



Number 72

Business Etiquette

The Leadernote Series

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Sometimes it may seem there are so many little rules to follow that it just shouldn't matter. However, today manners matter more than ever. Because the world is changing, rules of behavior are changing as well. Business etiquette is extremely important in today's fast paced world that involves communication on such a large scale. If basic guidelines are followed, the power of politeness will prove itself most beneficial.

I. Introductions

A. What to Say

1. If applicable, mention the name of the person of authority of importance first.
2. You only have to say each person's name once.
3. Try to add some neutral or positive information about each person.

B. How to Respond

1. Stand up
2. Move toward the person, establish eye contact, look pleasant or smile
3. Shake hands
4. Greet the other person and repeat his/her name
5. When conversation ends, say good bye

II First Name vs. Last Name

- A. If the person in question is of a significantly higher rank or seems closer to your parents' age than yours, use the last name. Otherwise, a first name may be acceptable.
- B. When in doubt, use the last name. They can always correct you. NEVER ask if you can call them by their first name.
- C. It is always better to use someone's title (Mr., Ms., Dr.) and last name until you are asked to use first names or are sure the first name is appropriate. "Ms." is usually preferred for women. Take notice of what your peers may use, but when in doubt, never use first names.
- D. When things go wrong
 1. You forget a name: be honest but polite.
Ex: "I remember meeting you, but I can't recall your name."
 2. Someone pronounces wrong: correct without embarrassing the person
Ex: "Actually, it's pronounced....."

III. Small Talk

- A. The key to gaining and giving attention is SOFTEN.
Smile - easy to forget to do it; remember it shows friendliness
Open posture - face the speaker and look attentive; don't cross arms
Forward lean - without invading their space
Tone - use appropriate voice
Eye communication - best way to say "I'm listening" without opening mouth
Nod - positive feedback, but don't over do it

- B. Need things to talk about?
 1. Read at least one newspaper a day and several magazines a month
 2. Observe the world around you: community, culture, weather
 3. Read your professional journals; be up to date on things that people around you are doing
 4. Maintain a written log of interesting stories, statistics, and situations. It can consist of newspaper or magazine clippings, something neat about your hometown, about your company, etc.
 5. Safe topics: weather, traffic, sports, non-controversial event (ie. Oscars), travel, environmental issues, favorable comments, books, common experiences, arts
 6. Unsafe topics: Your's or others health, cost of items, income, personal misfortune, gossip, dirty jokes, religion, highly controversial issues (ie. abortion)
- IV Professional Presences
- A. Attire
 1. Men
 - no undershirt showing
 - well knotted tie that ends in middle of belt
 - mid calf length socks with good elastic
 - jewelry - limited to good watch and a ring
 2. Women
 - hide slip/bra straps as well as panty lines
 - avoid clothes with designer labels that show
 - limit jewelry to a good watch, necklace, earrings, and one ring per hand
- V. How to win a telephone tag
- A. Always return calls
 - B. Call someone when you said you would
 - C. Be available if you told someone to call you at a certain time
 - D. Treat phone calls like appointments: schedule them and reschedule when there are conflicts
 - E. When you are unavailable make sure whoever will answer your phone has the adequate information
 - F. Always leave your phone number when calling someone - even if you think they have it.
- VI. Written Communication
- A. A written thank-you should be sent any time it takes someone more than 15 minutes to do something for you. Don't procrastinate; it should be done within a couple of days
 - B. Rules
 1. Proofread
 2. Spell all names correctly (double check)
 3. Keep each sentence between 10-12 words
 4. Keep the letter under one page
 - C. Know your reader. However, if you are writing to someone whose name was impossible to find out, use To Whom it May Concern, NOT Dear Sir/Madam.
- VII. Tips on More Informal Situations
- Remember to still use most etiquette rules
 - Attend social events, it marks you as a team player; remember to RSVP
 - Dress appropriately
 - Network - meet and greet
 - Limit business discussions
 - Limit alcohol
 - Maintain positive attitude
 - Remember that those "with" you also represent you; your date's poor behavior will reflect badly upon you
 - Send thank you notes