Note To Self: Five Helpful Tips For Passing Notes At Work

(NAPSA)—Just about anyone who's ever worked in an office has used a Post-it® note to send a quick memo to a co-worker or even to mark lunch leftovers in the fridge. But not as many realize those notes can also be used to help you stay organized, increase productivity and enhance communication skills.

As president of the etiquette consulting firm Mannersmith, Jodi Smith has worked with hundreds of companies and has seen firsthand how the notes can serve as multipurpose office tools. She highlights five creative uses for the notes that will help you achieve better results at work.

1. Make meetings more effective. Brainstorming meetings can often come to a grinding halt when a group is too shy or afraid to share its ideas. Smith suggests keeping the flow of ideas going by writing each idea on a single note and sticking them on a wall or easel. Have the group use the notes to cast ballots for its favorite ideas to avoid hurting anyone's feelings and limit confrontation.

2. Say it quickly. Whereas e-mails and letters are reserved for more formal communications (to customers or the CEO, for example), Post-it notes are effective for quick, informal one-way conversations like "We need to discuss this" or "Come see me." Smith suggests using a note to give a co-worker a quick "Thanks" for a helping hand. On a deadline? Stick a note on your office door or cube as a polite way to tell co-workers you're not to be interrupted.

3. Get personal. A colorful or specially designed note is an effective way to break through the clutter and noise in today's busy workplaces. For best results, choose your notes to represent your personal style or the style of whomever you're communicating with. You can match the notes with an occasion. For example, use flower-shaped Post-it notes to signify a fresh, new idea or a star-shaped note to recognize good work. Use one with your initials to make it easier for co-workers to identify who sent them the message.

4. Organize simply. In addition to notes, Post-it flags and durable tabs are also great office tools that can be used in multiple ways to help anyone stay productive and organized. Use them for filing and indexing in binders, notebooks and planners that are referenced on a regular basis. For example, use small durable tabs to identify important documents in your file folders, and use flags to highlight documents for fast reference. This will save you time and hassle.

5. Communicate with color. Establish a "color code" in the workplace to communicate more effectively. For example, use orange to represent something that requires immediate attention or blue to represent that you're on deadline. Use different colors for messages to specific co-workers and employees or to reference specific projects your team is working on. For example, use green when communicating to the accounting department or purple when sending messages related to a new business lead.

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For more tips, visit www.StaplesPostItShop.com.

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