

OFFICE ETIQUETTE

The definition of *Etiquette* is the conduct or procedure prescribed by authority to be observed in social and office environments. An organization's ability to accomplish its mission is directly and indirectly impacted by enhanced business etiquette. Direct enhancement occurs through external customers who are more likely to permit the development of a positive "customer relationship" if they feel comfortable and valued by you and your organization. Indirect enhancement occurs through the internal application of business etiquette skills that improves the morale and quality of work-life through reduced turnover and increased efficiency.

The following guidance will provide skills to enhance courtesy and politeness, as well as service in customer relationships in the areas of *Recognition of Rank or Position*, *Gender Neutral Etiquette*, *Telephone*, *E-mail*, *Cubicle Manners*, *Business Cards*, and *Appearance*.

Recognition of Rank or Position

- ▶ Common courtesies extended to everyone regardless of rank or grade
- ▶ Respect for rank or position
 - Introductions
 - Correct titles
 - Seating at meetings
 - Level of familiarity
 - Sir or ma'am when speaking with officers
 - Individual's rank when dealing with enlisted personnel

Gender Neutral Etiquette

- ▶ Shake hands with everyone
- ▶ Stand when:
 - Introduced
 - The ranking official enters
- ▶ Use your full name during introductions
- ▶ Use Ms. when addressing women
- ▶ Introductions based on rank, not gender (senior or junior)
- ▶ Avoid touching people, beyond the handshake
- ▶ Avoid showing too much skin
- ▶ The first person to the door opens it
- ▶ Avoid terms of endearment ("Hon", "Dear", "Son", "Doll", and "Babe")
- ▶ Nametags on the right shoulder or lapel
- ▶ Briefcases, purses, keys on the floor, not on the table

Telephone Etiquette

■ Telephone

- **Intrusion:** Always be sensitive to the fact that some people resent even a brief loss of control over their time.
- **Get to the point:** Keep it simple. Identify yourself and state the purpose of your call.
- **Excessive intimacy:** When you invade someone else's ear - at least do so with good manners.
- **Voice power:** The voice is a great reflector of the inner feelings that we communicate, regardless of distance. Watch your tone.
- **Speed:** The ease of use and speed of connection can lead to hasty discussions - with misunderstandings likely to result. Slow down and think before you speak.
- **Energy:** Extra energy and effort are required to make a conversation succeed. If you're not feeling up to making an important call, perhaps it might be better to wait till you're feeling more confident and refreshed.
- **Body language:** Be aware, there is none. Your voice says it all.

■ Making Phone Calls

- Be prepared for the call (notes, questions, etc.)
- Identify yourself and your organization
- State purpose of the call
- Ask if you can call again with additional questions

■ Answering the Phone

- Communicate clearly and convincingly
- Listen to your customer - find out what they want
- Identify verbal cues to help you ask the right questions
- Answer questions effectively
- Project a positive voice attitude
- Answer during all business hours
- Answer incoming calls quickly
- Identify yourself
- Identify organization
- Be prepared to take notes, give information, etc.
- Transfer calls properly
- Smile
- Explain delays - don't abandon caller on "hold"
- End calls pleasantly
- Let caller hang up first

- **Leaving Voicemail Messages**
 - Name
 - Telephone number
 - Time you can be reached
 - Date and time of your call
 - Brief message regarding the purpose of your call

- **Recording Voicemail Messages**
 - Smile
 - Positive voice
 - Clear speech
 - State name
 - State organization
 - Brief message

- **Returning Phone Calls**
 - Extended absence voicemail message
 - Return call on the same day – within 24 hours
 - If you don't have what the customer needs – call to give a status report

- **Taking Messages**
 - Caller's name
 - Organization
 - Phone number
 - Best time to return the call
 - Purpose of call
 - Deliver message promptly

- **PDA's / Cell Phones**
 - Turn them off
 - Set to vibrate
 - Return calls after meetings
 - If you must respond to it right away, politely excuse yourself

- **Speakerphone**
 - Ask permission of the other person
 - Identify other people in the room
 - Close office door
 - Don't use speakerphone in a cubicle

■ E-mail

Do:

- Acknowledge all e-mails
- Clearly state "subject" line
- Start with a salutation (Hello John, etc.)
- Address recipient appropriately (LTC Smith, Ms. Brown)
- Keep it short and sweet (if it must be long, give bottom line up front)
- Carefully use "CC" (use "Reply to All" selectively)
- Double check your "send to" fields
- Re-read for spelling and grammar
- Check your tone
- End with a salutation (thank you, regards)
- Add an auto signature with contact information

Don't:

- Write e-mail while emotional
- Read tone or emotion into e-mails you're reading
- Overuse "bold" and "highlighting"
- Use CAPS (CAPS = SHOUTING)
- Overuse the "urgent" classification
- Forward hoax or chain-letter e-mails
- Send e-mail postcards indiscriminately
- Send potentially offensive e-mail such as jokes
- Deliver bad news via e-mail
- Argue back and forth via e-mail
- Use "BCC"
- Write anything you wouldn't say in public
- Include an auto signature that has a quote, philosophy, political or religious statement - the customer doesn't care about your views

Cubicle Manners

- ▶ Cleanliness
- ▶ Noise (phone calls, radios, and visitors)
- ▶ Smells (personal fragrances, food, etc.)
- ▶ Entering someone's cubicle
 - Alert them of your presence
 - Wait for acknowledgement
- ▶ Borrowing supplies from another cubicle - not without permission
- ▶ Using someone's cubicle
 - Restore it to original condition
 - Leave it clean

Business Cards

- ▶ Always have a supply of cards
- ▶ Present your cards face up
- ▶ Take the time to read another's card
- ▶ Never turn down a card
- ▶ Be selective when distributing cards
- ▶ Include cards with official correspondence

Appearance

- ▶ Personal grooming
- ▶ Clothes are clean and well-fitting
- ▶ Fashion should fit your lifestyle, figure, and job
- ▶ Appropriate professional / business casual attire