



FALL 2020

WATER COOLER GOSSIP AND IDLE CHATTER

Scandal, hearsay, dirt and scuttlebutt. What do these words have in common? They are all synonyms for the word gossip. According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the term water cooler gossip is conversation about other people's lives or behaviors that happens in places where people meet each other (i.e. water cooler, break room, offices etc.)

We have all been guilty of gossip at one time or another. Talking about someone's recent promotion. Talking about someone's relationships. Assuming we know the latest at the office about them, him or her. How do we tell the difference between gossip and idle chit chat?

Idle chit chat is generally neutral, unbiased and many times it is useful in passing on office information. Light conversation is generally assumed to be chit chat. Gossip, on the other hand, is generally negative, rude and can be damaging to the person being discussed. Sharing of trivial hearsay information is considered gossip. Passing on rumors or making assumptions about others is considered gossip.

Workplace gossip can be a serious issue for many companies. Workplace gossip can contribute to low morale, lack of trust and a waste of time and energy. If workplace gossip borders on harassment or discrimination of any kind, then other matters must be considered. If supervisors or administrators are part of the gossip or discriminating talk, they also become a large part of the issue. Supervisors or administrators have a great deal of power over employees and those directly under them in the workplace chain of command. If they are part of the gossip, they can destroy their own credibility with their staff and create a low morale work environment.

When a person finds out they have been the source of untruths or gossip, the emotional hurt can be devastating. They may not trust who to talk with about how they feel or the situation they have discovered. They may not feel valued as an employee or coworker. They may experience more stress and anxiety in their work life. It is imperative for companies to have good policies in place to deal with harassment, bullying and discrimination in the workplace, as there are times gossiping can border on any, or all, of those concerns.

We will be exposed to office gossip many times in our daily work lives. Define for yourself where you draw the line in getting involved in talking about others when it is negative, rumor filled or simply not true. At one time or another, most of us have been gossiped about too, so have compassion and understanding for the people you work with each day. If you are the target of workplace gossip and need to talk, please reach out to KeySolutions EAP. We are here to help you navigate difficult times.

Article by Beth Hall, EAP Counselor at KeySolutions Employee Assistance Program-2020

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WINNING WAYS TO MAKE AN UNBEATABLE FIRST IMPRESSION

Selling yourself to potential employers (and clients) is nerve wracking, even for the most extroverted applicants. Just like speed dating, where strangers make snap decisions on your “date-ability,” employers will decide your hire-ability in less time than it takes to walk around the block. With both, first impressions are key.

Use these five winning strategies for making an unbeatable first impression:

- 1. Put on your pleasant face.** Look around in any group of people and you’re more likely to find more frowns and furrowed brows than pleasant and open expressions. We’re no longer socialized for face-to-face conversations and don’t often realize that our default demeanor may appear uninviting. Be hyper-aware that your facial expression will either attract others to listen to your ideas, or will close the door on interaction.
- 2. Dress professionally.** Your choice of attire sends a message, and showing up in a well-pressed business outfit will make a positive impression. Even when the dress code of the company is informal, you’re better off erring on the side of professional attire. Examine cuffs for any frays and be sure to brush off pet hair.
- 3. Curate your online presence.** Many of today’s hiring managers look up job candidates on social media networking sites to learn more about them. The online impression you make has become as important – if not more so – than a word-of-mouth referral or an in-person impression. Keep your LinkedIn profile updated, and make sure your online photo doesn’t stray too far from your true self.
- 4. Be aware of body language.** From a limp handshake to slumped posture, employers read a great deal into people’s character from their body language. Be sure to look interviewers and prospective clients in the eye when you speak to add punch to your point. Whatever you do, don’t look at the floor or over your interviewer’s head. You’ll lose your audience like a dropped call.
- 5. Think of the interview as a back-and-forth conversation.** Fielding interview questions adeptly is one-part preparation and one-part improvisation. Listen carefully to the question, then take enough time to give a cohesive answer while being careful not to ramble. Your answers will stand out when you can tie them to an applicable anecdote. For example, if asked how you deal with setbacks, skip the adjectives and share the story about having to keep your cool while changing a flat tire on your way to an interview.

Vicky Oliver is a leading career development expert and the multi-best-selling author of five books, including 301 Smart Answers to Tough Interview Questions (Sourcebooks 2005). For more information, visit vickyoliver.com.

**The article above is a good reference for many of us right now. Recent job losses, furloughs and hours cut have impacted many families during this time of COVID-19. There are people looking for supplemental or part-time work during this time as well. Remember this article if you or family or friends need some direction in this area. Good tips for all!*

MINDFUL QUOTES FOR THE DAY

“Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing.” - Jon Kabat-Zin

“Be happy in the moment, that’s enough. Each moment is all we need, not more.” - Mother Theresa

“Always watch where you are going. Otherwise you may step on a piece of forest that was left out by mistake.” - Winnie the Pooh

“The point of power is always in the present moment.” - Louise Hay

HOW KEYSOLUTIONS WORKS FOR YOU...

COUNSELING SERVICES: KeySolutions is here to **help you** and your family with any of **life’s challenges**. During your appointment, you will meet with one of our experienced professionals and together decide on a **plan of action**.

FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL: Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services are offered at **no charge** to **all employees** or their immediate family members. All services will remain **confidential**. You **do not** need to be enrolled in your employer’s insurance to utilize this benefit.

ANYWHERE YOU LIVE: The Employee Assistance Program is available to you wherever you live. We have a network of counselors ready to serve you. Please call KeySolutions first and we will inform you of those counselors.

CONTACT US: You can visit us at www.keysolutionseap.com, or email us at info@keysolutionseap.com.

Call us at 605.334.5850 or toll-free at 888.450.7844.