



BUSINESS ENGLISH · RESOURCE GUIDE

20 English Mistakes That Cost Italian Businesses Sales

Small slips in emails, calls and meetings — and what
to say instead.

Why these 20 mistakes matter

Most Italian professionals speak English well enough to be understood. The problem isn't comprehension — it's **credibility**. A handful of recurring errors, almost all of them direct translations from Italian, quietly signal "not quite professional" to an English-speaking buyer, even when the message gets across.

None of these mistakes are about grammar for its own sake. Each one is something that can make a client hesitate, misread your tone, or trust your business a little less — at the exact moment you're trying to win them over.

This guide walks through the twenty most common slips we see in Italian business English: in sales emails, proposals, calls and meetings. For each one, you'll find the mistake, the correction, and exactly why it costs you.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read through once, then keep it next to you when writing client emails or preparing for calls. Most of these patterns become automatic within a few weeks of conscious correction.

01 “Actually” used to mean “currently”

AVOID ~~We are actually working on your order.~~

USE **We are currently working on your order.**

WHY “Actually” means “in fact, contrary to what you might think.” A client reads this as a contradiction, not an update.

02 “Eventually” used to mean “possibly”

AVOID ~~We could eventually offer a discount.~~

USE **We could possibly offer a discount.**

WHY “Eventually” means “in the end, after some time” — it doesn’t express possibility. A firm offer can sound vague or open-ended.

03 “I am agree”

AVOID ~~I am agree with your proposal.~~

USE **I agree with your proposal.**

WHY “Agree” is a verb, not an adjective. One of the clearest tells of a direct translation, and it appears constantly in negotiation emails.

04 Confusing “make” and “do”

AVOID ~~We will make a meeting next week.~~

USE **We will have a meeting next week.**

WHY Italian uses “fare” for both. English splits them: do business, make a decision, have a meeting. Mixing them up in a proposal reads as careless.

05 “Informations” as a plural

AVOID ~~Please send us more informations.~~

USE **Please send us more information.**

WHY “Information” is uncountable — it never takes an “s.” A fast way a native reader clocks the email as non-native.

06 “Since” instead of “for”

AVOID ~~We have worked with this supplier since five years.~~

USE **We have worked with this supplier for five years.**

WHY Use “since” for a starting point, “for” for a duration. This undercuts exactly the experience claim meant to build trust.

07 “Discuss about”

AVOID ~~We need to discuss about the contract.~~

USE **We need to discuss the contract.**

WHY “Discuss” already means “talk about” — small, but it appears in almost every negotiation email.

08 “Explain me”

AVOID ~~Can you explain me the process?~~

USE **Can you explain the process to me?**

WHY “Explain” needs “to” before the person. On a call, this can make a confident question sound hesitant.

09 “Depend of”

AVOID ~~The price depends of the quantity.~~

USE **The price depends on the quantity.**

WHY It’s “depend on” in English. Often appears in pricing and terms language, exactly where precision matters most.

10 “Sensible” used to mean “sensitive”

AVOID ~~This is sensible information, please keep it private.~~

USE **This is sensitive information, please keep it private.**

WHY “Sensible” means practical or reasonable; “sensitive” means delicate or confidential. Mixing these up on a confidentiality clause can genuinely confuse a client.

11 “Sympathetic” used to mean “nice”

AVOID ~~It was a very sympathetic meeting.~~

USE **It was a very friendly meeting.**

WHY In English, “sympathetic” means feeling sorry for someone. Said about a client, it can sound like pity rather than a compliment.

12 “I would to discuss”

AVOID ~~I would to discuss the new terms.~~

USE **I would like to discuss the new terms.**

WHY “Would” needs “like to” before the verb. Shows up in opening lines of sales emails — a prospect’s first impression of you.

13 Dropping “old” from ages

AVOID ~~Our company is 25 years.~~

USE **Our company is 25 years old.**

WHY Without “old,” the sentence is incomplete. Worth catching since “years in business” is a common credibility line.

14 “Please to find attached”

AVOID ~~Please to find attached the invoice.~~

USE **Please find attached the invoice.**

WHY No “to” is needed. One of the clearest non-native markers in written English business correspondence.

15 Adjective placed after the noun

AVOID ~~We offer a service excellent.~~

USE **We offer an excellent service.**

WHY English adjectives go before the noun, the reverse of Italian word order. In marketing copy, this pattern repeats often enough to undercut polish.

16 “The company are” — agreement

AVOID ~~The company are pleased to confirm the order.~~

USE **The company is pleased to confirm the order.**

WHY In standard English, company, team and group take a singular verb. Small mismatch, but it stands out on a confirmation document.

17 Overly formal, dated sign-offs

AVOID ~~I remain at your kind disposal for any further clarification.~~

USE **Let me know if you have any questions.**

WHY A direct translation of formal Italian correspondence reads as stiff and dated. Modern business English is more direct and warmer, even at a formal level.

18 Burying the request in hedging

AVOID ~~We were thinking that maybe it could perhaps be possible to ask for a discount.~~

USE **Would you be able to offer a discount on this order?**

WHY Italian politeness often softens a request with several layers of hedging. In English business culture this can read as unclear rather than polite.

19 Confusing “borrow” and “lend”

AVOID ~~Can you borrow us the equipment for the demo?~~

USE **Can you lend us the equipment for the demo?**

WHY “Borrow” is to take, “lend” is to give. In a logistics email, this can genuinely reverse who’s meant to provide what.

20 Present simple instead of present perfect

AVOID ~~I work in this sector since 2015.~~

USE **I have worked in this sector since 2015.**

WHY English uses present perfect for something that started in the past and continues now. The wrong tense can quietly weaken a credibility claim.



Sound as professional in English as you do in Italian

Fluent Advance builds business English training around exactly these moments — emails, calls and meetings where precision wins or loses the deal.

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