



Stop Gossip in the Workplace

Gossip in the workplace is one of the most common negative activities that can destroy the morale of a company and decrease the productivity of a business. Not only is it a waste of time and energy, it also hurts the business' reputation, people's feelings, and also your bottom line.

The truth is gossip is as old as mankind. It will continue as long as humans exist. However, that doesn't mean that there is nothing you can do about it.



If gossiping is very common in your workplace, it's time for you to learn how you can avoid it. Start gaining control and focus on being more productive.

Change the subject

You know when your colleague sitting in the next cubicle pops his head over your divider wall and whispers something about the boss? Or when you get to the pantry and someone starts telling you something that has nothing to do with work?

One of the keys to avoiding gossip is to learn how to change the subject of your conversation. Decide not to join and just ask an unrelated question, such as "How was your weekend? Mine was great."

The one who asks the question will be in control of the conversation because people will have to answer you. If they don't, they will just feel like they are the bad guys who are trying to offend you.

Action: So the next time someone approaches and wants to gossip with you, just change the subject.

Keep your goals and priority in mind

It is human nature to want to know more – but gossiping is not the way to go. Always remember your goals and priorities. Remind yourself that you have something more important to do so you will never want to waste time in the pantry talking trash with your co-workers.

When you are busy or have a lot of work to do, usually, you will never have time to gossip. People do it when they have plenty of free time. It is when you are idle that your mind will have to search for something to do or someone to talk to. Guess what, this is how gossips usually start.

Action: Always remind yourself of the goals that you want to accomplish in your workday. You can use a Post-It note to write down your priorities. Create reminders to keep your focus.

Ignore the gossipers

This is another easy method you can take if you want to stop gossip in the workplace. Sooner or later, you will find out who the gossipers are, and hopefully, you are not one of them.

Action: Once you know the people who always love to talk bad about someone else, just ignore them. Avoid joining them in conversation.

Gossipers thrive in attention and invitation. Hence, your solution is to keep yourself busy and ignore them. Show them that you are hard at work and have no time to talk to them. They will understand and start looking for other targets.

Walk away

Even if you do not contribute or join in, you are still going to be affected by the negative energy when you just stand there and listen to someone talking bad about somebody else. Do not be the bystander. Walk away or go somewhere else.

Come up with an exit strategy and politely remove yourself from the gossiping. You can say, “*I’m sorry, I forgot that I need to send an email,*” and excuse yourself. Or just go to the restroom. Whatever you do, walk away so that you won’t be affected.

TIP: It is true that you may not be gossiping when you are just a bystander, but your act of being there is encouraging others to gossip more. Don’t contribute to a toxic work environment.

Focus on solutions, not problems

Sometimes, rumors may not be about other people – it may start off from a problem. When you sense people complaining, try to align the conversation back to the solution, NOT the problem.

TIP: People gossip in the workplace because they have lost control of the conversation and fall into the urge. Choose to focus on the solution.

For instance, come up with an answer and ask the group or the individual what they think. The key is to make people realize that they are off topic. Pull them back to the purpose of the moment.

However, you have to be extremely careful here as you may offend someone if you approach it incorrectly. People may think that you are trying to belittle them when you change the conversation out of nowhere.

The best way is to allow someone in a higher position to do so. Or just walk away from the gossiping.

Set yourself as an example

The best way to stop gossip in the workplace is to NOT get involved. If you are the leader or the manager and want to eliminate gossiping, start with yourself. Take a good look at yourself and ask if you are someone who gossips a lot.

Do you gossip about your own boss and other colleagues? Are you speculating idly or complain about future company policies?

TIP: When you set the example and tone in your workplace, people will notice and start to follow. This is just like the saying, “*You can’t help the poor by being one of them.*” **You can’t stop rumors if you are the one spreading them.**

Encourage positive gossip

Encourage a positive work environment where people share helpful stories about work and motivate each other to reach a common goal. This may be difficult to achieve, but it is something that every organization aims to accomplish.

TIP: A good example is when an employee serves the customer beyond expectations. The management can share the story within the company or even on social media to increase workplace morale, or teach brand values.

Deflecting or changing negative gossip into something positive and encouraging requires a lot of effort. Sometimes, people may not buy into your idea right away. Don’t force them into agreeing with you – but do your part and let your positive energy affect them.

These are effective methods you can use to stop negative gossip in the workplace. Always remember that the first step is to be aware of it. You cannot fix something that you don’t know is broken.

Raise your awareness and always keep an eye on yourself. When you find that either you or someone else is gossiping, you can apply the seven methods above.

source: www.everydaypower.com