Stakeholder Types: Gossipers

Idea In Short

We all know that playing office politics, spreading rumors and sharing the latest gossip are frowned upon and sometimes even forbidden. But, a recent study by researchers at the University of Kentucky has found that office gossip isn't all bad. In fact, certain types of gossip can actually be good for your career. Here's how.

When it comes to water dispenser conversations, gossipers are never far away. Gosspiers often forget that there are other really important things to do beyond gossiping. No wonder why gossipers are, often, the rather unpopular office personality types. Yet, hardly anyone wants to make do without their insider knowledge.

> Information tends to move through informal communication networks with greater speed than through formal channels

says study co-investigator Travis Grosser, a doctoral candidate in management at the University of Kentucky's Gatton College of Business and Economics.

> "The timeliness of incoming information often makes the difference as to whether or not [we] can act on it.

For instance, say you hear someone is leaving the company, creating an opening you'd like to fill.

> This kind of information can allow you [to prepare] a case for why you are best-suited for a promotion or raise,

says Joey Price, HR specialist and founder of Push Consultant Group, a career counseling company in metro Washington, DC.

Characteristics

Gossiping, as a female phenomenon, is simply wrong! There are also men who are constantly on the lookout for a brand-new story or a secret. They regularly discover a new, interesting topics for gossip, even though they never bothered to verify the veracity of the gossip. Gossipers make it their personal missions to disseminate information discreetly, regardless of whether the colleagues want it or not. As the hub of information, gossipers play an important role in the organizational structure of an office. After all, it may well be that they have something really important to share.Perhaps, the corporate headquarters decided to reduce budgets / headcount / replace leadership! Often, however, their information is hot, because this personality simply loves to be at the center of attention and to be heard - no matter what the consequences are. Gossipers are extremely well-networked and informed. They are the center of office politics due to their ongoing collection and dissemination of alleged office gossip. In general, the gossipers are harmless. However, they may render some serious damage from disseminating misinformation or untruths. In many cases, this massively affects the workflow in the office, which is extremely annoying.

At a glance

- Always looking for rumors, gossip and gossip
- Blasphemous
- Disseminates the information gladly, even when unasked for and unconfirmed truths
- Can cause damage with their behavior
- Loves attention
- Likes to be the focus
- Well networked in the office
- Deficient in work ethics
- Can severely affect the workflow
- Annoys many colleagues
- Is at the center of information exchange

How to deal with them?

In order to answer this question adequately, you should imagine two scenarios, whether you are:

- Interested in the gossiper's stories
- Annoyed by their rumors and stories

It is perfectly normal to be interested in office gossip. This has also leads to the fact that it is better to stay away from office gossip if your career is important to you. Listening to the latest stories of the chatterbox every now and then is okay. However, make sure that you do not waste too much time and do not take an active part. Such behavior will definitely adversely affect your status in the office. Before you know, you may become a victim of another meaningless gossip! If you are annoyed by the constant gossiping and the lack of clarity on the scope of gossipers' work, then only one thing helps. Speak directly, firmly and definitely with the gossiper. But, kindly mention that such behavior is not appropriate. Alternatively, you may decide to give the gossiper less attention. If they have no one that listens to their reports, then their energy wanes pretty quickly.

Summary

As a general rule, think carefully about who you want to openly talk about your lightbulb moments and if you sense a dangerous situation, it is better to keep your mouth shut. This also applies to your notes. Never leave them lying on your desk. You never know who is throwing a thievish look at it.