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Communicate for Success

However you try to climb the ladder of success, communication will help boost you to the top.

"People do business with people they know, like and trust, and communication provides the data that creates rapport," says Susan RoAne, author of "What Do I Say Next? Talking Your Way to Business and Social Success." "Nobody achieves success alone. You need to reach out to others and develop a network of people and resources."

Ms. RoAne suggests these pathways to increasing your communication skills.



Learn to network

Befriend people in different departments within your company by introducing yourself to them and by inviting a different co-worker to lunch each week. Meet new people in your community by joining associations, getting involved in community projects and attending social gatherings.

Make the most of small talk

"The best mode of communication is plain old conversation. The goal isn't to wow people with brilliant commentary; it's to make them comfortable with us. Finding commonality via conversation is how to do that," says Ms. RoAne.

Ask about people's hobbies, vacations, pets and family. Find out where they're from; you may know people in their hometowns. The object is to find something in common.

Initiate

"Good things don't come to those who wait; they come to those who initiate," says Ms. RoAne.

If you're shy at social gatherings, introduce yourself to people and make them feel comfortable. There are two parts to mingling -- being interesting and being interested.

Be interesting

It helps to be interesting, whether you're talking to one person or giving a speech to a group. Boredom never attracts anyone.

Ms. RoAne suggests you "read your hometown newspaper daily, as well as a national paper. And know what's going on in your industry and your clients' companies."

Give your opinions about something by starting with, "I think," "It seems to me that..." or "My opinion is" so you don't sound dogmatic.

Also, in your conversations, include short personal stories about your own interesting experiences so people can get to know you better.

Be interested

Listen, listen, listen. Most people want someone to listen to them and make them feel important. Listening demonstrates your respect and admiration.

Show your interest by responding to what's being said with questions such as "How did you accomplish...?" or "What was most exciting about...?"

Use the journalists tools of "Who," "What," "When," "Where" and "How" to keep the conversation flowing. Add your own related experiences.

Smile

A smile is the universal body language of acceptance. People don't like to feel rejected, and a genuine smile makes them feel at ease. Add some enthusiasm, and you'll create a spark of positive energy that will be hard to resist.

Keep in touch

Greeting cards, personal notes and short e-mail messages can keep your name in the minds of those you've met. If you keep in touch at least four times a year, you'll be doing better than most. Then, when the need arises, you'll have a network of resources to give you information, guidance and encouragement.

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The Many Benefits of Sharing



We tend to consider it a given that sharing is a good thing. As children, we're taught (and made) to share our toys, our crayons, and our rooms. As we age, our toys and our personal space become larger and more expensive, and we share them less and less, but we still value the idea of sharing. There are lots of ways to share resources as adults, including shared housing, shared transportation, shared gardens, food, and meals, shared jobs and caregivers, and many more.

But why do it? How can sharing a car with your neighbor or an office with others improve your life -- and the world? What are the reasons that you might want to share in ways that you've never considered before?

The benefits of sharing are many. Sharing can benefit us personally and financially, and it can make the world a much better place. Here are some of the benefits of sharing in the personal, environmental, and financial realms.

Social and Personal Benefits

These are some of the ways that your life and society as a whole will be better because of sharing. For example, sharing can help everyone:

- get to know our neighbors and make neighborhoods safer
- make friends
- find resources and referrals more easily
- find new ways to relate to friends, relatives, coworkers, and neighbors
- lighten our load of responsibilities
- create more free time
- meet the needs of seniors and people with disabilities
- increase resources and opportunities for low-income households
- support small businesses and buy local
- access better nutrition, and
- access higher quality goods.

Environmental Benefits

Sharing is kind to the planet, because it:

- uses space, energy, and resources more efficiently
- reduces consumption
- reduces waste
- reduces energy use
- helps us invest in green products, alternative energy, and durable goods
- shrinks your carbon footprint
- sets a green example for others, and
- helps take cars off the road.

Financial Benefits

The financial benefits of sharing really add up. Through sharing, you can:

- spread the cost of owning high quality and durable goods
- reduce the cost of caring for a child or other family member
- reduce the cost of food, fuel, and supplies
- accomplish home repairs without paying for labor
- spread the risk of loss, damage, and depreciation
- share homeownership and build equity
- save money through collective buying, and
- get access to luxury items you couldn't afford alone.

How to Keep Your Gums and Teeth Healthy



Brushing and flossing your teeth isn't hard to do, and doing both properly can help prevent gum disease and tooth loss.

Three out of four adults over age 35 have some form of gum disease, dental experts say, and gum disease is a primary cause of tooth loss. Gum disease is caused by plaque -- a sticky film made of bacteria, mucus and other particles -- that forms on the teeth. When the plaque is not removed, it hardens into tartar that harbors bacteria. The bacteria in the plaque and tartar cause inflammation of the gums called gingivitis. Tartar can only be removed by a dental hygienist or dentist.

Gum disease has three stages:

- Gingivitis, the early stage, is characterized by red, swollen gums that bleed easily. When caught early, the condition often can be reversed by proper brushing and flossing.
- Periodontitis (which means inflammation around the tooth), is a more advanced form of gum disease that occurs when plaque that hasn't been removed hardens into tartar. This causes the gums to pull away from the teeth and form pockets of infected material. The bacterial toxins start to break down the bone and connective tissue hold the teeth in place, causing the teeth to loosen and fall out. It can be treated by scraping tartar off teeth roots or, if severe enough, with gum surgery.
- Advanced periodontitis is characterized by further gum recession and bone destruction. At this stage, teeth may need to be extracted if periodontal surgery doesn't restore bone support.

Symptoms of periodontal disease usually appear when the condition is advanced. Symptoms are:

- Bad breath that persists
- Red, swollen, tender gums
- Pain chewing
- Loose or sensitive teeth

Risk factors

The following factors put a person at more risk for developing gingivitis:

- Smoking or using chewing tobacco
- Hormonal changes in girls and women
- Diabetes
- Some medications

Proper prevention

Good oral hygiene -- including brushing and flossing at least once every day -- can help prevent gum infections, cavities and tooth loss. Having your teeth cleaned and checked by a dentist or dental hygienist at least once a year also is important, dental experts say. No matter how well you brush, tartar and plaque can still build up and cause gum problems.

To brush correctly:

- Do so in the morning and before going to sleep.
- Use a soft-bristled brush and toothpaste that contains fluoride. If you can afford the cost, buy and use an electric toothbrush.
- Place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle against your gums and brush each tooth 15 to 20 times.
- Move the brush gently, using short strokes; don't scrub.
- Brush the outer tooth surfaces using short, back-and-forth strokes.
- Brush the inner upper-front teeth by brushing vertically against them using short, downward strokes. Use short, upward strokes for lower inside teeth.
- Brush the chewing surfaces of the teeth with short, back-and-forth strokes. Replace your toothbrush when it's worn or frayed -- about every three or four months, experts say. You should also get a new toothbrush after you have had a cold, strep throat or similar illness.

Floss with care

Flossing helps remove plaque and food particles stuck between your teeth. To floss properly:

- Cut off about 18 inches of floss and hold it tightly between your thumbs and forefingers. Guide it between your teeth using a gentle, rubbing motion.
- When the floss reaches the gum line, curve it around one tooth. Gently rub the side of the tooth, moving the floss with up-and-down motions. Repeat this method on the rest of your teeth, remembering to floss the back side of your back teeth.

Watch what you eat

The foods you eat contribute to tooth decay when they combine with bacteria in your mouth. To protect your teeth:

- Consume plenty of calcium-rich foods, such as milk, yogurt and cheese. Calcium maintains the bone the tooth roots are embedded in. This is particularly important for the elderly and for children during development of both baby and adult teeth.
- Avoid sticky sweets, such as soft candies, toffees, taffies and pastries. If you eat sweets, rinse your mouth with water afterward or brush your teeth if you have a chance.
- If you chew gum, chew sugar-free brands.