

like, professional atmosphere. By the way, for anyone, if your hands are very cold (or damp) because this is a high-stress meeting, rub them together *hard* before you go in. No sense betraying that calm exterior . . .

- *Smile*

Animals do it to signal friendly and non-threatening demeanor! We need it, too. Sometimes in your rapt concentration you forget to smile. A concentrated face can often look forbidding or even angry. Be aware.

- *"Jack" or "Mr. Hill"*

American informality in the workplace generally dictates first names. However, the content, the relative age and positions, and the intended outcome of the encounter make all the difference in how you make this choice. The culture in your place of business and the particular style of the individual you're meeting with also count. Using someone's first name *is* taking a liberty. Be careful about sounding intrusive and presumptuous. The safest route with someone you don't know well is to start with "Mr. Hill" till *he* says "Jack—please."

Small Talk

Hardly "small"! The next few moments that you spend (or *should* spend) chatting are an untapped gold mine—if you know what they're for and how to use them. (They're not only for helping to change gears.)

One important use: Small talk helps you each get accustomed to the other's style, voice, and speech patterns, if you don't know each other.

Another: Small talk covers the slightly awkward moments of settling down and settling in, whether you know each other or not.

Perhaps the *most* valuable by-products of small talk are:

- To connect and get to know each other (or start the ball rolling, if you already do) in a most relaxed, non-product-oriented, personal kind of contact.
- To develop a source of personal information you can use within the meeting.
- To let the other person begin to relate to you.

Here are some small talk suggestions and why to use them.