The Problem
Utterances of the form \textit{might}-\varphi often have the effect of conveying that the speaker believes not just that \varphi is not impossible, but that \varphi is a ‘live’ possibility. For example, if I tell you that Paul might come to the party, you don’t take me to be commenting on the fact that this is technically possible, but instead take me to communicate that I think it’s a relevant possibility, or one worth considering. That \textit{might}-\varphi can be used to answer the question whether-\varphi is especially compelling data in favor of this perspective:

(1) \begin{enumerate}
    \item A: Will it rain tomorrow?
    \item B: It might.
\end{enumerate}

A presumably doesn’t consider \varphi to be impossible; otherwise she would have no cause to ask the question. And yet B’s answer is not redundant or uncooperative. Kratzer (1981) and Willer (2013), among others, have coded this ‘live’ possibility meaning into their semantics for \textit{might}. However, consider data like the following:

(2) An asteroid might wipe out all life on Earth tomorrow, but it’s a truly remote possibility, and not worth worrying about—it’s irrelevant for our current purposes.

This sentence doesn’t seem self-contradictory. So it can’t be that \textit{might}-\varphi \textit{must} mean that \varphi is a ‘live’ possibility. Approaches like Kratzer (1977) and Veltman (1996) take the meaning of \textit{might}-\varphi to simply be that \varphi is not impossible. But these approaches are lacking an account of the fact that in many cases, including (1), \textit{might}-\varphi really does seem to communicate something stronger. These issues come to a head when considering data like the following:

(3) \begin{enumerate}
    \item A: An asteroid might wipe out all life on Earth tomorrow.
    \item a. B: {Yeah/You’re right/I don’t disagree}, it might, but it’s extremely unlikely.
    \item b. B: #{No/You’re wrong/I disagree}, it might, but it’s extremely unlikely.
\end{enumerate}

In (3-a), B first agrees with A that \varphi \textit{might} be true, and then goes on to dismiss \varphi as extremely unlikely. We get the sense that B is in some way disagreeing with A; however, in (3-b) we see that B cannot explicitly reject A’s claim. If all A is communicating is that \varphi is not impossible, then we have no explanation for why this feels like a disagreement; if A is communicating that \varphi is likely or relevant, then we have no explanation for why B cannot explicitly reject her claim. What’s going on?

The Analysis
For the sake of simplicity, I’ll assume a probabilist semantics for epistemic modals (Yalcin 2010, Lassiter 2011), because this allows us to be explicit about degrees of credence. In this semantics, agents’ credence toward various propositions is expressed via a probability measure \(\mu : \wp(W) \rightarrow [0,1]\). If we take \textit{might}-\varphi to express that \varphi is not impossible, then an assertion of \textit{might}-\varphi should comprise a proposal that all interlocutors adjust their distribution of credences such that \(\mu(\varphi) > 0\).

Pragmatic strengthening of \textit{might} can be cached out as a relevance implicature. Assume that QUDs are accompanied by some evenly-spaced subset of \([0,1]\) that specifies the grain size of probability that is relevant to that QUD. If I lodge a proposal that \(\mu(\varphi) > 0\), and the lowest degree of probability relevant to the QUD is \(.1\), then you must take me to indicate that \(\mu(\varphi) \geq .1\) if you assume that I’m being relevant. This is a defeasible implicature, as (2) and (3-a) demonstrate.