https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYZVMnO1JvE

8 Important English Grammar Rules That Anyone in Business Should Understand

1. The passive voice is used to shift the focus from the person doing the action to the action itself.

The rule:
The passive voice is formed with the verb *to be* and the third form (past participle) of the main verb.
The verb *to be* is used in the tense we want to have in the sentence, whether that's past, present, future or something else.
At the end we can add the person who completed the action, if that's necessary.

I baked a cake. (Active voice) (Doer of the action is given more importance)
Subject: I
Verb: baked
Object: cake

Passive voice (The actual outcome or the output is given more importance) :
A cake was baked by me.

Examples:

- **The meeting *will* probably *be delayed* (by the chairperson). CORRECT**
- **The chairperson will probably delay the meeting. INCORRECT**
- **The report *was sent* to the wrong recipient.**
- **Mr X sent the report to the wrong recipient. INCORRECT**
- **The email *hasn't been sent* yet because of technical problems.**

How to use this rule in business:

You can use the passive voice whenever you want to focus on an action rather than on the person performing the action.

If you're describing a problem, you can use the passive voice to avoid blaming a particular person for the problem. You can also use the passive voice when it isn't important to know who did the action, when a group completed the action together or when you want to make things sound more formal.

When we're being formal, we're less personal, so there's not always much point in insisting on who did what. You can make your English sound more formal by using the passive voice, especially in writing.

Here are some examples of expressions with the passive voice that can be used in formal writing:
(It is, It was, There is, There are..)

- *It is recommended that* we do more research before launching the product.
- *It has been suggested* that better team work will lead to better results.

2. Modal verbs are used to add meaning to the action of the main verb.

The rule:
Modal verbs are words like *may, might, can, could, shall, should, will, would* and *must.*
They're used together with another verb in order to add further meaning to it. Modal verbs don't get *s* in the third person singular, like many verbs do (e.g., he eats, she sleeps). They can't be used in the future or past tenses. You can form the negative version of them by just adding *not.*

I can sing.
I will work tomorrow.

Can / able

I can able to finish my task in the given time.
I can finish my task.
I am able to finish my task.

The meanings that can be added by using modal verbs are:

- Possibility

When expressing possibility, **may is used for stronger possibility than might.**
Can is used to make general statements about what's possible. ***Could* is the past tense of *can,* and it can also be used to say that something is possible**.

It can rain today.
It may rain today.
It might rain today.

- **Examples:**
- **They *may* email us for further details.**
- **The market *might* recover, but until then we should be cautious.**
- **The rules *can* be very strict in our company.**
- **Our supervisors *could* be more transparent about salaries.**

- Impossibility

The negative of *can* (cannot, can't) is used to express impossibility in the present and *could* (could not, couldn't) is used to express it in the past.

I can not finish my work.
I cannot finish my work.

CAN x CANNOT

Examples:

- **These figures *can't* be right, our profits are much higher.**
- **We knew the chairman was joking. He *couldn't* be serious.**

  - Probability

We use ***must*** to express certainty about the present and ***must have*** for the past. We use ***should*** to express high probability in the present and ***should have*** for the past.

Examples:

- **The meeting is running late. There *must* be something wrong.**
- **The team got good results again. They *must have* worked really hard.**
- **The negotiation *should* be over any minute now.**
- **It's closing time. Most customers *should have* already left.**

  - Ability

We use ***can*** to express someone's ability or skills in the present and ***could*** for the past. *Could have* is used when somebody had the chance to do something, but didn't do it.

Examples:

- **She *can* speak three languages, but we're not sure if we're going to hire her.**
- **Our project manager *could* give us very useful feedback but we have had no time to discuss our problems.**
- **We *could have* finished the project on time, but then one of us was transferred and we lagged behind.**

  - Permission

We use *can* to express permission. ***Could*** **and** ***may*** **are more formal**.

Examples:

- ***Can*** **I help you with that product?**
- ***May*** **I introduce you to my colleague?**
- ***Could*** **I ask a few questions about your presentation?**

  - Requests

We use ***can*** **and** ***will*** when asking people to do something for us and ***could*** **and** ***would*** when we want to be more formal and polite.

Examples:

- ***Can*** **you fill in for me please?**
- ***Will*** **you take my messages while I'm gone?**

- *Could* you please open a few windows?
- *Would* you help me with this scanner?

  - Suggestions

We use *could* and *should* to offer suggestions and advice.

Examples:

- You *should* try to talk slowly when giving presentations.
- We *could* schedule another meeting for tomorrow.

  - Necessity

We use *must* for the present and future and *had to* for the past.

Examples:

- You *must* fill in this form to apply for the job.
- They *had to* take on more staff to finish the job on time.

How to use this rule in business:
Whenever you have a choice, go with the more polite and formal modal verb.
For example, when asking somebody to do something for you, say:

Could you…? instead of *Can you…?*
Would you…? instead of *Will you…?*

Also, when asking for permission, you can be more polite by using *May I…?* instead of *Can I…?*

Won't = will not
Wouldn't = would not