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HANOI UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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SOFT SKILLS

Building Rapport



- 1. What is building rapport?**
- 2. Key techniques to build rapport**
- 3. Reflection**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



After this lesson, the learners can:

1. Understand **what rapport is** and **why it matters** in personal and professional communication
2. Recognize the **signs of strong rapport** – such as trust, connection, and emotional safety
3. Apply **eight practical techniques** to build rapport with others
4. Reflect on your own **communication habits** and identify ways to **connect more effectively**

1. WHAT IS BUILDING RAPPORT?

Definition

- A close and harmonious relationship where people understand each other's feelings and communicate effectively
- Key words: trust, empathy, connection, understanding

***Rapport** is the ability to enter someone else's world."*

1. WHAT IS BUILDING RAPPORT?

Why is rapport important?

- Facilitates open communication and collaboration
- Builds trust and psychological safety
- Essential for leadership, teaching, sales, and team dynamics



Figure 1a: A visual representation of building rapport

Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

1. WHAT IS BUILDING RAPPORT?

Signs of good rapport

- Mutual respect and trust
- Active engagement and eye contact
- Natural and open body language
- Shared laughter or emotional resonance



Figure 1a: A visual representation of building rapport

Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

Key techniques

1. **Making a good impression** – Giving a firm handshake and a smile
2. **Actively listening** – Focusing, nodding, and clarifying for better understanding
3. **Asking engaging questions** – Encouraging meaningful dialogue and showing genuine interest
4. **Using positive body language** – Keeping open arms, a relaxed posture, and mirroring naturally
5. **Finding common ground** – Discovering shared interests, backgrounds, or goals
6. **Engaging in small talk** – Using casual conversation to build rapport
7. **Showing empathy** – Acknowledging emotions without judgment or interruption

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

TECHNIQUE 1: MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION

- Making a good first impression starts with the small things. This could mean giving a **firm handshake** and a **smile**. It could be maintaining solid **eye contact** and **remembering the person's name**.

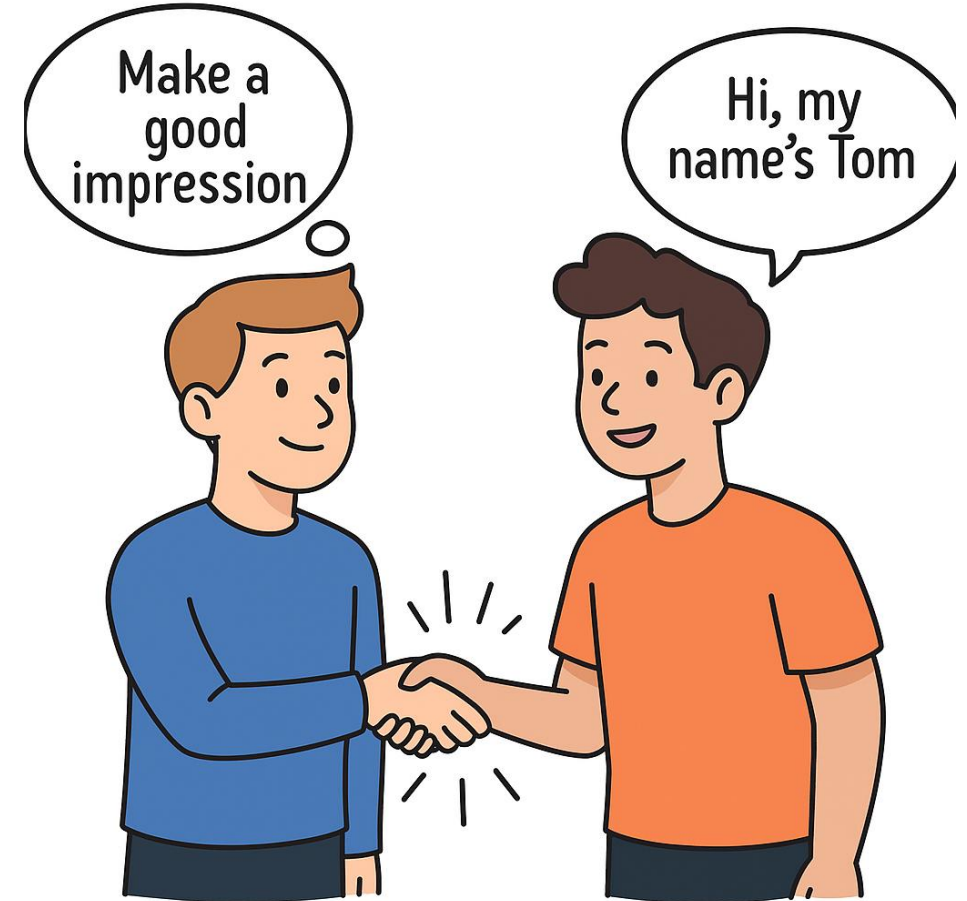


Figure 2a: First impression

Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

TECHNIQUE 1: MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION

Tips to Remembering Name

1. **Pay attention when introduced**

Focus fully when someone tells you their name, don't let it go "in one ear and out the other."

2. **Repeat the name immediately**

Say their name right after they introduce themselves:

"Nice to meet you, Minh."



Figure 2b: Say their name right after they introduce themselves

Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

TECHNIQUE 1: MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION

Tips to Remembering Name

3. Associate the name with an image or trait

Use visual or mental associations:

“Lam has long hair—Lam Longhair”
(silly, but effective).

4. Use the name during the conversation

Naturally say their name 2–3 times during your interaction.



LAM LONGHAIR

Figure 2c: Associate the name with an image or trait
Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

TECHNIQUE 1: MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION

Tips to Remembering Name

5. Write it down

After the meeting, jot the name in your notes or phone with a quick context description.

6. Ask again - politely

If you forget, don't hesitate to say:

"I'm sorry, could you remind me of your name again?"

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

ACTIVE LISTENING



TECHNIQUE 2: ACTIVELY LISTENING

- The goal of active listening is simply to understand the other person.
- When you're nervous, you may start planning what you're going to say next while the other person is still talking, which can cause you to miss important details.
- Remember to pay close attention so you can engage in the conversation in a meaningful way.

Figure 2d: A visual representation of active listening

Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

TECHNIQUE 3: ASKING ENGAGING QUESTIONS

- To do this, think about the core of what you'd like to know about this person. Consider asking yourself the following:

- *What am I hoping to learn?*
- *What sort of questions will allow me to set a strong foundation for our relationship?*
- *What are my goals?*
- *Am I showing my interest in the other person as a whole?*

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

TECHNIQUE 4: USING POSITIVE BODY LANGUAGE



Figure 2e: A visual representation of positive body language

Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

- Nonverbal cues such as **posture**, **eye contact**, and **facial expressions** are central to building rapport. Your **tone of voice** can also make a big difference.
- Be sure to also avoid body language that could make you seem closed off, such as crossing your arms or fidgeting.

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

TECHNIQUE 5: FINDING COMMON GROUND

- **Discovering shared interests, experiences, or goals**
 - Asking open-ended questions to explore background and values
 - Noticing mutual connections or similar perspectives
 - Using shared ground to foster collaboration and rapport
- **Purpose:**
 - To strengthen connection by highlighting similarities and creating a sense of mutual understanding.



Figure 2f: Bonding Over Shared Interests

Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT



TECHNIQUE 6: ENGAGING IN SMALL TALK

- **Using casual conversation to build connection**
 - Starting with light topics (weather, events, surroundings)
 - Avoiding controversial or overly personal issues
 - Listening actively and responding with interest
 - Using small talk as a bridge to deeper conversations
- **Purpose:**
 - To ease tension, create a friendly atmosphere, and open the door to meaningful interaction.

2. KEY TECHNIQUES TO BUILD RAPPORT

TECHNIQUE 7: SHOWING EMPATHY

- You can lead with **empathy** by having a sincere desire to understand and get to know the other person.
- You can show them **respect** by treating them how you'd like to be treated.



Figure 2h: Empathy

Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

3. REFLECTION

- Identify your communication strengths and areas for improvement in rapport-building.



Figure 2g: Know Your Strengths. Improve Your Skills

Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

We have learned:

1. What **rapport** means and why it is important in effective communication.
2. **Key techniques** to build rapport:

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Building Rapport

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Next Lesson:

Active Listening

References:

- [1] Covey, S. R. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change*. Free Press.
- [2] MDT Training (2017) *8 Ways You Can Improve Your Communication Skills*. Available at: <https://www.otcbahrain.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Effective-Communication-Skills.pdf>