

Business Etiquette

Basic Business Courtesies

- Open doors for others (regardless of gender or status). Courteous people open doors for others and hold the door until everyone in their party has walked through. They also hold the door behind them if someone else is approaching.
- Allow people to exit elevators prior to entering. If you are near the buttons, press and hold the “door open” button until everyone in the elevator has made their exit.
- Always stand to greet visitors. This shows that you respect them as individuals. Shake hands, and offer your visitor a seat before you sit down yourself.
- Assist your visitors with their coats and offer to hang them up. If you don’t have a place to hang a coat in your office, place it neatly over the back of a chair.
- Introduce the person of lower business rank to the person of higher business rank. (For example, Dr. H. this is Mr. S.)

Business Meals

- Wait until everyone has been seated before unfolding your napkin and placing it on your lap at business meals.
- Remember, your water glass is on your right and your bread and butter plate is on your left. If someone uses your bread and butter plate, don’t correct him or her; just place your bread on your dinner plate.
- If you leave the table during a meal, place your napkin on your chair. Once you have finished eating, place your napkin neatly, but not folded, on the table.
- Wait until everyone has been served before beginning to eat.
- Do not put your purse or briefcase on the table.
- Avoid using your cell phone during business meals.
- The host should be the one to bring up business. If you are the host, it is usually best to wait until everyone’s order has been taken before beginning a business discussion.
- The most senior person in the group should pay for business meals – unless that person has delegated that responsibility.

Interview Skills

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Learn about the company and its operation. You'll impress the interviewer if it is obvious you've done some research. It will also help you develop good answers to the interviewer's questions.
- Information you should know about the company prior to your interview:
 - Organizational structure
 - Name of the interviewer
 - Divisions/departments that interest you
 - Areas they are eliminating
 - Products/Services
 - Training Programs
 - Size of company
 - Career paths
 - How long have they been in business
 - Types of clients
 - Growth in the past and future potential
 - Job description & job title
 - New products and services they are developing
 - Employee benefits
 - Geographic location of home office, branches, stores
- Resources for this information:
 - Company's annual report
 - Literature produced by company
 - Information interview
 - Inside source
 - Professional journals (library)

- Magazine articles
 - Peterson's Guides
 - Moody's Industrial Manual (library)
 - National Job Bank
 - National Trade and Professional Associations
 - Colorado High Tech Directory (library)
 - Dunn's Employment Opportunities Directory (library)
 - Standard & Poors Industry Survey(library)
 - The 100 Best Companies to Work For in America (library)
 - Walker's Manual of Western Corporations (library)
 - Ward's Directory of the 51,000 Largest U.S. Corporations (library)
- Prepare answers to typical interview questions. Study and practice your answers.
 - Memorize the name of the person who will interview you. Nothing could be more embarrassing than forgetting their name or calling them by the wrong name!
 - Decide what you will wear. Check out the section titled "Interview Dressing" for some pointers. Be sure your outfit is ready to go.
 - Find out exactly where you are going, where to park, and how long it will take to get there. If you are travelling in an unfamiliar city, it is a wise idea to do a dry run prior to your interview time. Drive to the place of business, park your car, find the escalator, and time how long all this takes. This will alleviate any undue stress the day of the interview.
 - Get a good night's sleep.
 - Arrive 15 minutes early .This not only shows that you are prompt it also gives you a chance to gain your composure. Be friendly to the receptionist/secretary....they often are asked their opinion!

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Start it off like a winner. Offer your hand, and give a firm handshake, a pleasant smile and a positive confident attitude. Introduce yourself.
- Be comfortable. Take a seat facing the interviewer, however, slightly off center. Be sure you are not facing into direct sunlight or some other uncomfortable situation.
- Listen attentively. Look at the interviewer directly, but don't get into a stare down! Sit up straight. Try to relax. Its okay to take a few notes if the questions are lengthy or you need to remind yourself of something you want to stress.
- Avoid nervous mannerisms. Pay attention to nervous mannerisms you might have such as clicking your pen, jingling change in your pocket, twisting your hair, biting your nails. Control these impulses! Everyone is nervous to some extent; the key is to appear calm and collected.
- Speak clearly. Use good grammar and a friendly tone. Never answer just "yes" or "no" to a question. Always clarify, expand on your answers. Be sure not to ramble on.
- Be positive and enthusiastic. You want to outshine all other candidates so "turn it on" during the interview! No matter how sterling your credentials are, you won't be hired if the interviewer isn't sold. Pump up your enthusiasm prior to the interview. Never whine, gripe or complain about past employers, jobs, classes, etc.
- Ask pertinent questions. Be prepared to ask a few questions. Do not monopolize the interviewer's time, particularly if you know they have appointments scheduled following your interview. Do ask thoughtful questions. Don't ask about salary and benefits, this can be discussed when the company is definitely interested in you!
- Here's a sampling of questions you might ask.
 - What are the company's greatest strengths?
 - In what areas is the company trying to improve?
 - Who will I report to?
 - Could you give some examples of projects I would be working on?
 - How much travel is involved?
 - Will relocation be required?
 - What kind of assignments could I expect in the first 6 months?
 - What products, services or stores are in the development stage?
 - Is this a new position or will I be replacing someone?

- What is the largest single problem facing your company now?
 - What qualities are you looking for in a candidate?
 - What characteristics do successful employees in your company share?
 - Is there a lot of team work?
 - Describe the advancement opportunities.
 - What growth areas do you foresee?
 - Will I be encouraged to attend professional conferences?
 - Could you describe your training program?
 - How frequently are performance appraisals done?
 - How do you feel about the company?
 - Could you describe possible advancements within the company?
 - What is the next step in the interview process?
 - What is the company's management philosophy?
 - What would a typical day be like?
 - How much contact is there with management?
 - Is this job a result of increased growth or expansion?
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- Watch for cues the interview is over. Don't linger if you sense the interviewer is done interviewing you. When it is over, stand up, thank the interviewer for his/her time and shake hands firmly. Don't forget to express interest in being hired. Say you are impressed with the company and would like to work there.
 - Be sure to find out the next step. Ask the interviewer when the decision will be made, when you can expect to hear from him/her so you won't be left hanging.

THE INTERVIEWER'S HIDDEN AGENDA

The following are some typical concerns interviewers have, which you need to address when answering questions. Be sensitive to these concerns, answering all questions in the most positive way to build psychological leverage and position yourself for the offer.

- Does the applicant have the ability to do the job?
- Can he or she manage people?
- How does he or she relate to people?
- What kind of a person is this? A leader?
- What strengths does he or she have that we need?
- Why has there been a number of job changes?
- In what areas is he or she weak? How will this affect performance?
- What contribution has the applicant made?
- What are his or her ambitions? Are they realistic?
- Does she or he have growth potential?
- How is the chemistry between us?
- How will other interviewers react?
- Should this person get an offer?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Say thanks. The next day write the interviewer a brief note reiterating your interest in the job. Spell his or her name correctly!
- Follow up. If you haven't heard from the interviewer within the time frame indicated at the close of the interview, call them to relay a polite reminder that you're still interested in the job. Ask when they plan to make a hiring decision.
- If you aren't hired... If you continue to be interested in the company, it pays to keep in touch with the interviewer. Often, through persistence, you may be offered a position at a later date.
- Chin Up. Gear up for your next interview. After all the more interviews you tackle the more polished you become. You may want to contact the interviewer who rejected you and see if you can get any pointers on what to improve before your next interview.

INTERVIEW DRESSING

DO'S

- Dress conservatively
- Check out what management wears and dress similarly without overkill
- Practice good grooming
- Have clean, neatly styled hair
- Have clean hands and trimmed nails
- Carry a portfolio or briefcase with extra copies of your resume
- Bring a clean notepad and pen that works
- Wear basic hosiery (no textured hose)
- Wear shoes you can walk easily in
- Cover all tattoos

DON'TS

- Don't wear torn, soiled, wrinkled clothing
- Don't dress casually
- Don't wear a lot of jewelry (men should avoid earrings)
- Don't wear a lot of cologne
- Don't wear athletic shoes
- Don't eat spicy, offensive smelling foods prior to the interview
- Don't wear sexy clothing
- Don't wear "cutesy" ties (i.e. a flashing Mickey Mouse tie)
- Don't chew gum or smoke
- Don't wear a mini-skirt
- Don't wear heavy make-up
- Don't carry a purse AND a briefcase

References:

http://www.careersuperstar.com/2007/03/basic_business_etiquette.htmlhttp://www.careersuperstar.com/2007/03/basic_business_etiquette.html

http://www.western.edu/career/interview/Interview_skills.htm