14 Tips on Business Etiquette

Setting a professional tone with co-workers, clients and customers

Special Report from:
BusinessManagement DAILY

14 Tips on Business Etiquette:

Setting a professional tone with co-workers, clients and customers

Special Report from http://www.BusinessManagementDaily.com

EDITOR	EDITORIAL DIRECTOR	ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER	PUBLISHER
Kathy A. Shipp	Patrick DiDomenico	Adam Goldstein	Phillip A. Ash

---

© 2016, 2012 Business Management Daily, a division of Capitol Information Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Substantial duplication of this report is prohibited. However, we encourage you to excerpt from this report as long as you include a hyperlink back to www.businessmanagementdaily.com/BusinessEtiquette. The hyperlink must be included on every usage of the report title. Alternatively, you may simply link to the aforementioned page on our site. Any reproduction in print form requires advance permission by contacting the publisher at (800) 543-2055 or customer@BusinessManagementDaily.com. Any violation is subject to legal action.

This content is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information regarding the subject matter covered. It is provided with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal service. If you require legal advice, please seek the services of an attorney.

14 Tips on Business Etiquette:

Setting a professional tone with co-workers, clients and customers

For organizations and employees alike, recognizing the critical link between business protocol and profit is key to your success. Learn how to confidently interact with colleagues in ways that make you and your whole organization shine with this special report, ***14 Tips on Business Etiquette: Setting a professional tone with co-workers, clients and customers***.

Discover best practices on making proper introductions; cubicle etiquette; "casual dress" rules; handshake protocol; guest etiquette; workplace behavior faux pas; business dining etiquette, office wedding invites and other co-worker special occasions; business letter and email protocol—and even how your office decorations may affect your professional image.

14 Tips on Business Etiquette also presents real-life etiquette questions answered by "America's foremost authority on manners," Letitia Baldrige. And you'll learn tips on how to finesse awkward, embarrassing situations at work, courtesy of the great-grandson of Emily Post, etiquette expert Peter Post.

Business Etiquette Tips #1

Cubicle etiquette: 8 close-quarters rules

Open office spaces, where most people work without doors, encourage teamwork and creativity. But they also mean working closely with others—sometimes too close for comfort.

Even if there aren't four walls and a door marking the area, you need to respect everyone else's work space. Eight etiquette rules:

1. Don't "prairie dog." Walk around the partition to see a neighbor, instead of popping your head over the top. And as you walk down the passageways, don't peek into each workstation.

2. Pretend that workstations have walls. Don't barge into a work area that has no door. Lightly tap on the wall near the opening or say "Excuse me" to announce your arrival. Never assume it's OK to enter someone's work space unless he or she signals you to do so.

Put a lid on loud talking in the workplace

More than 30% of people surveyed by Harris Interactive said "people talking loudly at work" is one of their biggest pet peeves. Employees who talk loudly on the phone and in person can hurt productivity and morale, plus create tension among employees.

Advice: Send out an email reminding employees about your noise policy (if you have one) and the need to respect co-workers' work space. Most people probably aren't even aware that they're causing the disruption.

3. Allow co-workers to complete calls. Don't try to interrupt with sign language or lurk just outside the cubicle. Drop a note on the desk or return later.

4. Grant your neighbors private time. Stagger lunch breaks to provide everyone a few minutes alone at their desks.

5. Move conversations from hallways. Lead the group you're talking with to a conference room or other common area so you don't disturb co-workers who are trying to concentrate.

6. Don't chime in to conversations you hear over the wall. Whether it's a work question you can answer or a private conversation you'd rather not hear, ignore comments that aren't directed at you.

7. Keep lunch in the kitchen. Or, when you absolutely can't leave your desk for a meal, choose foods without strong odors, and dispose of your trash in the kitchen, not in your own wastebasket.

8. Turn down the volume. Mute any sound effects on a screensaver, set your phone ringer on low (and send callers directly to voice mail when you won't be able to answer), set your personal cell phone to silent mode and minimize the volume of any computer alarms.

Business Etiquette Tips #2

'Casual dress' etiquette: Demystify your event's dress code

Casual. *Corporate* casual. *Business* casual. *Smart* casual. *Resort* casual. Don't leave meeting attendees baffled about your event's dress code.

Explain what you mean by "business casual" or "corporate casual," etc. with examples of appropriate attire for men and women. One event's "resort casual"

encouraged wearing jeans, while another explained that shorts were acceptable, but not denim or cutoffs.

Strike the right tone in offering your advice to attendees, whether it's a formal "suits are not appropriate" or a friendly "leave your ties at home!"

If you will be attending a meeting where the dress code is unclear, conduct casual research: Contact someone in the host organization, talk with previous attendees to learn what people *really* wear (ties are encouraged, but no one wears one) or seek the advice of experts at a clothing shop that caters to businesspeople.

Business Etiquette Tips _____ #3

How to finesse awkward, embarrassing situations

Knowing whether or not to tell your CEO that he has spinach stuck in his teeth is one sure test of your business etiquette skills. (*Answer:* Tell him, but discreetly.)

How would you handle the two difficult or embarrassing situations below?

Situation 1. You find a personal—and potentially embarrassing—document left behind on the photocopier.

Solution: Normally, you'd put forgotten pages in a tray beside the copier, for people to claim later. In this case, though, deliver the document in person, advises Peter Post, author of *The Etiquette Advantage in Business* and great-grandson of Emily Post.

And don't peruse its contents. "Save the person any worry," writes Post, "by volunteering: 'I didn't read this when I opened the copier lid, but I could tell it was private and thought I'd drop it by.'"

Situation 2. The boss is expecting a visitor any moment, and you notice his fly is open. You wonder whether you should tell him or just hope someone else does.

Solution: If you're a man, tell him. If you're a woman, ask one of the guys in the office to let him know.

You've got a lot to juggle.

Join the *Administrative Professional Today* community of office all-stars and get the secrets to success at work.



Your job is tough. You're responsible for keeping a lot of balls in the air, keeping everyone happy and pulling it all off without breaking a sweat.

No big deal, right? Except it *is* a big deal.

At ***Administrative Professional Today***, we understand the challenges you face at work, and we know that even the most seasoned professionals can always use a little boost. In fact, we've spent the past 20 years providing resources for administrative professionals just like you.

Our popular 8-page monthly newsletter for admins is our pride and joy, but we want you to know that we're more than just a newsletter. ***Administrative Professional Today*** subscribers get free access to **www.AdminProToday.com** and participate in our growing online community, where other admins swap stories, download free templates and forms, share tips and learn from each other every day, about important topics such as:

- How important is a college degree for an established admin?
- How do you become a virtual assistant?
- What are the best tricks that the internet search-savvy know?

And when you subscribe to ***Administrative Professional Today***, you'll receive helpful tips every month—in print *and* delivered straight to your email inbox. Here's what you can expect from each issue:

- 1-minute strategies for everything from mastering new technology to getting work done faster
- Time-saving how-to's on running meetings and events more efficiently
- Ideas for designing a presentation like a pro
- Advice on how to handle real-life workplace problems such as difficult colleagues
- Software tips and tricks that you can use at work the very same day

You spend *your* days making sure your office runs smoothly. We spend *our* days helping you perform at your very best. Think of us as your very own team of assistants—here to help you shine!

Special Offer:

Three Bonus Gifts You Won't Believe We're Giving Away for Free! Plus a 100% Money-Back Guarantee.

Frankly, we believe so strongly that your career will benefit from ***Administrative Professional Today***, we're willing to practically give away the farm to get you to try it. You'll get three free Special Reports that our admin clients have ordered so frequently, they've become bestsellers:

- ***Control the Chaos: Become a Star at Work Without Becoming a Stranger at Home.*** The life of today's administrative professional is no picnic, and it certainly doesn't look like it will get any easier. But you can create order out of disorder. Discover strategies and tips to help you regain control of your workday without sacrificing your personal life. You can be a star at work without living at the office!
- ***Mastering Business Etiquette & Protocol.*** We've all made social blunders at work, but the fact is, your career depends on your growing past youthful awkwardness into the mature poise that others can rely on. With *Mastering Business Etiquette & Protocol*, you'll know instantly what to do or say when meeting important customers … attending meetings … traveling with your boss.
- ***25 Egregious Grammar Errors and How to Avoid Them.*** Think grammatical errors aren't important? Think again. Avoiding errors is essential for you to communicate clearly and make a good impression — on behalf of yourself and your organization. Plus, good grammar gives you an advantage over those who write poorly. Learn how to avoid 25 of the most common errors with this handy guide.

Don't miss this opportunity to receive your free gifts and join your peers in our active community of administrative professionals—it's easy and affordable. You'll have access to thousands of articles, networking forums and online training sessions—all designed to help you juggle your busy schedule and get home from work on time. ***Subscribe to Administrative Professional Today.***

Office etiquette no-no's: The top annoying behaviors

Showing consideration for your co-workers isn't merely polite. Those surveyed for the staffing firm Office Angels said they're more likely to help considerate co-workers, and that those colleagues are more deserving of promotion than annoying office mates.

The top irritating behaviors cited:

- Receiving email from someone sitting 3 feet away.
- Listening to voice mail over a speakerphone.
- Swearing at the computer.
- Playing music a co-worker doesn't like.

Noise created by technology topped annoyances that ranked high just a few years ago, such as leaving the photocopier with a jam or gossiping.

Don't dismiss the impact of annoying habits: More than a third of office workers say they've considered switching jobs to escape the irritation.

Business Etiquette Tips #4

Handshake etiquette: Setting the stage for instant rapport

A good, well-timed handshake to pair with your smile is a sure way to stand out, whether you're at the company picnic or an industry conference.

Here's how important it is: A prospective employee with the best handshake is more likely to get the job, research shows.

Even if you're not a job-seeker, a good handshake will grant you instant rapport when meeting someone new. With that in mind, here's a refresher course on the business protocol of the perfect handshake:

- ☐ **Focus on the person you're shaking hands with.** Look directly into the person's eyes during the handshake.
- ☐ **Keep your grip firm and assertive but not too tight.** *General rule of thumb:* Grasp as tightly as the other person does.
- ☐ **Two up-and-down pumps are adequate.** The shake should last about three seconds.
- ☐ **Two-handed handshakes are a sign of real affection,** so steer clear of them when meeting new people.
- ☐ **Be ready to shake hands, regardless of your gender** or the other person's. He or she will remember that you extended your hand first.

Business Etiquette Tips #5

Job etiquette: When a co-worker gets the pink slip

Your friend at work gets handed a pink slip, and now you feel awkward. So awkward, in fact, that you're tempted to do nothing. But that's the last thing you should do.

Here's how to deal with the situation:

React quickly, or risk appearing insensitive. Even if you can say only, "I'm sorry. And I don't know what to say."

Steer clear of downplaying or saying anything inauthentic. Avoid saying things like, "This place is going down the tubes" or "I know how you feel."

Set up a gathering, once the initial shock has faded. Make it just the two of you or invite others, so you have time to say goodbye outside the office. Keep it focused on the person, and "understand that some things are out of our control," advises psychologist Kenneth E. Reinhard.

Avoid morphing into a self-help book. You don't need to have all the answers, so keep it simple. "You want to say that you're feeling for them right now, but keep it simple," Reinhard says. "You don't have to do much more than be an outlet."

Don't indulge in office gossip. If you get together with your buddy post-layoff, steer the conversation away from sour office topics, such as who might be laid off next. "You're preventing that person from moving on," Reinhard says.

— Adapted from "Coping When a Close Co-Worker Is Laid Off," Kayleen Schaefer, *The Wall Street Journal*

Business Etiquette Tips #6

Guest etiquette: Roll out the red carpet for visitors

When a VIP comes to your office, how do you dole out extra-special treatment?

Being friendly and responsive is the key to treating VIPs well, says etiquette expert Peter Post.

Here's Post's advice on how to do that:

Greet VIPs by name. "There's something so powerful about using somebody's name when you greet them," Post says. "I'm always surprised when some people don't do it." Make the person feel welcome. Post even suggests standing up in some cases.

Example: Stand up, say: "Hello, Mr. Smith. Let me tell John you're here." Go to John's door, as opposed to calling him, open it for the VIP guest, then close it behind him. These are nice, simple things you can do. And you'll be remembered.

Deliver a heads-up to the boss. Even if you wouldn't normally give your boss a five-minute warning before an appointment, this would be a time to do it. That sets the stage. "You're giving him that moment to get ready," Post says.

Shoo away distractions so you're not caught juggling when the VIP arrives. If someone comes to your desk with a problem, be direct in asking her to wait.

Example: "I want to help you with that problem, but I know Mr. Smith is about to arrive and I need to give him my full attention. I'll get back to you."

Make small talk only if you observe a clear signal. "I think part of the smartness of an admin is an ability to read people," Post says. If the VIP ends up waiting a minute or two, you'll need to evaluate whether to attempt chitchat. If he whips out a newspaper, don't try to make conversation. If he sits and smiles at you, then ask about the weather.

"And, please, converse without going into controversial topics," Post advises.

Business Etiquette Tips _____ #7

Business phone etiquette: Soothe angry callers

Turn a growling caller into a purring, pleased customer with these telephone etiquette techniques:

►**Bite your tongue.** When someone screams on the phone, your first thought may be, "What a jerk!" But that attitude will only poison an already-tenuous relationship with the caller. Instead, stay calm and listen.

►**Let 'em vent.** Like a whistling kettle, angry callers need to vent some steam. Don't interrupt—even with a solution—before they tell their story.

►**Take it down a notch.** Instead of raising your voice to match the caller's volume, speak softly. That will soothe the speaker and show him or her that you're interested in handling the complaint in a calm, rational way.

►**Stay focused.** Resist the urge to complete another task while a caller rants. The sound of your rattling papers will signal that you don't care.

Phone etiquette: Avoid being 'red flagged'

When dealing with a vendor's customer service rep, always end a call politely—even if you're fuming.

Slamming down the phone may result in a "hang up" note attached to your record, which hurts your chances when you need something in the future. Never hang up in anger.

►**Empathize and apologize.** When the caller runs out of vitriol, show that you understand why the person is angry. *Example:* "I know this has been frustrating for you, Mr. Smith, and I'm sorry that Ms. Jones has not returned your call." *Note:* Use the caller's name and speak in complete sentences, not single words such as "Yes" or "No," which sometimes sound rude.

►**Take one for the team.** Accept responsibility for the problem even if you're not to blame. *Example:* "I should have made it clear that, although our manager will be returning to the office today, she's tied up in meetings until the afternoon."

►**Ask, "What would you like me to do?"** This shows that you're there to help.

► **Offer a fallback.** Never end a call with "I can't do that." If you can't do what the caller asks, tell him or her what you can do. *Example:* "I can't interrupt that meeting, Mr. Smith, but I can pass along the message to call you as soon as it ends."

Business Etiquette Tips #8

Kitchen faux pas: Who ate my yogurt?

Some employees can tolerate co-workers' swearing and rude behavior, but don't even dream of touching their yogurt or ham sandwiches. The most offensive thing an office worker can do is steal colleagues' food from the office fridge, says a TheLadders.com survey of 2,500 U.S. employees.

A full 98% agreed that fridge raiding was unacceptable workplace etiquette.

Respondents also cited, in order: bad hygiene, bad habits, drinking on the job, swearing, wasting paper, cooking smelly food in the microwave and referring to their smartphones and other digital devices during meetings.

Help everyone keep the fridge clean

The greatest mystery in many workplaces is what's lurking in the office refrigerator. Go beyond scheduling regular "Use it or lose it" deadlines. Follow these tips:

1. Post a copy of the clean-fridge policy on the refrigerator door, so no one will have any excuses.

2. Make it easy for people to label containers with their names and expiration dates by keeping a marking pen and tape in the kitchen.

3. Promote safe food storage by posting the USDA's cold storage chart. Sample guidelines:

- ☐ Don't leave perishable food sitting at room temperature for more than two hours. (Instead of leaving office party leftovers on the counter for everyone to share, leave a note directing people to the food in the fridge.)

- ☐ Make sure the refrigerator is set below 40 degrees, the magic number needed to slow bacteria growth.

Business Etiquette Tips #9

Office donations: Keep it low-key when passing the hat

Not only is there no such thing as a free lunch, but those birthday cakes for co-workers can cost you, too.

It's not unusual to be asked to help pay for celebrations at the office, such as birthdays and baby showers. In a survey by OfficeTeam, more than 75% of respondents said employees chip in at least once a year; 15% said employees receive donation requests monthly.

Avoid asking colleagues for too much too often by following these office protocol guidelines from OfficeTeam:

- ☐ **Keep it selective.** Asking a new hire who has never met the mom-to-be to contribute to a baby shower is unfair. Instead, extend the invite to those who are most familiar with the person receiving special attention.
- ☐ **Keep it reasonable.** Rather than specifying a dollar amount, ask co-workers for voluntary contributions of any size toward buying a cake, gift or other item.
- ☐ **Keep it low-key.** Send a general email announcement or circulate a donation envelope for anonymous contributions—that's preferable to a personal plea, which can make people feel uncomfortable.

Business Etiquette Tips #10

Business letter etiquette: The art of the personal note

Who hasn't started writing a thank-you or condolence note, only to encounter "the big um" after the first sentence?

"The big um is when you get your first couple of words out and wonder, 'What's next?'" says Angela Ensminger, co-author of *On a Personal Note: A Guide to Writing Notes with Style* (Hallmark). "That blank paper is very intimidating."

Ensminger told attendees at an International Association of Administrative Professionals convention that great personal notes come from taking these five steps:

1. State why you're writing in a straightforward manner. *Example:* "Thank you for taking the time to visit our offices."

2. Elaborate on step 1. *Example:* "It was so valuable for our entire executive team to meet with you face to face. And your meeting sparked several creative ideas that we're excited to pursue."

3. Build the relationship. "This is the most important step," says Ensminger. "What you're saying here is: 'Your relationship matters, and I'm proving it by taking the time to write this note.' In business relationships, time taken is worth everything. If there's a bell curve of emotion to a personal note, this is the top of it."

That key step is often missing in personal notes, adds Ensminger, so doing it well will set you apart from the crowd. As you write, take into consideration how close your boss is to the recipient and what's coming up next in the relationship.

Noteworthy etiquette: Say more than thanks

Managers are always looking for ways to tell the team "thanks." Appreciation is one of the few, affordable ways to retain and motivate everyone. Follow these tips to put your sentiments down on paper:

1. Use a handwritten personal note, whenever possible.
2. Avoid templates, and make each letter a unique expression of what you specifically appreciate.
3. Craft the right message with these effective "building block" phrases from *How to Write It*, by Sandra E. Lamb:

- ☐ Must express my appreciation
- ☐ So grateful for your contribution
- ☐ Unequaled in effort
- ☐ Done with such expertise
- ☐ An exemplary performance
- ☐ Offer my sincere appreciation
- ☐ I was so impressed by
- ☐ Your performance is noteworthy
- ☐ Set an outstanding example for
- ☐ Demonstrate such dedication

Example: "We feel fortunate to have spent so much time with you. We look forward to seeing you again at the XYC convention next year."

4. Restate why you're writing. *Example:* "Again, thanks for your visit."

5. Offer your regards. For business notes, "Sincerely" is the standard.

Bottom line: It takes practice, but the payoff is huge. Ensminger says, "People still get a jolt when they look in their mailbox, and there's something other than a form letter in there."

Business Etiquette Tips #11

Business dining etiquette: 5 rules

Whether you're lunching with peers at a convention or meeting with a vendor, business dining etiquette can keep you from marring your image with a faux pas.

Here are five etiquette rules for business meals, according to Robin Jay, author of *The Art of the Business Lunch: Building Relationships Between 12 and 2.*

1. Never, *ever* talk with your mouth full. Instead, take small bites so you can quickly swallow if somebody asks you a question, Jay says.

2. Come prepared with a few casual, non-business topics in mind. It helps you avoid awkward silences. People enjoy giving their thoughts on subjects like travel, sports and movies.

3. Always be kind to the waitstaff, no matter what happens. Anyone who is nice to you but nasty to the server is not a nice person.

4. Know your lunch partner's business. It's especially key when your tablemate is someone you'd like to impress, but the rule holds true regardless. The fewer times you have to say (or think), "I didn't know that!" the more impressed the other party will be. *How to steal this idea:* Take a few minutes to do a Google search before you leave for lunch.

5. Put some thought into choosing the right restaurant. Too casual or inexpensive and the person may not feel valued. Too expensive and they may perceive you as wasteful. When in doubt, suggest that the other person pick the place.

►**Bonus tip:** If you've ever wondered when (and how much) to tip an airport skycap, cab driver, pizza delivery person or furniture delivery person, go online to The Original Tipping Page. The site offers advice on various tipping moments, plus a tip-rate chart for your wallet.

Business Etiquette Tips #12

Office decorations: Balance personal & professional image

If reaching for reference materials requires moving a handful of beads you brought back from Mardi Gras, your personality may be overpowering your professional image.

Personalizing our office space is tempting because we spend more awake hours there than anywhere else. But strike a balance by answering these questions about your cubicle décor:

1. Who will see it? A receptionist in an office with many VIP visitors obviously enjoys less freedom of expression than someone whose workplace hosts few

outsiders. In wide-open spaces, search for private spots to display meaningful mementos. *Example*: Post an inspirational quote on your keyboard tray.

2. What does it say about you? Great choices for office decorations tell visitors something about you that might spark a conversation. A photo of you crossing the finish line in a marathon might inspire others as well as yourself. But a wall of blue ribbons hints at either boasting or insecurity. If doodads and figurines obscure your computer and desktop, don't be surprised when others question your commitment to work. And while live plants add a splash of color, a dead one screams "Neglect!"

3. Is it distracting? Although cubicle walls may block your items from view, they still may disturb others. Avoid screensavers and toys with sound effects, or fresh flowers each week if your neighbor suffers from allergies. Judge whether a candy dish on your desk offers hospitality, unwelcome temptation or an invitation to distractions from work.

4. Does it go overboard? Show off a few prize pieces from your collection, not hundreds of frogs. *The test*: If it's impossible to take a professional-looking photo of you from any angle in your workstation, you've surrounded yourself with too many items unrelated to work.

Just like professional dress in the workplace, seek cues from the corporate culture, your manager and others you respect about what's appropriate in your workplace.

Business email etiquette: 3 quick tips

1. Send the right message with your email sign-off by "mirroring," says Judith Kallos, creator of **www.NetManners.com**, a site dedicated to online etiquette.

"In business, you want to maintain the highest level of formality until the other person indicates otherwise," she says. "Let the other side set the level of familiarity."

2. Unless your organization specifies otherwise, you need not respond to email messages if your name is in the "cc" field, says productivity expert Laura Stack. And don't reply simply to confirm receiving a message, since most email systems allow the sender to request a receipt if needed. Reply only if you can't handle an assignment in the time frame expected.

3. Find out whether you've been rude via email at **www.NetManners.com**. You'll find business email basics, Netiquette forums for discussion, even a "Netiquette Questions?" section that allows you to pose your own questions and receive personal advice. Brush up on proper manners and be part of the trend toward more courteous exchanges online.

Business Etiquette Tips #13

Party etiquette: Special occasions with co-workers

Office party etiquette is simple: Don't do anything that you don't want the entire company to be talking about for several years to come. Contrary to popular myth, an office party is not the place to wear a lampshade on your head. Keep your dignity, and respect the dignity of others.

For co-worker special occasions, follow these gift-giving tips:

►Birthdays

A common practice is for the birthday person's co-workers to provide a cake and a small in-office party. Flowers from the boss are also a nice touch. A birthday card for a co-worker celebrating the special day is always considerate, but birthday gifts are never required in business. An executive may choose to give small gifts to special staffers, such as a long-time assistant. There's no need for employees to give gifts to the boss, unless the working relationship has extended over many years or the employee is socially close to the boss and his or her family.

►Weddings

Although all wedding invitations require a written acceptance or regret, you are *not* required to attend the weddings of all employees who send invitations. If you receive an invitation from someone who is not in your department or is not your superior, feel free to send your regrets. A gift is not required for these events, but a note congratulating the newlyweds is a thoughtful touch.

If invited, executives should attend the weddings of their staff and senior-level managers. If they can't attend, executives should still send a gift. Among peers, wedding invitations are common and should be treated as social events. Except when invited to the wedding, employees are not required to give their bosses wedding presents. In any event, a wedding gift from a subordinate to a boss need not be lavish.

►Baby showers

If you are invited to a baby shower, you should follow the personal rules you have established for contributing to office celebrations. It is not essential that you attend the shower or give a gift to every company employee who has a baby. However, executives should give shower gifts to their close colleagues, assistants and immediate staff. You may choose to send others a card or a personal note.

▶Retirement parties

When an executive retires, a party is standard protocol. At a retirement party, the company should give the person a gift based on his or her length of service and seniority.

The retiree's staff and immediate boss may wish to give him or her a present in addition to the official corporate gift. The best gifts are small presents that express how much the retiree will be missed at the office.

Business Etiquette Tips #14

Etiquette questions: Expert advice from Letitia Baldrige

Letitia Baldrige has been called "America's foremost authority on manners." She has written dozens of books on manners, entertaining and design. In a column in Business Management Daily's Administrative Professional Today, she answered readers' questions on workplace etiquette and protocol. Here's a sampling.

►What's the proper way to introduce business associates?

Q. I occasionally escort business visitors around our office and introduce them to our executives. I'm never sure whose name and title to say first—the visitor's or the executive's. What's the proper protocol?

Letitia: Always start with the more important person's name. For example, if you're showing your CEO's new executive assistant, Susan Flynn, around the office, you'd say: "Jim, I'd like to present George's new executive assistant, Susan Flynn. She has just transferred here from our offices in Pasadena. Susan, this is Jim Farnsworth, our corporate counsel, and you'll be seeing a lot of him."

If you're introducing someone important in your company to a more junior visitor, you would come out first with your senior executive's name: "Mr. Anderson, I would like to introduce Camilla Bianco to you. She is a new vice president for creative services. Camilla, this is Jonathan Anderson, president of the Blue Division."

If you get confused, relax: The important thing is to say the names of both people clearly. They'll take it from there.

►Office wedding protocol: Must I invite everybody?

Q. I'm planning my wedding and trying to keep the guest list to a manageable number. But I feel compelled to invite people from work. How can I invite some people but not others without hurting anyone's feelings? And I know I should invite my boss, but should I invite my boss's boss?

Letitia: Tell everyone well before your big day that you're having a small wedding, so no one will feel left out. Invite only very essential friends from the office, including your boss (but not your boss's boss!), his or her spouse, and perhaps your two closest friends. Your family members should take priority over co-workers, as should close friends from other parts of your life.

If you're lucky enough to have a group of supportive, close friends at work, ask them to give a simple, no-frills cocktail party in honor of your wedding a couple of weeks before it takes place. Then you can invite everyone from work, and they will feel caught up in the excitement of the wedding and look upon this event as if it were a reception.

►Business dining etiquette: Who pays for lunch?

Q. When a group of co-workers takes a colleague to lunch for a special occasion, such as a birthday, how should we divide the tab?

Letitia: I presume most people want these special occasion meals for office colleagues to be amusing, memorable and pleasant from every aspect. The big obstacle to success is when the bill is presented. There is fumbling and mumbling, indecision and objections. The conversation at bill-paying time might go like this:

"I had only a house salad, so I should pay less."

"Is $10 enough?"

"I had a really expensive dessert. Should I pay more?"

"I didn't bring much cash" ... and on and on and on.

The way to solve this is always to split it according to how many people are in attendance. The total should include the cost of the guest of honor's meal, plus the gratuities for everyone. If you feel you were cheated by spending less this time, it will probably even out the next time, or the time after that, when you will be spending more than the others. It almost always comes out in the end.

To split a large check 10 ways is easy. To calculate each person's charges, butter pad by butter pad, spoils the party.

►Does it matter who opens a door nowadays?

Q. What's the proper procedure when a group of people are approaching a closed door? If I (a female) arrive first, I usually open the door and hold it for others, but I notice that makes some people (particularly older males) uncomfortable.

Letitia: We spend too much time worrying about who should go through the door first. The important thing is just to get through it!

If you hold the door for a man who is clearly embarrassed by it, rest easy in the knowledge that you won't see many more men like him. He's obviously of the "outgoing generation" of businessmen whose touches of chivalry are no longer the norm. Just be thankful you once knew a "real gentleman."

Of course, you can avoid this problem by simply not being the first person at the door. Let someone else be the first.

If you find yourself stuck with holding the door for what seems like an interminably long line of people, step away from the door and let someone else cope with it. You shouldn't be left holding the door for the whole world.

►What's the protocol on presenting my business card?

Q. When's the proper time to present my business card at a meeting?

Letitia: When you present your business card to someone, you're handing *yourself* to that person, so it pays to remember these business card etiquette tips:

To gracefully exchange cards while talking to people before a meeting, hand the other person your card, saying: "I hope you won't mind if I give you my card, and I would appreciate having yours, also. I would enjoy discussing some things further with you, and now is obviously not the time."

Read the other person's card before you put it away, then follow up with a call within a day or two. Never present your card when the recipient is talking to someone else, hurrying to an appointment, talking on the telephone, or eating and drinking.

►Cubicle etiquette no-no: A noisy co-worker is driving me crazy

Q. I work in a wing of office suites with two cubicles for another assistant and me. My neighbor almost constantly makes noise, tapping pens, making "squeal" noises ("Aaahhh," "Hmmmm," etc.) while she's reading or whatever, humming, clearing her throat over and over… it goes on and on.

It's driving me crazy listening to this all day. She has already been addressed about the noise level, and it has improved, but I still have to listen to it all day. Do you have any suggestions, other than wearing headphones or earplugs?

Letitia: Have a confidential talk about this problem with your supervisor or someone in human resources. Don't be dramatic about it. Just say that you're supersensitive to noise, and that your cubicle colleague is driving you nuts.

Mention four noisy things she does all the time, and then lay off describing her so negatively. Throw in a compliment or two about how valuable she is in her work. Add that you've tried not to let her noisiness get to you, but it has affected your work. Then, ask meekly: "Is it possible that either she or I could be moved away from the other?" Then, follow with "I know I must sound unreasonable to you, but I'm proud of my work and I don't wish to be working less than effectively because of this problem."

If the boss or human resources person recognizes how valuable your work is, he or she will honor your request ... and your noisy co-worker never has to be any the wiser.

Did you find this report useful? Download more ***Free Reports***, at http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/free-reports.

10 Secrets to an Effective Performance Review: Examples and tips on employee performance evaluation, writing employee reviews, a sample performance review and employee evaluation forms.

Learn how to conduct positive, valuable assessments that lead to maximizing staff performance and helping your employees achieve their professional goals and your organization's objectives. Use Business Management Daily's practical advice for writing employee reviews and conducting performance evaluations. Don't forget to reference our sample performance review and employee evaluation forms for your own staff assessments.

http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/EffectivePerformanceReview

Workplace Conflict Resolution: 10 ways to manage employee conflict and improve office communication, the workplace environment and team productivity

Learn how to manage employee conflict and improve office communication and team productivity. Disputes between employees are inevitable…left unresolved, they can disrupt your department's productivity, sap morale and even cause some good employees to quit. Learn 6 steps for managing "difficult" employees, what to do when employees resent another's promotion, learn when and how to step in to referee disputes, and much more.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/WorkplaceConflictResolution

Maternity Leave Laws: 7 guidelines on pregnancy discrimination law, state maternity regulations, pregnancy disability leave, plus a sample maternity leave policy

It's important to know what you must do—and what you can't do (or say)—under federal anti-discrimination and maternity leave laws. And it's vital to double-check state maternity leave statutes, which may provide more liberal leave benefits. While no federal law requires you to provide paid maternity leave, most employers must comply with the pregnancy discrimination law and FMLA maternity leave regulations. Here are 7 guidelines on how best to comply with maternity leave laws, plus a sample leave policy you can adapt for your own organization.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/MaternityLeaveLaws

The Office Organizer: 10 tips on file organizing, clutter control, document management, business shredding policy, record retention guidelines and how to organize office emails

Learn how to keep your office operations running smoothly—and ward off chaos and legal trouble—with practical document management techniques for administrative professionals, office managers and HR professionals.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/OfficeOrganizer

Best-Practices Leadership: Team management tips and fun team-building activities to boost team performance, collaboration and morale

Learn new team management tips and team-building activities to boost team performance, collaboration and morale. Take our leadership assessment exercise to gauge your own performance as a team manager. See how businesses of all sizes are getting creative with team-building icebreakers and activities. Fight off team complacency with 5 strategies for making team-building exercises part of your daily routine.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/LeadershipTeamManagement

Employment Background Check Guidelines: Complying with the Fair Credit Reporting Act, conducting credit background checks and running a criminal check to avoid negligent-hiring lawsuits

Employment Background Check Guidelines shows employers and HR professionals how to properly conduct reference/background checks, select third-party background firms and why screening candidates online on social networking sites is legally risky business. Don't allow your organization to risk being held liable for "negligent hiring" or "failure to warn" should an employee turn violent on the job.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/BackgroundCheckGuidelines

Salary Negotiating 101: 7 secrets to boosting career earnings, negotiating a raise and striking the best deal in a job offer negotiation

Think you deserve a raise, but are afraid to walk into your boss's office and ask? Don't let ineffective negotiation skills hold you back. Employees at all levels can boost their career earnings by following the rules on negotiating a raise, hashing out the best pay package in a job offer negotiation and knowing their market value.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/SalaryNegotiating101

© 2016 Business Management Daily

FMLA Intermittent Leave: 5 guidelines to managing intermittent leave and curbing leave abuse under the new FMLA regulations

One of the biggest employer complaints about the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is the productivity problems caused by employees' use—and abuse—of FMLA intermittent leave. The problem: Employees with chronic health problems often take FMLA leave in short increments of an hour or less. The Department of Labor took steps to help minimize workplace disruptions due to unscheduled FMLA absences by saying that, in most cases, employees who take FMLA intermittent leave must follow their employers' call-in procedures for reporting an absence. Amend your organization's policies, update your employee handbook and revisit how you track FMLA intermittent leave with these 5 guidelines.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/FMLAIntermittentLeave

Overtime Labor Law: 6 compliance tips to avoid overtime lawsuits, wage-and-hour Labor audits and FLSA exemption mistakes

Employers, beware: The Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division reports that wage-and-hour labor litigation continues to increase exponentially. Federal class actions brought under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) outnumber all other types of private class actions in employment-related cases. Use this special report, Overtime Labor Law: 6 compliance tips to avoid overtime lawsuits, wage-and-hour Labor audits and FLSA exemption mistakes, to review your overtime pay policy and double-check your FLSA exempt employees' status. Expecting a visit from a DOL auditor? Get prepared by taking the self-audit at the end of this report.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/OvertimeLaborLaw

Office Communication Toolkit: 10 tips for managers on active listening skills, motivating employees, workplace productivity, employee retention strategies and change management techniques

A manager's job is 100 times easier and more rewarding when his or her employees are performing like a well-oiled machine. But when that machine runs slowly or breaks down entirely, a manager's job becomes exponentially harder. The best managers are the best listeners … listen to our 10 tips and maximize office communication skills and bolster workplace productivity.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/OfficeCommunicationToolkit

© 2016 Business Management Daily

Workplace Violence Prevention Toolkit: HR advice, guidelines and policies to keep your workplace safe

Unfortunately, in the wake of a spate of workplace shootings, HR professionals and managers nationwide must consider the horrific possibility of violence erupting at their own facilities and events. To help employers prevent tragedy, this toolkit offers business advice, guidelines and policies aimed at keeping workplaces safe from employee violence. Learn prevention strategies, tips on identifying potentially violent workers, managerial advice on maintaining a safe workplace. It includes two sample anti-violence policies, adaptable for use in any company, plus checklists to use in case violence erupts.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/WorkplaceViolencePrevention

14 Tips on Business Etiquette: Setting a professional tone with co-workers, clients and customers

For organizations and employees alike, recognizing the critical link between business protocol and profit is key to your success. Learn how to confidently interact with colleagues in ways that make you and your whole organization shine. Discover best practices on making proper introductions; cubicle etiquette; "casual dress" rules; handshake protocol; guest etiquette; workplace behavior faux pas; business dining etiquette, office wedding invites and other co-worker special occasions; business letter and email protocol—and even how your office decorations may affect your professional image.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/BusinessEtiquette101

12 Ways to Optimize Your Employee Benefits Program: Low-cost employee incentives, recognition programs and employee rewards

If you've had to cut pay and staff and now expect more from those who remain, it's vital to revamp your employee recognition and rewards program. Employers can double their rewards and recognition efforts in innovative, cost-efficient ways with employee-of-the-month awards, employee incentive pay, employee appreciation luncheons, more time off, shopping sprees, wellness incentive contests, plus employee rewards customized to motivate Millennials, Gen Xers, Baby Boomers and the Matures. Now is the time to get clever with your employee recognition programs. This report shows you how with great ideas offered up from our Business Management Daily readers.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/EmployeeBenefitsProgram

The Bully Boss Strikes Again! How to deal with bosses who make crazy requests

And you thought your boss was unreasonable? Bet he never asked you to perform oral surgery or fill in for the bomb squad. Talk about "other duties as assigned!" Even if your direct supervisor swamps you with petty tasks and doesn't appreciate all you do, you can always "manage up" to make sure the boss's boss knows your worth. This report includes practical advice on how to manage a toxic boss along with dozens of outrageous stories about bully bosses.

http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/BullyBoss

© 2016 Business Management Daily

Microsoft Email: Outlook Tips & Training: How to improve productivity by effectively employing under-used features already at your fingertips

We all use Outlook. It's easy. You can answer email, keep your appointments and your calendar, and save your files in various folders. But are you using it to manage your entire workflow? You can. Melissa P. Esquibel combines her 25+ years of experience in information technology with a background in training, technical writing and business risk analysis to move beyond email and help you understand Outlook's amazing workflow benefits. You'll discover how to get more out of Outlook than you ever dreamed possible with this hands-on road map to Outlook that can send your productivity skyrocketing.

http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/MicrosoftEmailOutlook

17 Team Building Ideas: The team building kit for managers with team building exercises, activities and games to build winning teams today!

With employees still reeling from workplace budget cuts, now's a great time for new team building ideas. No, you don't need an expensive round of paintball to gain the benefits of team building exercises, but you do need to squeeze the most out of them. This report provides teamwork examples, exercises and tips for leading winning teams. Go from being a manager who oversees people to a leader who molds them into winning teams with these 17 team building ideas.

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/TeamBuildingIdeas

10 Time Management Tips: A how-to guide on efficiently managing your time through effective delegating, calendar management and using productivity tools

In this era of downsizing and the quest for efficiency, businesses of all sizes are asking employees to take on extra tasks to boost productivity. Has your job turned into one of those "stretch jobs"? If so, you may be looking for a better way to get more done in less time, reduce stress and stop burning the midnight oil. Read about calendar management, keyboard shortcuts, running productive meetings, setting up agenda templates and using tech tools for project management with these 10 time management tips. Learn to prioritize your tasks and stop working in a crisis mode all the time

www.businessmanagementdaily.com/TimeManagementTips

.

© 2016 Business Management Daily

About Business Management Daily

Business Management Daily is a free news website of the Capitol Information Group, providing sound news and advice since 1937.

At Business Management Daily, we're driven to help organizations and individuals succeed. That's why we deliver plain-English, actionable advice to high-performers at over 80,000 companies of all sizes across hundreds of different industries.

Our Free Email Newsletters, Print Newsletters, Free Special Reports and Webinars, Podcasts, Audio Conferences & CDs help provide business professionals with the news, skills and strategies they need to grow their business, avoid legal pitfalls and advance their careers.

Our editorial team includes experienced managers, leaders, HR professionals, lawyers, administrative professionals, CPAs, strategists and business owners from a wide variety of industries.

A Promise to Our Readers

To help you advance your career or business, we will:

- Provide expert advice that is accurate, intelligent and timely
- Save you time by making that advice concise, actionable and available in your preferred format
- Guarantee 100% satisfaction with customer service that exceeds your expectations

Visit us at: http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/

© 2016 Business Management Daily