

# ETIQUETTE MANUAL



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# INTRODUCTION

## Meaning

Etiquette is a code of behavior that delineates expectations for social behavior according to contemporary norms within the society or groups. These codes were instituted during the days of ancient chivalry, but as years have flown by they have been modified to a great degree, many of them being quite obsolete while others have changed entirely. However, some have been slightly varied, to suit the times, being governed by the laws of good taste and common sense.

The rules of proper etiquette and protocol have been around for years and are far more important in this day and age than ever before. Implementing proper etiquette and protocol skills into everyday life should be a habit for everyone because a person who displays proper etiquette not only feels good about himself but he also makes those around him feel important and respected.

## Importance of Etiquette

Having social graces means that you can present yourself in any social situation with grace and ease. Whether you are in a business meeting or at dinner you will have confidence and put your companion at ease.

Proper etiquette is important in a social setting, but it is equally crucial in a business setting. In order to achieve business success, you must be able to adapt to an ever-changing situation and act with confidence. Displaying proper etiquette will get you noticed and, obviously, being noticed is great for business.

## Purpose

These pages have been prepared for those who are desirous to polish their etiquettes or/and to add to their stock of information concerning this subject. It has been compiled, for those who are desirous of obtaining knowledge of the etiquette which governs social interaction, and to cultivate both politeness and good-breeding.

# **GREETING, INTRODUCTIONS & HANDSHAKES**

## **Greeting**



Greetings and Introduction are like chemical catalysts, they get things going. It is hard to imagine one's daily life without friendly greetings and introductions which bring people together in a spirit of goodwill. These courtesies are observed in all societies, in different forms. From the most casual wave to the most formal presentation, greetings and introductions are the basic form of civilized interaction today as ever.

A Greeting is an acknowledgement of someone else's presence. For most people, greeting others is so ingrained that they hardly notice doing it. Failing to greet someone you know may cause hurt feelings and misunderstandings. If a courteous person doesn't wave at his/her neighbour or say "good morning" to coworkers, they may feel snubbed or think that the person is behaving oddly. Such failures may happen for a variety of reasons like the preoccupation of mind, distraction or getting late for an engagement. Such failures demonstrate the first essential of good greeting manners, that is; take notice of other people. Greeting is a chance to show your respect for others and to create a favourable impression of yourself.

## **Introduction**

The proper way to make an Introduction is to introduce a lower- ranking person to a higher- ranking person. For example, you are introducing the administrative manager Mr. Abhishek Gulati to your CMD, Mr. Kapila the correct introduction would be "Mr.Kapila, Please meet Mr. Abhishek Gulati, our new administrative manager." If you forget a person's name while making an introduction, don't panic. Proceed with the introduction with a statement such as, "I'm sorry, your name has just slipped my mind." Omitting an introduction is a bigger faux pas than salvaging a botched introduction.

## **Handshakes**

The physical connection you make while shaking hands with someone can leave a powerful impression. When someone's handshake is unpleasant, we often associate negative traits with that person. A firm handshake made with direct eye contact sets the stage for a positive encounter.

## ETIQUETTE IN CONVERSATIONS

Effective conversation stems from the ability of a person to properly construct phrases or sentences that will lead directly to the point. Social etiquette in conversation is about simple good manners. It is important that you put the person you're talking to at ease and that they feel as though they had a chance to say what they wanted to say and that you listened to them and responded to them with sensitivity.



One should use well-modulated tones when speaking in the office and over the phone. Raising your voice in haste, frustration, or anger is always inappropriate. It doesn't foster clear communication and leaves all parties concerned with an "emotional residue" that will interfere with getting work done. Speech is an important form of communication. Every time you open your mouth, you reveal something about yourself to someone else, not just in what you say, but also how you say it, so speak clearly and sincerely. Make yourself heard without shouting, interrupting or talking over others. Say what you think and how you feel, but with respect.

There are a few etiquettes to bear in mind while making conversation:

- **Don't hijack the conversation (Listen):** Conversation should be a two-way process where you find out what the other person thinks about a topic as well as tell them your views on the same topic. Observe the other person's body language and take clues of when he/she is ready to talk or has heard enough. Their eyes glazing over as they heave heavy sighs and glance at their watch is always a clue that you should stop talking pretty soon.
- **Give people time to speak:** Not everyone finds it easy to say what they want to say. Don't be afraid of a few silences during your conversation. A quick look at the face of the person you're talking to will let you know whether they're pausing to think of what to say next or are finished conveying their thought.
- **Invite others in:** If you see someone struggling to say something help them out. Paraphrase if needed to elicit a response and if they do not seem understand. But do not patronize.

- **Ask questions:** Make questions easy to understand and respond to. That will prompt the person you're talking to and help them relax while talking to you.
- **Give people time and a chance to answer:** And make sure you listen. Some people jump straight in with an answer; others like to ponder a question and give a thought out response. Either of these options is fine, so make sure you leave time for an answer to be given. You only have to look at facial expressions and the body language to know if they want you to step in and rescue them by speaking again.
- **Respect others opinions:** It doesn't really matter whether the world agrees with you. People are entitled to their opinion and you don't have to launch a single-handed campaign to convince them of the error in their ways. Unless someone is likely to be harmed by holding a particular opinion, leave it alone. Even if there is a risk of danger, think carefully about whether you're the right person to tell them about it.
- **Don't be a know-it-all:** You may have a wealth of wisdom and knowledge to pass on to someone on a topic, but unless you do it in the right way, it won't be appreciated.
- **Don't make disagreement personal:** It is fine to differ in opinions, even with friends and loved ones. That's just life and it doesn't hurt anyone. A difference of opinion doesn't have to cause a row and it can actually lead to an interesting conversation if you approach it right.

## BODY LANGUAGE

Body language is a form of non-verbal communication. It uses stylized gestures, postures, and physiologic signs which act as cues to other people. Humans, unconsciously, send and receive these non-verbal signals all the time.

Studies show that your words account for only 7% of the messages you convey. The remaining 93% is non-verbal. 55% of communication is based on what people see and the other 38% is transmitted through tone of voice. So in a business setting, people can see what you are not saying. If your body language doesn't match your words, you are wasting your time.

Consider this, someone starts to tell a story and you sigh and roll your eyes - your body is telling that person that you're not interested in their story and find it boring. If, on the other hand, you make eye contact with them while they are talking and nod or smile in response to what they are saying, your body is telling them "I'm paying attention to what you are saying and find your story interesting."

### The following Guidelines shall help in checking your Body Language:

- **Maintain Eye Contact:** Eye contact is powerful way to communicate. When one looks at the other person, you show interest. When you fail to make eye contact, you give the impression that you are not interested. But how much eye contact is important?. One should maintain eye contact about 60% of the time in order to look interested, but not aggressive.
- **Facial Expressions:** Facial expression is another form of non-verbal communication. A smile sends a positive message and adds warmth and an aura of confidence. Others will be more receptive if you remember to check your expression.
- **Relaxed Mouth:** Your mouth gives clues, too, and not just when you are speaking. Mouth movements, such as pressing your lips or twisting them to one side, can indicate that you are thinking about what you are hearing or that you are holding something back.
- **Arms & Legs:** How receptive you are is suggested by where you place your arms. Arms crossed or folded over your chest say that you have shut other people out and have no interest in them or what they are saying. This position can also say, "I don't agree with you." (You might just be feeling cold, but unless you shiver at the same time, the person in front of you may get the wrong message.)



Legs talk, too. A lot of movement indicates nervousness. How and where you cross them tells others how you feel. The preferred positions for the polished professional are feet flat on the

floor or legs crossed at the ankles. The least professional and most offensive position is resting one leg or ankle on top of your other knee. Some people call this the "Figure Four." It can make you look arrogant.

- **Alert & Interested Posture:** The angle of your body gives an indication to others about what's going through your head. 'Leaning In' says, "Tell me more." 'Leaning Away' signals you've heard enough. Adding a nod of your head is another way to affirm that you are listening. Posture is just as important. Sit or stand erect if you want to be seen as alert and enthusiastic. When you slump in your chair or lean on the wall, you look tired. No one wants to do business with someone who has no energy.
- **Visible hands and their movements:** Control your hands by paying attention to where they are. In the business world, particularly when you deal with people from other cultures, your hands need to be seen. This means that you should keep them out of your pockets and you should resist the urge to put them under the table or behind your back. Having your hands anywhere above the neck, fidgeting with your hair or rubbing your face, is unprofessional too.
- **Maintaining appropriate Distance:** The distance you keep from others is crucial if you want to establish good rapport. Standing too close or "in someone's face" will mark you as pushy. Positioning yourself too far away will make you seem standoffish. Neither is what you want so find the happy medium. Most importantly, do what makes the other person feel comfortable.

You may not be aware of what you are saying with your body, but others will get the message. Make sure it is the one you want to send. Standing or sitting up straight, appearing confident, looking at people in the eye, and having a smile or pleasant expression gives people the impression that you are polite, confident and pleasant. Scowling, crossing your arms, slouching, or staring off into the distance may make people think that you are angry, unapproachable, or disinterested.

The next time you're in a social setting, ask yourself what your body language is saying to people.

## IMPORTANCE OF GROOMING

The first thing people notice about one is the way they look and it leaves a lasting impression.

Putting forth a nice appearance does not mean that you have to spend a lot of money on clothes or accessories. Clean, ironed and well fitted clothes go a long way in contributing towards a positive appearance. A well maintained beard /clean face also contributes towards a positive image. A smart haircut and neatly combed hair is a must. Greasy-looking, unkempt, or poorly maintained hair can sink the best of all look. Dandruff can also negate a clean, streamlined look, so keep a lookout for flakes. Check your nails often to see if they need cleaning or filing. The basics of nail care for women and men include neatly manicured nails and cuticles.



In addition to taking care over your appearance, it is also important to consider if your appearance is appropriate for the situation. You may look lovely in your party clothes or feel confident in your business suit, but these would look out of place in a more casual setting such as at a picnic or at a movie.

The same goes for accessories and make up: glitter eye shadow and elaborate hair might be fun after work, but look odd for a business meeting. Think about what the majority of people will be wearing in the situation and wear something that fits in and makes one feel comfortable.

## TABLE ETIQUETTE

Business etiquette is made up of significantly more important things than knowing which fork to use at lunch with a client.

Table manners play an important part in making a favorable impression. They are visible signals of the state of our manners and therefore are essential to professional success.

### Napkins In a Restaurant:

As soon as you are seated, remove the napkin from its place setting, unfold it, and spread it in your lap. Do not shake it open. At some very formal restaurants, the waiter may do this for the diners, but it is not inappropriate to spread out one's napkins in one's lap, even when this is the case.

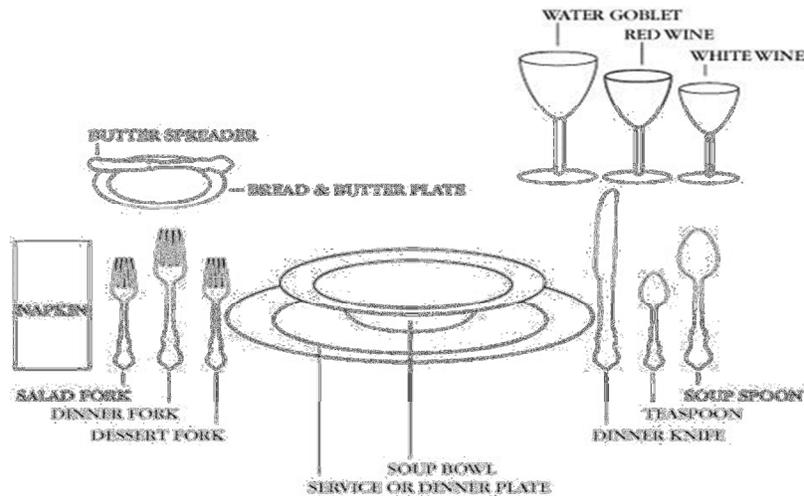
The napkin rests on the lap till the end of the meal. Don't clean the cutlery or wipe your face with the napkin.

If you excuse yourself from the table, loosely fold the napkin and place it to the left or right of your plate. Do not refold your napkin or wad it up on the table either. Never place your napkin on your chair.

At the end of the meal, leave the napkin semi-folded at the left side of the place setting. It should not be crumpled or twisted; nor should it be folded. The napkin must also not be left on the chair.



## Silver Ware, Dinner Ware-Dinner Seating Photo



### Use of Cutlery

The golden rule is always work from the outside, in. Use the outside knife and fork for the first course and then simply work inwards for each subsequent course.

Eat to your left, drink to your right. Any food dish to the left is yours, and any glass to the right is yours.

Starting with the knife, fork, or spoon that is farthest from your plate, work your way in, using one utensil for each course. The salad fork is on your outermost left, followed by your dinner fork and then Dessert Fork. Your soup spoon is on your outermost right, followed by your Teaspoon, and dinner Knife. If you remember the rule to work from the outside in, you will be fine.

### Use one of two methods when using the fork and knife

American Style: Knife in right hand, fork in left hand holding food. After a few bite-sized pieces of food are cut, place knife on edge of plate with blade facing in. Eat food by switching fork to right hand (unless you are left handed).

Continental/European Style: Knife in right hand, fork in left hand. Eat food with fork still in left hand. The difference is that you don't switch hands-you eat with your fork in your left hand, with the prongs curving downward.

Once used, your cutlery should not touch the table again. Always rest forks, knives, and spoons on the side of your plate or in the bowl. For more formal dinners, from course to course, your tableware will be taken away and replaced as needed.

To signal that you are done with the course, rest your fork, tines up, and knife blade in, with the handles resting at five o'clock and tips pointing to ten o'clock on your plate.

When you have finished eating, place the fork and the spoon side by side in the center of the plate. Any unused silverware is simply left on the table.

### General Etiquette Rules

- Pass food from the left to the right.
- Always say please when asking for something.
- If asked for the salt or pepper, pass both together, even if a table mate asks for only one of them. This is advised, so that dinner guests won't have to search for orphaned shakers. Set any passed item, whether it's the salt and pepper shakers, a bread basket, or a butter plate, directly on the table instead of passing hand-to-hand.
- Never intercept a pass. Snagging a roll out of the breadbasket or taking a shake of salt when it is en route to someone else is a no-no.
- Food is served from the left. Dishes are removed from the right.
- Butter, spreads, or dips should be transferred from the serving dish to your plate before spreading or eating.
- Never turn a wine glass upside down to decline wine. It is more polite to let the wine be poured and not draw attention. Otherwise, hold your hand over the wine glass to signal that you don't want any wine.
- Always scoop food away from you.
- Do try a little of everything on your plate.
- Don't blow on your food to cool it off if it is too hot to eat.
- Keep elbows off the table. Keep your left hand in your lap unless you are using it.
- Do not talk with your mouth full. Chew with your mouth closed.
- Cut only enough food for the next mouthful. Eat in small bites and slowly.
- Don't clean up spills with your own napkin and don't touch items that have dropped on the floor. You can use your napkin to protect yourself from spills. Then, simply and politely ask your server to clean up and to bring you a replacement for the soiled napkin or dirty utensil.
- If you cough, cover your mouth with your napkin to stop the spread of germs and muffle the noise. If your cough becomes unmanageable, excuse yourself to visit the restroom. Wash your hands before returning to the dining room.

- Turn off your cell phone or switch it to silent or vibrate mode before sitting down to eat, and leave it in your pocket or purse. It is impolite to answer a phone during dinner. If you must make or take a call, excuse yourself from the table and step outside of the restaurant.
- Do not push your dishes away from you or stack them for the waiter when you are finished. Leave plates and glasses where they are.

### **Dinner Table Etiquette - the 10 Do's**

- Once seated, unfold your napkin and use it for occasionally wiping your lips or fingers. At the end of dinner, leave the napkin tidily on the place setting.
- It is good dinner table etiquette to serve the lady sitting to the right of the host first, then the other ladies in a clockwise direction, and lastly the gentlemen.
- Hold the knife and fork with the handles in the palm of the hand, forefinger on top, and thumb underneath.
- Whilst eating, you may if you wish rest the knife and fork on either side of the plate between mouthfuls. When you have finished eating, place them side by side in the center of the plate.
- If the food presented to you is not to your liking, it is polite to at least make some attempt to eat a small amount of it. Or at the very least, cut it up a little, and move it around the plate.
- It is quite acceptable to leave some food to one side of your plate if you feel as though you have eaten enough. On the other hand, don't attempt to leave your plate so clean that it looks as though you haven't eaten in days.
- Desserts may be eaten with both a spoon and fork, or alternatively a fork alone if it is a cake or pastry style sweet.
- Always make a point of thanking the host and hostess for their hospitality before leaving.
- It is good dinner table etiquette to send a personal thank you note to the host and hostess shortly afterwards.

### **Dinner Table Etiquette - the 10 Don'ts**

- Never start eating before a signal from the host to do so.
- Forks should not be turned over unless being used for eating peas, sweetcorn kernels, rice or other similar foods. In which case, it should be transferred to the right hand. However, at a casual buffet, or barbecue it is quite acceptable to eat with just a fork.

- It is generally not regarded as good dinner table etiquette to use one's bread for dipping into soups or mopping up sauces.
- Loud eating noises such as slurping and burping are very impolite, the number one sin of dinner table etiquette.
- Talking with one's mouth full, is not only unpleasant to watch, but could also lead to choking!
- Definitely not a good idea.
- Don't stretch across the table crossing other guests to reach food, wine or condiments. Instead ask a guest sitting close to pass the item to you.
- Good dinner table etiquette sometimes involves a degree of diplomacy when it comes to the host's choice of food and wine! Even if you feel that you can do better, don't ever offer your criticism. If you feel unable to pay any compliments, at least remain silent on the subject.
- Picking teeth (unless toothpicks are provided) or licking fingers are very unattractive! The only exception to the latter is when eating meat or poultry on the bone (such as chicken legs or ribs). In which case, a finger bowl should be provided.
- Drinking too much wine can be very embarrassing! Where a different wine is served with each course, it is quite acceptable to not finish each glass.
- Don't forget to make polite conversation with those guests around you. Dinner parties are not just about the food, they are intended to be a sociable occasion.



## ETIQUETTE AT WORKPLACE

The globalization of businesses in India has vastly improved manners at work, but there is still much to be desired. In far too many companies, basic courtesies are still overlooked. Every work place has its own complex dynamics but the basic social rules which make people comfortable with each other remain valid in every working situation. An organization where people are treated well tends to be more successful than others.



### Guidelines to follow in a working environment

Few ground rules on insights into how to bring some consideration, grace and style back into your work life.

- **Speaking:** Use well-modulated tones when you speak in the office and over the phone. Raising your voice in haste, frustration, or anger is always inappropriate. It doesn't foster clear communication and leaves all parties concerned with an "emotional residue" that will interfere with getting work done.
- **Work Attire:** Dress as those in your work group dress. If your job requires you to interact with the public, you will probably be required to dress more formally. If you wish to climb the corporate ladder, look at the people in positions you want and dress as they do. Avoid clothing extremes, revealing clothing, and evening or party wear in the workplace.
- **Personal Life at Work:** Everyone makes friends at work and there is a fine line that is easy to cross when co-workers become friends. Remember to conduct your personal life outside the workplace and you won't go wrong. Use moderation in your exchanges with work friends so you don't spend too much time socializing. If it is necessary to discuss personal issues or conduct urgent personal business of any sort in your workplace, be brief and discreet, so you don't distract, disturb or offend those with whom you work. Keep casual talk to a minimum.
- **Interaction with Co-Workers:** Don't interrupt your work mates. Schedule times to meet whenever possible to go over mutual work. The occasional quick question is unavoidable, but don't let spontaneity rule you and ruin everyone else's schedule and concentration. Open cubicles already remove most of your co-workers privacy, so respect their silence.

Avoid roaming the floor and disturbing others at work when you are less busy. If you are interrupted or if a co-worker is making too much noise in an adjacent area, calmly and respectfully inform him that you need silence. You can be polite and firm at the same time. And always treat your co-workers with consideration and respect in all exchanges.

- **Your Workspace:** Maintain a high standard of neatness and professional decorum in your personal work area. Bringing personal items into that area is your decision, but be aware that what you display is a direct reflection of who you are and how you wish to be perceived. Think about it first! And think twice about displaying controversial, religious, political or extremely personal items in your private work area. And, while it shouldn't have to be said, we must never take things from other people's workspace and return anything you borrow with haste. It is extremely rude to carry on your business to the detriment of everyone around you.
- **Sharing the Environment:** Take care in shared areas. Don't leave your clutter in a conference room after a meeting. If you have nervous habits, break them. Don't twitch, jiggle your leg, tap pencils or other items on the table and so on. Never engage in personal grooming in your cube or in meetings. Comb hair, put on make-up, and engage in all personal grooming in the restroom or at home. Don't smoke, chew gum, play with your face, hands or other body parts, or absentmindedly snack, whistle or sing in a shared workplace. When you eat snacks, breakfast, or lunch in your cubicle, be considerate of those around you; try to select foods that do not have strong or unpleasant aromas.
- **Group Politics:** Don't gossip about or discuss other employees or their performance in any way in their absence. And if you have something you absolutely must say, say it to that person and in private. Avoid bringing a bad mood into your workplace. And never abuse others when you have a bad day. Learn how to be a "team player" and how to take action to make the changes you think are important. If you find this is impossible in your job and that you are distressed by your inability to affect change, maybe it's time to find a job where you can make changes. But don't destroy your current work environment with your unhappiness.



## How to Avoid Conflict in the Workplace

- **Sit, Wait, Think and Act when Correct:** Whenever you have issues in the workplace, you're better off thinking through your words before you voice complaints, thoughts or suggestions. Whether you're a business owner, supervisor, manager or employee, the workplace can sometimes become a tinderbox for conflict.
- **Listen, Don't Dispute:** Sometimes your manager needs to tell you how disappointed he is with you. Sometimes your co-worker needs to go on a diatribe about how you "neglect" him. Sometimes your employees need to express their resentment about the way you've treated them. You can't argue with feelings. Listen when your co-workers, managers, or employees express strong feelings. Rather than argue and try to insist that they shouldn't be feeling what they're feeling, understand that they are feeling that way and simply say, "I'm sorry you feel that way." Try to put yourself in their shoes and give them the empathy that you would want yourself. Arguing may only make a situation worse.
- **Document:** Make sure you protect yourself with thorough documentation of any potentially volatile situation. This rule applies to people on both sides of the power structure. A smart employee as well as a smart manager will document issues that relate to self-preservation and the protection of job security.
- **Cordiality and Friendliness:** Having vowed to create appropriate boundaries, make every effort to be cordial and friendly. Ask co-workers and supervisors about how they are; notice changes in their appearance in a complimentary way; comment upon the quality of their (good) work. Being popular can only make work life easier and happier.
- **Never Overreact:** When co-workers feel neglected, they often will create a scenario that invites your overreaction. Overreactions cause fights. Don't do it. Assess a dispute with your co-worker. Is it really worth fighting over?
- **Play well with others:** If you want to win the war (keep your job and progress up the career ladder), sometimes it is strategically advantageous to lose the battle. Assess a work situation carefully. Strategize and assess your gains and losses in a situation. If your supervisor or manager needs to act as if he or she came up with an idea that was actually yours, don't argue with them.
- **Brevity and Paucity:** In the workplace, if you keep contact limited and utilize a cordial and polite silence to avoid fights, you can often extinguish flames that are being directed your way. Supervisors and managers appreciate a cooperative employee who gets to the point succinctly.
- **Never try to change others:** Do not ever try to change your co-workers, especially those who are above you in the hierarchy of the workplace. It is a cardinal rule that people can change themselves,

but none of us can change another. You are doomed to failure if you try to get your supervisor to see their flaws and change their ways. Learn to change what you can and accept what you cannot change.

### Courtesy towards Colleagues

- Greet everyone you meet cheerfully and with a smile on your way into the office.
- Good bosses, employees and colleagues don't forget their manners. Remember 'please' and 'thank you'.
- Always show your appreciation with a smile.
- Small talk and light chitter chatter at work is essential; it expresses friendliness without demanding attention. Whether you talk about the traffic or the weather, the vital message is that you are all part of the same team.
- Be polite to hired help like peons, drivers, delivery boys etc.
- Do not talk loudly when you talk over the phone or to your colleagues. Talk in a soft and clear voice.
- Take instructions with grace and give instructions gracefully.
- Always be considerate. The last person to leave the office should not have to switch off all the lights, air conditioners and computers. For example, when a photocopier runs out, whoever used the last sheet of paper should refill it.
- When you are going to get yourself a cup of tea, coffee or a cold beverage, offer to bring one for your co-workers as well.

### Make yourself pleasant to work with

- Don't be a whiner who is always complaining and miserable with his/ her lot in life. Do bring a positive attitude to meetings and discussions.
- You don't have to be rude or sarcastic to say "no."
- Never use words like 'can't' and 'won't', or phrases like 'I'm busy' and 'that's not my job'.
- Do not criticize anyone. And if you get criticized, be professional about it. Do not take it personally.
- Keep personal conversations down to a minimum and keep out of earshot of others.
- It is shabby to look through people's computers, emails or letters and don't ever make the mistake of sneaking into people's personal property like handbags or wallets. Be responsible for your own property and valuables. If you lose your expensive items, everybody else becomes a suspect and nobody likes being one.
- Never borrow anything from someone's desk without permission and when you do always return it in good condition.
- Do not misuse office property. Keep your workplace orderly. Do not infringe on other people's space.

- Be friendly with colleagues of the opposite sex but know where to draw the line. Don't get involved needlessly in any situation which could lead to embarrassment and could potentially damage not only your reputation, but that of the organization as well.
- Do not get indulged in office gossip or discuss delicate topics like religion, politics and money.
- Do not fidget or make unnecessary sounds which can be distracting to your co-workers.
- Maintain stringent standards of personal hygiene. Do clean up after you use the restrooms for the next person.
- Use office privileges like sick leave etc thoughtfully so that you don't burden your co-workers with extra work.

### **Etiquette With Clients:**

Business Etiquette is about how to conduct your business with clients - by showing respect and consideration for them at all times. Your Clients rely on your expertise and knowledge. Be helpful and above all act with honesty and integrity. Therefore show courtesy and good manners always. Practice business etiquette at every opportunity; on the phone and face to face; with your clients and your suppliers.

### **Few tips to keep in mind while dealing with clients:**

- Don't keep clients waiting while you wind up another task.
- Go out personally to ask for a brief deferment.
- Apologise if getting late for a meeting and invite them to use the facilities; tea, coffee, magazines or whatever else is on offer while they wait.
- Introduce people by name and with dignity.
- Make a brief statement of how they fit into the business.
- Never be caught without business cards. Hand them over with pride and confidence and don't forget to smile.

## BUSINESS MEETING ETIQUETTE

Business meetings are one arena in which poor etiquette can have negative effects. By improving your business meeting etiquette you automatically improve your chances of success. Comfort, trust, attentiveness and clear communication are examples of the positive results of demonstrating good etiquette.



Following are the guidelines for Formal and Informal Meetings.

### Informal Meetings

Informal meetings are generally more relaxed affairs and may not necessarily take place in the office or meeting room. Even so a sense of professionalism and good business etiquette are still required.

#### There are 7 points to be considered:

- Business etiquette demands that the person calling the meeting (henceforth 'the chair') should be the most senior one or the one with the most direct or urgent interest in the topic at hand.
- The chair should decide the time, place and agenda. These details should be confirmed with everyone to make sure all are in agreement and no inconvenience is caused.
- The chair must make the purpose of the meeting clear to the attendees, how long it will last and what is expected of them, i.e. particular information or preparation of documents. Failing to relay the proper information is bad business etiquette as it could cause embarrassment.
- Punctuality is a must. Keeping people waiting is considered the height of poor etiquette
- The chair should strive to ensure the meeting stays within a set framework or agenda so that it is kept as short and effective as possible. The chair should pre-appoint someone to record the minutes of the meeting. This can later be distributed to the attendees for reference.
- If the results of the meeting have an effect on others who were not present it is considered proper business etiquette to inform them.

## Formal Meetings

The business etiquette of formal meetings such as departmental meetings, management meetings, board meetings usually have a set format.

### Here are 7 business etiquette guidelines that are applicable to any formal meeting:

- Prepare well for the meeting as your contribution may be integral to the proceedings. If you are using statistics, reports or any other information make sure it has been handed out at least three days prior to the meeting.
- Dress well and arrive at scheduled time. Your professionalism is linked to both.
- Always remember to switch off your mobile phone.
- If there is an established seating pattern, accept it. If you are unsure, ask.
- When discussions are under way it is good business etiquette to allow more senior figures to contribute first.
- Never interrupt anyone, even if you disagree strongly. Note what has been said and return to it later with the chair's permission.
- When speaking, be brief and ensure what you say is relevant.
- It is a serious breach of business etiquette to divulge information to others about a meeting. What has been discussed should be considered as confidential.

The above principles of business meeting etiquettes are good manners and courtesy. These principles, if adhered to, the chances of offense and misunderstandings are greatly reduced.

## TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

Many things have changed over the years, especially in the evolving world of business. One thing has not changed though, and that is the need for proper telephone etiquette in the work place. Proper telephone technique involves some basic common sense in which everyone who works for an organization should use.



### Here are some basic guidelines for proper usage of telephone

- Identify yourself immediately to the other person.
- Focus yourself clearly on the purpose of the call and the person you are speaking with. Don't try to do things like opening a mail or talking with someone in the room in the course of your telephone conversation.
- Don't eat or drink while you are on the phone. You may not be aware of how well the person at the other end of the line can hear you chewing or swallowing and the impression you leave will not be a good one.
- Be prepared before you dial, know the reason for your call and be ready to discuss.
- When leaving a message for someone you have called, speak slowly and clearly. Leave your name, contact number and a brief message.
- If you need to transfer a call, explain the reason for the transfer to the caller. Monitor the line to be certain that the transfer was completed successfully.
- When you call someone, ask if they have a moment to talk with you rather than assuming that they have enough time to talk to you.
- All incoming calls should be answered in a timely manner.
- If you get the wrong number, apologize to the person who answers the phone, do not just hang up. This is especially important nowadays when people have Caller ID's on their phone lines. All they have to do is to check their device to find out who just rudely hung up on them.
- Sometimes you may be required to answer someone else's phone while they are away from their desk. The best response is to take a message. Be sure there are phone message pads and pen where you answer the phone. Ask for the caller's name, contact number (repeat for accuracy), reason for the call and the best time to return the call. Add your name or initials, and the date and time of the call to the message.

## CELL PHONE ETIQUETTE

Usages of cell phones are on the rise. Having a cell phone allows you to conduct business from virtually anywhere at any time. While they have helped make our lives easier, at the same time many people agree that they also create an unwanted intrusion in our lives. Almost everyone seems to be on the phone. Organization needs to have certain guidelines to ensure polite usage



of these technologies/devices. So to make everyone's life easier in an organization following guidelines have been put relating to cell phone etiquette

- **Let It Vibrate:** If you have your cell phone turned on in meetings, workshops, workstations etc. set it to vibratory mode. If you have to attend to a call, excuse yourself and answer your phone in a private corner.
- **Do not Shout:** If the background noise is disturbing, go to a quieter place. If the problem is a bad connection, talking louder will not help so just end the call and try again from a place where the reception is better.
- **Choose Your Spot:** When choosing a spot to take or make a call, make sure you are far enough away from other people & that they are not forced to listen to your conversation.
- **Ringtones:** Set the ring tone at a low level with a tune that is soft, gentle and not annoying. The more crowded the situation, the quieter and softer the volume of voice and ring.
- **Remain Humane:** Some employees seem incapable of speaking on their cell phone in a normal tone of voice. Perhaps they are subconsciously worried that the party on the other end cannot hear them very well, so they double and triple their volume.
- **Keep business private:** Many personal and business conversations contain information that should remain confidential or private. Before using a mobile phone in a public location to discuss private business or issues, make sure that there will be enough distance to keep the content private. Some stories, some issues and some conflicts should be saved for times and locations that will allow for confidentiality.

Judicious and appropriate use of your cell phone can be a valuable business asset. Make the most of your calls by projecting the same professional impression on the phone that you would in person.

## E-MAIL ETIQUETTE

E-mail has become a part and parcel of today's business communication.



### Here are some rules one should follow for writing and Forwarding e-mails

- Don't forward anything without editing out all the forwarding >>>> i.e other e-mail addresses, headers, and commentary from all the other forwarders. If you must forward, only forward the actual content of the e-mail that you feel is valuable.
- If you cannot take the time to write a personal comment at the top of your forwarded e-mail to the person you are sending to, then you should not forward it at all.
- If you must forward an e-mail to more than one person, put your e-mail address in the To: field and all the others you are sending to in the Bcc: field to protect their e-mail address from being published to those they do not know. This is a serious privacy issue.
- Use the Subject field to enter a clear concise indication of what the e-mail is about. This is a very useful field and can be helpful to the recipient if used judiciously, so make it informative.
- Avoid mixing subjects in your email. Unless otherwise needed by your superior or work culture, mixing subjects in one e-mail message might confuse your readers.
- One should type in capitals only if he means to SHOUT. It is ill-mannered to shout, so one should type in lower case.
- It is alright to intersperse your replies between a whole bunch of questions, just be sure to reply in a different coloured text so that your replies stand out. It would help to start the reply with the customary greeting and then refer the recipient to the answers written below each question.
- Avoid sending copies or forwarding emails to persons not directly involved in the subject matter.
- Think carefully before you decide to click "reply to all".
- Do not request a delivery receipt or that the email has been read unless such information is vital.
- Avoid ambiguity to stop a further exchange of emails seeking clarification.
- Keep the contents clear and to the point.
- Always proof read your e-mail prior to sending it. It may take you a minute or may be ten but you shall atleast be sure that the message you sent is free of grammatical, vocabulary and appropriate usage errors.

## **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE**

To say that today's business environment is becoming increasingly more global is to state the obvious. Meetings, phone calls and conferences are held all over the world and attendees can come from any point on the globe. On any given business day, one can find himself dealing face-to-face, over the phone and by e-mail with people whose customs and cultures differ from their own.



While the old adage "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" still holds true, business clients and colleagues who are visiting this country should be treated with sensitivity and with an awareness of their unique culture. One should do their homework and put their best international foot forward to build good relationships for future business. One small mistake such as using first names inappropriately, not observing the rules of timing or sending the wrong color flower in the welcome bouquet can be costly.

There is no one set of rules that applies to all international visitors so one needs to do the research for each country that their clients represent. This may sound like a daunting task, but taken in small steps, it is manageable and the rewards are worth the effort. Here are a few tips for International Business Etiquette.

### **Building relationships**

One should take time to get to know their international clients and build rapport before they rush to the bottom line. Business relationships are built on trust that is developed over time.

### **Dressing conservatively**

Your choice of business attire is a signal of your respect for the other person or organization. Hence one should take care and try to dress conservatively in business meetings.

### **Observe the hierarchy**

It is not always simple to know who the highest ranking member is, when you are dealing with a group. If you are unable to discover the protocol through research one should address a person by their age, to avoid embarrassment.

## Understanding the handshake

With a few exceptions, business people around the world use handshake for meeting and greeting. Variations in handshakes are based on cultural differences, not on personality or values. The American style handshake is with a firm grip, two quick pumps, eye contact and a smile. The Japanese give a light handshake. Germans offer a firm handshake with one pump, and the French grip is light with a quick pump. Middle Eastern people will continue shaking your hand throughout the greeting.

## Using titles and correct forms of address

One should approach first names with caution when dealing with people from other cultures. Ideally one should use titles and last names until they have been invited to use the person's first name. Use of first names is reserved for family and close friends in some cultures.

Titles are another important aspect of addressing business people. Earned academic degrees are acknowledged. For example, a German engineer is addressed as "Herr Ingenieur" and a professor as "Herr Professor". Listen carefully when you are introduced to someone and pay attention to business cards when you receive them.

## Exchanging business cards

The key to giving out business cards in any culture is to show respect for the other person. Use both hands to present your card to visitors from Japan, China, Singapore, or Hong Kong. When you receive someone else's business card, always look at it and acknowledge it. When you put it away, place it carefully in your card case or with your business documents. Sticking it haphazardly in your pocket is demeaning to the giver. In most cases, wait until you have been introduced to give someone your card.

## Valuing time

One should stick to the rules of punctuality but should not take it personally if someone from a more relaxed culture keeps you waiting or spends more time than you normally would in meetings or over meals.

Whether the world comes to you or you go out to it, the greatest compliment you can pay to your international clients is to learn about their country and their customs. Understand differences in behaviour and honor them with your actions. Do not take offense when visitors behave according to their norms. People from other cultures will appreciate your efforts to accommodate them and you will find yourself building your international clientele.

## CONCLUSION

Manners are something used every day to make a good impression on others and to feel good about oneself. No matter where you are - at home, work, or with friends - practicing good manners is important.

If you practice good manners, you are showing those around you that you are considerate of their feelings and being respectful. You are also setting standards for other's behavior and encouraging them to treat you with similar respect.

Every culture and individual may have different rules or feelings about what is polite or not polite. The goal of this manual has been to recapitulate some of the basic and common rules of polite behavior in our society.

At the end of the day everyone likes to be in the company of a well behaved and well-mannered person, be it during business or informal get together. These little tips may help all of us to gear up for a more sophisticated and polished ambience.

“Growing together in harmony is progress and living cordially together is friendship.”



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