



Make a Professional Impression

Your Reputation Precedes You (and follows you)

Your behavior at company functions, your language, your ability to work with others, even your table manners, can enhance or undermine your reputation. A single, major blunder can undo months or even years of hard work. Don't let unprofessional behavior derail your career – make every effort to create and leave a good impression.

Control Communication Conduits

Reduce wordiness in all of your business communications. Be concise, clear and conversational in style – on the phone, at meetings, and in writing. Be aware that your e-mail communications are a “forward” or “blind copy” away from anyone. Have automatic spell-check set as a preference in all your software programs, but still proofread carefully. With advance planning, miscommunications can be minimized.

Lead the Way!

Imagine you are visiting your client's office for the first time, and they guide you to walk down the hallway first, to be polite. Wrong! You have absolutely no idea where you are going. When you are the host and know your surroundings, *you* lead the way. Don't leave your guests faltering or hesitant in front of you.

Make Introductions Smooth

When making an introduction, always mention the name of the person of greatest authority/importance first. This would almost always be your client – or among associates – the most senior member. Gender or age is not a deciding factor. When introducing yourself, state your name clearly and say something brief and memorable about what you do. Practice and **offer a good, firm handshake** – this is important for men and women.

Less is More

Avoid clothing and accessories that are “too much” of anything: too short, too gaudy, or too tight. Perfume/cologne also should be subtle. Stay well groomed with a polished appearance. *If you can't take care of the details of your own personal grooming, clients and coworkers may not trust you to take care of the details of their business.*



Dress Up

Both literally and figuratively. Look to the successful people in your organization or industry, and dress for the position you'd like to attain. Buy classics and eschew the trendy, the sexy, and casual wear. Be sure you know the parameters of your office's formal or informal dress code. Call ahead when visiting a client site, and choose to dress a notch above their usual as a sign of respect.

It's Not About the Food

With any business meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner or cocktail reception), it is of the utmost importance to remember that business is still the first item on the menu. Moderation and propriety should be the specials of the day. Abstain from or limit alcohol intake. And, please, no "doggy bag" requests.

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