

JAN NORMAN ON SMALL BUSINESS

news and practical tips for orange county small business owners



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Tip of the Day: Small talk made simple

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Today's tip comes from Rachel Wagner, founder of Rachel Wagner Etiquette and Protocol.

Small talk matters in the business arena. It builds rapport and often leads to bigger things like new clients and new business. Here are six timeless tips to enhance your ability to mingle anywhere your business takes you:

Be well read. News and sports are great "small talk" topics to get a conversation going. Read about a variety of subjects.

Keep the spotlight on others. Ask about their job. If they are new in town ask where they previously lived and worked. People will think you are fascinating if you get them to talk about themselves and their interests.

Keep it light. Stay clear of heavy or culturally sensitive issues, as well as personal illness, money woes or marital problems.

Be a good listener. Careful listening helps you be a better conversationalist because you ask questions and keep the conversation going.

Send a friendly message. Body language speaks before you do. Avoid folding your arms across your chest, so that you don't unintentionally appear aloof or uninterested. Have good eye contact and smile.

Be you. Conversations are all about making a connection. You don't have to be clever or quotable. Just be sincere, show empathy and be willing to listen.

