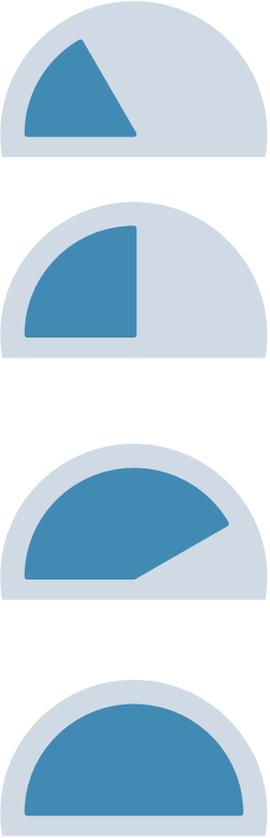
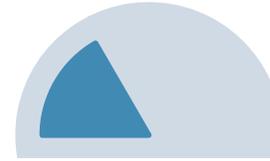


Sarcasm in the Workplace: A Bad Idea



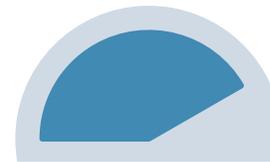
And How to Work Around It



What is Sarcasm?



Why Avoid It?



Dry Humor



Self-Awareness

What Me, Sarcastic?

Sarcasm, by definition, is “the use of irony to mock or convey contempt” (www.dictionary.com)

Are the following statements sincere or sarcastic?

“Oh, you’re hilarious!”

“Gee, just what I always wanted.”

“Why wouldn’t anyone think you’re a genius?”

Without the proper **context**, we will never know



Just kidding...or Was I?

Sarcasm has fallen into regular use as personal relationships use more and more filters in their communications:

- Text
- Email
- Social media

Distance between Messenger and Recipient creates an **empathy gap** – out of sight, out of mind



Just Kidding...or Was I?

Humor is not funny unless your **target audience** thinks it is

Humor is found in the interpretation of a message.

- Baby Boomers and Gen X'ers think *Seinfeld* is hilarious
- Millennials think it is **unfunny** and offensive



Just Kidding...or Was I?



The problem with **sarcasm** is that not everybody understands it!

Sarcasm is found in the nonlexical components of speech

- Tone of voice
- Facial expressions
- Exaggerated vowels

If you have to tell people “**I was being sarcastic**”, you weren’t!

Just Kidding...or Was I?



Improperly executed, sarcasm can be interpreted as

- Anger
- Disgust
- Disingenuous feeling

You many think you are being **sarcastic**, when in fact you are being **mean**

Dry, Dry, Baby



An alternative to sarcasm is the use of **dry** or **deadpan** humor. The late comedian Johnny Carson was an expert at it.

While sarcasm highlights the **negative** of a situation, dry humor puts a **positive** spin on it by emphasizing an overlooked point of view

Dry humor removes the **tension** from a situation; sarcasm adds to it

Dry, Dry, Baby



Dry humor usually entails keeping a straight face, and showing no change in emotional state.

When in the office or with clients, it is best to smile when attempting humor

- Shows sincerity
- Invites levity
- Appears non-threatening

Does This Joke Make Me Look Fat?



The most important part of using humor in a business situation is to keep a sense of **self-awareness**

- Is your **audience** laughing?
- Is your audience laughing **with** you – or **at** you?
- Are your jokes falling flat?

If you are not getting a positive response, cut the humor

If your audience appears **offended**, immediately **apologize** for your lapse in judgement

Does This Joke Make Me Look Fat?

Always remember:

The **office** is a place of **business**, not an open-mic night at a comedy club

Sarcasm is not understood by all cultures

Dry humor should be used sparingly, lest people not take you seriously



Summary



What Is Sarcasm?

Sarcasm is a form of low humor; it is using irony to mock someone or something.



Why Avoid It?

Sarcasm can be difficult to interpret. Not all cultures use sarcasm, and not all people use it correctly. When misinterpreted, can be seen as a disrespectful attitude.



Dry Humor

Dry humor puts a positive spin on a negative situation, reducing tension; it generally points out a previously unexplored viewpoint.



Self-Awareness

Be aware of how your use of humor – especially sarcasm – is received by others. If your jokes are falling flat, accept responsibility.

A 3D white figure stands inside a circular frame, holding a white rectangular sign. The sign has the word "Questions?" written on it in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The figure is positioned on the left side of the frame, with its right hand resting on the top edge of the sign. The background is white, and there are decorative elements on the left side, including a grey vertical bar with overlapping circles and a blue bubble.

Questions?