Work: Cube talk

I started my life in a cubical about two weeks ago. There are benefits and drawbacks to cube life—for example, I can decorate my cube to reflect my personality. But I have to reserve space for my calendars and plethora of post-its. And then there is what I like to call “cube talk.” The amount of noise in an office can be measured on a sliding scale, from “mildly annoying” to “preventing productivity.” People talk to one another face-to-face and over the phone, but sometimes it’s more convenient to call over the cube wall. Everyone can hear what everyone else says anyway...

The only difference between calling out and regular conversation is that perhaps the latter is more considerate of other people’s ear-space. Both are audible, but calling out over the cube wall might suggest that others are meant to hear what is said (instead of just overhear). Clearly intent plays a large role in the choice of conversation type in cube life. When people call over the cube wall to converse, the speech becomes public. In essence, anyone can join in or laugh along. I’m as guilty as anyone else in the office of listening in and sharing a laugh or cringe.

I have frequently been amazed by the topics of conversation passing over my head. Nothing too serious, just the strange, fascinating, and most unexpected things I could have imagined hearing while carrying on business as usual in my cube.