

## Small talk (Communication)

The term "small talk" is frequently used in and outside of the business world. However, if asked, few of the individuals who use the term would be able to clearly explain what it means. And to enjoy and take full advantage of small talk, one must truly understand it.

Small talk, or non-official talk that's intended to provide a break from official conversation, is often used by business professionals. Most people take short breaks during the work day to converse with others, and business employees aren't exceptions—even if they're taking a break from a conversation with another conversation.

Small talk can concern almost any matter in the world, so long as it is appropriate. Topics such as the weather, weekend plans, and sports are all acceptable small talk subjects. Unacceptable small talk subjects, or small topic matters that're offensive and/or inappropriate, should be avoided at all costs, as they can compromise business relationships and cause one to be fired from his or her position. Topics involving violence and sexual content, as well as racist and/or sexist matters, are common examples of unacceptable small talk subjects.

Other small talk subjects like politics, current issues, and personal preferences aren't necessarily unacceptable, but should be avoided, as they can easily result in disagreement and confrontation. And as many readers know, confrontation and disagreement are best avoided—especially in business!

If small talk is appropriate and welcomed by another individual, it can help to improve relationships, improve business-talk productivity, and allow business pros to have a little bit of fun. One should be sure to not spend too much time on small talk, however, or there won't be enough time left for professional conversation!

### Did you understand the text?

#### 1) What is small talk?

- a) Talk that's tiny in physical size
- b) Talk that takes place over a brief time period
- c) Non-official talk that's intended to provide a break from official conversation
- d) Small talk can mean a bunch of different things

#### 2) Why is it important for small talk to be about appropriate topics?

- a) To assure that no one is offended or hurt
- b) To assure that an employee isn't fired for his or her words
- c) To assure that a business relationship and a company's reputation improve
- d) All of the above

#### 3) What is an example of an appropriate small talk topic?

- a) Religion
- b) The weather
- c) Current issues
- d) Politics

## More questions about the text:

### 4) What is a risk associated with small talk?

- a) There is no risk associated with small talk.
- b) That too much time will be spent on it
- c) That it will distract from official talk
- d) 3 and 2

### 5) What is a benefit of small talk?

- a) Improved business relationships
- b) Improved official talk productivity
- c) Improved company reputation
- d) All of the above