



WORKPLACE ETIQUETTE

"It is easier to avoid bad habits than to break them." — Benjamin Franklin

During childhood, most of us are taught how to observe proper etiquette and apply it in the proper setting or situation (e.g. home, school, etc.) yet we are rarely taught any workplace etiquette. Workplace etiquette is certainly based on many unwritten rules that all of us are just expected to know, but as it goes with many basic and fundamental things, it never hurts to be reminded of them every once in a while. In the list below, we did exactly that. Use the following tips to contribute to or maintain a harmonious environment:

1. Attitude is everything.

Have a good attitude at work no matter the circumstances. This will ensure you are always approachable and give away the impression that you always have things under control.

2. Be aware of your non-verbal communication.

Eye contact is one important aspect of non-verbal communication. Maintaining good eye contact shows you are listening. Another example of non-verbal communication involves handshakes. In the North American business world, firm handshakes portray trust and emphasize the importance of the relationship.

3. Be on time.

Regardless of age, job title, or level in the team hierarchy, be on time for work and meetings. Better yet, be a few minutes early. Punctuality shows your team that you respect them and their time.

4. Show appreciation.

Everyone likes to be appreciated. Sincerely verbalize and demonstrate thanks as often as possible. Do this both publicly and when appropriate, express it in private.

5. Be discrete in meetings.

If your phone starts ringing during a meeting, try to resist the temptation of walking out of the room to take it, unless, of course, it is a very important matter that

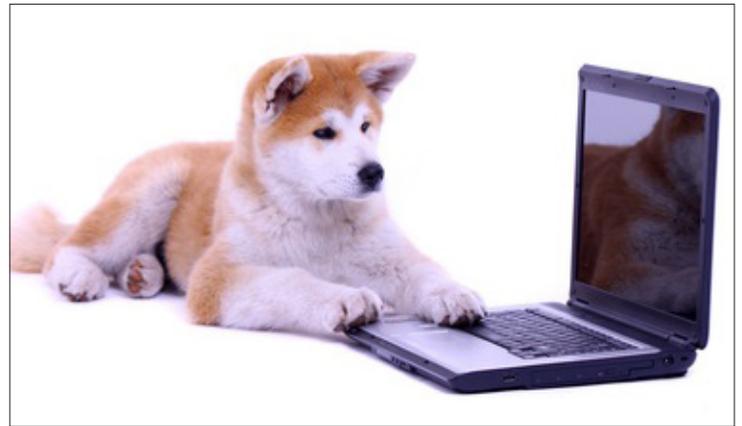
cannot wait.

6. Keep your coworkers informed about your whereabouts.

This is especially important for those who travel as part of the job. Try to let your coworkers know where you are: the car, the office, at home or off-site. You can, for example, use your email system to let people in your office know where you are.

7. Avoid email overuse.

Many workers are guilty of sending one-liner emails. Consider walking over to your co-worker's desk or giving them a call to avoid taxing valuable e-mail storage space.



8. Always follow up on your emails.

Not returning messages in a timely manner can portray lack of care or tardiness. Whenever possible, try to send a timely response even if it is short.

9. Follow and honour the rules.

If your company has a formal code of ethics, try to follow it as closely as possible. This can not only help you gain the respect of your coworkers but also create a positive work environment built on a sense of equality and fairness.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

"However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results." — Winston Churchill

Conventional wisdom reflected through axioms such as "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" may work well for some aspects of your business, but will likely not work when it comes to your strategy. Strategic planning is a dynamic process which involves minute-to-minute awareness of our surroundings and an ability to move fast, all while remaining stable.

As we are getting closer to the end of 2014, we pose the question of strategic planning and invite you to think about this topic with us. To get started, we compiled a list of questions to ask about your business strategy for the upcoming year:

1. What business are you in?

Know which business you are in. Know your competition well and know your market even better.

2. What other businesses are you in?

Try to see your organization through a wider lens — in which other businesses are you involved or have the potential to get involved? Expanding your service or product is an excellent opportunity on which you can capitalize.

3. What are your core competencies?

Your core competencies are what makes you different in the market. These are the activities that make your product or service unique and allow you to grow. Unlike activities you outsource, core competencies are things you can perform better than others could on your behalf, and are much



more than mere strengths.

4. What are your core values?

Know what values you stand for. Are you oriented towards operational excellence at the expense of minimizing customer service expenditures? Or do you value investing in customer relationships in order to gain long-term growth? Either way, knowing your core values is paramount.

5. Which, if any, competitor will be your next partner?

Your competitors can become allies if you ever consider strategic partnerships. It can take a change of perspective to go from seeing your competitors as enemies to seeing them as powerful allies.

6. Are your short-term goals and long-term strategies aligned?

In order to maximize shareholders' capital, most organizations adopt a quarter-to-quarter mentality. Look beyond the quarter to align your short term visions with your long-term profitability goals.

We hope these questions will start a good discussion and benefit your strategic planning for the coming year. In summary: good strategy means asking the right questions AND asking them often. It also means knowing your business model, being thorough and keeping your strategy under constant scrutiny.

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