

Power and Politeness

In the Workplace

Power and Politeness in the Workplace provides insights into the way we all talk at work. The book contains a wealth of material illustrating the way people communicate with each other in their ordinary everyday encounters in their workplaces. The analysis focuses, in particular, on how and why people "do" power and politeness in the workplace, and examines the discourse strategies involved in balancing the competing demands of meeting workplace objectives and getting things done on time with maintaining good collegial workplace relationships. Drawing on a large and very varied corpus of data collected in a wide range of workplaces, the authors explore specific types of workplace talk, such as giving advice and instructions, solving problems, running meetings and making decisions. Attention is also paid to the important contribution of less obviously relevant types of workplace talk such as humour and small talk, to the construction of effective workplace relationships. In the final chapter some of the practical implications of the analyses are identified.

This book aims to provide useful information to those interested in the many functions of talk at work. It should be useful to those teaching business or interpersonal communication courses, language in the workplace courses, courses on discourse analysis, communication studies, pragmatics and sociolinguistics. It should also be of interest to workplace practitioners, and especially those involved in Human Resources training, communication skill development, and professional development and education.

JANET HOLMES is Professor of Linguistics, Victoria University of Wellington. Her many publications include An Introduction to Sociolinguistics (2nd edition 2001), Women, Men and Politeness (1995) and an edited book Gendered Speech in Social Context (Victoria University Press. 2000).

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