



Building Rapport

The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.

—Theodore Roosevelt

The same set of communication skills in body language and vocal quality that is integral when presenting material or facilitating a training session is just as important, if not more so, when communicating socially (often before, during and after your presentation or meeting). Effective social communication is an excellent way to build or strengthen the relationship between you and your audience or listeners. Keep in mind that these relationships, like all other types of relationships, need to be established, developed and maintained.



Why is it important to continue to engage your participants before and after the session and even during breaks?

Connect Early

Remember, the moment your audience walks through the door, they are making judgments and perceptions about you based on what you say and how you say it. That's why it is essential that you arrive early for your engagement so that you can greet your audience and introduce yourself as they arrive. Smile, shake their hands and learn their names. Thank them for coming.

Traits that make a person more likeable to others:

1. Empathy
2. Sincerity
3. Trustworthiness
4. Curiosity
5. Active Listening



According to experts, _____ judgments are made about a person within the first 7 seconds of them meeting someone.

Checklist for building rapport

Below are areas to remember when meeting participants prior to your training or presentation:

1. **Proper greeting.** Stand (if seated) and approach the person you are meeting and smile. Shake hands while maintaining good eye contact. In many circumstances, a proper greeting is your calling card and your first impression.
2. **Use their name.** People generally love to hear their name spoken, so learn the person's name and use it. By sprinkling it in the conversation at various points, you will help draw them in. Also, by repeating their name, it will help you remember it.
3. **Icebreaker.** An effective icebreaker eases the transition from the greeting into the conversation. If you know anything about the person you are meeting, asking him about those things can act as a good icebreaker and serve as an excellent springboard. Be sure to write down and remember important family names or items of interest after your meeting to use as a future icebreaker.
4. **Body language/eye contact.** If you are relaxed, smiling and gesturing naturally, the other person is also more likely to mirror this behavior back to you. Remember to maintain eye contact with the person, especially when they are speaking or answering a question. If your eyes are looking somewhere else or wandering, you will be perceived as distracted or disinterested in what is being said.
5. **Vocal quality.** Make sure you speak clearly and articulately so the other person can understand you. In a bar or crowded restaurant, you may need to adjust your volume and pace. And watch your inflections. Remember, downward inflection exhibits confidence and certainty while upward inflection shows doubt and shyness.
6. **Lead the Conversation.** Don't interrogate. Remember, you are building a relationship. That involves both individuals learning more about each other. Don't be afraid to insert interesting information about yourself when appropriate. But be careful not to interrupt. If you don't know what to talk about, steer the conversation to a common interest that you will both be comfortable conversing about.



7. **Focus on the other person.** When communicating socially, successful interactions often require suspending your own wants and ego. Let the other person speak; be comfortable simply letting them be the focus of attention. Ask open-ended questions to allow them the opportunity to speak.
8. **Active listening.** Be engaged. Over the course of the conversation, you will learn a lot about the other person. Try to remember the important facts or items you take away from the meeting. Write them down in a notebook, address book or contact management system. They will provide great icebreakers for your next meeting.
9. **Be yourself.** We spoke in earlier modules about your “personal stamp.” It is important that the real “you” shows up in the social meeting as well. Smile and be sincere. Show your personality. If you are comfortable with humor and can include some, do it. You will be much more engaging if you don’t pretend to be someone else.
10. **Closing.** Stand, shake hands, smile, make eye contact and use the person’s name, just like in your greeting. Your last impression now supersedes your first impression. Thank them for their time and tell the other party you look forward to your next meeting. If appropriate, “ask for action” on any outstanding items or next steps that are business-related.

Conversation topics for social communication

When meeting participants for the first time, you often don’t know what to talk about. If you are leading the conversation, it is your job to steer it to something you both share an interest in.

If the conversation starts to drop or grind to a halt, here are some general topics you can usually use to jumpstart things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



There are certain questions and topics in every culture that are generally off-limits and best to avoid, such as:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____