

10 Professional Etiquette Tips

Professional etiquette encompasses everything from how to greet people to knowing which fork to use at a business dinner. Small details about the way you carry yourself can make a big impression. The scope of professional etiquette is too broad to cover in just one handout, but here are a few things to get you started:

- ✓ **Keep your personal voicemail greeting professional.** This is especially important when you're job hunting. State either your name or the phone number so that the caller can verify that he/she has reached the correct person. Assure the caller that you will return the call shortly. That's pretty much all you need – no gimmicks required!
- ✓ **Leave your phone alone!** Refrain from checking or sending text messages and emails during meetings or lectures. You may think you're being discrete, but others will take notice. Give the speaker the respect that he or she deserves.
- ✓ **When making introductions with someone, stand up, smile and make eye contact, state your greeting, and shake hands** (or other culturally appropriate greeting).
- ✓ **Return emails and voicemails within 24 hours.** If you receive an important email but are not able to answer it quickly, send a response indicating that you've received the email and will respond fully by the end of the day, week, etc.
- ✓ **At mixers or receptions, keep your drink in your left hand.** That way, your right hand is available for handshakes.
- ✓ **When addressing people – either verbally or in written communication – use titles (Mr., Ms., Dr., Professor, etc.).** Do not use first names unless invited to do so. If you have multiple email communications with the same person throughout the day, a formal greeting may not be needed for each email; however, you should begin the first email of each day with a salutation.
- ✓ **Don't assume privacy.** Your employer has a right to record the use of all office equipment, including sent and received email and internet activity.
- ✓ **When approaching someone in a cubicle, knock on the cubicle door/wall and ask, "May I come in?"** Respect personal space, even if there are no office walls.
- ✓ **Proofread, proofread, proofread!** Many workplace blunders involve email. Take extra time to be absolutely sure that the recipient(s), subject, and content of your email is what you intend. Also, be especially careful when using Reply/Reply All; double check to make sure you send emails only to the intended recipients.
- ✓ **When leaving a voicemail, state your name and phone number slowly.** Keep your message brief. It is often helpful to repeat your name and phone number at the end of the message.