Business Etiquette
What is it – and why does it matter?
What is Business Etiquette?

The “rules” or norms – cultural and societal - both in origin and scope, that define the boundaries of acceptable or expected business interaction and communication.
Why is ‘business’ etiquette important?

- Business is based on social exchange.
- Knowing (and following) the “rules” shows respect for and understanding of the applicable norms of social exchange.
- This demonstrates preparation, maturity and competence.
- In turn, increasing your credibility and your potential for success – personal and professional.
Test Your “Etiquette Intelligence”

(adapted from http://www.etiquetteexpert.com/eti_quiz.htm: ©2005 The Protocol School of Palm Beach, Inc. All rights reserved.)
In business situations, what’s right?

a) Only men should stand for introductions and shaking hands.

b) Only women should stand for introductions and shaking hands.

c) It is not necessary for men or women to stand for either handshaking or introductions.

d) Both men and women should stand for handshaking and all introductions.
In business situations, a man is required to:

a) To pull a chair out for a woman.

b) To stand when a woman leaves the table.

c) To act as “host”.

d) All of the above.

e) None of the above.
Where should you wear your name badge?

a) On your left shoulder.

b) On your right shoulder.

c) On your left sleeve.

d) It doesn’t matter – just so you can see it.
The best way to meet people at business or social functions is to:

a) Head for the bar or the buffet table.

b) Introduce yourself to a couple standing together and talking softly.

c) Look self-assured, stand in the center of the room, and wait for someone to approach you.

d) Introduce yourself - to a person standing alone or to groups.

e) Stick with those you know well and forget about the rest.
If you receive e-mail from an unknown source and realize it should be handled by someone else, you should:

a) Forward it immediately.

b) Forward it with a note explaining why you are sending it.

c) Consider it spam, delete it, and forget about it.

d) Print it out, leave it on the xerox machine, and hope someone else takes care of it.
If a client (or potential employer) calls to ‘complain’, you should:

a) Try to stay calm, put them on hold, and recuperate in the restroom.

b) Defend yourself – tell them they have the wrong number and hang up.

c) Stay calm, listen to their complaint, and promptly try to help or get help.

d) Fight back - put the caller in their place by yelling back. No one has the right to talk to you rudely.
If you are introducing two people, but can’t remember one person’s name, what can you say or do?

a) “Do you know each other?”

b) “I can’t remember your name. Can you introduce yourself?”

c) Say nothing, do nothing, and hope they introduce themselves.

d) “It’s been one of those days! Please tell me your name again.”
When making a formal business introduction of a client to your company Managing Director you should:

a) Do what feels right.

b) Introduce your client to the MD.

c) Introduce the MD to your client.

d) Don’t do anything. It is their responsibility to introduce themselves.
After a meeting in your offices with a potential client or vendor, you should:

a) Tell him or her: “Don’t call us, we’ll call you.”

b) Accompany them to your reception area or elevator.

c) Give them a handshake and a big hug and tell them that you can’t wait to see them again.
After a job interview or networking meeting, you should:

a) Send an e-mail - it's faster and more efficient.

b) Send a handwritten note.

c) Call to say thank you within 72 hours.

d) Consider a verbal thank you sufficient.
You are in an interview, a class, a conference or workshop and your cell phone rings. What should you do?

a) Answer it promptly and keep the call brief.

b) Ignore it and pretend someone else’s phone is ringing.

c) Apologize and switch your phone to silent mode. Your client/class takes priority.

d) Apologize, leave the room, and answer the call outside.
In written correspondence with a potential employer, it is acceptable to:

a) Assume e-mail is sufficient

b) Use short-hand expressions and abbreviations, ignore salutations and spell-check – it’s the same as ‘IM-ing’ someone

c) Be very blunt or direct in your language

d) Write e-mail the same way you would a formal letter.
Other Etiquette Topics

- **Networking**: What should you say when approaching someone?
- **Dress**: How should you dress for an interview or business meeting?
- **Grooming/Dress**: Is personal hygiene really important?
- **Internet persona** – Personal blogs, MySpace, Facebook, etc.
- **Names** – Use first name or last name? Academic titles?
- **Introductions** – Formal or informal? Handshakes. Personal space.
- **Language**: When you can use “casual” language?
- **Humor**: When can you use humor?
- **Content**: How can you tell when you are being “too personal”?
- **Following up**: When should you send a thank you note?
- **Seniors/Juniors**: Treat everyone the same!
How do you learn “appropriate” business etiquette?

- **Ask** – Before you start meetings with employers!
- **Observe** – Watch what others do.
- **Research** – Norms change from country to country and from industry to industry.
- **Unsure?** - When in doubt, err on the formal.
- **Websites:**
  - Many – [www.ravenwerks.com/practices/etiquette.htm](http://www.ravenwerks.com/practices/etiquette.htm)

*Arrogance, superciliousness, condescension are never appreciated!*
Remember the simple courtesies:

- Be on time – there is no excuse for lateness.
- Stand up!
- Introduce yourself.
- Remember names!
- Engage! Participate!
- Say thank you.
- Do your homework – respect your client/interviewer’s time
Tips for Job Interviews:

- **Do your research:**
  - Learn about the organization
  - Understand the position
  - Be able to articulate why you want to work there

- **Practice your “elevator speech”**

- **Provide specific examples to show your skills**

- **Maintain eye contact and positive, interested body language**

- **Dress to Impress**

- **Bring copies of your resume (on resume paper)**

  *Practice (vocally!)*
What can we do for you?

Graduate Student Career Development Center for Career Education

- Individualized or walk-in counseling appointments
- Documentation and application reviews
- Practice interviews and job talk critiques
- Video-taping
- Workshops, panels, speakers, career fairs
- Dossier service
- Career Resource Center
- Non-academic job and internship listings
Graduate Student Career Development

Who we are:
Richard Kurz, PhD, rk347
Beth Olson, bo2145

Where you can find us:
East Campus, Lower Level
careereducation.columbia.edu
Check events calendar often!

How you can reach us:
(212) 854-5498
Call to set up an individual appointment

When you can reach us:
Mon – Fri, 9am-5pm
Wed (term time), open till 8pm
Walk-ins, 2pm-4pm every day