"Before You Hit Send" Email Checklist

Use this checklist to help you write more powerful communications. (You can grab the checklist at www.taramohr.com/pbbookmaterials if you want to have a version to keep handy near your desk).

☐ 1. **Check for "shrinkers"** — words like "just," "actually," and "almost" (As in, "I just think . . . ," "I actually disagree," "I almost want to suggest that we . . .") Delete them!

☐ 2. **Check for any unnecessary apologies** — places where you are saying sorry for no good reason or for simply taking up space on the planet. ("Sorry to bother you but …" "Sorry if this is a silly question . . .")

☐ 3. **Check for any added-in "a little bit" or "just a minute" or "just a sec"** — anything where you are implicitly suggesting what you have to say isn't worth much time or space.

☐ 4. **Check for any instances of "Does that make sense?" "Am I making sense?" or "Do you know what I mean?"** Replace these questions with something like "I look forward to hearing your thoughts," or "Let me know if you have questions about this." Even if you are trying to make sure your audience understood you, find out if they have questions without implying that you've been incoherent.

☐ 5. **Check for any undermining disclaimers:** "I'm just thinking off the top of my head, but . . . ," "I'm no expert in this, but . . . ," or "You clearly know about this more than I do but . . ." Delete the qualifier and simply say what you have to say.

☐   6. **Check for places where you are hiding your point of view behind a question.** Instead of sharing your opinion, for example, "I think this is the wrong direction for us to take," you might have written, "Does everyone feel sure about this direction?" Use questions as replacements for more explicit statements only when it's strategic—not as a way of hiding your ideas.

☐   7. **Weave in warmth.** Include a personal, friendly, warm opening and closing. Add a little humor into your communications when appropriate. Express your interest in hearing the recipient's thoughts and response. Use bids for connection.