



## **BUSINESS TIP**

### **HOW TO REMEMBER PEOPLE'S NAMES**

*Remembering a person's name is not only important in a social context, but is extremely important for managers and business owners. By remembering a person's name and what they are interested in is flattering and it gets them onside immediately. But forgetting their name and what is important to them, and you're telling them you don't consider them to be important.*

*If you want to avoid the embarrassment of forgetting the names of people you meet, then here are some suggestions for you to consider...*

#### **1. Get the name clearly first**

- The most common problem in remembering a person's name during an introduction, is that we don't often pay enough attention. Whether we are self-conscious about meeting a new person or we feel out of place – whatever the reason, we tend to focus on the 'nice to meet you' or 'how do you do'.*
- What's more important, as the person being introduced to you is to listen to the person's name. This is the most important thing. If you don't pick it up, ask for it to be repeated, and if in any doubt check the spelling and pronunciation.*
- This shows that the name – and the person – mean something to you.*

#### **2. Repeat the name to the person**

- Take a second to repeat the name when you are introduced, maybe find an excuse for the name to be repeated, by saying their name in the first couple of sentences.*
- By repeating the name you are not only strengthening the goodwill between this new acquaintance and yourself but also getting your memory processes going. The process of retention has begun.*

#### **3. If possible, focus on the name's derivation**

- A useful suggestion, especially if it is an unusual name, is to enquire about its origins.*
- Many people enjoy talking about the derivation and history of their name, particularly if it is unusual, and this may assist you in remembering it further.*

#### **4. Look for a memory hook**

- To remember names, many authorities recommend we establish 'mental filing systems' or 'memory hooks' which instantly attach a name to a familiar face. Such hooks may or may not work for you.*
- This tactic of linking a name to an image need only to make sense to you, and at first the process may seem cumbersome – but anything is probably better than just trying to remember names by just repeating them.*

*Try any of these 5 options:*



- (a) *Try to put a name to a face – Mr Bennett is bald, or Ms Bain has a large body*
  - (b) *Check whether the name has a meaning in itself – meaning names are valuable footholds for memory – like animals such as Wolff, cities such as York or Washington or adjectives, such as Strong or Little, create a vivid mental image.*
  - (c) *Find a word substitute. If a name has no meaning, substitute a meaningful word that comes close in sound to the name in question eg Buckman – bucket or buckle...but be warned, there is a hazard with such word associations, don't go calling Mr Buckman, Mr Bucket!*
  - (d) *Link the mental picture with the location. To remember where you first met the person, create your image at the location – picture Mr Bennett walking along the beach bald, if that's where you met him!*
  - (e) *Link the mental picture to the person's interests. To remember Mr Buckman's interest in sailing, picture him bailing out his sinking yacht with a bucket!*
- Remember, the sillier the image, the more likely you will remember the information.*

### **5. Repeat the name to yourself**

- *Following the initial meeting, look back at the person a few times to reinforce the episode, repetition is the essence of good memory.*
- *The more often you say the name to yourself, in association with the memory hook, you may have devised, the more entrenched your mental image becomes, and the harder it will be to forget that person's name.*

### **6. Use pen and paper**

- *By writing information down, you increase the chance of information being retained.*
- *Exchange business cards if possible*
- *As soon as the opportunity arises, jot down the name along with a line or two of description about the person you met, any memory hooks you have created and what common interests you found.*
- *Later, you might transfer this data to a database*
- *If you adopt this strategy, you'll soon earn a reputation for having a terrific memory*

### **7. Work at it**

- *The best way to remember a name is to tell yourself firmly to do so.*
- *It requires discipline and hard work for most people but to be an effective manager or business owner, you have to get to know people by their name*
- *The effort will be worth it for you will be rewarded by winning friends instead of just nodding acquaintances.*

Reference: Flanagan, N. & Finger, J. "Just about everything a Manager needs to know" Plum Press Brisbane, Australia 1998.