BUSINESS ETIQUETTE PRIMER

Proper business etiquette can make or break the first impression, the sale, the relationship, the interview, the job, and the career. It is to YOUR advantage to be aware of proper etiquette, and to use it correctly. Using proper etiquette:

• Differentiates in a competitive market
• Honors commitments to quality and excellence
• Enables confidence with a variety of people
• Modifies distracting behaviors and develops admired conduct

A first impression is made in 7-10 seconds.

Your dress (attire) commands the level of respect you will be given.

Gender is no longer a factor regarding etiquette with the exception of interactions with “older” generations.

GENERAL ETIQUETTE NOTES

• BE ON TIME.
• SHAKE HANDS CORRECTLY.
• IF YOU SAY YOU’LL GET BACK TO SOMEONE, GET BACK TO THEM.
• Smile and greet co-workers in passing.
• Return phone calls promptly.
• Share recognition for joint projects.
• Use titles for higher-ranking co-workers and avoid the use of first names unless you are
  o asked to be less formal.
• Decide what fights are worth fighting.
• Don’t bury bad news.
• Say please, thank you, you’re welcome, congratulations, excuse me.
• Be civil, ESPECIALLY during disagreements.
• Apologize when you’re wrong.
• Do not discuss sex.
• Do not swear.
• If you don’t know something, find it out.
• Use “Sir” and “Ma’am”
INTRODUCTIONS

- Make them! Failure to do so causes embarrassment and discomfort.
- Always stand!
- Come around from desks.
- Order of names.
  - Mr./Ms. Greater Authority, I would like to introduce Mr./Ms. Lesser Authority.
  - Clients take precedence over people from your own organization.
- Look at people as you introduce them.

MEETING ETIQUETTE

- Be on time!
- Start on time.
- Don’t leave early.
- Use agendas.
- Pay attention during meetings.
- Get back to people!
- End on time.
- Use effective listening.

GENDER NEUTRAL ETIQUETTE

1. Shake hands with everyone – men and women – the same way. The one hand, straight up-and-down handshake is the most effective and professional.
2. Women should always stand when introduced, as men do, in a one-on-one encounter or meeting environment.
3. Use your full name when introducing yourself. Don’t be “Mary in accounting.” Full names give you more credibility and identity as a professional.
4. It is proper and legal to address women as “Ms.” In a spoken or written communication. The woman may then advise you to say “Mrs.” Or “Miss” if she prefers it.
5. Introduce people in business based on rank, not gender.
6. Avoid touching people, beyond the one-hand professional handshake.
7. Avoid showing too much skin in any business-related situation, whether it is dress-down day or the company cocktail party. Short shorts, sleeveless shirts, tank tops, sandal-like shoes or open backs are not appropriate for business-related environments.
8. People open doors for people, not necessarily men opening doors for women. If someone opens a door for you, however, you should not protest this act of politeness.
9. The host of a business lunch, the one who did the inviting, pays for lunch regardless of gender.
10. Avoid saying “Hon,” “Dear,” “Son,” “Doll,” and “Babe,” to people in the work environment and over the telephone.
GENERATION GAP ETIQUETTE  
(Suggestions from Ms. Potter)

“Older generations” were raised in a different world. Remember this for two reasons.

1. There will be occasions when you might “cut some slack”. Example: Being called “Hon” or “Bud” by a 70-year-old man is usually meant in a friendly manner and should not be immediate cause for concern. An older person often thinks of you as they would a grandchild. In the business world, you can use this to your advantage.

2. There are different etiquette rules for the older generation based on gender. While you might allow a peer to open the door for you, you would be best served to always open the door for a 70-year-old lady.

The obvious question is “Where do you draw the line of generation?” The answer is that when in doubt, do the most polite thing possible.

ETIQUETTE IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

Etiquette may be different in different countries. There may be differences in:

- Personal space, touching
- Eye contact
- Sitting
- Time
- Eating
- General attitudes
- Customs

TECHNOLOGY ETIQUETTE

1. Do not use laptops during meetings. Working during a meeting suggests the meeting is unimportant to you.

2. Put pagers on “vibrate” mode during meetings. If your pager does not have this option, either turn it off, or explain up front that you must wear it (and have a very good reason why) and that it is possible you must exit the meeting early.

3. Cell phones—same as pagers. First choice is turn them off. Second choice is to explain at the beginning of the meeting that you are expecting an urgent call. When the call comes, excuse your self quickly and quietly so that you disrupt the proceedings as little as possible. If possible, sit near a door that will allow a quick exit. Return as soon as possible.
4. Speaker phones: If it is necessary to put a person on speaker phone, make sure that you inform the person that this is the case. Also make sure they are aware if more than one person is listening, and who that person or those people are. The caller NEEDS to know who is in the audience. Not providing this information holds the potential for embarrassment or a feeling of being ambushed.

5. Email: Remember that business communication is FORMAL communication, even on the computer. Keep email messages brief, but use full sentences, proper titles, subject lines, and a respectful closing. Write emails the same as you would address someone to their face. THE TONE OF THE MESSAGE CAN BE EASILY MISCONSTRUED.

- Don’t let separation and anonymity allow you to be rude
- Nothing is private in email
- Don’t type in all caps
- Watch your words
- Make subject line specific
- When replying/forwarding, clean up the document
- Use Blind Copy
- Use spell check
- Always verify you have replied, replied all, or forwarded correctly
- Delete extraneous information
- Address and sign emails
- Never assume anything (lingo, emoticons, etc.)

**DINING ETIQUETTE**

1. Decide quickly what you will order and don’t make a group wait for you.
2. Avoid hard-to-eat-dishes, like corn-on-the-cob or triple-decker sandwiches.
3. Remember, drink to the right and eat to the left, so you don’t grab the client’s bread.
4. Napkins go in the lap immediately. If you must leave momentarily mid-meal, your napkin goes on your chair. At the end of the meal it goes on the table.
5. Knives and forks go back on the plate as soon as you have taken a bite and remain there until the next bite.
6. Don’t lick you fingers or brush crumbs off the table with your hands.
7. Stick to a pre-determined limit on the amount of alcohol you will drink.
8. Don’t argue about whether to pay the check—it is always paid by the host, whoever arranged the appointment.
9. Cocktail hour—hold drinks in left hand, so that right hand is free and neither cold nor wet.
10. Take food out of your mouth the same way you put it in (exception is fish bones).
10 MOST COMMON ETIQUETTE BLUNDERS

1. Inappropriate language
   • Demeaning salutations or names
   • Vulgar, tasteless humor
   • Spreading gossip

2. Disregard of Others’ Time
   • Arriving late
   • Being unprepared for meeting or appointments
   • Barging in on someone
   • Turning in assignments late

3. Inappropriate Dress and Poor Grooming
   • Inappropriate wardrobe for work situation
   • Poor hygiene

4. Misuse of the Telephone
   • Keeping people on hold too long
   • Not returning calls
   • Not giving messages to others
   • Slamming down the phone
   • Not identifying who is speaking
   • Eating while speaking

5. Failure to Greet Someone Properly
   • No handshake or poor handshake
   • Improper introductions

6. Poor Listening Skills
   • Cutting people off, interrupting
   • Avoiding eye contact
   • Asking questions but not waiting for answer

7. Disregard of Shared Property and Others’ Space
   • Invading someone’s privacy
   • Misuse of office equipment

8. Embarrassing Others
   • Constructive feedback not properly delivered
   • Putting others down
   • Being rude
9. Poor Table Manners
   - Poor manners during business meals
   - Not tipping appropriately

10. Inappropriate or Inconsistent Recognition of Others
    - Paying undue attention to someone’s gender
    - Giving inappropriate gifts
    - Not showing thanks or appreciation
    - Not being diplomatic, tactful

**SOURCES**

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