

7 Small talk tips and a check list (page 3)

Almost all my German students have complained about the nonsense of small talk. However, small talk serves an important purpose. You want to meet somebody with a bit of distance at first and check them out. So, if you lack small talk skills, here are a few tips...

...meet new people

I introduced two great clients of mine using a mix of small talk and changing to some interesting topics at the Frankfurt School of Finance and Section PEI and Annette Wright, Program



and begin your network.

mix of small talk and changing to some interesting Management in Frankfurt (Prof. Ralf Tönjes, Head of Director of International Healthcare MGMT-MBA FS

Be positive and get the ball rolling!

1. **Be positive** and smile. Look at the picture.
These two people in the picture only met a few minutes ago.
2. Check some information before meeting the person and **get things moving**:
I understand PEI is working on flu vaccines.
I hear FS has a global network.
Didn't I read somewhere that FS also offers executive education programs?
I believe your organization is expanding to the Middle East.

3. **Ask safe questions.**

(and avoid closed questions: yes/no questions)

Have you been to Frankfurt before, Mr. Smith?

How long have you been with FS?

4. **React to what the person is saying.** It shows you are listening and that you are interested.

If you do not react, I can easily assume you are not interested and will finish the conversation.

Oh, really?/How odd./I see./What a pity./That's great./What a shame./Small world.

5. If you are the host, **show great hospitality**

Let me get you something to drink before we start.

Have you tried some of our local wine?

Do you already have some dinner plans? (No) We would love to invite you for dinner.

I will get my colleague to take you to the hotel (airport).

6. If you are the guest, **pay compliments** to your host.

Delighted to meet you at last.

I've heard a lot about FS.

This is a great office.

I'm very impressed with your business.

7. **Avoid single words** and single sentences. They are conversation killers.

Do you know the new premises? No, I don't. killer :/

Do you know the new premises? I'm afraid I haven't had the chance, I am curious, though. Tell me about them.

This is Toni, Toni, this is Peter. Peter and I worked together at LH and he is now visiting from Berlin. It's a pleasure to meet you Peter. So, how do you like Berlin?

Check List:

Where were you? _____ Who did you speak to? _____

How did you feel? _____

	0 - 3 points	4 - 6 points	6- 10 points
1. Was I positive? How?	I did not smile. It is not me and I don't feel authentic. This is business	We shook hands and I had an open and upright body posture. I listened to the person. That is enough.	We shook hands, I smiled, it was easy to stay friendly throughout the entire time. Yes, I felt positive.
2. Did I use some information & expressions?	I did not know the company.	I did not know the company, but could improvise and give some input.	I got the ball rolling with lots of (improvised) knowledge.
3. How many safe questions did I ask?	None to 1 question Not sure.	Around 2 questions.	More than three questions.
4. I could react with empathy and interest.	I did not change my face expression, it feels unnatural.	I only reacted serious and professional and was polite and said That is interesting.	I enjoyed expressing empathy and interest and I used the right intonation.
5. I was a great host	I didn't offer any drinks. No time to show the him/her around. That's not my job.	I offered something to drink. I felt a bit nervous. I tried to be friendly but left quickly to talk to others.	I felt relaxed and made the guest feel relaxed too. I offered drinks. I used a lot of phrases.
6. I was a welcome guest	This is business, so I don't need to pay compliments etc. I am not a clown.	I paid compliments at the very end when we said goodbye. I did that in a serious way.	I paid subtle compliments at the beginning and throughout our talk. Especially, when I saw something I really liked.
7. I avoided single words.	Well, I said Yes and I said No. Those are facts for me. Long sentences don't mean anything.	I concentrated on saying a little bit more than only yes or no. It was hard, but I think it helped the conversation.	I said yes and continued to explain a little. I never said No. Instead I said: Not really, Not sure, etc and I added more (fun) information.

What do you want to change for your next meeting? Write to me if you have any questions.