

HEALING WORDS IN THE WORKPLACE FACT SHEET

- Imagine a company of 200 employees. If each employee spent one hour a day trading gossip, it would result in \$160,000 of lost productivity each month! (Based on \$40 per hour, salary and benefits.) That's \$1.92 million a year!⁽¹⁾
- Gossip has been shown to boomerang on the gossiper. "...When you gossip, you become associated with the characteristics you describe, ultimately leading those characteristics to be 'transferred' to you," reports researchers in the APA Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.⁽²⁾ This is why, "for example, when Kenneth Starr accuses Clinton of perjury, Starr himself may be seen as more deceitful."⁽²⁾
- Gossip flourishes in workplace environments that fail to address issues head-on or believe a policy prohibiting gossip will take care of it. Accurate, open communications, cross-functional contact, problem closure, and honoring commitments creates an environment based on trust, that will go a long way to stopping gossip.⁽³⁾
- Companies have the right to terminate employees for gossiping or making negative or unprofessional comments over their company e-mail systems.⁽⁴⁾
- While some people use gossip as a tool to impress people and build influence, the effect peters out as people who gossip too much become known as "big mouths" who can't be trusted. Colleagues may even come to resent them for taking up so much of their time.⁽⁵⁾
- Men are just as likely to gossip as women; they just call it "shop talk", "shooting the breeze", or even "networking."
- E-mails are never confidential. All it takes is a simple click of the Send Button and hundreds will be reading your "confidential" message within minutes.

(1) "The High Cost of Communication" by John R. Hall, Business Management Editor, www.achr.news.com/8/01/2000.

(2) "Be Careful With That Gossip" by John Skowronski, Ph.D., Donal Carlston, Ph.D., and Lynda Mae, M.A. and Matthew Crawford. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, April 1998.

(3) "Deal With Gossip" by Carol Patton. Human Resource Executive Magazine.

(4) "Electronic Interaction In the Workplace" by Mark S. Dichter and Michael S. Burkhardt. www.MorganLewis.com/art61499.htm

(5) Levin, J., and Arluke, A. Gossip: The Inside Scoop. New York: Plenum, 1987