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### SMALL TALK FOR SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS!

Small talk is **free talk** about light topics that are not related to business. You are likely to engage in small talk before meetings, during breaks or while having lunch/dinner with your colleagues. Small talk is important because it gives you an opportunity to **connect with** your global team members and build a **good relationship** with them. Here are some guidelines for successful small talk:

### SMALL TALK ADVICE

#### 1) Small talk should be about light topics

Good topics include the weather, sports, travel, food, restaurants, movies, music or shopping.

Avoid difficult topics, such as politics, religion, money or anything which may be too personal. (Note: It can also be useful to know something about the other person's culture).

- ✓ It's cold today, isn't it?
- ✓ Do you play any sports?
- ✓ Which countries have you been to?
- ✓ So, have you seen any good movies lately?
- ✓ Are there any good restaurants near here?



#### 2) Ask questions to find out more information from

the other person. If you only get a short answer to a

yes/no question, follow up to find out more. Also, you can return the same question by asking, "How about you?"

- ✓ What's the weather like in Tokyo today?
- ✓ What kind of food do you like?
- ✓ Which sightseeing spots do you recommend?
- ✓ Do you like sports? / So, what sports do you like?
- ✓ I've been to America and Italy. How about you? Where have you been?

3) In addition to asking and answering questions, you should also **share your own experiences**. Expand on your answers to questions and make comments about the answers the other person gives.

✓ We're going to Hawaii next month on vacation. Have you been there?

✓ I saw a great movie last week called Parasite. Have you seen it?

✓ I really like baseball. My favourite team is Hiroshima Carp. I always watch their games on TV.

✓ Oh, you're from New York? I went there on vacation a few years ago. It was a great trip.

4) Try to find a **topic in common** with the other person, so you can talk about it in more detail.

✓ Oh, you play tennis, too. How often do you play?

✓ Yeah, I've been to Hawaii as well. I had a great time. Where did you stay when you were there?

✓ I also love sushi. Which restaurant is your favourite?

## EXAMPLE DIALOGUE

**Takeshi:** Hi, I don't think we've met. I'm Takeshi Sato.

**Tom:** Hi Takeshi. Nice to meet you. I'm Tom Walker.

**Takeshi:** Nice to meet you too, Tom. So, how are you today?

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**Takeshi:** Do you like sports?

**Tom:** Yeah. I love baseball. I'm a big fan of the New York Yankees. How about you?

**Takeshi:** I love baseball, too. I support Hiroshima Carp. I always watch their games on TV and sometimes go to Mazda stadium to see them.

**Tom:** Sounds great. I'll have to watch a Hiroshima game on TV sometime. When is their next game?

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**Takeshi:** Well, I'm afraid I have to go now as I have a meeting. It was nice talking to you.

**Tom:** It was nice talking to you too, Takeshi.

**Takeshi:** See you around.

**Tom:** Yeah, see you later.



## YOUR TURN!

Imagine you are sitting next to a new global team member in the cafeteria. Practice small talk together. Here are some points to consider:

- 1) Start your conversation with an opener, such as, “Hi, I don’t think we’ve met, I’m \_\_\_\_\_.”
- 2) Try to find a topic that you both have in common. Talk about this topic in more detail.
- 3) Close your conversation politely by giving a reason for closing. You can say something like, “Well, I’m afraid I have to go now as I have a meeting. It was nice talking to you. See you around”.



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