

## Network to Work Meeting – November 2019

### RESOURCE DOCUMENT – Workplace Etiquette

### *What Constitutes Proper Workplace Etiquette?*

Most jobs demand teamwork and strong collaboration skills, which includes following the unwritten rules of workplace etiquette and protocol. The rules we were taught in elementary school -- pay attention, don't be late, and if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all -- also hold true in the workplace according to a survey from the temporary accounting and finance staffing firm, Accountemps.

When asked “Which of the following is the most common breach of workplace etiquette committed by your staff / co-workers?”, the most frequent selection made by workers was “gossiping about colleagues”.

Senior managers reported that employees being distracted during meetings was the biggest problem they observed. These results, according to Accountemps, suggest that managers may not have a full understanding of how widespread gossip is at work, while workers may not be aware that their bosses notice distracted behavior during meetings.



**These are the most common breaches of workplace etiquette reported in the survey:**

- Gossiping
- Being distracted in meetings, checking phone or email or the internet
- Running late or missing meetings
- Not responding to calls or emails in a timely fashion
- Not giving others the credit they deserve
- Criticizing others publicly



Displaying poor etiquette at work is really a demonstration of a lack of consideration for ones co-workers. Accountemps offers **four tips for displaying proper workplace etiquette**:

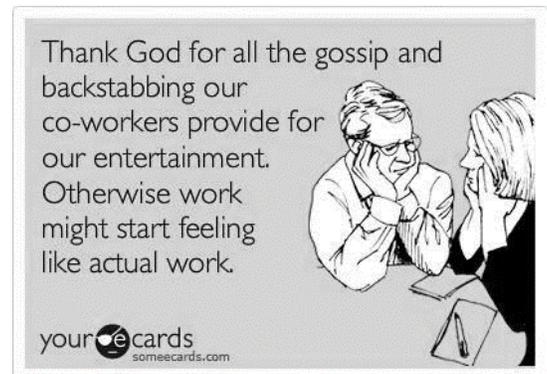
- 1) **Be present.** No matter how many deadlines you're up against, give your full attention during group discussions. You'll be surprised how much more effective you are in meetings and conversations when focusing only on the topic at hand.
- 2) **Avoid the rumor mill.** Don't participate in office gossip; it's just another distraction that can reflect poorly on your character and damage others' careers.
- 3) **Be responsive.** Don't let your inbox fill up with emails or voice mails. Set aside time each day to respond to messages so you can attend to the rest of your workload uninterrupted.
- 4) **Give credit where credit is due.** No one likes a glory hog. Acknowledge those who help you along the way, and they'll likely do the same for you.

Using good manners and being courteous can be as important for your workplace success as your technical abilities. Friendly, likeable people with effective communications have an easier time getting hired and promoted. Remember to think about how others may interpret your actions, and always aim to be considerate and respectful toward your colleagues.

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## ***Stemming Gossip and Creating a Healthy Workplace***

What is gossip? It is a casual form of communication or “empty talk” that is often negative and usually about an absent third party. It often arises in the workplace when formal communication between employers and employees is lacking or dysfunctional. A culture of gossip can be detrimental to the entire workplace community – even for the people who are not being whispered about.



On the surface, gossip can appear to have certain benefits. It creates social bonds between individuals and group solidarity. It releases withheld emotions via a ‘vent’, providing some stress relief. It eliminates boredom and fulfills a need held by the gossiper for self enhancement.

However, gossip usually surfaces at the cost of someone else's social status, reputation or sense of belong. Therefore, gossip in the workplace that goes too far can have damaging ramifications such as:

- Disrupted teamwork
- Reduced productivity
- Hurt feelings
- Diminished morale
- Damaged reputations
- High staff turnover

Gossip often increases during times of organizational change when employee concerns aren't being considered or addressed by management. Everyone's viewpoint needs to be heard with respect, at all levels. While addressing gossip is the obligation of management, **each employee in an organization has a responsibility to stem the tide of gossip, and each can play a role in creating a culture of civility in the workplace. Here are some ways to do that:**

- Listen to others with respect and empathy;
- Avoid inconsiderate conversations that go against workplace values and norms;
- Show compassion towards others and demonstrate good manners;
- Don't be condescending towards others;
- Don't blame others for your mistakes;
- Avoid verbal outbursts and throwing tantrums;
- Set challenging goals for yourself that will bring focus and contentment to your day.

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**from:**

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"Challenging Gossip: How to Create a Healthy Workplace", by Justine Curwen, PositivePsychology.com, August 8, 2019. <https://positivepsychology.com/challenging-workplace-gossip/>