Professionalism, Workplace Etiquette & Personal Branding

WHAT IS PROFESSIONALISM?

Professionalism is presenting yourself in a controlled and appropriate manner to develop and maintain a positive public image.

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

How can you create a positive impression?

- Always be prompt, actually 5 to 10 minutes early is best.
- Dress appropriately.
- Don't chew gum.
- Be positive and professional at all times.
- Respect others around you, including their time.
- Show "can do" attitude and enthusiasm.
- Work hard and take initiative.
- Communicate well, both written and orally.
- Use active listening skills.
- Follow up quickly on action items.
- Ask questions, show curiosity and genuine interest.

WHAT IS ETIQUETTE?

*Etiquette is the rules of socially acceptable behavior based on principles of **respect**, **consideration** and **honesty**. These rules can be applied to a range of contexts including general business conduct, work and college life.*

ETIQUETTE

Behaving in an acceptable & professional manner will help you to:
- Build and maintain your professional reputation.
- Provide a positive impression in the eyes of others.
- Maximize your chances of fostering positive network.

IN THE WORKPLACE
- Foster a happy and stress-free environment.
- Avoid work-place tension.
- Avoid misunderstandings.
- Help you develop and maintain good working relationships.

Good etiquette should be adopted in all scenarios, inside and outside the workplace. This ensures you make a good impression.

Workplace etiquette differs across countries, regions and cultures.

Be sensitive to your surroundings and adapt your workplace behavior and etiquette to suit the context.

Being respectful allows you to be adaptive and flexible enough to recognize the value of other people, even if their backgrounds or beliefs are different than yours.

APPROPRIATE WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR

Appropriate workplace behavior can be categorized using senses:

SIGHT
- Looking the part and dressing appropriately.

- Dress code will vary depending on the industry and business.
- Check the company website to get an idea of appropriate dress.
- Keep your desk and work area tidy.
- Use shared facilities with respect and keep kitchen area clean.

SOUND
- Monitor the volume of conversations.
- Keep personal telephone conversations to a minimum.
- Be diplomatic when interacting with all colleagues including colleagues you may find difficult.
- Maintain privacy - keep all workplace conversations professional.
- If listening to iPod or music while working, be conscious of the volume and ensure it does not disturb others.
- Good practice to have mobile phone on silent during the day.
- Mind your manners. Say "please," "thank you" and "sorry."
- Avoid interrupting or talking over people.
- DON'T GOSSIP.

SMELL
- Be sensitive to others and use perfumes and cologne sparingly.
- If eating at your desk, avoid eating foods with strong aromas.
- Take care of your own personal hygiene - bathe/shower regularly and make sure clothing is clean and odor free.

TOUCH
- Have a firm handshake, but not overly so. Don't squeeze the other person's hand hard. The ideal handshake will be comfortable and match the pressure of the grip of other person.
- Respect people's personal space – don't stand over them or stand too close to them.
- Avoid touching people while communicating with them.
- Do not use threatening gestures or body language.

LOOKING PROFESSIONAL

Forming a positive impression is not only about appropriate behavior, but also appropriate dress.

Men	
Do's	**Don'ts**
Collared button up shirt/polo shirt with collar	Shorts/T-Shirts
Trousers, dress pants, slacks	Torn/dirty/crumpled clothing
Dark shoes or boots	Flip-flops/athletic shoes
Ties	Hats/beanies

Women	
Do's	**Don'ts**
Collared shirt or blouse	T-Shirt
Dark dress shoes, flats or low heeled pumps	Plunging neckline/strapless or halter neck tops
Dress pants/skirt (knee length)	Torn/dirty/crumpled clothing
Sweater or cardigan	Hats/beanies
Minimal jewelry	Flip flops/athletic shoes
Blazer or tailored/fitted jacket	Short skirts
Natural make-up	Colored/fishnet stockings

NOTE: It is always better to be overdressed rather than under-dressed. Dressing professionally helps to boost confidence too!

WORKPLACE ETIQUETTE

Other factors to consider:

- Reflect good work ethic by arriving on time. Train yourself to be punctual and to even to arrive five to ten minutes early.
- If you are late for work due to unforeseen circumstances, inform your manager as soon as possible about the delay and be willing to stay late to make up for it.
- Workplace etiquette does not only apply to your direct colleagues but anyone who occupies your office space, including cleaners and delivery staff.
- Don't check your phone during meetings at work.
- Be sensitive to others, particularly to cultural differences. Respect, value and appreciate differences in the workplace.
- Be honest. Don't over-promise and under-deliver. Always try to deliver what you say and follow up promptly.
- Try and keep emails as short as possible to prevent overloading and use bullet points for action items.
- Consider your web browsing habits. Although employers must inform you if your Internet usage is monitored, try to keep your web usage to work-related matters.
- When passing by others when walking in the halls, break rooms and elsewhere, it is always polite to greet them.

FACEBOOK AND IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

What does your Facebook profile or other social media accounts say about you? How are others likely to interpret your profile?

Many would argue that their social media activity is a reflection of their personal, not professional life and therefore should not be filtered. Despite claims such as this, more and more recruiters and interviewers are checking potential candidate profiles. Some are even asking candidates in the interview to log in to their accounts on the spot!

While generally succeeding at presenting a positive image of themselves, social media users are only partially aware of how they are coming across and tend to underestimate the strength of the impressions they foster.

Be cautious of what publicly available information you are presenting about yourself. Everything on the Internet is permanent. Consider the following:

- **Profile picture:** What does your profile picture say about you?
- **Photos/albums:** What photos do you have uploaded? Remove inappropriate pictures.
- **Applications/groups:** What do your applications and groups say about you? Sometimes you join groups because at the time they were funny and a novelty. You may want to consider filtering these.
- **Status updates:** What are your status updates like? Are they overly cryptic, dark, aggressive, defensive? Or are they generally happy, positive status' about mundane events? How do they represent your personality and attitude about life?
- **Wall posts:** Who is writing on your wall and what are they saying? What image do your friends portray about you? What assumptions could a recruiter make on what is written on your wall?
- Some social media users have two distinct profiles, one personal and one professional. This is an option that may be useful to consider in certain industries where public behavior is considered a reflection of the organization's brand and image.
- Think twice before adding colleagues and managers as friends. It is appropriate to decline such friendship requests during the term of your employment.

LINKEDIN AND IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

LinkedIn is a valuable tool for professional networking and job seeking. Recruiters and interviews will often research candidates through this networking resource. In creating a positive professional image of yourself, consider the following:

Image: Your profile is professional and updated. Your profile picture should be a head-shot which is friendly yet professional.
Accuracy: Avoid providing false or misleading information. Recruiters and interviewers will cross-check information against your resume, interview responses and references.

WHAT IS NETIQUETTE?

Netiquette is derived from the words "network" and "etiquette." It is the social code of network communication.

RULES OF NETIQUETTE

- Use spell check.
- Don't use all CAPS. CAPS can indicate yelling.
- Do not engage in flaming, which is escalating a heated conversation over email.
- Do not spam colleagues with inappropriate emails.
- Address others professionally and by name.
- Sign off emails professionally e.g. "Kind regards," "Many thanks" etc.
- Avoid swearing.
- Avoid emoticons in work related correspondence.
- When talking or emailing colleagues, avoid using 'text-speak', such as LOL and OMG.
- Use "Reply All" only when absolutely necessary.

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EHCO
EXPLORING
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