

On the Job Etiquette

Courtesy

It goes without saying that courtesy is the number one most element of business etiquette. There is never a circumstance at work where courtesy and respect are not important. You should be mindful of raising your voice, using foul language and being rude in any way.

Work Relationships

Oprah Winfrey says that the most important thing she realized is that absolutely everyone in the world wants to be valued (Oprah Winfrey on Career, Life, and Leadership, 2014). Value your colleagues by taking the time to talk to them and listen to them actively. Say hello to the janitor, hold the door for the person carrying in boxes and bags and always acknowledge the people you pass in the hall. Don't forget to wish your work partners happy birthday and volunteer to cover or trade shifts when they need time off for their life. Thoughtfulness in the workplace will lead you to respect and great work relationships. Be mindful of nonverbal cues. Watch facial expressions, body posture and hand movements in both yourself and others.

Communication

Communication is the cornerstone of business etiquette. Knowing when to speak, what to say and how to say it is critical. You should make it your business to know how to return phone calls, write effective emails and respond to social media thoughtfully and respectfully. (see Module 2 for details!)

You Are What You Wear

There are an infinite number of work place environments, just as there are infinite numbers of people who have their own individual style of dressing. Be sure you understand the appearance you are expected to present at your job and dress appropriately. If you are not sure what you can and cannot wear, ask your supervisor. A good rule of thumb is think about what you might wear to a church service or a funeral. Remember, what you wear is a reflection of who you are. It is a demonstration of the respect you hold for others. Take it seriously and always present yourself in the best light. Take a shower, fix your hair and make sure your socks match. Don't wear provocative clothing, anything that exposes body parts, and if you have tattoos it is best to cover

them up until you are sure it is acceptable to everyone in your workplace. Be mindful of the fact that many older people still view tattoos negatively. Don't be afraid to ask what is meant by business casual and be thoughtful at work place social events, too. Remember, even if you are dressing down for a casual Friday or going to the company picnic, don't make the mistake of dressing in way that might disrespect a client, a colleague or boss. Protect your credibility by know what to wear and presenting yourself in attractive attire at all times.

Peers, Subordinates and Superiors

Business etiquette means always putting your best foot forward. Demonstrate respectful behavior to your superiors, peers and subordinates; in other words, to everyone (Magloff, 2017). When you respect everyone, by being courteous, avoiding gossip or joining in on that complaining session at the watercooler, you maintain your professional image. Don't overshare about yourself and your life. Keep the weekend stories to yourself, and remember social media is forever. Mistakes online can get you fired. Respect people's privacy and personal property. Remember that everyone is an individual and may not work the way you do Don't blast loud music – put on your headphones. Make it your business to remember everyone's name. Always use your full name when introducing yourself or others.

Remembering names can be challenging, especially if you meet multiple people at one time. Try repeating the name silently to yourself three times, or identify a characteristic that helps you differentiate the person and associate that characteristic to their name. Try using their name in your conversation 3 to 4 times, but not so frequently that it is obvious (21 Business Etiquette Rules You Should Never Break, n.d.).

Respect for Property

Take care of work property. When you work you are sharing space and equipment with others. How you share reflects on your character. Clean up after yourself. Don't eat the sandwich out the refrigerator. Fill the copier with paper when it is empty. Recycle if there is a bin.

Table Manners and Meal Etiquette

Table manners and meal etiquette is much more than knowing which fork to use. Aja Frost of Hubpot sasys it is advisable to read a whole book on this subject, but provides a quick list that should serve you in any business eating situation:

- Put your napkin in your lap when you sit down
- Order items in a similar price range to your dining companions
- Don't start eating until everyone has received their food
- Pass condiments and dishes from left to right rather than reaching across the table
- Chew with your mouth closed
- Don't snap your fingers at your server
- After the meal is over, partially fold your napkin and put it to the left of your plate

Professionalism

Aja Frost also has great advice on professionalism. He reminds us that professionalism encompasses a whole host of behaviors but here is his short list:

- Keeping your word: When you make a commitment -- whether it's big or small -- keep it. If you know that will be impossible, give the other person as much notice as possible.
- Being punctual: Show up on time (or early).
- Remaining calm: Even in heated situations, do your best to stay cool.
- Acting flexible: Sometimes you'll have to stay late, show up early, change plans, move meetings, and more to make things work. Unless this is happening all the time, accommodate these changes without raising a stink.
- Using diplomacy: There will be people you don't like -- prospects, coworkers, or both. Be kind and amiable anyway.
- Accepting constructive criticism: Throughout your career, others will offer feedback. If you're closed off to it, you'll not only harm your professional rapport, you'll also lose valuable opportunities to improve.
- Maintain eye contact 60% to 70% of the time.
- Match the volume of the people you are speaking with.

- Show interest in what you people are saying
- Don't speak too loudly so as not to disturb people working around you.

(Frost, n.d.)

References

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