

# A WORD IN YOUR EAR

Сплетни на работе как две стороны одной медали: для одних фатальны, для других — источник информации. Как извлечь из судов и пересудов пользу, вам расскажет BOB DIGNEN. medium

If you put people into groups, sooner or later, some of them will start **gossiping** about those who are not present. **Gossip** is everywhere, both at home and at work. Women do it. Men do it, too. **Gossip** doesn't have a **good name**. Many people think of it as both a waste of time and a form of aggression that damages relationships and makes teamwork difficult. It was reported that the US **hedge fund** Bridgewater Associates even tried to stop office gossip by threatening to fire anyone involved in **tittle-tattle**.

In this article, we look more closely at different aspects of gossip. Before you read on, take a few moments to think about the following questions and then compare your answers to the comments in the article:

- Why do people gossip?
- What are the most typical **topics** of gossip among men and women?
- What is the best way to deal with someone who spreads negative news about others?
- When might it make sense to encourage gossip at work?

## 1. What is gossip?

“Gossip” normally refers to conversations between two or more people who discuss and criticize the private life or professional behaviour of others who are not present. We've all done it, and we all know people who **excel at it**. Think about your own office, and you'll soon be able to identify the person who loves to tell everyone about new relationships, about who's not **pulling their weight**, about who earns what, about who is not speaking to whom and so on.

Gossip sometimes starts with a comment about what a person has done to **upset** the speaker or someone else (“Do you know what he said to me yesterday? He really **annoyed** me when he...”). It can quickly become the spreading of **rumour** and scandal as in the **gossip columns** of popular magazines.

At worst, gossip is the spreading of misinformation or “dirt” with **malicious intent** to damage someone's reputation (“I think Pam has an alcohol problem”; “Have you heard about the problems that Michael is having with... ?”). **Psychologists** see gossip of this type as a form of workplace violence, as unacceptable as **bullying** and a cause of enormous stress for the **victim**.

## 2. Who gossips, and about what?

Gossip is normally seen as a female phenomenon. Yet **research** by the organization Onepoll found that men spend an average of 76 minutes a day tittle-tattling with their friends or colleagues, compared to just 52 minutes for women. The research also found that men and women gossip about somewhat different topics:

Top ten gossip topics among men	Top ten gossip topics among women
1. Drunken friends	1. Other women
2. News	2. News
3. Old school friends	3. Relationship problems
4. Female colleagues at work	4. Other people's relationships
5. The sexiest girl at work	5. Sexual relationships
6. Spreading rumours	6. Friends' <b>weight gain</b>
7. <b>Promotions</b>	7. Soap operas
8. Sexual relationships	8. Other women's boyfriends/husbands
9. Salaries	9. The <b>mother-in-law</b>
10. The boss	10. <b>Celebrities</b>

<b>annoy sb.</b> [ə'noɪ]	раздражать кого-либо
<b>bullying</b> ['bʊlɪŋ]	моббинг, травля
<b>celebrity</b> [sə'leɪbrəti]	знаменитость
<b>delight in sth.</b> [dɪ'laɪt ɪn]	находить в чем-либо удовольствие
<b>excel at sth.</b> [ɪk'sel æt]	отличаться чем-либо
<b>godparent</b> ['ɡɒd,peərənt]	крестный, крестная
<b>good name: not have a ~</b> [ˌɡʊd 'neɪm]	пользоваться дурной славой
<b>gossip (about sb./sth.)</b> ['ɡɒsɪp]	сплетничать (о ком/чем-л.); сплетни; сплетник
<b>gossip column</b> ['ɡɒsɪp ,kɒləm]	колонка светской хроники
<b>hedge fund</b> ['hedʒ fʌnd]	хедж-фонд
<b>idle talk</b> [ˌaɪdəl 'tɔːk]	болтовня
<b>malicious intent</b> [mə,lɪʃəs ɪn'tent]	злой умысел
<b>mother-in-law</b> ['mʌðə ɪn ,lɔː]	здесь: свекровь
<b>promotion</b> [prə'məʊʃən]	повышение по службе
<b>proverb</b> ['prɒvɜːb]	поговорка
<b>psychologist</b> [saɪ'kɒlədʒɪst]	[из-за произношения]
<b>pull one's weight</b> [ˌpʊl wənz 'weɪt]	выполнять свою долю работы
<b>research</b> [rɪ'sɜːtʃ]	исследование
<b>rumour</b> ['ruːmə]	слух
<b>tattler</b> ['tætələ]	сплетник
<b>tittle-tattle</b> ['tɪtəl ,tætəl]	перемывание косточек
<b>topic</b> ['tɒpɪk]	тема
<b>upset sb.</b> [ˌʌp'set]	расстраивать кого-либо
<b>victim</b> ['vɪktɪm]	жертва
<b>weight gain</b> ['weɪt geɪn]	набор веса

“Whoever gossips to you will gossip about you.”

Spanish proverb

### DID YOU KNOW?

The noun “gossip” is from the Old English **godsibb**, the term for “godparents”, which comes from “god” and “sib” (relative). Later, it came to mean “close friends”, and by the 16th century, it meant a **tattler**, someone who **delights in idle talk**. In the early 19th century, the term was extended to the idle talk itself.



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