

Etiquette

Lesson Introduction

As a leader, many times we find ourselves in very public situations. In these cases, we must carry ourselves with the utmost diplomacy and tact. To do so, portrays a positive and professional image to your audience. Knowing how to interact with a myriad of different people and in different situations is key important when being a leader. To learn the ins and outs of etiquette can sometimes be very tricky, but with a little practice even the most difficult situation can be navigated with ease.

Lesson Objectives

By the end of the lesson, learners will:

1. Understand some basic manner rules
2. Describe the different codes of dress
3. Understand the rules of communications etiquette including phone, cell phone and email
4. Describe various rules for dining etiquette

Lesson Content

Someone once told me that a leader must live their life in a fishbowl, their every move on display. For that reason, and many others, it is important for leaders to understand and practice, some simple rules of etiquette. It isn't about knowing with which fork to eat your salad, though that is important on some level. It is more about showing that you care about others, how you treat them and how you make them feel.

Some Basics to Remember

These are some good rules of thumb to put into practice in everyday situation in which you may find yourself.

- Open doors for others and them to enter first. If you are entering a door and someone is behind you, hold the door until the person behind can grab it. If someone holds the door for you, say "thank you".
- Always greet someone when they come to meetings, conferences, etc. If you are a guest somewhere, be pleasant and introduce yourself to people. Whether at home or elsewhere, always pick up after yourself.
- Wait your turn and do not interrupt other people when they are speaking.
- Be a good sport. Win graciously, LOSE MORE GRACIOUSLY!
- Take compliments well. Say "thank you", and avoid putting yourself down or pointing out flaws.
- When people do things differently from you be respectful of those differences.

Attire

Attire is a key piece to a positive image and an important part of etiquette. As a leader, people will look to you to see how to act, dress, and speak and the way we dress sends a message about the way we feel about ourselves. You should select your clothes with a sense of confidence and authority. Clothes should allow you to move and stand with ease and grace. They should be clean, wrinkle, stain, and lint free. Your shoes should be polished and clean.

Grooming can not be overemphasized! Your hair should be clean and in place. If you are female, your make up should be tastefully applied (remember the less is more approach). Everyone should wash your hands and groom your nails before attending an event! Who wants to shake someone hands if they appear dirty?

As a leader, you may be called upon to attend a function where the preferred attire is listed on the invitation. In those cases, it can sometimes be difficult to decipher what is meant by the terms. What is the difference between business and dressy casual? Some folks from the University of Texas at Dallas, (<http://www.utdallas.edu/~aria/dance/etiquette.html#Clothing>), have provided us with this information to help decode the message!

- Dressy Casual:
 - Neatly pressed and clean slacks, skirts, or dresses
 - Solid color t-shirts, mock turtleneck, polo shirt, collared or button down shirts/blouses
- Semi-Formal:
 - Men: neatly pressed dress pants, slacks, button shirts & ties (jackets are optional but preferred)
 - Ladies: evening dress, dinner dress, some pant suits
- Formal:
 - Men: tuxedos, dark suits & ties
 - Ladies: cocktail to floor length dresses (avoid sequins), nylons, dress shoes
- Black tie:
 - Men: black tuxedo coat, trousers with satin ribbon, cummerbund and bow tie.
 - Ladies: ball gowns
- Black tie optional:
 - Men: option of wearing a regular suit with a tie
 - Ladies: cocktail gown or dinner dress. Long to full-length skirts are preferred;
- White tie: **Most formal category**
 - Men: black tailcoat with matching trousers, a white pique' tie, white pique' single or double-breasted vest, and a wing-collar shirt with a stiff pique' front.
 - Ladies: ball gown with a full skirt. Elbow-length gloves

But what about what not to wear? Here is a tried and true list that regardless of the situation always fall in the DO NOT WEAR category!

- Tube/Halter tops and shirts
- Dresses with spaghetti straps
- Shorts, skirts or dresses that are not lower than your finger tips
- Ripped jeans

- Cut offs
- Attire with inappropriate messages/slogans/etc...
- Hats are never allowed in buildings

Meeting People

Both nonverbal and verbal behavior help to define your social skills. Using effective handshakes, good eye contact, proper introductions show proper etiquette and are a sign of good manners. When you meet people you should always pay careful attention to what others are saying. Smile, be at ease, self-confident, composed and on good behavior. Speak well of others (regardless of your true feelings). Look directly at a person when speaking and always use respectful words such as, Ma'am and Sir, "Yes, Please" & "No, Thank You" or "Yes, Please Mr. Jones" & "No, Thank You Mrs. Johnson"

Handshakes

Handshakes are as important as your smile and tone of voice. They should be firm, with substance, NOT a bone crusher, and not lifeless. Two to three seconds is long enough to hold a handshake. Never shake hands with your left hand in your pocket, and never reach across a table to shake hands with someone.

Introductions

Always take the initiative to introduce yourself. When in doubt introduce people (even if they already know each other). Always remember that the youngest is introduced to oldest, or that lower rank is introduced to higher rank. It would go something like this:

- Group: "(Group Name), this is Brandon Jones"
- Individual: "Brandon, I would like for you to meet Emma Bean, Emma, this is Brandon Jones"

If you forget a person's name, admit that you have a mental block rather than obvious flailing around.

Titles should always be used in introductions as well as in general conversation. ALWAYS use Mr. & Ms. (use Mrs. only if you are sure someone is married AND prefers that title). If someone has a PhD, DVM or MD, the use of Dr. is most appropriate. When in doubt, error on the side of being too formal!!

Communications

Being able to effectively communicate with your peers and the public is very important. As a leader, you may be called upon to write letters, send emails, attend conference calls, and do presentations. Knowing the proper etiquette for email, voice mail, and phones will aid you in conducting yourself in a professional manner

Public Cell Phone Etiquette

Cell phones are here to stay, and people are using them more and more for both business and private calls. With an increasingly connected society, it is becoming more and more important to know how to use these devices properly. The individuals at Info World, (<http://www.infoworld.com/articles/op/xml/00/05/26/000526opwireless.html>), provide us with ten

rules to using your cell phone in a way that allows you to conduct business but as not to annoy everyone around you!

- If you are in a situation where you can not move away from others, (a bus, theater, meeting, dinner table) you should not be using your cell phone. No one wants to listen to your conversation and it is rude to force them to do so.
- If you use your phone for business, keep the ringer to a normal phone ring, not the latest Top 40 hit, or your favorite childhood song.
- Turn your cell phone off during public performances.
- You do not need more than one electronic device with you at a time. Either use your cell phone or your PDA, not both.
- Do not ever use your cell phone while driving. Pull over, and save yourself and your fellow drivers from a potentially dangerous situation.
- Especially when in a business situation, do not wear an earpiece or other attachment for your phone.
- Do not scream into your cell phone. You should be able to use your normal speaking voice, or do not make or receive a call. This prevents others from having to listen to your conversations.
- You do not need to have your cell phone with you everywhere. In fact, there are some places that a cell phone should never go- a hospital, house of worship, a classroom, etc.
- Do not try to show off all that your phone can do in a public place. It's rude, unnecessary and people do not want to see that your phone has 47 ring tones.
- Do not take your phone out of your pocket, purse, or bag when in a meeting, at a meal, or other public venue just to hear it ring. Put it on vibrate or turn the ringer to a reasonable level that you can hear with it still safely tucked away in your pocket, purse or bag.

Email

Email is one of the easiest and fastest ways to communicate in today tech savvy society. Few people do not have access to the internet and an email account. But as this medium has become more and more popular, even for business purposes, the lines between good and bad manners seems to have become blurred. The people at Dynamoo.com (<http://www.dynamoo.com/technical/etiquette.htm>) have provided a great least of email Do's and Don'ts!

Good Email Etiquette

- Do find out if your place of business or organization has a policy about email. This will let you know what types of messages and be sent and received.
- Do think about the message content before you hit the send button. If you pause a moment when thinking about your content, more than likely you should rethink sending the email!
- Do send relevant messages to people. Nobody likes junk mail.
- Do me polite. Again, if you reread and question something you said, others will as well.
- Do delete old messages when you hit the reply button. No one like to skim through pages of text to get to the newest messages.
- Do use jokes and attempts a humor sparingly. If it's a business email, remember that smileys and the like are not appropriate.
- Do include a subject line and make it relevant to the message you are sending.

- Do include information from previous emails if it is necessary for the person reading, to understand the current situation.
- Do be patient with people who are not familiar with email.
- Do always sign your emails with your actual name, not your email address or other alias.
- Do pay attention to whether or not a message is sent to a whole list of people. If the message is going to a whole list of people from one person, only reply to the whole list if absolutely necessary!
- Do delete information that isn't necessary.
- Do tell people if you are sending an attachment, what the attachment is and why they need it.
- Do let people know if you are forwarding their message to someone else, and if appropriate ask if you may do so.

Bad Email Etiquette

- Don't reply to an email message when angry, you may regret it later.
- Don't copy a long message just to add a line or two of text such as "I agree".
- Don't type in CAPITALS as this is considered to be SHOUTING.
- Don't over-use punctuation such as exclamation marks ("!") as these are meant to be for emphasis.
- Don't send irrelevant messages, especially to mailing lists or newsgroups.
- Don't send large attachments without checking with the recipient first.
- Don't send chain letters.
- Don't send an email without first proofreading!
- Don't conduct arguments in public, for example on a mailing list.
- Don't make personal remarks about third parties.
- Don't send unsuitable email or attachments.
- Don't use an over-elaborate signature on your email message.
- Don't mark things as urgent if they aren't.
- Don't post your email address on web sites and other public parts of the Internet.

Telephone Etiquette

We have all been using the telephone for awhile, but it is still good to use proper etiquette when using the phone for business. You should always make an agenda for the call, speak slowly, be polite and friendly, and smile.

Within 24 hours, reply to voice mail. When leaving messages, start with your name, phone number and the time and date of your call, speak slowly and clearly, be brief, let the person know the level of importance (urgent, ASAP, etc.) and end the message by repeating your name and number.

When speaking with a business for the first time know who you need to speak with so you can ask for them directly. If you do not speak with them directly, write down the name of the person with whom you speak and the date and time you called for your records. Always, introduce yourself. If the person you are looking for is away, ask when they will be available and when you will call back. When you phone later, your call will be expected.

Dining Etiquette

As a leader you may be called upon to attend banquets, luncheons, or parties. Good table manners are an important part in leaving a favorable impression. Being in a formal setting, trying to enjoy a meal can seem like to be almost an insurmountable task, however knowing a few key tips can make the whole experience much more enjoyable. The individuals at the Career Center at Ball State University (<http://www.bsu.edu/students/careers/students/interviewing/dining/>) and at Cruise Net (http://www.cuisinenet.com/digest/custom/etiquette/manners_intro.shtml) have provided some great information on dinner etiquette.

Let the host take the lead, when they unfold their napkin you do the same. Avoid foods that are sloppy or are hard to eat. Be polite and courteous. Be comfortable and relaxed.

Basic Table Manners

- Eat with a fork unless the food is meant to be eaten with fingers.
- Don't stuff your mouth full of food.
- Chew with your mouth closed. This includes no talking with your mouth full.
- Don't make any rude comments about any food being served.
- Always say thank you when served something.
- If the meal is not buffet style, then wait until everyone is served before eating.
- Eat slowly, don't gobble up the food.
- When eating rolls, break off a piece of bread before buttering.
- Don't reach over someone's plate for something, ask for the item to be passed to you.
- Don't pick anything out of your teeth.
- Always use a napkin (which should be on your lap when not in use) to dab your mouth.
- When eating at someone's home or a guest of someone at a restaurant, always thank the host and tell them how delicious it was, even if it wasn't.

Napkin Etiquette

Place the napkin on your lap. If it's a small luncheon napkin, completely unfold it; if it's a large dinner napkin, fold it in half lengthwise. Your napkin remains on your lap throughout the entire meal. If you leave the table during a dinner, place your napkin on your chair to signal to the server that you will be returning. When you are finished dining, place your napkin neatly on the table to the right side of the plate. Do not refold the napkin, but don't leave it crumpled up either.

Proper Passing

Food dishes are passed from left to right. When asked to pass a dish of food, it's okay to help yourself to some but don't take the last helping. Among friends, it's fine to be informal and just use fingers to take a cookie from a plate. To be more formal, small tongs can be used to pick up the cookie. Take only one of anything, and then get seconds if there are any left.

Bread

Bread is best eaten by tearing off a bite-sized piece and then buttering that piece. If you are using your hands to eat the meal then soaking up sauce while holding a piece of bun or tortilla with your fingers is fine. If you are dining with a fork, tear off a bite-sized piece of bread and place it onto the plate, and use the fork to retrieve the bread from the sauce or gravy.

What to Eat with Your Fingers

- Artichoke
- Asparagus
- Bacon
- Bread
- Cookies
- Corn on the Cob
- Deviled Eggs
- Hors d'Oeuvres, Canapés, Crudités
- Pickles
- Sandwiches
- Small Fruits and Berries on the Stem
- Chips, French Fries, Fried Chicken, and Hamburgers
- Nuts
- Olives

Pasta

Cut the strands to shorten slightly before twirling. You don't have to use the spoon (if one is provided). Twirl the pasta with a fork either by rolling it around in the spoon or just use the fork alone, keeping the fork tip in contact with the plate. Slurping pasta is the only method that is never proper.

Reflection Questions

- What are some ways you can put etiquette to use? Where might you use these tips?
- Have you every done something on one of the "Do Not Do" lists? If so, how can you correct your error for next time?
- Did you find something that you do on one of the "Do" lists, but didn't know it was an etiquette rule? Where have you done it?
- Describe a time where you might find yourself using these tips in the future. Why are they so important to learn now?

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