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## Socializing at workplace

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### Abstract

Humans by nature need love and affiliation. Besides their needs of food and security they have a strong need to get along. Even a person who would rank lower on the continuum of socialization needs some kind of association. Mingling up with people at work is great skill one could have, for it brings love, help and recognition – three corner-stones of one's successful career. However some people lack this skill and face problems in socializing. This study has been undertaken to know the reasons that keep a person devoid of this skill. The article highlights the importance of overcoming the social & personal hiccups that become hindrances in affiliating with those around. Taking inputs from various researches, theories, case studies and advices of various social scientists, the article would suggest some ways to overcome the problem of being introvert. The study is based upon a fact that an employee needs to be good at interpersonal skills and to develop these skills, he will have to be social.

**Keywords:** Need, affiliation, Socialization, Skill

### Introduction

Introversion is not a thing to be undermined, for it leads to deep thinking, innovation and solutions to ones problems. The introverts are not affected by adversities as much as their social counter parts are for the obvious reason that they just look inside and find a way to get through. However some difference does exist between a personal life where being introvert pays you off and the work life, where researches figure out lot of problems facing introverts. The structure of an organization is always designed in a way that someone will report to you and you will have to report to someone in turn. The term "report" should not be taken in absolute sense here. It means one has to explain the reasons of success and failure in achieving targets, justify a particular action, discuss the problems and describe ideas. All of these actions need you to interact with those around you. So even if you are an introvert manager or subordinate, your work life demands some kind of socialization from you and you will have to be good at it. This article discusses some ways of being good at reporting, rather socializing. There does exist a significant percentage of workforce around the globe who are not good at affiliating. They are not able to relate themselves to the culture they work in because they don't open up to that culture. Consequently, they can't share their problems with anyone, can't get any help and apparently can't succeed at the job. The article highlights the importance of socializing at workplace in reference to the fact that, "what shows off, is sold off". It further describes the personal and social problems faced by people that become hurdles in affiliating with other and also suggests some remedies to overcome those problems.

As Dale Carnegie put it rightly, "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you". It's clear from this statement that one needs to take the initiative and not wait for other people to approach him. Becoming interested in other people means spending time with them in listening, speaking, helping and in getting to know them. So, one has to be good at interpersonal skills to socialize effectively.

### Objectives

Socializing at workplace is essential for one's career. If you are not able to relate to the

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Culture or people you work with, your will not prosper at work. This article aims to highlight the importance of socializing at work. There are people in almost every organization who want to get along but don't know how. This article aims to give them some relief by suggesting some widely accepted tips to socialize. Taking references from various people experts and social scientist, we aim to know how to develop interpersonal relationship at work. An employee should give up being an introvert and mingle up with people and develop positive relationships, for employees who have positive workplace relationships are happier at work. Through the content and examples chosen to explain various points, we aim to show that socializing is in the very nature of a human being.

### Literature Review

One of the most profound experiences we can have in our lives is the connection we have with other human beings. Positive and supportive relationships will help us to feel healthier, happier, and more satisfied with our lives (Lorri, 2013). Socializing and getting to know people will help you to communicate better, trust each other more and work better together. Also, employees who have positive workplace relationships are happier at work (in fact, good workplace relationships are one of the most important sources of workplace happiness) and we know that people who are happy at work are more productive, more creative and more successful overall (Jacquelyn, 2013) [6]. Collaborating with colleagues socially can be "very politically savvy [in terms of] building trust and support." It can help team members get to know each other on a personal level, ultimately increasing engagement (Brusman, ...). He further says, Socializing can also be a great way to develop empathy and create a high performance culture among people who are happy to work together on significant goals. Audra Bianca says, Career advancement is easier and you will accomplish more if you can count on the support of coworkers and managers. It's up to you to actively build relationships with others in the workplace. Don't approach relationship-building in a selfish manner. Work at building strong workplace relationships for greater job satisfaction and because you value a healthy workplace culture.

Jacquelyn Smith quotes Alexander Kjerulf, an international author and speaker on happiness at work, that "socializing should happen both inside and outside the office—but it's most important to be able to socialize in the workplace, since that's where employees spend the most time with one another". "There should always be time for a coffee break where you don't talk about work, or a fun lunch break where you can laugh and relax with coworkers," he says. "Also, small office celebrations for birthdays or team wins are a great way to socialize." Lynn Taylor, the author of *Tame Your Terrible Office Tyrant; How to Manage Childish Boss Behavior and Thrive in Your Job* (2009) [7] says, "Whether it's a company picnic, outside meeting, philanthropic, company-sponsored event or business lunch, all these activities allow you to build 'smart' camaraderie. They make your work interactions more enjoyable, which in turn boosts productivity: a win-win for you and the company."

As a rule of thumb, you should only socialize with coworkers in situations where you are most likely to showcase your best behaviors. "A friend of mine is so

passionate about the New York Rangers that he has a hard time controlling his emotions when they play. If they are losing, he can get visibly upset, so he knows he can't ever attend Rangers games with his coworkers because they might not understand his intense reaction. But he has no trouble attending any other sporting event with his team", says Cali Williams Yost (2013) [8].

"The modern workplace has become a community center, or a 'home away from home' where people get many of their social needs met. We spend so much of our time at work, that it's natural that we develop relationships in the workplace", says Dr. Maynard Brusman, a consulting psychologist and executive coach.

### Getting Started With Socializing

Getting along with people is not just a skill, it's a blessing that helps you get through any trouble facing you. Wonder seeing your colleague who joined this new job three days ago with you, hanging out with your manager and you still trying to be professional enough, thinking when and how should I approach the boss ?. Someone to stay in the comfort zone might say, they must have met before, but that's not always the case. That colleague of yours knows something which you don't. He knows people skills, he knows mingling up, he knows how to get along.

Let's get started with the "Dos" at the workplace. These rules are to be followed like religious practices and have faith they will pay you off.

1. **Get Over The Stereotypes:** Larry Myler in her article "Don't Just Make Money, Build Relationships", put it so nicely about socializing. She says, If you read books and blogs about succeeding in your career, you will often be advised to leave your personal life at home, check your ego at the door. Adding to this statement of Larry, I suggest, leave your perceptions and beliefs at home as well. This is the first thing that will open you up for people at work. Clean up your mind, approach positively. One will find people of every type at work. Those whom you have heard the good about and those otherwise. Forget what you have read about them or heard about them, rather know them upfront. You might as well be shocked to see how different people are than what you knew about them. All Americans are not materialistic; you might come across someone who is more spiritual than you.
2. **Expect The Differences:** We are all different in the sense that we see the world in different ways. We give meaning to things based upon what we know about them. What is fair for you may not necessarily be fair for someone else. The major hindrance in getting along with people is the expectation that people will think like I do. As Lori Freifeld says, "We feel more comfortable when we feel that people "get" us and can see our point of view. Life, however, would be very dull if we were all the same and, while we may find it initially easier, the novelty of sameness soon would wear off. So accepting and celebrating that we are all different is a great starting point".
3. **Let Them Feel Valued:** Speak to the people in a way that they feel dignified and feel like coming to you again. Everyone has problems back home, problems with government, bills and on top of that, work stress.

When they come to work they have this feeling of nobody is listening to them. Make them feel valued by giving them your time and your attention. Listen to their thoughts, ideas and problems. Sometimes they don't expect a solution; just a listening would do it for them. Listening clears doubts and boosts up other person's self-esteem. Do not multi-task when you are having a conversation, it doesn't build the real rapport. When you are with someone, just be there.

4. **Take Counsel From the Higher-Ups:** As I have mentioned in my article, "Organizational Politics: Learn To Play The Game", If you face a problem/dilemma at work and need some counsel, go to higher ups. Not just that, it is does no harm to you taking counsel about a personal problem. Make them feel valued. Let them know you value their advice; they will more likely defend you when you need. It is politically advisable to make yourself visible to your boss and greet him/her every day.
5. **Show Trust In People:** Learn to trust people, It goes a long way in relationship. Don't doubt the integrity of people. Also be trustworthy to others. While you listen to various personal and social problems of your colleague on a table, on a walk or on phone, remember there is a lot they don't want you to through in public.
6. **Go With The Flow:** Every organization has its own customs they follow unknowingly. For example, you might just notice that the team you joined has this trend of staying an hour late on a day before weekend. You would have to do the same to stay relevant. Don't miss any team outings and get-togethers; observe all the formal and informal norms of the team.
7. **Be Empathetic:** In a relationship, it is better you put yourself in other's boots and feel what they are feeling. Empathy is to know the problem from their perspective and offering a solution as if the problem was yours. As Larry says, "There is a great expression that I learned a long time ago: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

In building relationships, while there are things we need to do wholeheartedly, there are other things that we should totally avoid. We call them "Don'ts" of the workplace. Here are some things you should abstain from doing if you want to acquire the people skills.

1. **Don't Mix Personal & Work Life:** An ancient famous saying is, "Don't wash your dirty clothes in public", which Lynn Taylor in her own words puts as, "It's one thing to show genuine concern for fellow employees. It's another to divulge your entire private life to a coworker". There should be some professional gap between socializing and personalizing. Humans have this tendency to hide their dirty side, which is a nice thing to do.
2. **Avoid getting Too Informal:** One has to understand the gap between a bachelor's party and an official get together. Staying out late over too many drinks, heavy

duty partying and office romances are not usually career-enhancing moves, says Lynn Taylor. She further adds, with the prevalence of smart phones, you don't want your guzzling contest or attempt at pole dancing to be a hit video circulating on Monday morning – or appearing on Facebook."

3. **Avoid Looking Different:** Every workplace has its written or unwritten norms that one should learn. An organization where being in casuals on Saturdays is a norm, won't appreciate you wearing a three-piece and a tie. Make yourself visible as part of the culture. Let them get this feeling of you being one of them. People are more likely to approach their alike, not aliens.
4. **Don't Be Rude:** Kind people are loved by everyone. Be kind not just to your colleagues, but to the support staff as well. Help them with a smile, get them some chocolates. You never know when you would need the help from a house-keeping guy. How often do people hit a cup of coffee on their desk and they want nobody to notice it.
5. **Don't give in To The Social Media:** When we suggest you be Social, we mean at work, at least in this article. But since your social media contacts are often the workplace people, one may just take social media as a way to socialize with colleagues. But one should know that social media is not taken as credible source of information. The person-to-person interactions are still valued. When you have the option to present an idea in person, don't use social media. Remember professionalism is the best behavior and it still counts.

### Conclusion

Socializing is not a rocket science one can't master. It just takes you to be a human, and human by nature is a social creature. If we just take a while and think about the principles we just discussed above, we find them all easy and doable. Well, that's the point. They are doable and let's just do it. Human is supposed to be loving, kind, compassionate, forgiving - that's what socializing demands from you. As Theodore Roosevelt says, the most important single ingredient in the formula of success is to know how to get along with people. After you have been through this reading, we hope that now you know how to get along and that you have the formula of success.

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