



SYP Tool: Don't Gossip

Title: How Do We Stop Talking?

Objective: Determine how much gossip is happening and develop strategies to minimize organizational gossip.

Material: Loose Lips Sinks Shifts Article

Setup: "Workplace gossip is unproductive. It breeds resentment and becomes a roadblock to effective communication and collaboration." – *Business Week* - Nov. 3, 2009

One workplace took a stand to see if they could remove the gossip roadblock. Use the activity and discussion below to see if you can do the same thing.

Activity: On one wall of the room post numbers 1 to 10 on the wall with post-its or sheets of paper. (1= little to no gossip; 5=average amount of gossip; 10=very high levels of gossip on a consistent basis)

Ask the participants to line up with the number that best represents the level of gossip in the organization. Ask a few of the people to explain why they selected the number they did. Ask about the gossip topics they hear about at that level. Optional: If time allows, have the participants go through the same exercise evaluating the team/group's level of gossip.

Share the Newsweek story of the Chicago PR Firm. "*Loose Lips Sink Shifts*"

Debrief:

- What do you think would happen if we used the same strategy at our workplace?
- What are some strategies that we could implement here that would help us to minimize gossip?
- (If the group identified low levels of gossip) What are we doing as a group that helps us be successful at keeping our gossip levels low? What can we do to help new employees understand our organizational norms around gossip?