

Business Etiquette

Power Point Slides
Corporate Training Materials



Module One: Getting Started

Success in any industry relies on relationships, whether with co-workers, clients, suppliers or investors. When you're well-mannered and considerate in dealing with others, you create engaging, productive and long term business relationships. As such, it is important to learn, not just the technical side of a business, but how to conduct one's self in the company of others.

Manners are more important than laws. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us...

Edmund Burke

Workshop Objectives

- Define etiquette and provide an example of how etiquette can be of value to a company or organization.
- Understand the guidelines on how to make effective introductions.
- Identify the 3 C's of a good impression.
- Identify at least one way to minimize nervousness while in social situations.
- Understand how to use a business card effectively.
- Identify and practice at least one way to remember names.
- Identify the 3 steps in giving a handshake.
- Enumerate the four levels of conversation and provide an example for each.
- Understand place settings, napkin etiquette and basic table manners.
- Understand the protocol in ordering in a restaurant, handling alcohol in a business meal, paying the bill and tipping.
- Understand basic guidelines when it comes to the proper form of address, grammar standards and use of acronyms in e-mails.
- Understand basic guidelines in the use of the telephone, voicemail and cell phone.
- State the difference between a formal and an informal letter.
- Create an effective 'Thank You' note.
- Understand the meaning of colors in dressing for success.
- Differentiate among the dressy casual, semi-formal, formal and black tie dress code.
- Understand basic guidelines in international etiquette.

Module Two: Understanding Etiquette

Before we look at etiquette rules across multiple business-related scenarios, it's best to level off everyone on what etiquette means.

*Good manners
can open doors
that the best
education
cannot.*

*Clarence
Thomas*

Etiquette Defined

Josy Roberts, author of *'Business Etiquette: Your Questions and Answers'*, defines etiquette as **'conventional rules of polite behavior.'** They are guidelines on how to behave befitting good manners while in the company of other people. They show sensitivity to the needs and feelings of the person/ people you are with.

The Importance of Business Etiquette

Etiquette can help businesses improve the following areas:

- Branding.
- Customer Care.
- Employee Engagement.
- Team Synergy.

Etiquette can help businesses improve the following areas:

Branding. Everything we do reflect on our company and our products. By acting professionally, we send the message that our business is credible and trustworthy. Personalized care may very well be your edge against the competition.

Customer Care. The best way to show customers that their patronage is valued is to treat them with respect and consideration. This in turn can inspire customer loyalty and positive feedback.

Employee Engagement. Good manners help improve employee/ team morale and confidence.

Team Synergy. Good manners help establish smooth working relationships within a team, which contributes to greater productivity.

Module Three: Networking for Success

When you're networking, it's important to make the best of the first meeting. In this module, we'll discuss how to create an effective introduction, make a good impression, minimize nervousness, use business cards effectively and remember names.

*You've only got
one chance to
make a good
first impression!*
Anonymous

Creating an Effective Introduction

Three steps to introducing yourself effectively:

1. Project warmth and confidence.
2. State your first name and your last name.
Depending on the situation, you may also state your affiliation and/ or your position in the company.
3. When the other person has given their name, repeat it in acknowledgment.

Three steps to introducing yourself effectively:

1. Project warmth and confidence.

Many people size you up even before you say a word, which is why it's important to mind your body language. When introducing yourself, stand up straight, relax and establish eye contact.

2. State your first name and your last name. Depending on the situation, you may also state your affiliation and/ or your position in the company.

Example: *"Hello. I'm Jacqueline Smith. I'm the Quality Control Officer."*

3. When the other person has given their name, repeat it in acknowledgment.

"It's nice to meet you, Mr. Andrews." or *"It's nice to meet you, Joseph."* Repeating their name is an acknowledgment that you heard their introduction

Making a Great First Impression

If you want to make a good impression, know that you need to project 3 C's:

- Confidence
- Competence
- Credibility

You can project confidence by:

Having a straight but relaxed posture. Hold your head high and steady. Don't slouch or slump.

Moving in a natural, unaffected manner.

Maintaining eye contact with the people you are talking to.

You can project competence by:

Exhibiting knowledge of your craft. Know your way around the agenda. Being prepared for the meeting. Bring supportive materials to emphasize your points.

Answering questions in a clear and professional manner, avoiding the use of slang or technical jargon.

Asking relevant questions.

You can project credibility by:

Arriving on time

Being presentable (well-groomed and mindful of dress codes).

Keeping true to your word.

Minimizing Nervousness

Here are some ways to minimize nervousness while in a social situation:

1. Be informed.
2. Practice! Practice! Practice!
3. Learn relaxation techniques. There are many activities that can help relax a nervous person. These activities include:
 - a) Meditation
 - b) Self-talk
 - c) Visualization
 - d) Breathing exercises
 - e) Listening to music.
4. Identify your triggers.
5. Believe in what you have to offer!

Using Business Cards Effectively

5 Tips on Using Business Cards Effectively:

1. Never be without your business cards!
2. Follow the protocol on hierarchy.
3. Time the presentation of your card.
4. Accompany your business card with an explanation of what you can offer them.
5. When receiving a business card, show the other person that you value their card.

Never be without your business cards! (Make sure there's always a stack in your office desk, and in your wallet. You'll never know; even a trip to the grocery store can present an opportunity to network.

Follow the protocol on hierarchy. Cards should not be given to senior executives that you meet, unless they've asked for one.

Time the presentation of your card.

Don't just hand over your business card at any random moment. Handing a business card in the middle of a discussion can be an interruption, as parties would need to take a moment to give it a look. You also want to make sure that your card is perused at point when the other person can give it his or her full attention.

The best moments to hand a card is when you're asked for one, when you're asked to repeat your name, or when someone offers to send you something.

If the two organizations that you represent are well-known to each other, although you haven't met your host before, offering your card is probably best left to the end of the meeting. If your host is unfamiliar with your company, offering your card at the beginning of the meeting is good practice.

Accompany your business card with an explanation of what you can offer them.

When you hand another person your card, give a brief 'action recommendation.' This can increase the likelihood of them contacting you again. For instance you may say: "I think I can help with your PR concerns, Mr. Johnston. Here is my card."

You may also ask for referrals. Invite the other person to send your contact details to anyone they know who can use your services or products.

When receiving a business card, show the other person that you value their card.

Look at the business card for a few seconds. Comment about the card. Let them see that you take care in storing their card as well, instead of just jamming it in your pocket.

Remembering Names

1. Repeat.
2. Use mental imagery.
3. Put it on paper.
4. Use their name in creative sentences.
5. Be genuinely interested.

1.Repeat.

When someone is introduced to you, repeat their name. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Mark." This can help reinforce your memory of the name. You may also introduce them to someone else so that you can create an opportunity to use their name.

2.Use mental imagery.

We think in pictures, therefore associating an image with a name can help in assisting recall. For example, after meeting Bill the plumber, imagine the word Bill spelled with pipes. If Jason Smith is marathon runner, imagine Jason running on a treadmill in a gym called Jason's. Or just imagine a person's name written on their forehead. Pick an imagery that works for you. The more striking or exaggerated your mental picture, the bigger are the chances of recall.

3.Put it on paper.

Write the name down as soon as you can. Or write their details on the business card they give you so that you would remember them the next time you see them around. (Just make sure you don't let the person see you writing on their business card.)

4.Use their name in creative sentences.

Mentally construct sentences that are fun and a bit frivolous, to make name recall less stressful. Alliterations, or repeating consonant sounds in succession, are a great way to remember names. For example, to remember Jane who sells kitchen ware, you can repeat in your head: Jane makes jam and juice in January.

5. Be genuinely interested.

Remembering names begin with attitude. If you are sincerely interested in a person, then they would make an impact on you. If you adapt the attitude that everyone is interesting, and are a potential ally in business, then remembering names would come as second nature.

Module Four: The Meet and Greet

An introduction is almost always accompanied by a handshake and conversation. In this module, we would discuss the three steps that make an effective handshake and the four levels of conversation.

Ideal conversation must be an exchange of thought, and not, as many of those who worry about their shortcomings believe, an eloquent exhibition of wit or oratory.

Emily Post

The Three-Step Process

The Three-Step Process to Handshake:

Step 1: Facial Expression

Step 2: Shake Hands

Step 3: Greet the Person

The Three-Step Process to Handshake:

Step 1: Facial Expression

Start non-verbals that show openness and sincerity. Maintain eye contact. Smile.

Step 2: Shake Hands

Your handshake gives an impression. If your grip is too lax, you send the message that you're hesitant and possibly indecisive. If your grip is too tight, you might come across as too brash, even intimidating. Go for a grip that's in between. It sends the message that you're confident.

For most occasions, two or three pumps of the hand are appropriate. Longer handshakes can make some people, especially women, uncomfortable. But there are people who do prefer longer handshakes. If uncertain, go with the flow, and follow the lead of the other person. If you feel that it's time to let go, just relax your hand to signal the other person.

Step 3: Greet the Person

Talk to the person whose hand you are shaking. A simple 'hello' or 'how do you do' is appropriate.

The Four Levels of Conversation

1. Small Talk
2. Fact Disclosure
3. Viewpoints and Opinions
4. Personal Feelings

1. Small Talk

This is commonly referred to as the 'exchange of pleasantries' stage. In this level, you talk only about generic topics, subjects that almost everyone is comfortable discussing. These subjects include the weather, the location you're both in and current events.

The small talk stage establishes rapport; it makes a person feel at ease with you. It's also a safe and neutral avenue for people to subtly 'size up' one another, and explore if it's a conversation or relationship that they'd want to invest in.

If the small talk goes well, you can proceed into the next level: fact disclosure.

2. Fact Disclosure

In this stage, you tell the other person some facts about you such as your job, your area of residence and your interests.

This is a 'getting-to-know' stage, and it aims to see if you have something in common with the other person. It's also a signal that you are opening up a little bit to the other person while still staying on neutral topics.

If the fact disclosure stage goes well, you can proceed to sharing viewpoints and opinions.

3. Viewpoints and Opinions

In this stage of the conversation, you can offer what you think about various topics like politics, the new business model ---or even the latest blockbuster. It helps then to read and be curious about many things, from politics to entertainment to current events.

Sharing viewpoints and opinions require the 'buffering effect' of the first two stages for two reasons:

First, a person needs rapport with another before they can discuss potentially contentious statements, even if they're having a healthy debate.

Second, sharing viewpoints and opinions opens a person to the scrutiny of another, and this requires that there is some level of safety and trust in a relationship.

The controversial, and therefore potentially offensive, nature of an opinion exists in a range; make sure that you remain within the 'safe' zone in the early stages of your relationship.

4. Personal Feelings

The fourth stage is disclosure and acknowledgment of personal feelings. For instance you can share about your excitement for the new project, or your worry about your son's upcoming piano recital. Depending on the context and the level of the friendship, you can disclose more personal subjects. This stage requires trust, rapport, and even a genuine friendship, because of the intimate nature of the subject.

Module Five: Dining in Style

Conducting business over meals is a great way to build business relationships. Meals make for a more casual atmosphere compared to offices, and are therefore more conducive for a relaxed discussion.

Nothing is less important than which fork you use. Etiquette is the science of living. It embraces everything. It is ethics. It is honor.
Emily Post

Understanding Your Place Setting

1. Solids on the left, liquids on the right.
2. Forks are on the left, knives and spoons on the right side of the plate.
3. Work your way inwards with the utensils.
4. Follow the 'rule of three's.'

1. Solids on the left, liquids on the right.

Plates are always placed on the left, while glasses are on the upper right. This guide can help you find which place settings are yours.

2. Forks are on the left, knives and spoons on the right side of the plate.

In general, forks are placed to the left of the plate with the exception of the oyster fork which is placed on the right.

3. Work your way inwards with the utensils.

The rule for utensils is to work inward toward your plate as the meal progresses.

Place settings are organized so that, with each new course presented, the guest can use the outermost utensil(s). For instance, the salad fork would be leftmost, before the dinner fork, as the salad comes before the main course.

4. Follow the 'rule of three's.'

If you're hosting the dinner, don't clutter the table with too many implements. Set at most three of anything (e.g. three glasses, three forks etc.). If more than three would be used, then the additional implement would come as the new meal is presented.

Using Your Napkin

- When everyone is seated, gently unfold your napkin and place it on your lap. If the napkin is large, fold the napkin in half first.
- Your napkin remains on your lap throughout the entire meal. If you need to use your napkin to clean something on your lips, just dab it lightly.
- 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.
- If you drop your napkin on the floor, discreetly ask the waiter or host for another one.

Eating Your Meal

- Don't talk business during the meal proper, unless the senior members want to do so. Otherwise, business matters should be addressed either before the meal or after it.
- Take a cue from the host, or the most senior in the table, where to sit yourself.
- Take your cue from the host, or the most senior in the table, when to begin eating.
- Keep elbows off the table while eating. Elbows on the table are acceptable in between meals.
- Don't talk with your mouth full. Chew quietly. Don't slurp your liquids.

Eating Your Meal (cont'd)

- Don't apply make-up or comb your hair while dining.
- Don't pick your teeth at the table.
- If you need something that is not within your reach, politely ask the person next to you to pass it to you. Food is typically passed from left to right.
- Try to pace yourself so that you can finish at the same time as everyone else. When you have finished eating, you can let others know that you have by placing your knife and fork together, with the prongs (tines) on the fork facing upwards, on your plate.
- Don't forget to thank your host for the meal!

Module Six: Eating Out

In the previous module, we talked about etiquette guidelines relating to dining in style. In this module, we will look at basic courtesies to be observed while eating out, including guidelines in ordering in a restaurant, intake of alcohol during a business meeting, paying the bill and tipping.

*Manners are
one of the
greatest engines
of influence ever
given to man.*

Richard Whately

Ordering in a Restaurant

- As with many places, say 'please' and 'thank you' especially when addressing the waiter or server.
- Don't order the most expensive item.
- If you're the host, cue the server subtly at the start of the meal.
- Don't order for your associate.
- If, after looking at the menu, you see items that you are uncertain about, ask your server any questions that you may have.

About Alcoholic Beverages

In general, alcohol is not recommended to be part of a business meeting.

What are the instances when alcohol is appropriate?

- Dinners are traditionally accompanied by wine. White wine goes with fish and poultry, while red wine goes with red meats.
- During celebratory occasions, such as a deal going through, a toast may be in order.
- There are certain cultures where wine is expected. Germans like to drink wine before a meal; Texans find a beer appropriate with a barbeque lunch.

Paying the Bill

Who picks the tab? The host picks the tab. If you're the one who invited the guests, then it is assumed that you would be the one picking the tab.

Be discreet in paying the bill.

If you can, arrange that the receipt be not brought to your table.

You can do this by:

- Requesting that the bill be held at the maitre d's station.
- Arranging to pick the check on your way out.
- Arranging to have the check sent to your office.
- Leaving your credit card with the restaurant, and request that the server add your tip to the meal.

Tipping

- Tip appropriately. The standard is 15% for moderate service and 20% for excellent service of the pre-tax cost of the meal. In a self-service/ buffet style restaurant, a tip of 10-12% is standard.
- Deal with bad food/ service by talking to the manager. Remember that many get a portion of the waiter's tip, not just the waiter, so you may be punishing the chef for a server's lack and vice-versa.

Module Seven: Business Email Etiquette

Email is a convenient and effective medium to conduct business communication. In this module we will discuss etiquette guidelines on how to address an email message, the use of grammar and acronyms in the letter body and top 5 technology tips.

Almost overnight the Internet's gone from a technical wonder to a business must.

*Bill Gates
Schrader*

Addressing Your Message

- Using the 'To' field. The 'To' field is used when sending a direct message to someone.
- Using the 'Cc' field. Cc stands for carbon copy.
- Using the "Bcc" field. Bcc stands for Blind carbon copy.

a. Using the 'To' field.

The 'To' field is used when sending a direct message to someone.

You may send the same email to multiple addresses using the 'To' field. Do so when your email is meant to be addressed directly to all recipients, as in the case of a manager directing his team.

Note though that when you use the 'To' field, all email addresses can be viewed by all recipients. Put multiple addresses in the 'To' field only when every recipient is okay with his or her email address being released to everyone.

b. Using the 'Cc' field.

Cc stands for carbon copy.

You use the 'Cc' field to send a copy of the email message to people who are not meant to be the direct recipients of the message, but still need to be kept on the loop.

For instance, if a manager has ordered his secretary to send a memo to everyone in the department, the secretary may place all the department employees' email address on the 'To' section, and the manager's email address on the 'Cc' field.

Note that, like the 'To' field, all email addresses entered in a 'Cc' field can be viewed by everyone.

c. Using the "Bcc" field.

Bcc stands for Blind carbon copy.

When you place email addresses in 'Bcc' field, recipients are 'blind' to other recipients' email address. The use of the 'Bcc' field is most appropriate if the recipients have not given permission for their email address to be released, or if there is reason to keep the email address private.

Because the 'Bcc' field offers privacy that the 'To' and 'Cc' fields do not, you may use the blind carbon copy field for both direct and indirect email messages where privacy of email addresses is needed. If you wish to send an email to many direct recipients, but you don't wish to disclose anyone's email address, just use your own email address in the 'To' field, and use the 'Bcc' field for the recipients' addresses.

Grammar and Acronyms

Here are some key things to remember with regards to grammar and the use of acronyms in an email.

- Always follow the rules of good grammar.
- Always use full sentences and words with proper sentence structure. Don't use text-speak.
- Proper capitalization and punctuation are a must! In email, all caps give the impression that you're shouting, and small caps are hard to read.
- In business emails, avoid text-speak abbreviations such as BTW (by the way), IMHO (In my honest opinion,) and LOL (laugh out loud). Avoid the use of emoticons, e.g. smileys :-), as well.

Top 5 Technology Tips

Here are 5 tips when using technology:

1. Medium is the message.
2. Always re-read your letters.
3. Think security.
4. Think of your recipient's convenience.
5. Skip it if it's not necessary.

Here are 5 tips when using technology:

1. Medium is the message.

There are some things that are better done face-to-face rather than through the net. An example of this is delivering negative feedback. Don't use technology when a personal approach is much more appropriate and/ or desirable.

2. Always re-read your letters.

Some statements don't come across well in written. An ironic joke, if people can't see the twinkle in your eye, can end up sounding insulting. Read everything twice before you send it.

3. Think security.

Do not assume privacy when communicating online. Do not use emails to discuss confidential and speculative information.

4. Think of your recipient's convenience.

Since reading from a screen is more difficult than reading from paper, the structure and layout is very important for e-mail messages. Use short paragraphs and blank lines between each paragraph. When making points, number them or mark each point with bullets. Also don't attach lengthy documents in your email. Forcing your client to read a long document through a screen is insensitive, not to mention the time it would cost them to download bulk files. If a hard copy is possible, then send a hard copy instead.

5. Skip it if it's not necessary.

Remember that most emails now go into PDA's. Before sending a message in the late hours, ask yourself: how will they react to me sending a text message?

Module Eight: Telephone Etiquette

This time we will look at telephone etiquette. Particularly, we will discuss how to develop an appropriate greeting, how to deal with voicemail and cell phones dos and don'ts.

An unbelievable number of client interactions start with a phone call.

David Gerson

Developing an Appropriate Greeting

How to Create an Appropriate Phone Greeting:

1. Say your greeting Business telephones should always be answered with a phrase like, "Good morning" or "Good Afternoon."
2. Identify yourself and the company.
3. Inquire how you might be of assistance.

How to Create an Appropriate Phone Greeting:

1. Say your greeting Business telephones should always be answered with a phrase like, "Good morning" or "Good Afternoon." Speak clearly and distinctly, in a pleasant tone of voice. Some trainers recommend smiling before one answers the phone in order to project a positive energy into one's voice.

2. Identify yourself and the company. It's only polite to tell the other person on the line that they've reached the right place.

3. Inquire how you might be of assistance. "How may I be of service?" or "How can I help you?" can set the tone.

Dealing with Voicemail

Tips on leaving a voicemail message:

- State your name, affiliation and phone number.
- State your reason for calling.
- State any action plan or action required on your message.

Cell phone Do's and Don'ts

Here are some cell phone dos and don'ts.

- Don't take calls in the middle of a business meeting or a conversation with another person.
- Never talk in intimate settings or places where silence is imperative.
- Don't talk on a cell phone in a public place.
- If you really have to take a call in public, step out or to a secluded area to take that call.
- Keep business calls within business hours.

Here are some cell phone dos and don'ts.

1. Don't take calls in the middle of a business meeting or a conversation with another person. Exceptions are urgent calls, but excuse yourself first before taking it. Likewise, set your ringer to silent or your phone to just vibrate mode when in a social conversation.

2. Never talk in intimate settings or places where silence is imperative. Examples of these are elevators, libraries, museums, restaurants, cemeteries, theaters, dentist or doctor waiting rooms, places of worship, auditoriums or other enclosed public spaces, such as hospital emergency rooms or buses.

3. Don't talk on a cell phone in a public place. A good rule to keep is the 10 foot rule --
- answer calls at least 10 feet away from the next person!

4. If you really have to take a call in public, step out or to a secluded area to take that call. You can also set your phone to voicemail when going out in public. If you really must take the call, answer briefly to tell that you're in a public place and that you would return the call as much as possible.

5. Keep business calls within business hours. Just because it's a cell phone doesn't mean that you can call anytime.

Module Nine: The Written Letter

Even in written communication, appropriate tone, content and format must be observed. In this module, we would discuss how to write a 'Thank You' note, a formal letter and an informal letter.

*The art of art,
the glory of
expression and
the sunshine of
the light of
letters, is
simplicity.*
Walt Whitman

Thank You Notes

A thank you note need not be a long letter.

Most thank you's mention:

- Your thanks
- What you're thanking them for
- What their gesture/ gift or action meant to you or the company

Formal Letters

A formal letter usually contains the following sections:

- Sender's full name and address
- Addressee's full name and address
- Date the letter is sent (or assumed to fall into the hands of the receiver)
- Formal Salutation e.g. "Dear + Formal Address"
- A Subject Heading e.g. "Re: Job Opening for Quality Control Officer"
- Letter Body
- Formal Closing e.g. "Respectfully yours, Sincerely yours,"
- Name and Signature of the Sender

Informal Letters

An informal business letter is a shorter and more straight-forward version of a formal letter. Standard rules on grammar and spelling correctness still apply, but with certain flexibilities.

Module Ten: Dressing for Success

A significant part of practicing etiquette is proper self-presentation. The way you look talks, not just about how you want to project yourself, but also the courtesy you have for the people in your company.

*Your
appearance is
your visual
resume.*

*Dana May
Casperson*

The Meaning of Colors

Some of the common interpretations associated with colors are:

- Red – connotes dominance and power
- Orange – warmth and enthusiasm
- Yellow – optimism and confidence
- Green - vitality and harmony
- Blue - serenity and peace

In general, conservative colors are perceived as more professional and appropriate for business-related situations. These colors include black (which is perceived as the most formal), white, dark gray and navy blue. Conservative colors are recommended for formal occasions; you can be more playful during casual days.

Wear these conservative colors in solid blocks instead of as part of a printed pattern.

The main suit is recommended to have conservative colors but louder colors can be mixed with the accessories. E.g. the tie and pocket squares for men or scarf for the women.

A lot of companies use color dress code for building their brand as employees interact with the consumers. Also, when the workforce dresses the same color, it further brings unity among the employees.

Interpreting Common Dress Codes

Dress codes often depend on the company or industry where you work in, and even in the type of job that you do.

- Dressy Casual
- Semi-Formal
- Formal
- Black tie

1. Dressy Casual

Dressy casual means dressed up versions of casual looks. For men, it could be neatly pressed slacks and a sports coat. For women, it can be slacks, but also skirts, dresses. This can be matched with solid color t-shirts, mock turtleneck, polo shirt, collared or button down shirts/blouses.

Casual means anything goes but in the business setting, casual is recommended to be interpreted as dressy casual.

2. Semi-Formal:

Semi formal means a medium between formal and informal. For men, semi-formal can translate to neatly pressed dress pants, slacks, button shirts & ties. Jackets are optional but preferred. For ladies, it's evening dress, dinner dress (knee length) or some pants suits.

3. Formal:

Formal means tuxedos, dark suits & ties for men. For ladies, it's cocktail to floor length dresses, nylons and dress shoes.

4. Black tie:

Black tie is the most formal dress code. Men wears black tuxedo coat, trousers with satin ribbon, cummerbund and bow tie. Ladies are to wear ball gowns.

There are dress codes that state 'Black tie optional'. This means that the men have the option of wearing a regular suit with a tie instead of a tuxedo. Ladies have the option of wearing a cocktail gown or a dinner dress. Long to full-length skirts are preferred.

Module Eleven: International Etiquette

Etiquette is heavily influenced by culture; each country and nation has their own set of rules for polite behavior. When dealing with an international clientele, or when conducting business in a foreign country, it's best to be aware of local etiquette guidelines.

*Etiquette
requires us to
admire the
human race.*

Mark Twain

General Rules

1. Always take the time to research cross-cultural etiquette when dealing with a foreign client, or when conducting business in a foreign country.
2. Awareness of international etiquette is important not just in face-to-face meetings but also in non face-to-face encounters such as sending gifts, conversing over the phone or communicating online.
3. Areas you need to look at include:
 1. Religion
 2. Dress Codes
 3. Social Hierarchy.
 4. Rules on Meet and Greets
 5. Use of titles and forms of address.
 6. Exchanging business cards
 7. Valuing Time
 8. Physical Space
4. Dealing with embarrassment
5. When uncertain, err on the side of what you presume is conservatism.

Important Points

- Some cultures dress conservatively as norm.
- Some cultures meet and greet people with a kiss, a hug, or a bow instead of a handshake.
- Stick to formal titles for business interactions unless invited otherwise.
- Some cultures are less time-conscious than others.
- Understand differences in perception of personal space.

1. Some cultures dress conservatively as norm.

Americans tend to be more relaxed when it comes to dress codes, and even recommends dressing for comfort in certain fields and professions. People from other parts of the world are generally more conservative. The Japanese, for example, dress according to rank. Some Muslim nations find short dresses for women as offensive. If uncertain, err on the side of conservatism.

2. Some cultures meet and greet people with a kiss, a hug, or a bow instead of a handshake.

A handshake for greeting is mostly universal. However, don't be surprised if you are occasionally met with a kiss, a hug, or a bow somewhere along the way.

3. Stick to formal titles for business interactions unless invited otherwise.

Approach first names with caution when dealing with people from other cultures. Some cultures are very hierarchical, and with consider it disrespect to be addressed without their title. Some cultures never accept first names in the business setting, and this should be respected.

4. Some cultures are less time-conscious than others.

Don't take it personally if someone from a more relaxed culture keeps you waiting or spends more of that commodity than you normally would in meetings or over meals. Stick to the rules of punctuality, but be understanding when your contact from another country seems unconcerned.

5. Understand differences in perception of personal space.

Americans have a particular value for their own physical space and are uncomfortable when other people get in their realm. If the international visitor seems to want to be close, accept it. Backing away can send the wrong message.

Preparation Tips

1. It starts with being open-minded.
2. Read up!
3. Find informants, or experts with good local knowledge of both countries, and simply ask them to talk to you over a good lunch or dinner. If you live near a university or a centre of expertise on a particular country, it can also be helpful to seek guidance from experts who will probably be only too glad to be consulted and share their knowledge,
4. For the really serious there is no better way than to spend at least two or three days traveling with at least two representatives selling your company's products or services. Use the time to absorb the atmosphere, methodologies, hospitalities, practices and styles.
5. Take a more specialized course on international etiquette if relating with international clients is a big part of your job description.

Module Twelve: Wrapping Up

Words from the Wise

- **YOGI BERRA:** In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.
- **DWIGHT EISENHOWER:** Plans are nothing; planning is everything.
- **JONAS SALK:** The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more.

*This feeling,
finally, that we
may change
things - this is at
the centre of
everything we
are. Lose that...
lose everything.
Sir David Hare*