

Fig. 1: Language Components & Cline of Increasingly + Language/Goodwill

Negative Language → Neutral Language → Positive Language

Sounds

Negative (-)		Positive (+)
Na!	Uhhhhh	Ahhhhh!
Shush!	Shh (Quiet, pls./Listen up)	

Words & Phrases

Livid → mad angry → upset
 Impossible → difficult/hard → challenging
 Not available **unavailable** (downplays negative)

Sentences

Conditionals	→	Directives	→	Statements (requests = more polite)
Unless you pay by Fri., . . .		Pay by		Please pay by Fri. to avoid . . .
Active Voice		Active		Passive (less ego-bruising)
You failed to pay.		You did not pay.		Your payment was not received .

Discourse (paragraphs & longer segments))

Direct approach to bad news (thesis 1st)	Indirect approach to neg. news (delayed thesis)
- Bad News	- Buffer 1 st (i.e. a positive or neutral statement)
- Reason/explanation	- Quick transition to neg. news positively worded
- Positive close (optional)	- Positive close (less concise yet more polite)