

ETIQUETTE

*“The existing system is the game of business...
anyone who wants to join the game must subscribe to the standard rules of play.”*

--Betty Lehan Harragan--

Introduction

Although many of today’s work environments have become increasingly casual, business etiquette remains extremely important. To get ahead in today’s business world, the savvy professional takes the business of manners very seriously. You will want to master the nuances of business etiquette—the subtle but critical behaviors that can make or break an important meeting, influence a first impression, or impress a potential client.

Negative first impressions are difficult to change. What do others decide when they meet you? Polish your professional image and performance by using etiquette anchors that are valued and used by people who look for standards of excellence. After reading this guide, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate impeccable table manners and create a polished business dining environment.
- Create effective small talk with five key words.
- Discover the details that make a difference in professional dress and image.
- Discover the message behind your handshake.
- Identify and honor cultural norms that make critical differences in business environments.

Job Search Etiquette

Your demeanor is important whether you are in a social setting or a business one. Everyone you meet has the potential to make an enormous impact on your life. This contact could become your next employer or a networking resource. Being polite is the best way to showcase your professionalism.

RESPECT YOUR CONTACTS’ TIME

Showing consideration for others’ time is critical throughout the job search process. Recruiters agree that business etiquette impacts their selection and hiring process. Attention to little things can make a big impact on them. Why? Because they believe that the way you treat them and their employees is also the way you will treat their clients or prospective customers.

1. When you phone a potential employer or networking contact, if you happen to reach them “live,” don’t expect them to immediately drop everything to hear you out. Explain briefly why you’re calling and ask when might be a good time to talk.
2. Be at least fifteen minutes early for all interviews. Following this rule impresses the employer on your promptness, and it gives you the opportunity to observe the daily flow of the office. If delay or cancellation becomes necessary, notify the recruiter directly before your interview time. You demonstrate that you recognize and honor the value of others’ time when you arrive for appointments on time and prepared. If delay is truly unavoidable (your car breaks down on the way to the interview or you become ill) call and alert the employer to your situation.
3. Try to make a good impression on everyone with whom you come in contact, especially the secretary or receptionist who greets you. The person who interviews you may well ask his or her opinion of

you, or he or she may even decide to offer an unsolicited opinion, especially if you were not overly polite.

4. Respond promptly to requests for references. Never give someone a reference without checking with your reference first. Try to keep in touch with people whom you plan to use as references. A call out of the blue after five years of no contact may not produce as glowing a reference as a call that is simply part of your routine of keeping up with old business friends.
5. Use tact in dealing with employer's job acceptance deadlines. If you receive an early job offer while you are still in the middle of interviewing, estimate how much time you would need to finish the interview process and negotiate an extended deadline with the employer. If your time frame is reasonable, most employers will grant the extension. It is to everyone's advantage when you choose the job that is best suited to you.
6. If you walk into an interview with an offer from another employer in your pocket, be sure to advise the interviewer (without undue pressure) of your possible time constraints. This will alert the company to the need to act quickly if they are seriously interested in you.
7. Respond graciously to all job offers, whether you accept or refuse the position. The company you reject today may be the company you wish to join in the future. The best way to convey your acceptance or rejection of a job offer is in person or by telephone, followed up with a letter. You **MUST** respond to **ALL** offers.
8. Job offers are not made randomly. Employers put much serious thought, discussion, and resources into candidate selection. When you decline an offer, be sure to convey how difficult it was for you to reach a decision. Express genuine appreciation for their interest in you. These recruiters are professional acquaintances that you ought to contact periodically. At a minimum you could send a note to say hi and keep them posted about yourself. Don't burn any bridges.

CORRESPONDENCE

Always, always send a thank-you letter to an interviewer or networking contact (Refer to **BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE** guide).

Thank you notes should include a personal message if using a printed card. They are never out of place, since they are a nice way to reciprocate thoughtfulness and acknowledge another's consideration.

Dining Etiquette

“A person with class is someone you want to be around all the time.”
--Ambassador Clare Booth Luce--

Employers invite you to lunch or dinner to determine how you react in a social situation. By eating a meal with you, a potential employer will be given visible signals about your manners and poise. Although you probably have great table manners, it would still be useful to you to review the following tips because table manners are important in making a favorable impression.

Remember, any business dining experience is never about dining, it is always about business!

NAPKIN USE

1. The meal begins when the host/interviewer unfolds his/her napkin. This signals you to do the same.
 - Place the napkin in your lap.
 - Completely unfold the napkin if it is a small luncheon napkin.
 - Unfold halfway if it is a large dinner napkin.
2. Keep your napkin in your lap for the entire meal and use the napkin occasionally to blot your mouth gently.
3. If you have to leave the table, excuse yourself and place the napkin in your chair.
4. When the host puts his/her napkin on the table, it signals the end of the meal.

ORDERING

1. Feel free to ask your server any questions you have regarding the menu.
 - It is better to find out before you order if the dish is something you do not like or are allergic to than to spend the entire meal picking tentatively at your food.
2. Usually you will order first, but follow the server's or your employer's lead.
 - Do not order one of the most expensive items on the menu.
 - Do not order more than two courses unless your host indicates that this is all right.

SILVERWARE USE

1. Start with the knife, fork, or spoon that is farthest from your plate and work your way into the plate, using one utensil for each course.
 - The salad fork is on your outermost left, followed by your dinner fork.
 - The soup spoon is on your outermost right, followed by the salad knife and dinner knife.
 - Your dessert spoon and fork are above your plate or brought out with dessert.
2. There are two ways to use a knife and fork to cut and eat your food:
 - **AMERICAN STYLE**
 - Cut the food by holding the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left hand with the fork tines holding the food to the plate.
 - Cut a few bite sized pieces, then lay your knife across the top of your plate with the blade facing in.
 - Change your fork from your left hand to your right hand to eat.

- **EUROPEAN/CONTINENTAL STYLE**
 - Cut the food by holding the knife in the right hand and the fork in the left hand with the fork tines holding the food to the plate.
 - Keep the fork in your left hand and the knife in the right hand.
 - Eat the pieces by picking them up with your fork still in your left hand.

COURSES

SOUP

- Do not slurp soup from your spoon. Spoon the soup away from you when you take it out of the bowl and sip from the side of the spoon.
- Do not blow on your soup if it is too hot. Wait until it cools.
- Don't crumble up crackers into the soup; eat them from your hand.
- The soup spoon should rest on the saucer; never leave it in the cup or bowl.

SALAD

- Cut large pieces of greens or vegetables with a knife.
- If you don't eat particular vegetables in the salad move them to the side of the salad plate and eat around them.

BREAD/ROLLS

- Break the slice or roll into quarters. Tear a roll by the creases.
- Butter and eat one quarter at a time.
- Do not use the bread as a "pusher," or to wipe up sauce or gravy on a plate.

MEAT

- Cut meat one or two pieces at a time.
- Choose foods that are easy to manage (avoid spaghetti, spicy/saucy foods, fried chicken)

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED

- When finished leave your plate where it is in the place setting; do not push it away from you.
- One way to indicate you are finished is by placing your silverware side by side with the handles pointing to three on a clock face.
- Once you have used a piece of silverware, never put it back on the table.
- Leave any unused silverware on the table.
- **SEND A PROMPT THANK-YOU NOTE FOR THE INTERVIEW AND MEAL.** One survey found that 76% of 150 executives with the nation's 1,000 largest companies said they consider a post-interview thank-you note valuable when evaluating job seekers. Ironically, only 36% of applicants actually follow through with this simple courtesy. Making the extra effort to demonstrate your interest in a job can set you apart from other candidates.

BASIC TABLE MANNERS

1. It is inappropriate to ask for a to go box when you are a guest.
2. It is best to order foods that can be eaten with a knife and fork. Leave finger foods to informal dining.
3. Do not order alcoholic beverages at lunch. If your potential employers are drinking alcohol, you should limit yourself to only one drink. Drinking too much when dining out is one of the biggest mistakes a candidate can make.
4. Sit up straight at the table. Eat slowly. It makes a good impression.

5. Follow your employer's lead. Make social conversation when food is on the table, and talk business between courses or after the meal. Do NOT order the same food as your prospective employer; it indicates that you are too eager to please and/or incapable of making your own decisions.
6. Do not smoke while dining out.
7. When you are not eating, keep your hands in your lap or rest your wrists on the edge of the table. Elbows are not acceptable on the table.
8. If food gets caught in your teeth, excuse yourself from the table and go to a mirror where you can remove food in private.
9. Politely ask the person closest to an out of reach item to pass it to you. Do not reach across the table. If food spills off your plate, pick it up with silverware and place it on the edge of your plate.

Networking Receptions/Cocktail Parties

LEARNING THE BASICS

Do your homework about the other attendees and know what your goals are in attending the event. Put yourself in a positive frame of mind; if you are unable to do so, you should just stay home.

WALK WITH PURPOSE

When you walk into a room, walk with purpose. First impressions are made within 5 seconds of meeting someone. Fifty-five percent of any first impression is based on non-verbal perceptions of appearance and behavior.

KEEP YOUR PURPOSE IN MIND

The bar or the hors d'oeuvres should not be your first stop. The purpose of any business/social function is not free food or all the alcohol you can drink. These occasions are about people and making connections. Concentrate on greeting and meeting people and on getting into conversations rather than on appeasing your appetite. Remember to make eye contact while having a discussion. No one wants to talk with someone who is always scanning the room for a more important prospect.

GUIDELINES FOR EATING AND DRINKING

Never drink alcohol on an empty stomach; stop on the way to the event for a snack if necessary. Pace your alcoholic intake throughout the course of the evening. Many people make the mistake of losing control and/or being indiscrete after excessive alcohol consumption.

The right hand should always be kept free to shake hands with any man or woman who may be arriving or leaving. Food, drink, napkin – everything – goes into the left hand. Then you'll never be mistaken for an amateur juggler when the opportunity to meet someone new presents itself.

This trick is taught at expensive executive seminars on etiquette. It's yours for free: Take the cocktail napkin and put it between the ring and baby finger of the left hand. Then spread the ring and middle fingers to act as a base for the plate of hors d'oeuvres. Use the thumb and index finger to hold the stem or base of the glass and to stabilize the top of the plate at the same time. As you need something, reach for it with the right hand, use it, and then return it to the appropriate finger slot in the left hand before continuing.

A chilled drink like white wine should be held by the stem, never the bowl, so you don't heat the drink. Hold a highball by the base of the glass rather than wrapping your hand around the drink. Only room temperature drinks,

like red wine, brandy, or a neat scotch that benefit from the added body heat to release the bouquet, are held by the bowl of the glass.

Don't fill your plate to overflowing. People seldom notice you going back for seconds at large cocktail functions; they will notice the mountainous heap on your plate.

HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT FOODS

Some foods, although they may not be as obviously messy as pasta, can still create problems. Here are some guidelines:

- Olives with pits are held in the fingers and eaten in several bites, then the pit is discarded on the side of your plate or into a napkin.
- While eating shrimp with the tail still on, hold the shrimp by the tail and dip it into the sauce once. Eat it in one bite if it is not too large. Then discard the tail as you would olive pits and toothpicks.
- Crudités are dipped into the accompanying sauce only once. Never, ever dip something from which you've already taken a bite back into the sauce. Hold your cocktail napkin beneath the vegetable to catch any drops of sauce that may fall
- Bite carefully into cherry tomatoes or puff pastry to avoid spraying yourself and everyone within arms' length
- Always exercise caution to avoid burning yourself when biting into hot hors d'oeuvres. Test the temperature unobtrusively with the tip of your tongue, and remember that the inside is usually quite a bit hotter.

Effective Cocktail Conversation

“A gossip is one who talks to you about others; a bore is one who talks to you about himself; and a brilliant man is one who talks to you about yourself.”

–Lisa Kirk–

1. Listen before jumping into a conversation. You may not be interested in dealing with those people.
2. Make eye contact with one person in the group, smile and listen until they include you.
3. Introduce yourself when there is a pause in the conversation.
4. If you have something relevant to add to a group’s conversation, jump in, and then introduce yourself afterward.
5. To initiate a conversation, you can talk about the situation, talk about yourself, or talk about the other person. Above all else, a good conversationalist is a good listener. Being a good conversationalist requires basic intelligence, a desire to please, and a sense of humor.
6. Avoid taboo topics:
 - off-color or discriminatory jokes
 - personal relationships and sexual proclivities
 - health
 - diets
 - personal tragedies
 - cost of anything personal
 - income
 - controversial topics like politics or religion
 - free advice from professionals
 - talking about yourself excessively
7. Don’t blend; circulate. Spend five to seven minutes with each person or group.
8. Always remember to close a conversation. Shake hands and take your leave.

Business Etiquette

“Every action done in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those that are present.”
--George Washington--

The basics of professional etiquette are very simple. First, it is important to understand the difference between business etiquette and social etiquette. Business etiquette is genderless—it is based on hierarchy unlike social etiquette which is based on gender and chivalry. For example, the traditional chivalrous etiquette of holding the door open for a woman is not necessary in the workplace and can have the unintended effect of offending her. In the work environment, men and women are peers. If you base your behavior on treating them similarly in similar situations, you won't go wrong.

Your guiding principal should always be to treat people with consideration and respect. Although this may seem obvious, this basic decency is a frequent casualty in today's workplace. Be respectful of other's time, interests, and commitments. Remember that the words “please,” “thank you,” and “you're welcome” are essential words in your vocabulary.

INTRODUCTIONS

Mastering the art of the introduction will help put you and the people you are introducing at ease. The way we meet and greet people in business and social situations creates lasting impressions and sets the groundwork for a productive encounter.

MAKE THE INTRODUCTION. The most important point about introductions is to make them. Failing to do so causes embarrassment and discomfort. If given a choice, most people would prefer you to make the introduction incorrectly, even if you forgot their name, rather than stand there unacknowledged and disregarded.

The second important point about introductions is the order of names. The name of the person being introduced is mentioned last and the person to whom the introduction is made is mentioned first. In business, introductions are based on power and hierarchy. Persons of lesser authority are introduced to persons of greater authority.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF. If no one introduces you, step in and introduce yourself. Someone may be too embarrassed to admit forgetting a name or may be distracted by other matters. Introduce yourself by extending your hand, smiling, and saying something like, “I'm Dave Jones, Michael's business partner.” As a guest, it's your duty to circulate and introduce yourself at any function. By only sticking to those people you already know, you'll never expand your horizons or make new acquaintances.

Always use both names when introducing yourself to convey the message that you take yourself seriously as an adult and expect the same treatment from others. Since you don't know how comfortable the other person feels with formality or lack of it, you give that person the chance to set the tone most comfortable to them.

DEVELOP A GOOD HANDSHAKE

1. Handshakes are the only acceptable physical contact for men & women in the business arena.
2. You are judged by the quality of the handshake.
3. A good handshake:
 - keep the fingers together with the thumb up and open
 - slide your hand into the other person's so that each person's web of skin between thumb and forefingers touches the other's
 - squeeze firmly

A proper handshake:

- is firm, but not bone-crushing
 - lasts about 3 seconds
 - may be pumped once or twice from the elbow
 - is released after the shake, even if the introduction continues
 - includes good eye contact with the other person
4. Extend a hand when:
- meeting someone for the first time
 - meeting someone you haven't seen for a while
 - greeting your host(ess)
 - greeting guests
 - saying good-bye to people at a gathering
 - someone else extends a hand
5. Handshaking Tips:
- if your hands tend to be clammy, spray them with antiperspirant at least once a day and wash frequently.
 - avoid giving a cold, wet handshake by keeping your drink in the left hand.

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE QUIZ

1. What are five words that help create and maintain small talk conversation?
2. What are three courtesies to use when using speakerphones?
3. What are three tips for better voice mail messages?
4. What is considered “comfortable personal conversation space” when standing and talking with someone?

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Use Who, What, When, Where, and Why to form open-ended questions.
2. Tell the person who called that you have them on speakerphone. Identify each person who is in the room. State their purpose in being present during the conversation.
3. When leaving your message, pause between your first and last name as you identify yourself. Spell difficult names. Say your phone number slowly at the beginning and end of your message.
4. Americans are comfortable with 3' to 5'. Asians stand further apart than Americans are used to. People in Latin and Mediterranean countries stand so close that Americans feel their space is being violated.

International Business Etiquette

To interact successfully with associates in another country, it is helpful to adjust to the communication style of the other person's culture. It can take months or years to feel completely comfortable and conversant in that culture, but it's possible with just a little research to find the basic information that will eradicate the major faux pas and grievances.

FORMING RELATIONSHIPS. Only in the Germanic countries will the people be as eager to get down to business as in the U.S. Almost anywhere else in the world, but especially in Asian and Latin countries, it is important to first get to know the person with whom you're dealing to build a bond of trust.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION. If you have no idea how someone from another culture communicates either verbally or non-verbally, you cannot negotiate effectively. Americans are very direct in their speech and do not generally use innuendoes or implied meanings. As a result, Latinos often consider Americans uncultured and lacking in refinement. You should learn how to say “please” and “thank you” in that country's native language.

TIME. Differing attitudes toward time are the major source of annoyance in international interactions. How far in advance appointments and bookings must be scheduled, and to what extent punctuality is stressed or ignored are all important considerations to remaining in control of during negotiations.

COURTESY. Be courteous and respectful at all times and never do anything that would offend your host's pride.

BE RESPECTFUL. Show appreciation for the culture, music, and art of the country you are visiting. Learn the business and social customs of the culture of the people with whom you will be doing business. Scrupulously respect your host's dietary customs, holidays, religion and form of government. Don't make comparisons unless asked, and even then, in a non-judgmental way.

Image is Everything!

First impressions, often based on appearances alone, can indicate to a potential employer or client one's sense of taste, ambition, and self-esteem.

10 KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL DRESSING:

1. Recognize that you have less than 10 seconds to make a good impression.
2. Know that what you wear influences others and can make you appear to be more confident and in control.
3. Focus on being appropriately dressed every day.
4. Plan ahead; don't "wing it."
5. Avoid attire that makes others feel uncomfortable. You want to stand out for your performance, not your clothes.
6. Develop a consistent style of dress that takes into account your physical assets and flaws.
7. Spend enough to make the grade.
8. When in doubt, dress conservatively.
9. Take cues from your superiors.
10. Pay attention to detail - this is a virtue employers look for in an employee's work *and* wardrobe.

10 THINGS EVERY WELL-DRESSED PERSON MUST OWN:

1. A lint brush
2. A sewing kit
3. An iron and ironing board
4. A full-length mirror
5. A good pen
6. A quality binder or briefcase for interviewing
7. An elegant (does not have to be expensive) watch
8. Shoe polish
9. A good interview suit
10. A quality umbrella

10 SIGNS YOU'RE NOT DRESSING FOR SUCCESS:

1. You dress for the job you have. Dress for the position you want, and people are more likely to believe you are qualified to do it.
2. Your shoes aren't polished.
3. You dress the same way you did in college.
4. You have a lot of low-quality clothing.
5. You always shop at the last minute and purchase what is available, not what is the best fit or quality
6. The only casual clothes you own are sweats and jeans.
7. You follow fashion trends closely.
8. Most of your clothes are stained, wrinkled, or missing buttons.
9. It's been three months since you're last haircut. Good grooming is essential: hair must be neatly trimmed and styled, nails should be clean and groomed, and you should always practice excellent personal hygiene.
10. You can't pull an interview or meeting-appropriate outfit together in a hurry.

Career Management Center Resources

Books:

- ***169 Ways to Score Points with Your Boss***, Schonberg, Shook, & Estreicher
- ***Career Power***, Koonce
- ***The Critical 14 Years of Your Professional Life***, Dilenschneider & Genova
- ***Executive Etiquette in the New Workplace***, Stewart & Faux
- ***The Complete Idiot's Guide to Successful Dressing***, Repinski