

# TRAINFO

## TRaining + INFOrmation

### IDIOM OF THE MONTH:

#### ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

This means that what you do is more significant than what you say. It is important to 'Walk the Talk'!

*e.g. Nobody takes our boss seriously because he doesn't keep to his own rules and, as everyone knows, actions speak louder than words.*



### BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Communicating is central to business. Speaking, listening, reading, presenting and expressing yourself through body language are all included in communication. Communication is therefore part of all your work, from introductions and small talk to telephoning, customer care, memos, policy changes, negotiations, meetings, reports, etc. Good communication is a critical success factor for business success. From the moment you say hello, what you say and how you say it will decide how you are seen both individually and as a representative of your company. An unclear communication style, poor information and a wandering mind will not help you move up the career ladder.

Two kinds of communication are usually needed by managers in business: clarity and information. Business people should make sure that instructions are absolutely clear and precise. This is a difficult goal, but there is a GOLDEN RULE to make things easier:

- KISS – Keep It Short and Simple

The best style is to say or write things as simply and directly (but still politely) as you can. Use simple, clear sentences - the shorter the better. This will be easier than long sentences in English, and also more effective.

The second kind of communication is informing people, for example, staff members, about things like company decisions, policy, directions, etc. Some employees want a lot of information and others want very little. What most people do not want is to feel that information is being kept back from them because they can't handle it or can't understand its implications. A good manager finds a balance between providing enough information up front and being available to talk about the information in more detail.



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### SMALL-TALK

**Small talk or 'chat' is the icebreaker which warms the waters when you meet someone for the first time. It helps you to get to know the other person and provides a safety zone for contact and agreement before serious business discussions start.**

It is interesting that there is no equivalent German word for 'small talk' – and, indeed, there is nothing 'small' about it! In England, we talk about the 'art of conversation' and not everyone is an 'artist', not even in their own language. In task-oriented cultures, such as in Germany, it is quite normal to get straight down to business. But in relationship-oriented cultures, it is usual to build up personal contact before starting business discussions.

#### Here are some useful tips for practising 'small talk'

1. Be open, friendly and show an honest interest in the other person.
2. Keep to 'safe' topics of conversation.
3. Ask questions to encourage the other person to talk.
4. Offer your own opinion on the subject. Share an experience or an anecdote
5. Show interest in what the other person is saying: nod, make interested 'noises', use words like "really!", "how interesting!", "tell me more!"
6. Ask questions. Use question tags: "It's nice weather, isn't it?"
7. Don't just give one-word answers. Offer more information and then ask the other person about his or her experiences: "And you?"; "And what about your holiday?"
8. Develop a wide range of interests that you can talk on many topics.
9. Keep a balance between talking and listening.

10. Include everybody in the group in the conversation.

#### Useful small-talk expressions

##### Icebreakers (non-personal topics)

*Nice place. Do you come here often?  
Beautiful day, isn't it!  
Is this your first visit to London?  
How was your flight?  
How was the weather in Hamburg?  
How is your hotel?*

##### Small-talk topics (general / personal)

*Where do you come from?  
Have you ever been to England before?  
What's your profession / job?  
Are you interested in sport?  
What do you do in your spare time?*

##### Conversation openers (personal)

*How was your last holiday?  
Do you like music?  
Do you have any pets?  
Where did you live as a child?*



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