seem like you're happy they're happy.

10. Hounding those poor folks in IT. Always try rebooting your computer when encountering a tech problem that's stopped you cold—even if it doesn't seem like such a simple fix could possibly cure what's ailing your system. ("Come on, how can turning this thing off and on again magically make the fonts in this PDF appear correctly?") Chances are good that a reboot is the first thing IT will recommend anyway; never underestimate the mysterious power of a reset to miraculously unjam the works.