

2010

Civility Experts, In Good Company
A Canadian Business Etiquette Serie



**POWER SUIT,
POWER LUNCH,
POWER
FAILURE**

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INTRODUCTION

Some regard etiquette as an old-fashioned word. It conjures up memories of “the good old days” when everyone knew their place and acted accordingly. Somehow the perception that etiquette is only relevant for fancy situations, such as formal dinners and wedding receptions, or that it is all about arcane etiquette deals with much more than which fork to use for the salad course or where to put your napkin. In the ever-changing modern office environment, basic etiquette can teach you how to deal with almost any situation that comes your way. That’s because etiquette is really about respect and leadership-taking the time to put people at ease, evaluating the needs and intentions of others and thinking before you act. In other words, good manners are critical for advancing your career in business.

The value of etiquette is far reaching: it helps build better relationships, it helps us present ourselves positively, it aids in communication and it effectuates confidence in social situations. This is particularly true in the modern office environment where gender balances have shifted, new technology has created the need for new protocol and “casual Fridays” leave us wondering how it is we’re supposed to dress. Certainly everyone can remember a time when they floundered with the guidelines for behavior in a particularly memorable business situation. Remember your first job interview? First business luncheon? Or the first time you were invited to the boss’s house for drinks? In each awkward situation uncertainty about the “rules” left us insecure and vulnerable.

This book is a clear and concise guide to basic business etiquette: how to make a good first impression, how and when to make introductions, how to deal with bosses, co-workers and employees, gender roles in business, basic tips on technology, and how to dress in any business situation. All of the information in the book relates to the basic rule of etiquette, which is putting others at ease. Etiquette is simply a way to be aware of others, and to treat them as we would like to be treated. When clients or customers feel comfortable with us, they are more likely to retain our services. When a boss and co-workers find us easy to work with, he or she is more likely to overlook our shortcomings.

Finally, when a boss is able to put employees at ease, those employees are usually more motivated, more likely to remain at their jobs, and more likely to work hard for their boss and the company.

In writing this book, we- the experts at CivilityExperts.com wanted to put the reader at ease. For this reason, we've included not only clear and easy-to-find information, but some fun "bad examples" too. Characters like Ivana Talkalot and Mr. Monotonous pop up on occasion to remind us that no matter how concerned with self-improvement we are, there is always someone worse off!

Finally, our goal is to bring civility back in style and make our workplaces better places to be. We at CivilityExperts.com have been encouraged by the positive press and interest from the public in general in our business etiquette and civility workshops. We offer the In Good Company Series for business people because we firmly believe that good manners are good business.

Are you an offender?

About 96 percent of Americans have experienced incivility at work. Here's what it looks like:

- Taking credit for others' efforts
- Passing blame for your own mistakes
- Checking e-mail or texting during a meeting
- Sending bad news through e-mail so you don't have to face the recipient
- Talking down to others
- Not listening
- Spreading rumors about colleagues
- Setting others up for failure
- Not saying "please" or "thank you"
- Showing up late or leaving a meeting early with no explanation
- Belittling others' efforts
- Leaving snippy voice mail or e-mail messages
- Forwarding others' e-mail to make them look bad
- Making demeaning or derogatory remarks to someone
- Withholding information
- Failing to return phone calls or respond to e-mail
- Leaving a mess for others to clean up
- Consistently grabbing easy tasks while leaving difficult ones for others
- Shutting someone out of a network or team
- Paying little attention or showing little interest in others' opinions

Chapter 1

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Will the real CEO please step forward!

The meter is running. You only have so much time to make a first impression and it goes without saying that you're after a good one. We believe you only have a short time -anywhere from 15 to 60 seconds- to make a good first impression. Therefore, time is of the essence. A polished professional is well aware of the risks he or she takes when the impact of a first impression is ignored.

How many times do you think someone has made an incorrect assessment of you based on a first impression? Even those of us who consider ourselves seasoned executives need to be aware of what kind of signals we're sending. It's pretty easy to settle into bad habits. Been losing clients lately? Wondering why your social life seems to have fallen off? Passed over twice for that promotion? Maybe you need to practice the tips and exercises in this chapter or the appendix to increase the chances of making a positive first impression. Do you know how you are presenting yourself?

Fortunately, we do have some control over first impressions. There are guidelines for behaviors, which help define your presence as polished and professional even before you have an opportunity to speak. Take the self-assessment quiz and see how much you know.

QUIZ: SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. When I am wearing a nametag it should be on my right lapel.

True or False

2. If a man and woman meet, the man should always take the initiative and extend his hand to make an introduction.

True or False

3. At a formal event, a man need not wear a tie.

True or False

4. A good handshaker maintains hand contact until an introduction is complete.

True or False

5. When you meet someone new you should always stand and extend your hand.

True or False

6. Gossip is a typical and harmless activity in the workplace.

True or False

7. When introducing your boss to your spouse, you say your spouse's name first.

True or False

8. It's easy to remember someone's name if you associate their name with an unrelated object.

True or False

9. You have between 30 and 120 seconds to make a first impression.

True or False

10. Even in business men should hold the door or pull out chairs for women.

True or False

(See answers at the end of this chapter.)

A: Pleased to meet you!

Over the course of an ordinary day in the etiquette business, we meet an average of twenty new people. How many people do you meet? If you're in customer service or on the front line in your work, you may meet five times that number. If we could survey everyone you came in contact with, what do you think they would say about their first impression of you?

There are five basic and mandatory rules of etiquette for meeting someone new:

- Make eye contact
- Stand up, if you cannot stand, move your body towards them
- Smile
- Extend your hand to shake theirs
- Say hello

Making memorable first impressions is so simple. So simple, in fact, that people undervalue its importance. If you consistently do all five of the above, when you meet someone, you're at least halfway towards making a good first impression.

B: Don't roll your eyes

In most North American workplaces, an ability to make timely and direct eye contact just may be the secret to your success. When you come into a room hold your head up. Scan the room briefly to acquaint yourself with the surroundings, and then adjust your behavior accordingly. Look people right in the eye. The only exception to this rule pertains to dealings with people from specific cultures where direct eye contact is not appropriate.

It is considered very bad manners to break eye contact during a conversation, especially if it is obvious that you are not interested in the conversation and are prowling for prospects amid pretending to show interest to someone else.

If you are approached by people you are not interested in meeting, be polite, but be direct. Make eye contact, shake their hand and say hello. There is no reason you cannot politely say, "Excuse me, I hope we can speak again later," or "if you'll excuse me, there's something I have to attend to." Smile and make your exit.

People recognize when they are being treated insincerely, so be sincere in greeting them but don't pretend you're interested in having a conversation and do show them the courtesy of not wasting their time either.

Throughout introductions, maintain eye contact but try not to stare. One hint is to shift your view to the person's eyebrows after a few seconds so that he or she knows that he or she has your attention but there is not an uncomfortable glaring into a person's eyeballs. We often tell young children to keep direct eye contact long enough to know a person's eye color. Whatever you do, don't let your attention or your eyes wander when engaged in an introduction.

C. Shaken not stirred!

Be safe! The handshake is the only universally accepted greeting in North America.

As you travel through different countries, acceptable greetings might change. In some places, hugs and kisses are not only suitable but also expected. In typical North American environments, business colleagues may feel quite uncomfortable when others are hugging. How often have you seen this situation or been on the outside looking in? Clients or associates wonder where to look or if any unsightly group hug will be initiated. Patting and inappropriate touching can also be misconstrued as harassment in some work situations. Better to stick with the ever safe and appropriate handshake. In North America people will judge you based on your handshake and yes, you should always shake hands when you meet and greet as well as when you leave a situation or end an interaction.

Recommended Reading:

CHOOSE CIVILITY by Dr. P. Forni and
SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE by Daniel
Goleman

Maybe you've had experience with some of the following handshakes:

THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS: This is the infamous limp hand shake. Could be extended by a man or a woman. This person extends his/her fingers instead of his/her hand and seems to be expecting the kiss that will never come. Kind of makes you feel sorry for the poor little thing. No secret who's in charge here.

THE BONE CRUSHER: There's one in every crowd. The greeting turns into a competition, or the threat of never being able to use the crushed hand again. Either the bone crusher just doesn't know his/her own strength or maybe the plan is to try to intimidate you right off the start by causing bodily injury.

THE JUGGLER: This is a very annoying hand shake indeed. This person ends up extending his/her plate of chicken fingers or his/her elbow for you to shake because the other hand is holding their cell phone, or cigarettes, or knapsack and they truly don't understand the value of a handshake. By the time the handshake is finished you are probably holding the majority of this person's items, wondering where to put them.

These handshakes leave us with an unpleasant first impression, which can be avoided by following simple guidelines for a great handshake.



Guidelines for a great handshake

A great handshake tells others you are confident and at ease in your surroundings. It makes others feel welcome and comfortable in your presence. Handshakes are the most commonly accepted (and appropriate) physical contact for men and women in the North American business arena. A good Handshake consists of the following:

- Keep the fingers together with the thumb up and open
- Slide your hand into the other person's so that each person's web of skin between thumb and forefingers touches the other's
- Squeeze firmly and pump two or three times from the elbow
- Release after the shake, even if the introduction continues
- Maintain good eye contact with the other person

You should extend your hand when meeting someone for the first time, when greeting someone you haven't seen in awhile, when being introduced, when saying good-bye to someone, and whenever anyone else extends his or her hand.

Also, note that extending your arm for the purpose of shaking hands can often be just the excuse you need to interject into an ongoing conversation and introduce yourself to that "important" person you've been waiting to meet. Obviously you should not barge in and introduce yourself, but, often eye contact and an extended hand are enough to solicit a pause in a conversation. Make sure you've prepared a greeting so that you can keep someone's attention once you've captured it. This is the key to "schmoozing." Exhibiting a sense of humor and doing your research go a long way in maintaining conversation with someone new. Usually compliments come into play and a great conversationalist understands that people love to talk about themselves so they will generally maneuver the conversation so that they quickly become the listener.

In the next chapter we'll discuss tips for remembering someone's name after you've successfully completed the handshake.

D. The art of schmoozing

Time constraints and fierce competition in the modern business world dictate that we are often called upon to make business contacts in casual, “party,” or social situations. This is called “schmoozing.” On the one hand, mixing business and social activities makes sense. Four or five people you need to meet are in the same room at the same time and it’s a perfect opportunity to chat with them, make a first impression, and get a sense of who they are. On the other hand, the rules in these situations can be extremely complicated. How are you expected to behave in this situation and how do you make the most of it while maintaining your professional reputation?

First of all, etiquette dictates that you’re far better off making a few solid and memorable contacts than you are fluttering around the room shuffling business cards like a blackjack dealer. It may seem a little contradictory, but sincerity is the key to good schmoozing. Do your homework so that you’re confident, make eye contact, smile and be direct whenever possible. Call the event host/hostess to find out who will be attending the function. Map out what you hope to accomplish and prioritize those you need to meet most at the function. Keep in mind the purpose of the event, however, and be tactful. For example, everyone knows that fundraising events, while primarily about raising funds for specific cause, also serve a networking purpose.

But there is an appropriate time and place for everything. You would never approach the doctor who is presenting a keynote address on children with disabilities at a fundraising event and try to sell him a new, unrelated pharmaceutical your company is representing. However, you should certainly introduce yourself, comment on their speech, ask for their card and follow up with a sales call at a later date. Of course, if the doctor initiates a conversation about you or your company, by all means take advantage, but keep it brief and make arrangements to discuss it further at a more appropriate time and place. Good manners also dictate that you should not attend a fundraising function with the intention of schmoozing if you have not made some donation, whether time or money, to the specific cause.

Once you have scanned the room and targeted some key contacts, make your way over to them. Don't beeline and look over-eager but watch for a moment when the "targets" are alone or not seemingly engaged in deep conversation. Be polite to those you pass on the way, shake a few hands, smile and make eye contact but do not get caught up in a conversation. If you find yourself "trapped" by someone in whom you are not interested, be respectful, say something kind-"Enjoy your evening" or "do try the shrimp canapé"-to close the communication and excuse yourself.

If it appears that the person you are dying to speak with will be completely occupied for most of the evening and the host does not have an opportunity to introduce you, make your way over to the person anyway. Wait for a break in the conversation and while extending your hand say something like, "Excuse me for interrupting, Mr. Guest of Honor, my name is Miss Have to Meet You, I know you have many people to talk to tonight so I'd like to leave you with my card and ask that I may call you next week so we can talk more."

E. Non-verbal communication style: Are you the master of your own domain?

In our workplace seminars we teach our students that fifty percent of all communication is nonverbal and of the fifty percent which is verbal, more than half is quickly forgotten or misunderstood. This indicates that if your body language does not echo what's coming out of your mouth, whoever is listening is probably not getting the message you are trying to communicate. One important aspect of nonverbal communication is posture and body language. Are you in control of all your actions? If you are truly the master of your domain, you are aware of all the signals you send at any given time. There is tremendous power in understanding this. Not only can you better control the messages you send, but also you can properly read signals sent by others. Here are some people you may recognize from previous first impressions.

MISS DEMEANOR: This woman has A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E written all over her. From the stern expression on her face to her serious gestures and stiff posture, it's obvious to all she would rather be somewhere else. Don't even approach her unless you brought a sweater because she'll be venting and it will be chilly

SPARKY: This guy can hardly contain himself. Just like an excitable pooch, he's straining to break free. Either one knee shakes or one hand clicks the pen incessantly. He runs his hand through his hair constantly and the rapid "yeah, yeah, yeah" starts to sound like panting. His eyes are darting all over the room and if he's not set loose soon you might see something running down his pant leg.

MR. CASUAL: Wow! What confidence. Not a care in the world. This character acts like he's got it all in the palm of his hand. You can tell he contemplated leaving the suit jacket in the car. He's already helped himself to a handful of mints, he slouches comfortably in the boss's chair, and he loosens his tie and maybe one too many shirt buttons. He's not at all shy about scratching if he has to and if the meeting/ reception/interview go into overtime, he just might take off his shoes. Yikes!

BETTY BOOPSTER: Oooooooooo, I'm so excited to see you because I'm so gorgeous I can't stand myself...this courtesy-free cupcake flutters around the room brushing up against everyone she meets. You'll have to help her with her chair because one hand's busy twirling her hair while the other adjusts her skirt. What kind of business did she say she was in?

How do you master body language? How can you learn how to send signals and how to read them? One way is to watch yourself in the mirror. Practice doing a speech or presentation and watch what you do with your hands, feet or eyebrows. Ask a friend or family member if there are specific habits or gestures they've noticed you do when you are engaged in conversation or when you don't know you're being watched. Most of us have some signature gesture or habit that others notice that we may not even be aware of. Some typical gestures and their interpretations are:

- **Crossed arms:** Arms crossed over the chest sometimes suggest that a person is not open to the subject or ideas that are being discussed. It might be interpreted that they are closed-minded or angry.
- **Furrowed brow:** Some people furrow their brow when they are deep in thought or reading or straining to see something. Often people misconstrue this gesture to mean that the person with the furrowed brow is angry, worried or confused.
- **Yawning or stretching:** This gesture typically means that someone is tired or physically uncomfortable but you can often be interpreted as boredom, disinterest or impatience.
- **Foot or finger tapping:** Some people have the habit of unconsciously tapping their foot, fingers or pencil. Some even shake their knee so that their chair or table moves. Usually these are energetic people who can't help but move constantly, but people in their company find the habit unnerving or distracting and often think these people are uninterested in the topic at hand.
- **Fidgeting or playing with hair, chin or neck:** People usually do these things when they are nervous and their lack of self-confidence will be obvious to everyone in the room.

- **Nodding:** In lieu of saying yes or no, some people nod rapidly or persistently. Often nodding is merely a way of letting others know that they have your attention. To the listener, however, repetitive nodding can be interpreted as dismissive, or even worse, may be taken as agreement or nonverbal consent.

Understanding your personal habits and nonverbal communication gestures will enable you to practice controlling them. This control will benefit you greatly in situations where the balance of power is vital.

Now that you know the value of first impressions, take a moment to do the following quiz.

Rank the following in order of importance when you are making a judgment based on a first meeting. Then rank your own skills in each area in order of your strongest attribute to weakest.

Strongest	I	Weakest
	Clean & neat appearance	
	Handshake	
	Friendly smile	
	Posture	
	Appropriate clothing	
	Expressions	
	Speech styles	
	General mood	
	Smell/fragrance	
	Tact/self-control	
	Listening skills	
	Knowledge/preparation	
	Sense of humor	
	Consideration/politeness	
	Respect for time	
	Tone of voice	

(See answers at the end of this chapter.)

G. Chapter summary

Points to remember: Good manners are an investment in yourself and in your company. You have a maximum of 60 seconds to make a first impression so make it count. When you meet someone, stand, make eye contact, shake his or her hand, smile and say hello. Be mindful of the message you send through your body language. Most communication is seen and not heard.

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