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HANOI UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Faculty of Education

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.

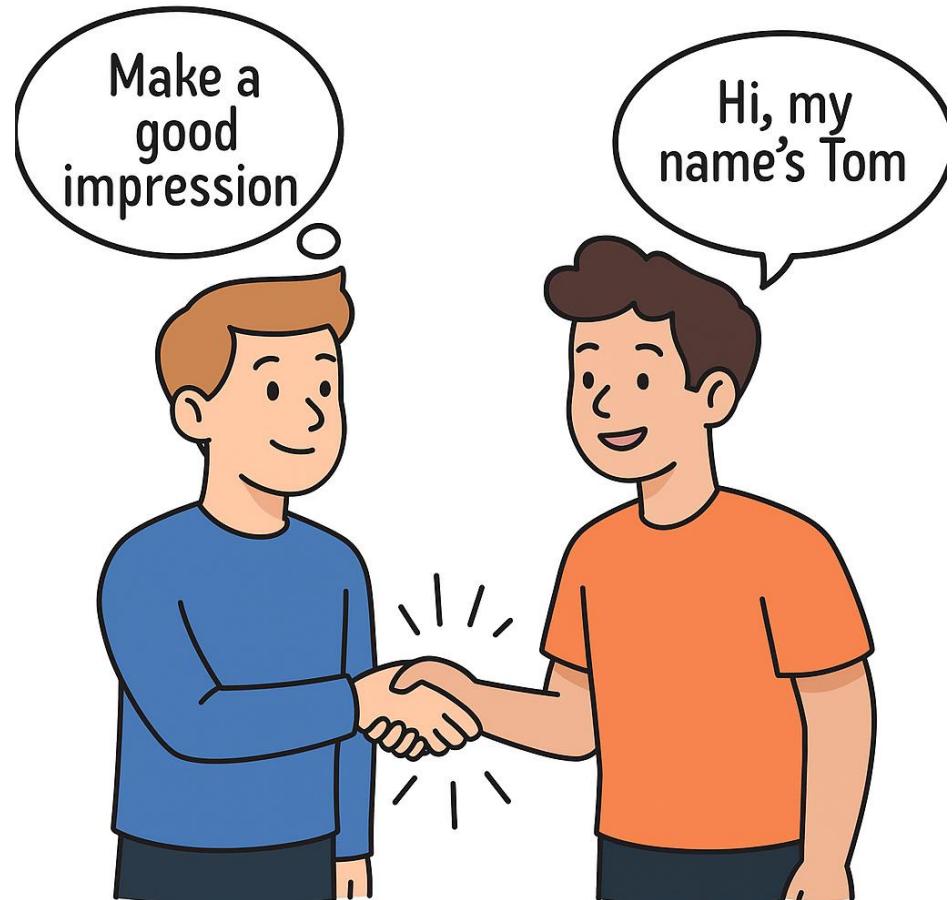


Figure 2a: First impression

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.

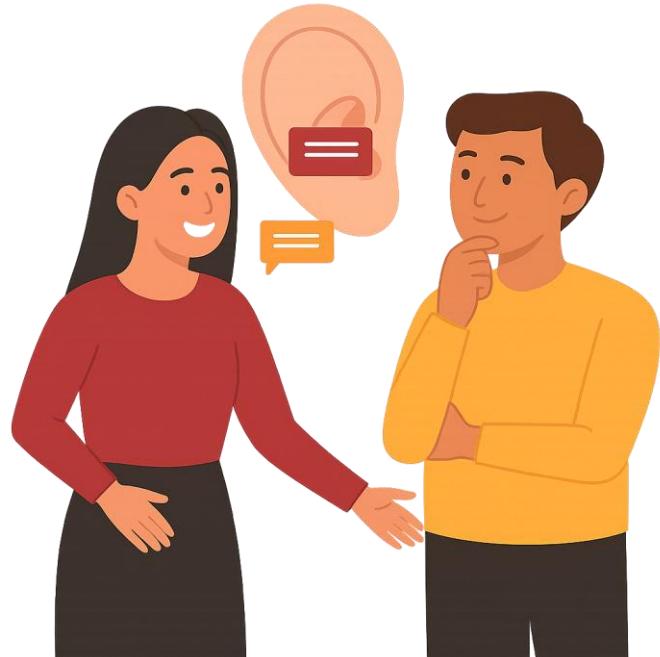
6. Ask again - politely

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.

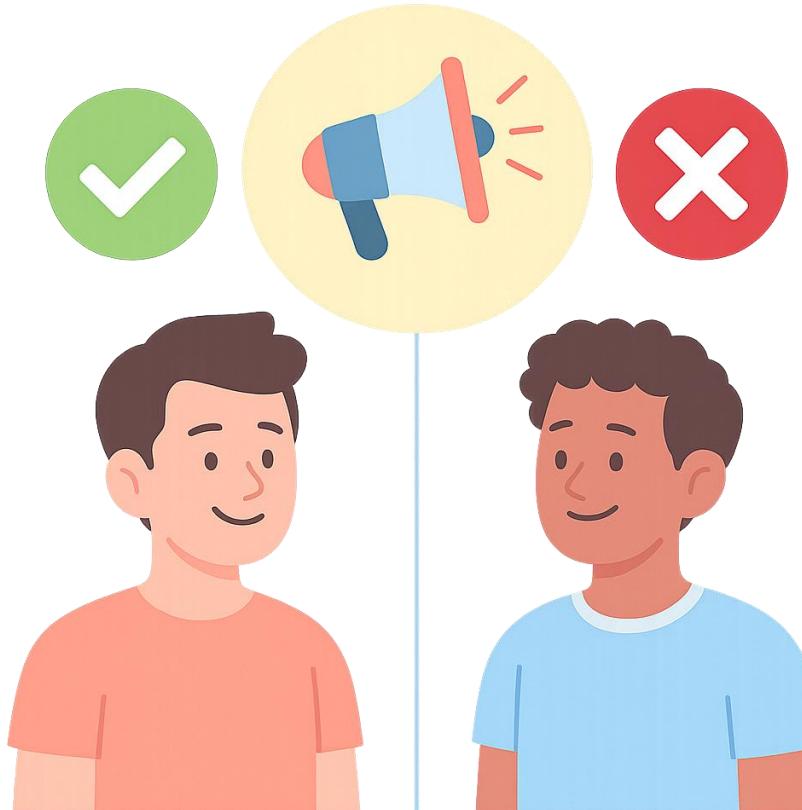


Figure 2g: Know Your Strengths. Improve Your Skills
Source: Illustration created using AI (DALL·E via ChatGPT – OpenAI)

We have learned:

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

SOFT SKILL

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>