Business Etiquette

Your behavior says a lot about you. No matter whom you come in contact with, that person deserves respectful treatment. Regardless of the situation, you’ll always come out on top if you maintain a courteous manner. Listed below are some of the essentials of business etiquette:

Good communication is the key to developing successful relationships at work:

- Be a good listener.
- Learn to think before you speak - don’t raise your voice, use harsh tones or use profanity toward anyone.
- Don’t interrupt.
- Avoid miscommunications – clarify by summarizing and repeating back what you heard.
- Aim for face-to-face communications as opposed to voice-mail or e-mail.
- Emphasize use of courtesy and respect in all communications.

Dealing with conflict in the workplace:

- Approach conflict as situation-related as opposed to person-related.
- Be positive - offer solutions and suggestions for fixing the problem.
- Be slow to anger-especially over petty issues.
- Keep an open mind when discussing a problem - strive for a win-win solution.
- Never criticize a co-worker or employee in front of others.

Strive to be thoughtful and appreciative:

- Acknowledge birthdays, promotions, engagements, weddings or condolence for the death of a loved one or family member.
- On group projects be sure to credit and compliment everyone who contributed.
- Never take credit for someone else’s efforts.

Magic Words: Please, Thank You, Good Job!
These expressions are too often forgotten in business but what a difference they can make. Use them!

Distracting Behaviors:

- Take personal conversations outside the office or into the hallway and keep personal telephone conversations—and e-mails—brief and to a minimum.
- Make sure the volume of your radio isn’t so loud that your co-workers can hear it.
- Don’t have a loud conversation when standing near someone’s desk so it’s difficult for the person working at the desk to get anything accomplished.
Use Common/Shared Areas with Courtesy and Respect:
- Don't leave a mess in the office kitchen.
- Avoid eating food with a strong odor that permeates the office.
- Keep restrooms tidy. After use, wipe the countertop and sink of any spilled water or soap. Notify the proper attendant if supplies are low or out and of any plumbing problems.
- Keep all shared office equipment in working condition. Refill the paper on a shared printer. Take the time to fix or notify the proper person if the printer is jammed (same for the fax machine). Set the printer to the original setting if you have to change it – such as printing multiple copies, using legal size paper or 2 sided copies.

Keep your personal workplace clean and neat.
- Don’t over decorate, clutter and obstruct your work area.

Be Punctual:
- If you encounter an unavoidable delay, make every attempt to contact the person or group that is waiting for you.
- Always allow extra time if you have to travel.

Gossiping
- Sharing professional information is terrific; gossiping is not.

Personal Appearance:
- For both men and women, simple well-cut clothes that flatter your shape/figure are the typically the best choice.
- Don’t wear clothes that are too tight-fitting, low-cut clothing, ripped/torn clothes or mini skirts.
- Be sure to always look in the mirror – front and back – and ensure that undergarments do not show.

Personal hygiene and grooming
- Be clean shaven and use perfume or cologne sparingly.
- Personal grooming such as filing, cleaning or clipping your nails, applying makeup or combing your hair should not be done in public.
- Hair should be clean, styled and neatly combed.
- Follow good bathing and dental habits and wear clean clothes.

Body language and non-verbal messages
- Make sure that your body language reflects your words and intentions.
- When speaking with someone, try not to slouch, fidget, look around the room or play with your hair or jewelry.
- Use your posture and eye contact to indicate that you are focused on the other person.
Respect personal space
- Don’t borrow items from someone else’s desk.
- Don’t stand too close or too far from someone when conversing.

Meeting and greeting
- When greeting someone, rise if you are seated, smile, extend your hand and make eye contact.
- Use a firm handshake, lasting 3-4 seconds or 2-3 “pumps” and let go.

Apply these basic guidelines to managing all business relationships and you will distinguish yourself in the workplace as a confident, competent professional.