

## Maintain Your Credibility at Work: Don't Overshare

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As a young woman, you likely enjoy time with your girlfriends dreaming about your future, dealing with the challenges of today and sharing your thoughts and perceptions of the world around you. That's an excellent use of your girlfriend time. Go ahead and share every intimate detail of last night's date, your nervousness during this afternoon's presentation at work, and the way you saved your cranky coworker when she started to explode in a client meeting. **But please, keep that sharing out of your professional world.**



The fact is the **way we communicate directly informs the way others perceive us.** At work you want to be perceived as capable and competent. You may also want to be seen as creative or funny or innovative. Whatever space you are carving out for yourself professionally, don't let gossip girl, whiney whiner or drama queen become a part of the mix. It's not good for you or your career.

Go ahead and tell your boss that it took some wrangling to get the project done on time. Outline your accomplishments, show what you've delivered, and articulate the positive impact you're making in the business. That kind of communication signals that you went above and beyond and that you care about your work. Your manager is then free to ask you for more detail and you can tell her about the backordered supplies or the less-than-stellar consultant. Many people believe unveiling the shortcomings of others, the struggle of getting a job done, or generally ranting about garden variety work difficulties shows how committed they are, how much effort they put into getting a job done, and helps highlight where other people dropped the ball. Not true.

**It is not useful to go to your boss with a laundry list of the hoops you had to jump through to get the job completed.** She really doesn't need to see you as a complainer who focuses on the negative and belittles others. Don't spend your precious time with her talking about the way your colleagues refuse to keep the database updated because they are lazy and selfish and expect you to do all the grunt work. Instead, outline your ideas for solving your company's database update issues in your next one-on-one meeting. That displays a commitment to the business, strategic thinking, and teamwork. You want her to focus on the positive contributions you're making, not on all the details of the manageable hurdles you've faced.

What you're doing when you unload on your boss is a little thing called oversharing. **Cease and desist. Oversharing makes you high maintenance and a bit of a tattletale. Neither of these things serves you well.** Please, be strategic with your backstories. If you really need your boss to know that someone isn't pulling their weight or that a system is flawed, go to her with a clear statement of what's in need of repair, how improving it can improve the business, and then offer a solution. No drama; no oversharing. Most professional managers want to know they can trust their direct reports to get the assigned work done with minimal drama.

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