

It's time for positive

# CHANGE

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### Is Technology Killing Our People Skills?

UXL, October 2015



As an adjunct professor at <u>St. Catherine University</u>, I am well aware of the **modern problem of "screen addiction."** More often than not, I walk into the classroom and everyone is silent, eyes glued to their laptops and tablets, flicking through <u>Twitter</u> or playing Candy Crush on Facebook. When I walk into the cafeteria, people aren't talking to each other in line. Instead, they're listening to their iPods or monkeying with their smartphones. Where did all the interpersonal communication go?

Sure, it still happens. Friends chat with each other at lunch, students participate in the classroom. But there's something missing. It's the











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All our technology has led us to be more independent and much more reluctant to engage with people outside our comfort zone. Instead of asking the newspaper-reading stranger on the bus about the weather report, we can pull up the 5-day forecast on our phones. Instead of relying on a travel agent to book us a trip, we can do a little research online and book a flight and hotel within minutes.

I'm not saying technological advances are a bad thing, but what I am saying is that we're slowly cutting off the need to interact with people on the fly. And that is making us lose our touch when it comes to networking and teamwork.

In a world where robots are taking over people's jobs and technology is making entire career fields obsolete, there are still a few advantages people have over their electronic counterparts:

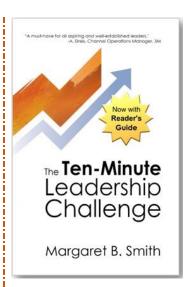
Creativity, empathy, and...communication!

Not to mention, you still need great communication skills to:

- A. Network effectively
- B. Land a job
- C. Work successfully in a team
- D. Maintain a healthy relationship
- F Ftc

So, how to regain the lost art of people skills? Here are a few ideas:

- Force yourself to do it! Sign up for a networking event and make yourself mingle. Then, sign up for another networking event and another. Just getting out there and doing it will improve your communication skills.
- 2. **Listen.** Good listeners are often good communicators. They pick up on others' conversation cues and are able to match the other person's tone. They also can tell what piques the other person's interest (their job, their family, their pet, etc.)
- 3. **Join a MeetUp group.** There are groups for every interest out there (from fencing to knitting, and from writing to hiking) on <a href="MeetUp.com">MeetUp.com</a>. Join one! You'll be surrounded by people that have *something* in common with you, so that can help jolt a conversation.
- 4. **Put the screen away.** Too often, we turn back to our technological crutches when we're feeling uncomfortable. Don't! Turn your phone off and be fully present. You'll be amazed by how much you can absorb if you turn on your full attention.
- 5. **Don't be afraid to make mistakes.** If you're a little out of practice in the interpersonal game, you might fumble your words a bit or run out of things to say. IT'S OKAY. As the saying goes: If you fall off the horse, get back on and keep riding.



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on.

Tapped Out? Nap It Out!



Get out there and use those people skills!

Sincerely,

**Margaret Smith** 

Founder, <u>UXL: Creating Successful Leaders</u>
Author of *The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge* 

### Thank You For Reading!

Please enjoy a FREE 1/2 hour consultation with Margaret Smith



**To Redeem**: Email Margaret at margaret@youexcelnow.com and mention this offer.

Date of actual consultation subject to availability.

The evidence is building! Taking a nap in the middle of the day can help you rejuvenate, concentrate, be more productive, and boost your creativity. How to nap at work without creating a fuss? Read more here.

**Having Clarity** 



Here's one of the videos I made to accompany my book, the <u>Ten Minute</u>
<u>Leadership Challenge</u>. It's about both giving and asking for clarity. <u>Click here to enjoy!</u>

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UXL's mission is to create leaders, promote positive change, and enable businesses and individuals to transform their dreams into reality.

Margaret Smith is a career coach, speaker, author, licensed Insights Discovery practitioner, and adjunct professor at St. Kate's University with 27 yrs experience as a Senior Leader for 3M.

Learn More about Margaret

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