

Small talk is more important than you might think. We award it a low status, but make use of it every day. It is the foundation of many people's everyday welfare, both in private life and in their careers. We often fail to realize that we are using small talk when we create a good atmosphere at the start of a meeting by asking a colleague if the morning traffic was slow, or when we ask a colleague about his health, or smile at the checkout operator in the local supermarket.

Small talk is a technique of talking, a way to make contact with people, and the glue that creates and maintains contact with friends, colleagues, and business partners.

When you use and refine the things you say in the small-talk category, you realize that the technique is a very useful and effective tool for the task of extending your networks.

Some safe and evergreen small talk topics could be:

- What brings you here
- The weather
- Culture
- Movies
- Books
- Headlines in the media

When you use small talk constructively alongside consciously-managed body language, you can make everyday life easier and more success-oriented.

When we make a new acquaintance, we activate a structure of interests and communication.

Small talk also gives us space to see the potential in a conversation, and at the same time gives us the opportunity either to accept or to decline a relationship.

The anatomy of conversation has three stages of communication, with small talk as the first stage.

- At the small-talk stage you aim to create a good atmosphere for the person you want to make contact with. It is all about being precise in your communication through your body language and your voice, and leading the potential conversational partner to want to progress to the next stage.
- If you reach the second stage, you are probably talking in professional terms or talking about a common reference topic. Most people feel comfortable in this domain. You have found something in common, and you are committed to a real conversation with substance.
- The highest stage is intense and personal conversation. Here we talk to each other as good colleagues, friends, and close family.

You should also keep in mind, that it is important for you to be able to take the initiative to generate small talk and get a conversation going. But once talking is under way, it is even

more important that you are able to keep silent and listen. The best way to get your conversational partner to relax is to listen to him. People will often be very happy and feel honored to have you demonstrate real interest in them.

In summary, the essential elements to use small talk successfully are: listening, and asking the speaker relevant questions.

### Building rapport:

Social workers expect a great deal of service users and carers. We enter their lives often at moments of great crisis. Their situation may be making them feel frightened, sad, humiliated, angry. Even if they have requested to see a social worker, they almost certainly wish they were not in a position to need to do so. Many will not have chosen to do so at all, and may be resistant or hostile. They may not know what to expect, or expect only the worst. If they have requested help or support, they are likely to be anxious that the support will not be forthcoming.

We come into this highly arousing situation, and usually, within a few minutes, are expecting them to be prepared to tell us, complete strangers though we are, intimate and even painful details of their lives. The judgements that we base on that information may change their lives for ever. These judgements cannot be better than the quality of the information, so it is part of our professional responsibility to enable service users to give us the best possible information, despite the pressure on time and the procedures we may be required to complete. This means that we must be able to establish rapport from the outset. This is, essentially, an unnatural thing to do, and so we need to adopt specific techniques to enable it to happen.

Research, especially in NLP 1, has established a number of behaviours which characterise situations where people have established rapport. One of these is matching body language - eg both participants leaning forward, or both leaning back with hands behind head. If we are faced with someone whose body language is conspicuously different from our own (such as someone who sits very still, when we are prone to gesture enthusiastically) we tend to feel less comfortable in their presence. This is true both when body language is habitual, and when it is an expression of emotion. To take an extreme example - if you were sitting hunched tightly, and sobbing into a handkerchief, you would be unlikely to feel you had established any rapport with someone sitting sprawled opposite you with a smile on their face. Even a very calm demeanour and expression might seem to you like lack of recognition or connection with your distress, whereas someone who is sitting forward, with a concerned look, would seem to you like someone who fully appreciates how you feel.

Conscious body matching is, therefore, a quick and powerful way of establishing rapport. It takes some practice to consciously note how someone is sitting or standing, and mirror that in your own behaviour, but it can quickly become automatic. However, people in natural

rapport do not mirror every aspect of each other's behaviour, and if this is done it easily tips over into mimicry, and becomes highly noticeable, thus breaking rapport.

Rapport can also be established by mirroring the other person's rate and level of speech, and by using similar language.

"Small talk" is a universal way of establishing rapport, but one which is often overlooked in a professional relationship. The weather, and the state of traffic, are universal topics of conversation, because they are shared experiences which do not rely on the personal histories of the people involved. If your small talk has a positive note to it, you will be setting up a more positive atmosphere, so any favourable or positive comment you can make will help to establish rapport. "Yes-sets" are a variant of this positive small talk – a series of short statements designed to get the answer "Yes" – eg "You found it all right then"; "It's suddenly turned a lot colder, hasn't it"; "You obviously got my letter".

Finally, smiling is an extremely effective way of establishing rapport, particularly on first meeting. If the other person is very angry, or very upset, a smile will be inappropriate, but in most other cases a warm smile will usually elicit a smile in response, and with it a sense of connection. If you have ever smiled at a complete stranger in a crowd, you will know how powerful this is.

You may feel concerned that this deliberate use of language and self is either manipulative or inauthentic, or both. Bear in mind that your language and use of self will be influencing the other person's perception of you, and of the situation, whether or not you choose to do so. Furthermore, you need to establish a relationship of trust as rapidly as possible if you are to give a good service, with someone whom you do not know, and who may not be someone with whom you would instinctively have a good level of rapport. It is preferable, therefore, to seek consciously to use your own words and body in a way that supports that relationship, rather than leaving it to chance.

In any case, these techniques are only effective in establishing initial rapport. In the longer run, rapport will not be sustained if the service user does not feel you are genuine in your respect and your readiness to listen and to seek solutions.

### **Develop Public Relations:**

Public Relations experts ought to possess the following skills for a highly successful and rewarding career.

#### **1. Excellent Writing Skills**

A Public Relations expert needs to write well. He ought to be creative and should master the art of putting thoughts into meaningful words. Your words need to create the desired impact and influence the customers. Make sure whatever you write is relevant and puts your organization in the best light.

## 2. Creative

A public relations expert needs to be extremely creative and should be able to think out of the box. He/She should be able to come out with innovative ideas to promote the organization and its products among the target audience. In today's world of fierce competition, it is really essential for marketers and public relations experts to experiment with new ideas /concepts and develop something which would benefit the end-users.

## 3. Good Communication Skills

Public Relations experts must master the art of effective communication skills. It is really essential to speak well. Don't just speak for the sake of it. Public relations experts must ensure the recipients have understood what they intend to communicate. Two way communication is the essence of effective public relations. Whatever you communicate ought to make sense and well understood by target customers.

## 4. Focussed

Stay focussed and take care of even the minutest details. Do not ignore even the slightest doubt. Even a single detail left unattended can become a major cause of concern in the future. Crosscheck every single detail and observation before jumping to the final conclusion.

## 5. Study a lot

Public relations experts ought to study a lot and do extensive research before designing public relations activities.

## 6. Proactive

A public relation professional ought to be proactive and on his toes always. He needs to have a strong grasping power with an eagerness to learn. Lazy individuals generally do not make good public relations professionals.

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## 7. Competitors research

Keep your eyes and ears open. Find out what your competitors are upto. It is really important to keep a close watch on competitor's activities and initiatives. You may draw inspiration from them but following them blindly would do no benefit and in turn tarnish your organization's image.

## 8. Be Friendly

A Public relations expert needs to have strong networking skills. As a Public relations representative one needs to have a strong association with people from media industry (TV, Radio, Print - Newspapers/Magazines), employees, investors, shareholders, partners etc. Sometimes it really becomes essential to flash your smile and get your work done. Never ever spoil your relationship with anyone. Don't fight with anyone. If you do not like someone, the best way is to ignore. You never know when you might need the other person.

9. Loyal towards your Job .

Be loyal towards your job. Remember a public relations job is not only a nine to six job. You need to stay back sometimes even at odd hours and you can't just complain. At times you need to meet lots of people in a single day but one can't crib. One needs to be a little flexible. Make that little extra effort to satisfy your clients.

10. Pleasing Personality

Public Relations Professionals need to have a pleasing personality. Make sure you dress smartly. Public relations experts need to be extroverts.

11. Tech savvy

Be a little techsavvy. Depend on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter to spread awareness and promote your organization.

### Informal Communication:

Meaning of grapevine or informal communication: When an organization does not follow any prescribed or official rules or procedures of the organization is called informal communication. The basis of informal communication is spontaneous relationship among the participants.

Informal communication system is the opposite system of formal communication. In this system the communication is made without following any predetermined rules of policy. Informal communication plays a vital role to operate the organization's activities. When the employees cannot understand the subject matter of the communication, they can discuss with their authority anywhere about the matter as like in the dining table or in the play ground or in the club. Some definitions of informal communication are as follows:

~~According to Bartol and Martin, Informal communication is the takes place without regard to hierarchical or task requirements."~~

According to Bovee and his associates, "Informal communication is the flow of information without regard for the formal organizational structure, hierarchical or reporting relationship."

So, grapevine or informal communication is the process of spontaneous exchange of information between two or more person at different status without following any prescribed or official rules, formalities and chain of command in the organizational structure.

Characteristics of grapevine or informal communication: The important features or characteristics of grapevine or informal communication are as follows:

Un-official channel of communication: Since an informal communication network does not follow any rules or formalities. So, it is an unofficial channel of communication.

Not controlled by management: The grapevine is not controlled by management. The grapevine is mainly controlled by the employees themselves. As employees control the grapevine information, sometimes the information may be accurate and sometimes the information may be inaccurate.

More reliable information: Most employees perceive and believe that the grapevine contains more reliable information than the information received from upper management. What employees may or may not realize is that many times the grapevine contains false information.

- ① Flexibility: Informal communication is more flexible than formal communication because it is free from all type of formalities.
- ② Oral way of communication: Informal communication technique more uses oral way of communication rather than written communication.
- ③ Rapid communication: Informal communication transmits very fast. Especially miss-inflation or rumor spread rapidly to others is the organization.
- ④ Distortion of meaning: Something the meaning and the subject matter of the information is distorted in this system.
- ⑤ Influential: Informal communication is very much influential type of communication is distorted in this system.
- ⑥ Free form accountability: The exchange of message in informal communication is free from accountability to the authority or top executives of the organization.
- ⑦ Spontaneous: Informal communication is the process of spontaneous exchange of information between two or more person at different status within the organizational structure.
- ⑧ Multidirectional: Informal communication is multidirectional in nature. The grapevine may be largely available to simply serve the interests of the people it involves. Many times, employees use the grapevine to begin rumors that serve their own interests, with little regard to the people they affect.

Others:

Incomplete messages,

penetration capacity,

no record.

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## Social Communication in Workplace environment

When you are at work or in a workplace, how do you meet the needs of others, identify ways in which improvement can be made, or determine how a specific job needs to be done? All of these answers can be achieved with successful communication skills in the workplace.

Communication skills are essential no matter where or who you are. However, successful communication within a workplace can determine whether a business, company, or individual is successful or not. If communication should break down, things such as efficiency, requirements, and morale can easily fail. To stress its importance, we are going to go over some of the most basic communication skills that you should be using in the workplace, how to communicate those skills clearly, and how you can help improve employee communication.

### Effective Communication Skills for the Workplace

Listening: Sure it helps to be a great talker, but being a good listener is essential for proper communication. In the workplace, you need to be able to listen to another person's needs so that you can help them meet their goals and standards. Listening will help you become aware of what others are thinking. If you want to show someone that you are truly listening to their words, consider taking notes or asking them follow up questions to their statements.

Empathy: In the workplace, you are going to be working as a team with other people, so it is important to be open to others' thoughts and opinion no matter how much you may or may not agree with them. If you are having trouble understanding someone else's point of view, consider putting yourself in their shoes and see why they might have acted the way they did. Also, asking questions is a good way to improve workplace communication.

Patience: Patience can be tricky, and when you are dealing with other people, it can be easy to feel frustrated or overwhelmed if you cannot seem to get your point across. In the workplace, it is important to practice patience with yourself and with others. For instance, make sure that you are patient with your boss, coworkers, or employees so that you can really hear what other people are saying. Not everyone is going to be able to understand you either right off the bat, so be methodical and take your time when explaining things that need to be done a certain way.

Clarity: When you are dealing with people in the workplace, it is not efficient or polite to beat around the bush or prolong things. No matter if you are talking to your coworkers, a secretary, or your boss, it is important to be direct and to the point with them. If you spend too long getting your point across, they are less likely to listen to you or take your credibility for things down the road. A great way to practice communicating clearly is to practice before hand. For instance, consider making an outline or jotting down some notes that detail the points you hope to get across. Go as far as to create support evidence to and reference the points if you need to. Being clear in the workplace is going to ensure that things get done in a timely manner and in the way that they should.

**Positive Attitude:** There are going to be some days where you dread going to work – we all have them (and it does not mean you hate your job). The key here is to always keep a positive attitude no matter how tired, angry, bitter, or exhausted you might feel. You should never mix your outside feelings with work, because this can create misunderstandings or conflicts. If you have any problems or issues at work, talk them out with the people who are involved and find ways that you can overcome them. If you suppress and challenges you are facing, they will only grow larger and burden you.

**Be Honest and Open:** If you are feeling overly pressured at work or experiencing certain challenges concerning your job, it is important to speak with a manager or someone in the human resources department as soon as possible to help you alleviate your problems.

**Self-Improvement:** It is true that you cannot necessarily communicate self improvement, but the two still go hand in hand. Communication requires time and practice both verbally and in written form. As such, it is helpful to always work on the skills that you need for communication, because they are going to help you improve as a person overall. If you are aware of the essential communication skills needed in the workplace, you can make a conscious effort to listen, practice patience, clarify, and remain positive during your daily work routine.

#### How to Improve Communication in the Workplace:

Communication skills in the workplace Communication skills are an essential part of any productive workplace. Here are some things that you can do, whether you are an employee or a manager, to help improve communication in the workplace.

**Employee Training Programs:** Not all employees at a workplace are going to be social and interactive right off bat. A great way to get everyone feeling social and comfortable with communicating amongst each other is to set up some employee training programs. These programs can teach employees how to practice effective communication skills that will help them increase their effectiveness in what they do. For instance, consider: listening skills, encoding, communication fundamentals, and online communication in your training program.

*Cognitive*  
**Model:** Sometimes the best type of learning is through example. Modeling good and effective communication skills for new employees can be a useful way to leverage the social learning theory. Especially with small business, owners and managers can have a large impact on their employees if they work alongside with them or communicate face to face on a regular basis. This can help them model their own behavior after the communication style of their bosses or managers. If you are in a large company, pair your newer employees up with older ones who already practice effective communication skills so that they can learn from each other.

**Promote:** As mentioned above, if you are a large business owner, it can be helpful to promote certain individuals with strong communication skills into more supervisory positions. This will help you set the bar for newer employees or those who are working on their own communication skills.



**Performance Appraisals:** A good way to get your employees excited and invested in sharpening their communication skills is to include communication skills and efficiency in performance reports or appraisals. This is a way to help motivate employees to achieve their goals. If communication seems to be an issue, set goals for employees and give them an incentive to reach those goals by offering rewards or setting up a reward program for employees who are to meet communication goals.

**Team Building Exercises:** Team building exercises are fun, and they are not just a way to kill time at summer camp. Team building exercises for workplace employees can help strengthen office dynamics and communication. Have your in-office teams engage in out of the office exercises that force them to work cohesively to strengthen their communication with each other.

### Social Networking:

How Social Media Has Changed How We Communicate?

As communication and information travel faster and faster, the world seems to get smaller and smaller. As a result, this changes how the world communicates, especially with today's obsession with social media networks.

Before social media, we were extremely limited in our means to interact with others and we were limited largely to the people that we knew in-person. There were things we (those my age and older) had to deal with that millennials do not have to – your significant other's parent answering the phone when you called, waiting for a letter in the mail, waiting a week to get your pictures that you sent off to be developed, and so on.

The internet and social media has drastically changed the way people all over the world interact and communicate.

How, you may ask?

One of the biggest changes in the way that we interact, due to social media networks, is the sheer number of people that we can interact with.

Because of social media networks, we are now able to interact with thousands of people all over the world – this is why we see people who have thousands of Facebook friends or tens of thousands of Twitter followers. Without social media, that would be impossible. Social media networks allow us the opportunity to share opinions with a far wider audience.

Another big change that has occurred is that there is now no filter on the way we speak

In the past, unless you spoke to people directly, you had no way to get your message across regardless of your freedom of speech. Now we can use social media to get our messages out to thousands or even millions of people uncensored.

Two Examples:

#JeSuisCharlie & Betty White hosting Saturday Night Live, which came as a result of a social media campaign.

Social media has also changed the way that we interact, mainly the way we have lost some of our social skills. Some people are completely incapable of carrying on a normal conversation or interacting with people in person because of the dependency of social media.

Social networks are becoming one of the dominant ways we communicate. Snapchat or Instagram, anyone?? People are more obsessed with checking their smartphone every 2 minutes than engaging in meaningful conversation with their child or spouse. Social media and technology are double-edged swords. It's awesome to have and can really help us, but it also distracts us to the point of being blind and deaf to everything else going on.

Next time you are out, count how many people you see walking and staring down at their smartphone.

It can also be argued that social networks have affected our communication by the way we converse and in our writing techniques. The social web has changed the written word in a couple of crucial ways:

**Writing is more summarized:** When Twitter and its 140 character limit were introduced, most of us questioned how we could get anything meaningful across in 25 to 30 words. As we have adapted to Twitter and other social media networks, we have realized that the 140 character limit has actually pushed us to get to the core of what we are conveying. However, this has allowed for shorter sentences or paragraphs and made way for neglecting correct grammar use.

**Abbreviations are more prevalent:** People who communicate via social media or text message aren't necessarily spelling things incorrectly, they are speaking a new language entirely. "TTYL" is commonly used to let someone know you will talk to them later. In today's world, abbreviations are now so common that we do not even have to think twice about what they stand for. Example: "FB is the best way 2 use sm. U have lots of chances 2 advertise ur biz."

There is not a right or wrong way to communicate and/or adapt social language into our lives. However, we are all becoming engulfed in this new world of communication due to technology—and if we haven't done so already, will be forced to learn this new form of language, especially if you are a parent of a tween (I am) or a teen.

## Visual Code and Social Etiquettes:

Visual code and social etiquettes are integral for a first impression in a professional environment as well as social circle. These define a particular behaviour according to which one is expected to act. These are on the same lines of the conventional norms set up by society, social class or group.

Power dressing, Dining etiquettes and Business and travel etiquettes are major components which have to be followed.

Power dressing is a style of clothing and hair intended to make wearers appear authoritative and competent, especially in professional settings in business, law and government. It helps the wearer in conveying authority, power, distinction, self-confidence, trustworthiness, sincerity to colleagues and customers, and makes good first impressions.

There are two levels of business attire. One is the business professional attire that constitutes the most conservative corporate dress, and the other is the business casual attire which is a more relaxed version of the business professional look. For women, the business professional look includes a conservative suit with a knee-length (or longer) skirt or pants in a solid or pinstriped pattern. Preferred colours are navy, dark brown, gray and black. White and pastel-coloured long or short sleeve blouses are acceptable. Pumps with a closed heel and toe accessorize the suit. The casual professional look incorporates pressed khakis/slacks or knee-length or longer dresses/skirts with long or short sleeve blouses or sweater sets. Women should not wear shoes with heels more than 1 to 2 inches. Jewellery should be simple but trendy or classic jewellery. The perfume or cologne should be mild. Makeup should be minimal and must match the natural skin tone. There should be no visible body piercing (other than in ears). Nails must be short and well-manicured in one tone. Hair should be clean and neatly shaped. Conspicuous hair accessories are unacceptable. Men's business professional look consists of a conservative suit or blazer/sport coat with pressed dress/khaki slacks and white long-sleeved, button-down, collared shirt. A conservative silk tie is optional. Preferred colours are navy, dark brown, black and gray. Dark polished lace-up shoes with matching belt and socks completes the attire. Pocket squares are not allowed. The business casuals comprise of pressed khakis with a polo-style shirt or dress slacks with long-sleeved, button-down, collared shirt. The tie should not be too wide or too narrow. Men could accessorize their clothing using cufflinks, tiepins and an elegant watch. Hair must be neat and trimmed hair and face clean shaven. There should be no visible body piercing or tattoo.

Travelling for business isn't the same as going on vacation. While there are some similarities, it's important to remember that you're not only representing yourself while travelling for work; you're also sending out important signals about your company — its culture, brand and products.

Whether you're travelling to meet with current or prospective clients, attend a seminar, or scout a new meeting location, presenting yourself in a professional and friendly manner can send positive messages about the company you represent.

Here are some critical aspects of business travel to consider:

**ATTIRE**-Your attire is the first key to successful business travel. If your schedule allows, travel in comfortable clothes and change when you get to your destination. This will keep your stress level down and help keep you focused on your mission.