


LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

June 23, 2009

This Week's Message:

**Water Cooler
Wisdom**

Paths Forward

**· Need Career
Coaching?**

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Water Cooler Wisdom

In any business climate it's a good idea to use every possible work opportunity to expand your network, to polish your reputation and image and, thus, advance your career.

· **Tired of boring meetings??**

Resources

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An easy and low-stress way to do this is to be mindful of the casual conversations that you frequently have with your co-workers.

How often have you heard someone refer to his or her "work family"? I like this phrase because it refers to a supportive, mutually reinforcing environment. (After all, no one refers to their work family because it reminds them of the Manson family, right?) But, because we spend so many hours at work, it is easy to forget that our work colleagues are *not* family and, in fact, may be more accurately described as acquaintances than friends. So sometimes things slip out of our mouths that would hardly raise an eyebrow at home or amongst close, personal friends but that can take on a whole new meaning at work.

At work you want to be known as friendly, congenial and engaging. You want to be included in group discussions and not be seen as arrogant or snooty. A good way to achieve these worthy goals is to engage in informal conversations with your colleagues at the appropriate times. However, there are ways to do this correctly and there are ways to stick your foot in your mouth. Here are a few do's and don'ts to help you develop your water cooler savvy.

Paths Forward

· **Information About The Business.** Be a good source of reliable data. Internal job postings, committee openings, task force results, upcoming networking meetings, relevant business press articles are all appropriate topics. It goes without saying not to reveal anything of a confidential nature. A good example of this is salary information (yours and others).

· **Personal Information.** People love to hear about pleasant situations and celebrations such as birthdays, anniversaries, vacation plans, graduations and the like. Folks at work do not need or want to hear about your colonoscopy, your therapist, your child's toilet training or your divorce. Nor do you want to become known as a gossip-monger because it is hurtful, often untrue and it all but assures that you will eventually be the target of it.

· **Three Big Taboos.** You may think that you know a person's religious and / or political orientation but even if you are correct in your assumptions that does not give you license to discuss them. These types of beliefs are usually

very closely held and it is terribly easy to offend even with a well-meant comment that is misinterpreted. Along with religion and politics it is imperative that you avoid anything of a potentially discriminatory nature such as any comments on race, gender or ethnicity. Not only are these comments hurtful they could also generate legal problems.

• **Accentuate The Positive.** Every organization has its ups and downs, its good days and its bad days, its success and its setbacks. Your organization is no exception. If you can't exude optimism or put a positive spin on whatever is being discussed then try to keep your mouth shut. It's incredibly easy for an informal chat to devolve into a pity party where everyone gets demotivated and walks away feeling worse. I'm not asking you to be an obnoxious Suzy Sunshine but I am asking you not to contribute to or buy into a downward emotional spiral.

• **Humor: The Double-Edged Sword.** Every one loves a good joke. However there is no universal agreement on what constitutes a good joke. There is nothing as energizing and engaging as a good laugh - as long as that laugh is not at someone's expense. As if these two caveats against at-work joke telling weren't enough here are a couple more. There are some people who just can't tell a joke and shouldn't; they either forget the opening, get lost halfway through or they forget the punchline totally killing the moment. And lastly, many jokes have as their subject the three taboos I mentioned above and, for the same reasons, should be deleted from your repertoire.

LifeMap is about wisely using every possible work opportunity to expand your network, to polish your reputation and image and advance your career.

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Resources

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• **Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?**

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Sincerely,

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