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## **Lecture 1**

### **Business etiquette and Protocol. Ethics.**

#### **1. Business etiquette**

#### **2. Business protocol**

#### **3. Business etiquette and ethics**

#### **4. Fundamentals of business protocol**

Etiquette deals with what is considered acceptable by a society or within a given company; ethics is what is considered moral. Sometimes there is overlap: it is both proper and morally correct to tell the truth, but being nice to people is a rule of etiquette, not of ethics.

Both etiquette and ethics are codes of conduct that business workers have to consider. It is poor etiquette to use foul language, but it is not unethical. It is poor etiquette to misuse company property, and it is also unethical.

Although ethics and etiquette sometimes overlap, ethics issues tend to be larger than the offense caused someone in business by failing to say "thank you," "please," or sending a congratulatory note upon learning of a colleague's promotion.

Let us look at the following real-life ethics/etiquette examples:

An employee goes on a popular business news talk show and talks about good stocks, hyping her own company's product as the best one to buy. The etiquette mistake is that of excessive bragging, but the ethics breach is that of plugging one's own product.

Robert Osborne, the Hollywood Reporter's "Rambling Reporter," wrote that the late George Cukor said of MGM superstar Norma Shearer: "Norma is absolutely unbearable. You ask her how she is, and she tells you...." Providing more personal information than is appropriate in a business setting may be poor etiquette, but sharing too much information about what top secret projects are going on at your company is a breach of ethics.

An executive misrepresents the probable profits on a project; because of those inflated projected sales figures, two professionals plan to allot several years of their lives to completing that project. The executive, who gets a salary, has possibly placed the families of her contractual professionals in jeopardy since the projected income may not be forthcoming. Unfortunately, inflating sales figures and making unrealistic promises is all too common; it is more than poor etiquette, it is unethical.

Every etiquette issue, from bragging to gift-giving, has to be examined in light of the ethics guidelines of a company. What may be etiquette, appropriate, and acceptable for a profit-making chain of employment agencies may be unethical and suspect for a government agency or a financial services institution. (As a human resources manager at a manufacturing company in California wrote: "As a government contractor we have a specific code of conduct and policies relative to our relationship with customers and vendors.") It may be considered poor etiquette to vent your criticisms of one employee to another, but it would be considered unethical for a company psychologist to critique a client/patient/employee before another, much less mention clients at all.

Often in business it is necessary to say things about a product or project to get someone to invest their time or money into a new venture. When is it ethical to give figures that are inaccurate and when is it not? The key is whether you know the information you are providing is "iffy" or downright untrue. If you innocently repeat false information, that is one thing. If you willingly relay false information—information that helps someone decide to proceed with this venture or that purchase—you are behaving unethically.

An insurance broker articulates how some brokers may behave unethically by misrepresenting certain basic financial issues to their prospective clients: "In insurance, there are projections of what dividends will be, which are only projections. For example, in permanent whole-life insurance, there is a certain guaranteed cash accumulation portion and that is absolutely guaranteed. That might only be four or five percent. But the balance is not guaranteed and it depends on how efficiently the insurance company manages itself. They may do very well and they may do only okay or they could do outright poorly. It is not necessarily common to stress this to the client. It's very important to make clear to clients that some of that is only a projection with no guarantee attached. Indeed, a few companies have exceeded projections."

One of the best ethics protections for a worker is to be employed by a top company. They will have less of a need to lie to workers or customers than poorly rated companies, or those with inferior products. As the insurance broker, who works for one of the top American companies, explains: "I see a lot of people selling second-rate products. I don't know what the management tells their people about the company and their strengths and whatever. I'm taking an insurance course and meeting a lot of people from other companies. One company is very weak. It is clear that one of the salespeople there has no idea how bad the company's ratings are. Every now and then she finds out about their ratings and she just cringes. Obviously you don't tell your sales troops the bad news. There are only eleven insurance companies out of about seventeen hundred to two thousand in the United States today that have all the top ratings."

In order to maintain an ethical work environment companies should supplement codes of conduct with ongoing training programs that strive to enhance employees' awareness of ethical issues and conflicts. A recent survey the Center conducted among two thousand U.S. corporations reveals that while ninety percent have written codes of conduct, only forty-four percent have ethics training programs in place.

Both ethics and etiquette deal with doing the right thing. Just as a company has its own standards of etiquette, it also has its own corporate culture about ethics. Does this company encourage absolute honesty, bending the facts, or outright lies in how they conduct business? I am not saying that a company says to its employees, "We're going to lie to our clients," but new employees quickly learn if that is, indeed, what is done as they overhear conversations or observe their supervisors in day-to-day situations. Every single employee that is hired should be an advocate of that company's ethics standards. Today one of the biggest problems in merging companies is the merging of corporate cultures that clash.

Lying rarely serves you or your company well since it is likely you will get caught in your lie, which will hurt you and your employer's personal credibility. For example, a realtor makes comments to try to encourage a sale. When the customer says, "Those bedrooms are too small," the realtor, trying to make a sale, says, "Don't worry. Children don't stay in their bedrooms, they are always outside." A few days later, when the same customer complains that the property that went along with another house is too small, the realtor says, "Don't worry. Children don't play outside. They tend to entertain in their bedrooms." That realtor's credibility has been damaged by those conflicting statements; her customer will undoubtedly deal with her more cautiously from now on.

Camille Lavington, a New York-based international communications consultant, polishes and packages business executives. Lavington comments about ethics and etiquette:

One of the main things I reassure clients is that I will do nothing to change their ethics or morality, but some of their values may need modifying. This is based on the need to be considerate of another person's values. I believe in the premise that to make another person comfortable, you must do so in an appropriate fashion.

Ethics and etiquette go hand in glove. Your manners reflect your ethics. Decency and concern for others indicate a desire to live by high standards, to the benefit of everyone. Empathy and understanding humanize any relationship. By setting an example for others to follow, you subliminally encourage better behavior and ethics.

American corporations have gone through a low period on the scale of behavior. Wall Street is still reeling from the lack of ethics of a few bad apples. International competition and "Old World" values are going to force us to change our behavior. If United States corporations want to be respected by the international community, their executives must embrace some of the time-honored rituals and etiquette practiced abroad. Unpolished behavior is totally passé.

A "code of ethics" is the quality of standing behind your word. It's your reputation. One way to build a negative reaction is to bend the truth. An example: Corporations delay payment for services, and then fib about mailing the check. They are practicing one of the three biggest lies known to man. It makes you wonder if they are unethical about other business practices.

If a company issues a company code of ethics or business guidelines, they have some specific rules for a range of situations, eliminating the agony of pondering over each and every circumstance; for example, what the maximum worth of a gift is from a customer or client that an employee can accept without being accused of influence peddling. Some companies even make such business codes mandatory reading of their employees. As one company adamantly states at the end of the introductory letter to its business conduct manual: "We cannot, and will not, tolerate unethical or illegal

actions undertaken either for personal benefit or misguided attempts to achieve gains on behalf of the Firm. No one's bottom line is more important than the reputation of the Firm." This firm's business conduct booklet covers these areas: conflicts of interest, outside business connections, public office, gifts, use of information, regard for the company's assets, relationships with clients, competitors, governmental authorities, and employees, using your own judgment, and reporting misconduct.

Avoid criticism of the company, especially in public.

Keep your promises—to your boss, to your clients, to your employees, and to yourself.

As noted in the chapter on gift-giving and receiving, be cautious about accepting any gift that is more than a nominal one, like an imprinted calendar, basket of fruit, bottle of wine or liquor, book, pen, or flowers.

As Elena Jankowic points out in *Behave Yourself!*: "A purchasing agent who accepts gifts like a VCR or a trip to Las Vegas is guilty of serious misconduct which could lead to blackmail or dismissal. If a supplier offers a gift that is out of line with professional standards, you should report it immediately to your superior so that there is no doubt about your integrity."

Protocol is a tool for you to use to help you to succeed. Yet protocol alone will not ensure success for the job candidate who is poorly trained or ill-suited for a job. You will not get a job just because you wear nice clothes and write a memorable thank-you note following an interview. But by simply following the rules of etiquette, the qualified candidate increases his or her chances of success. The rising executive who combines business protocol with excellent people skills and superb work performance will rise faster than those who breach etiquette by using unacceptable language, being discourteous, and failing to follow acceptable rules of conduct in terms of dress, business stationery, executive communication, treatment of superiors, co-workers, or subordinates, among other etiquette issues.

The work experience of someone with excellent business manners is different, and usually richer, than that of someone without them.

As sociologist George C. Homans pointed out, every interaction between two or more people is an exchange of material or nonmaterial goods. Etiquette enhances that exchange, ensuring that one or both persons will want to continue the interaction over a period of time. Studies of groups have found that cohesiveness attracts individuals to a particular group; observing and following the etiquette standards within a company will make that company more cohesive and membership in that group (employment at that company) more rewarding, predictable, and reinforcing of each individual's behavior.

Observing the business protocol at a particular company is one way to ensure that company behavior is a recognizable and consistent entity. If what is expected is predictable, it is possible to get down to the business of doing business more easily than if what is expected has to be determined in each and every instance. If a man need not stand for a woman who enters his office, it makes it easier for a boss to know that he is not insulting his secretary if he stays seated when she appears, that he is observing the rules of etiquette at work (quite different, perhaps, than those in his social circle). By contrast, it is easier for everyone involved if a business lunch or dinner follows the etiquette rule set forth in *Debrett's Etiquette and Modern Manners*: the principle guest sits to the host's right, and the second most honored guest to his left. If there are women present, they are to be seated at equal intervals among the men.

In working your way up the corporate ladder, manners are essential. Executives are expected to be positive representatives of their companies. The freewheeling sixties, seventies, and even eighties have been replaced with the more staid and image-conscious nineties. Training for etiquette usually begins at home, when parents teach a toddler to say "please" and "thank you," and should continue throughout the school years through family and educational institutions. But finishing or charm schools disappeared decades ago, and college and graduate schools have been slow to take up the slack. Rising executives and professionals of every kind have the onus on them to get the business protocol training they need from whatever sources are available. That means etiquette training for everyone—from a management trainee who needs good business manners, to a doctor needing a polished bedside manner, to consultants needing to present themselves in an impressive way. For some, that training will be obtained by reading books and articles that convey vital information about etiquette. For others, books will be the start, but they will also need personal trainers or image consultants, or will have to enroll in etiquette seminars or courses to brush up on such things as proper table manners, ways of walking and sitting, and even how to dress. What works

on a Saturday night at a fast-food restaurant is not going to go over on a Wednesday afternoon at the Four Seasons.

Ethnic or racial slurs against groups of people as well as individuals can get you fired, or certainly damage your reputation. A New York journalist was suspended for two weeks without pay for responding to a criticism of one of his columns as "sexist" with a comment that was an ethnic slur.

If he had observed the etiquette rule against making disparaging comments, he would have avoided compromising his professional image of an objective reporter who should be above such conduct.

In a corporate or business situation, talking against someone or negative gossip is very dangerous because it usually gets back to someone with all the ramifications you might predict.

Paul Critchlow, Senior Vice President for Communications at Merrill Lynch, explains how business manners help a company to function better. Says Critchlow:

The fundamentals of business protocol are as follows:

1. Being courteous, polite, and pleasant will take you far in the business world just as being critical, negative, or maudlin will hamper your success.

2. Saying "please" or "thank you" should be part of your everyday behavior in the business world unless it is a life-and-death situation where time is of the essence, such as a physician opting to say "Get me another pint of blood" rather than "Please get me another pint of blood." In most situations, however, please and thank you will promote goodwill and are the way to behave whether you are the superior, co-worker, or subordinate.

3. Avoid criticizing anyone—subordinate, co-worker, superior, client, or customer—especially in the presence of others. If you must unfavorably review someone's performance, do it privately. It is also better to begin with praise and follow with criticism (feedback is a more neutral way of describing this process), and end with additional praise. For example, "Ms. Hansen, you are doing an admirable job with the volume of work that I have demanded of you lately. However, I have noticed an occasional typographical error slipping into some of the correspondence. I know, because you are so reliable and conscientious, that you will take care of this now that I have pointed it out to you. You are an asset to this department and I hope you will accept this feedback in the spirit in which it is given."

4. Dress according to examples of others at your level and function in your company. For a job interview, it is better to be a little overdressed than too casual. When in doubt, go to the company in advance of your interview and observe workers entering and leaving the building, or try to contact any friends or acquaintances who might already be working at that company for inside tips.

5. There should be consistency in how individuals are addressed at your company. If your secretary is required to address you as Mister Jones, he or she might prefer to be called Mr. or Ms. Clark. It is up to the senior person to let the rules of address be known to the employees. Introduce yourself with your complete name, "I am Mister Gordon Jones," and, if you wish to be called by just your first name or a nickname add, "But you can call me Greg."

6. Ms. is easier to use than Miss or Mrs. since it eliminates having to check on a woman's marital status before writing a letter or addressing someone. In that way, Ms. is equal to Mr.

7. If a company office party is going to include a spouse or fiancé (or fiancée), it is polite to allow single persons to ask a guest along, if they wish, so they are not discriminated against.

8. Write a thank-you note to the host of any company dinner or party immediately after you attend it. However, if you see the host the next day in the office, you should also mention in person what a good time you had and what a splendid dinner or party it was.

9. Observe the guidelines on gift-giving that your company provides. You should give or receive gifts only if it is considered appropriate.

10. Be aware of and respect the etiquette standards of other cultures if your business has international dealings. For example, if you deal with a Muslim, the month of Ramadan requires Muslims to fast from dawn to dusk; party-giving is to be avoided during the first month of the Islamic year. Arabs might find it hard to deal with a woman in business. The Japanese first exchange business cards, and meet to discuss topics other than business, while slowly moving into a business relationship based on a sense of trust. Presents are expected to be mutually exchanged.

11. You are judged by the following up of your actions, not just your initial contacts. If you call someone, follow up to see if whatever you talked about has been accomplished. If someone writes to you, follow up with an answer. And always return phone calls.

12. Beware of being silent merely because you feel uncomfortable rejecting someone. Remember: you are rejecting the project or situation, not the person. This policy of saying nothing rather than a simple no is rampant in some industries, such as Hollywood, where some screenwriters will simply not hear from a producer, agent, or studio—not even a phone call or short note saying, "Not for us." (This is a generalization, of course; some producers, agents, and studios are very polite, getting back to a writer with any answer very quickly.) To those who cowardly prefer silence, remember that the person you are afraid to say no to today, who now sees you as impolite, might be the person you want to say "yes" to next month, next year, or in ten years. People do not forget impoliteness. Be polite and give an answer to a submission or inquiry—if not for today, for the future.

If you have trouble saying or writing "no," have a secretary do it for you. If you are too busy to do even that, the least favorable alternative, but an action more courteous than silence, is to have a printed or photocopied short statement sent, along with any material to be returned, to the effect that:

We are sorry we cannot reply personally to you, but we receive hundreds of inquiries each week about possible jobs at our company.

We are returning your resume, since all executive level jobs are handled on a referral basis only.

Thank you for your inquiry. We wish you the best of luck in your job search.

13. New York copywriter Don Hauptman advises including a note or letter with everything you send, even an article or news clipping. Comments Hauptman: "It's been said that if you omit a note or a letter, it's like walking into someone's office without an appointment. Quite often the envelope will be thrown out, and the recipient doesn't even know the identity of the sender, unless there is a personal communication." Hauptman suggests that a simple "Hi" or "For your information," on your note or letterhead stationery, will often suffice.

14. Immediately attend to such polite gestures as sending a congratulatory card when a business associate gets a new job or a promotion. It will take less time to send a card as soon as possible after the event than it will take adding it to your "to do" list and then ruminating over finding the time to do it. Furthermore, if you keep a stack of cards suitable for business for various occasions—congratulations, condolences, get well—right in your drawer at work, it will be easy to translate your good thoughts into the good deed.

15. Do not assume because someone calls you through a referral that your services are presold. You still have to work hard, perhaps even harder, to prove yourself, to live up to their recommendation, and to retain the business. If business comes to you through a recommendation, rather than a cold call, you may have to work more diligently, since the potential client or customer's expectations may be higher. Such referrals may actually be easier to get the initial business, and harder to keep it.

16. Corporate spouses should know business manners so they help (not hurt) their partner's career. With the development of the two-career family, some corporate spouses may be unable or unwilling to place their partner's career before their own. A spouse may be reluctant or unable to take time off from work to accompany a spouse on a trip. A partner who teaches evening classes, for example, may be unable to accompany her spouse to business dinners. That should be a decision the couple makes, and one that is kept between them. When a spouse must attend a business function—because the boss has requested it—and it is proper for the spouse to be there, the corporate spouse should try hard to do so. Once there, he or she should let his or her spouse shine. This is not the time for the spouse to talk nonstop about his or her achievements, or to bring up controversial topics that may embarrass the spouse or the employer. As hard as it may be for the corporate spouse, this is the time to defer to the spouse and the spouse's career for the few company-sponsored business functions, such as the company picnic, dinner, or out-of-town trip. Corporate spouses will reap the rewards in helping the employed partner to advance and to be known at his or her company as an asset to their spouse's career.

However, if there are problems at home, it may be wise to make polite excuses why a spouse cannot attend a company function, or to avoid inviting business associates to any personal functions, such as a child's wedding. If a spouse's behavior is in any way unpredictable, keep corporate and personal affairs separate. I am reminded of the embarrassed doctor who invited a few associates to his son's bar mitzvah

only to have his ex-wife make a fool of herself—by drinking too much, saying the wrong things, and dancing erotically—in front of hundreds of business and personal guests.

If corporate spouses are not pursuing a career of their own, try not to make them feel less valuable or important than the spouses who have their own careers in addition to family and household duties. One way to avoid insulting a corporate spouse in this area is to let them volunteer information about their families and activities rather than asking the questions, "What do you do?" or "Where do you work?"

17. Keep kissing for social occasions; a handshake is more proper in business settings.

18. Keep promises in business.

19. Take the long view in business. Don't be shortsighted about your efforts. If a business relationship does not immediately seem to lead to a sale or deal, work as hard at that relationship as the ones that do. Not only may it someday come to fruition, the name of the game in business is referral—if you cannot help someone, maybe you know someone who can. Old business gets you new business. Someday, the person to whom you have referred the business may reciprocate and send business your way. Too often when a business deal fails to ensue, someone who was polite and courteous during the courtship becomes distant and even rude when a sale or transaction fails to materialize. Remember that practically every executive in every business—from propane gas to insurance—is ultimately in a people business based on relationships.

20. Make sure you are polite at all levels of a company. First of all, proper etiquette includes being deferential to age, seniority, and authority but also being kind to those at your level or below it. Second, you never know what person under you today, or on the way up, may be your co-worker, superior, employee, or client tomorrow.

21. Make people feel welcome—to enter your office, to have a phone conversation with you, to do business with you, to work with you, to want to be around you.

22. Remember, and put into everyday practice, the six basic principles of business etiquette:

1. Be on time.

2. Be discreet.

3. Be courteous, pleasant, and positive.

4. Be concerned with others, not just yourself.

5. Dress appropriately.

6. Use proper written and spoken language.

It is important to practice good business manners because others will mirror your example. I am reminded of the anecdote told to me by Richard Zeif, a New York lawyer. He is well aware of the mirroring effect in behavior; it is even part of the nonverbal communication portion of the course in negotiating that he teaches. Mirroring refers to the way in which someone copies the behavior of someone else. Zeif was involved in a negotiation and every day he would see an accountant, who would be smiling, even though he heard that the accountant's mother was dying. The accountant was absent for a few days and Zeif learned it was because his mother had died. When he saw the accountant, who still had a smile on his face—it must have been a nervous gesture—he mirrored the accountant and committed the gaffe of smiling at him as he said, "I'm so sorry to hear your mother died."

Good etiquette, like a college degree, is only noticeable in its absence. It is vital to learn about appropriate etiquette in general as well as what is specifically expected of you in whatever profession, industry, company, or situation you work in so you can get on to the other issues of competence that everyone today must face.

The truth of the business world today is that if you have a choice between employing the services of one individual over another, you will probably pick the kind, considerate, appropriate, and well-bred one over the abrasive, coarse, inappropriate one. A gentle polishing will guarantee that you will always shine in your profession.

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## **Lecture 2**

### **GREETING PEOPLE**

#### **1. Importance of business greetings**

#### **2. Handshakes**

#### **3. Types You May Encounter in Work-Related Situations**

Unless you are intentionally trying to be vague or discrete, refer to individuals by their names, rather than as "she" or "he." Remembering names is a good way to get ahead at work. There is nothing as endearing as when someone you have met just once before somehow remembers your name.

Do you have trouble remembering names? One helpful tip is to get the business card of any new person you meet and make notes, right on the card, or attach the card to a larger index or address file card and make notations on that card. Include the date you met, any distinguishing physical characteristics that will help you to remember that person, such as height, hair color, build, and any other notable tidbits, such as town of birth, college attended, or hobbies. But keep in mind that others may have access to your card or address files, so be discrete in your descriptions and notations about clients or business associates.

Another way to remember names is to make a concrete association between the name or face of a new person and to write that association down, or memorize it. For example, someone by the name of Jim Peters may be tall and thin. The association that comes to mind might be the tall and thin Peter of Peter, Paul, and Mary, the singing group from the 1960s, so you remember the name Jim Peters forever more. Or for Lila Dempsey, who is quite active and energetic, you might remember her last name because she brings to mind the energetic fighter Jack Dempsey.



What should you do if you see someone you are supposed to know whose name you have forgotten? Try to avoid the impulse to blurt out, "Forgive me, but I don't remember your name" and instead take a moment or two to ask questions that might help you remember the name by associations. For example, you might say, "So nice to see you. What are you up to these days?" That question might lead to an answer that helps you put the person in the context in which you know each other and helps trigger your memory about how you know each other and what the name is. For example, you run into someone at a store near your company. She says hello to you by name, and you are at a loss as to what her name is, let alone how you know each other. Your question about what is new elicits this answer, "They are transferring me to a new library." Obvious follow-up question on your part: "Which one?" "The reference library in the second building," she answers. Bingo! She is the company librarian you have seen from time to time; her name begins to come back to you as well. "It is so nice to see you again, Jane. Good luck at the new location."

Find out the rules about names at your company at each level and follow those rules when addressing others or introducing yourself. It may be perfectly acceptable to say "I'm Bill," or it may be breach of that company's etiquette since only "I'm William O'Casey" will do.

When introducing yourself to someone outside your company, give your full name, not just your first name. Only use someone's nickname if he or she has given you permission to do so. For example, when you are first introduced, someone will say, "I'm Jonathan Franklin, but you can call me John." Otherwise, use a man or woman's complete name.

Charles Peebler, CEO of Bozell Inc., a major advertising company, tells the story of how at a meeting the inappropriate addressing of the chairman of the company by his first name by a junior advertising manager led to gasps around the room as well as a reprimand. Says Peebler: "He said, 'Well, Jim, this is the way we do this.' He also called me 'Chuck.' But even vice presidents call the chairman 'Mister.'" Peebler explains that it has to do with having a general awareness of what is "proper and sensitive to any situation," which includes being deferential to age as well as status. Says Peebler: "With many clients I am on a first-name basis. They call me Chuck, and I call them 'Sir.'"

When introducing people, introduce the lower-level person to the senior one. For example:

- "Mr. Jones, I'd like to present Mr. Blank, Vice President of Marketing. Mr. Blank, this is Mr. John Jones, the president of our company."
- Try to include descriptions of each person when you are making introductions. For example:
- "Ms. Hastings, I'd like to introduce to you Sally Holmes, the winner of this year's executive communication competition. Sally, this is Ms. Alice Hastings, a published poet and the manager of our corporate communications writing division."

Handshakes

You are meeting a business prospect for the first time. This is the perfect opportunity to make a great impression through a firm, confident handshake. Handshaking is an important form of nonverbal communication. This interactive body language offers a peek into how the other person views the world, himself, or you. Understanding the messages and meanings of these brief encounters is beneficial to everyone.

How to execute the perfect handshake

Make eye contact and be sure to give a smile showing some teeth. Meet head on facing them directly. This will promote openness, confidence and trustworthiness.

On your approach, extend your right hand. Continue to smile. The aim here is to connect with your partner the part of your hand between your thumb and forefinger. This part should interlock with the same part of your partner hand.

Your grip should be just right, natural and friendly. Crushing grips can be seen as over powering or obnoxious. A limp grip can give an impression of disinterest. Your grip should be a comfortable pressure communicating confidence and ability.

The physical steps to a good handshake are simple:

- Extend your right hand while making eye contact.
- Make good web-to-web and palm-to-palm contact.
- Shake from the elbow, not the wrist or shoulder; two or three good pumps are all you need.

-Focus on the moment, and try to be the person who ends the shake.

Handshake blunders

Shaking the tips of the finger - May be perceived as a lack of self confidence.

Energetic arm pump - Can sometimes be perceived as insincere.

Extending your arm with your palm facing down - This may be seen as disrespectful.

The Pull-In

The Two-Handed Shake

The Topper

The Finger Squeeze

The Bone Crusher

The Palm Pinch

The Limp Fish

The Proper Handshake

- Firm, but not bone-crushing
- Lasts about 3 seconds
- May be "pumped" once or twice from the elbow
- Is released after the shake, even if the introduction continues
- Includes good eye contact with the other person
- Hold your drink in your left hand to avoid a cold, wet handshake

Types You May Encounter in Work-Related Situations

It is useful to know what "type" of person you are meeting or working with to avoid making any faux pas. By accurately and quickly sizing up someone you meet, you may avoid unwittingly offending someone. If you believe someone is not trustworthy, you could avoid making any compromising revelations about yourself or your company.

Increased social mobility means that mixing is more and more important. Making the most of a business breakfast, whether it is with someone you have just met or a co-worker, is one way to network and get further up the ladder. Networking is, after all, a skill that may be learned, and with that skill business success often is facilitated.

You will encounter many different types of people at breakfast, lunch, or dinner meetings, at your company, or in working with clients or customers, but chances are they will fall into one of the following categories.

The Courtship Type

The courtship type needs to be courted before making any decisions. If you are dealing with this type, you should not, under any circumstances, pressure them into a "yes" or "no" on a particular subject at your first meeting. With courtship types you are better off having several meetings, with some time between each one, than trying to get an answer right away. For this type, the wooing and the process of getting this person to say "yes" is as important as the final decision. Courtship types will prefer working with you, rather than others, if you indulge their indecisiveness by giving them even more items to choose from, whether that is pictures of possible houses to buy, several projects that might be worked on, or ways of completing a certain task.

The Need-for-Closure Type

In contrast to the Courtship type, the Need-for-Closure type must come to closure by the end of your meeting. To deal with that type, make something concrete happen, such as "I'll call you on Monday" or "I'll send you a copy of that article I told you about," especially if you want to avoid a "yes" or a "no." Since there is this need for closure, you have to be careful that this type does not provoke a "yes" or "no" just to finalize the matter. Acknowledge this person's needs, "I know you want to finish up this project," but introduce your different approach by saying "but let's keep the door open another few weeks." Allay his or her fears by emphasizing that closure is not too far off: "Don't worry. I'm confident we'll nail down this new campaign by the middle of next month."

The Spy

Someone who pumps you for information, under the guise of being interested in you, but does not give any information back, is a spy. Or if they give information back, it may be false or inconsequential. Spies may also be in the position to use the facts and opinions you have given them against you, within

your own company or at a competing one. Be wary of someone who asks you excessive questions. If you do not see a mutually beneficial reason for revealing so much information, switch to another topic.

#### The Mentor

In contrast to the spy, mentors are those who genuinely care about others succeeding, sometimes even at their own expense. Recognizing and befriending a mentor in a business setting can help you since he or she will introduce you to others who can also help you along. How do you recognize a mentor? If this person begins sentences with "I can teach you" or "I can show you"; or they open up their network to you by saying something like "Let me introduce you to. . . ."

#### The Braggart

You have to listen patiently to every personal and professional achievement that the braggart has accomplished. Try to avoid drawing attention to your own triumphs; braggarts are insecure and want the platform all to themselves. It is best to let braggarts get their fill of bragging; then go on to the business at hand. Without being too obvious, give praise throughout the meal to boost the much-too-low ego of the braggart. For example, compliment their choice of restaurant (if they selected it), how they handled the waiter, or ask for any recommendations for dishes they have tried on the menu.

#### The Tell-All

The tell-all type needs to relate every minuscule detail of what went on right before your meeting. For example, at a morning meeting, a single man or woman who had a date that was particularly pleasant or traumatic the night before might want to share the experience with you. You might just as well sit back and enjoy the tale that the tell-all shares. Be supportive, empathetic, and nonjudgmental, but also be cautious since the tell-all just may repeat to others anything personal or professional that you relate.

#### The Manipulator

Watch out for this type since everything, from what is said to who picks up the check, can be manipulated by this type, who needs to control the situation. They are really insecure people who are unable to trust their instincts as situations unfold, so they try to manipulate every sentence, every situation. Stay calm and pleasant since you understand the manipulator's game.

#### The Workaholic

Workaholics are missionary in their commitment to their job, so you may have to hear about how hard they work, and what sacrifices they make for that job. Be sympathetic and congratulate them on their dedication. Avoid analyzing the psychological components of such a lopsided existence, since work is the defense that those who are frightened of relationships and free time hide behind. Workaholics will probably remind you throughout your meeting that they really do not have time for a leisurely talk—they should already be at work—so accept whatever time they can give you as the best they can offer. Workaholics have more of a need to tell you about their work rather than to hear about your own, so be a patient listener.

#### The Hidden Agendist

This type gets you to a meeting on one pretext; it is only by being astute and a good listener that you learn, sometime during your meeting, that there was a completely different motive for the encounter. For example, a co-worker might ask you to lunch on the pretext of discussing a report you are working on together. It is only halfway through the meal that you realize the hidden agendist wants to find out if you would give this person a recommendation if he or she were to give your name as a reference to a headhunter he or she is seeing. It is important when meeting with a hidden agendist to switch gears easily from the presumed to the actual reason for the meeting, and to be cautious for the remainder of the meeting since the motive for the meeting might even switch again.

#### The Lay Psychologist

This type has a need to analyze everything you say or do. Do not take it personally. However, this person does need affirmation, so humor the lay psychologist by saying something like, "How astute of you" or "That's quite an insight; you could have been a psychologist."

#### The Official Host

This is the person who actually called the meeting. When more than two are meeting, however, you can lose sight of this distinction as others may take over this role. Official hosts, however, may be insulted if their official host capacity is questioned or overthrown. Who is seen in this light may also determine who picks up the tab or brings the meeting to an end.

### The Unofficial Host

This is the person who takes on the role of host, even though it is really someone else who set up the meeting and is responsible for the check. The unofficial host is a strong personality type that rarely feels comfortable in the subordinate role. If you are dealing with this type, it is best to share the decisions at the meeting, such as where people will sit, who picks up the check (if meeting at a restaurant), and when the meeting is over, rather than make the unofficial host uncomfortable and anxious.

### The Nervous Wreck

Avoid laughing when nervous wrecks knock over water glasses, mistake the half-and-half for milk that someone can drink, or get their sleeves in the coffee. Nervous wrecks cannot help it, and the meal setting only exacerbates their nervousness. These types are best seen outside of a food context, such as at a meeting in their office where they are most comfortable. But sometimes breakfast, lunch, or dinner meetings with them are necessary and then it is best to be tolerant and compassionate about their nervous habits and accidents.

### The Success-Story Type

There are types who have achieved something that the other person (or persons) at a meeting has not yet done and feel the need to share that story with the others, whether they want to hear it or not. Success-story types have a need to share and educate, and you just might as well sit back and listen and possibly even learn something, because they need to tell it to you anyway. It could be a happily married woman telling a recent divorcee how to meet someone and get married again. It could be a vice president telling a new manager how he made it to the top. Since you understand that success-story types have a need to share their tales with anyone, do not take it personally as a put-down of your own achievements. They mean well.

### The "Life is a Struggle" Complainer

No matter how well things go for the complaining types, they dwell on the problems and setbacks they or others have faced. Being overly positive with them can just infuriate them, so listen patiently and agree that life can be a struggle without being condescending or becoming as depressed as they seem to be. Avoid bringing up all the joys in life as a counterpoint since this only fuels their angst.

### The Parent

This type is so enthralled with every stage a child is going through that he or she cannot resist providing every fact, even if it means detailing every struggle with the introduction of solid foods or toilet-training successes and failures. The best way to deal with this type is to listen intently—do not look bored or you might seem offensive—and say something like, "Isn't that cute" or "Isn't that very advanced for that age?"

### The "On-the-Make" Type

Be cautious with this type and avoid saying anything that could be misconstrued as giving credence to their fantasies. Dress appropriately, avoiding anything even somewhat risqué. Similarly, avoid using any sexual double-entendres, sexual phrases or expressions, or alluding to anything personal that could be taken as approval, on your part, of this person's behavior. This person arrives at the meeting turned on; it is your job to avoid fueling that aspect of your meeting's agenda. Neutralize the situation and stick to business.

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### **Lecture 3**

#### **BUSINESS CARDS AND NOTES**

##### **1. Business cards**

##### **2. Different types of notes**

International business today necessitates people travel all over the world for meetings, negotiations and other business functions. Along the way one will meet numerous people that all have the potential to give recommendations, pass over work or provide some sort of benefit. The business card is the key to remaining in their sphere of contacts.

Increasingly business cards need to be translated into foreign languages to ensure the receiver understands who you are and who you work for. However, translating a business card is not a simple as literally translating one language into another. There are many linguistic and cultural considerations one must take into account. In order to assist those needing their business cards translated the following ten tips are presented:

1 – Always have your business cards translated by a translator or translation agency. Your neighbour or friend may be capable of translating but to ensure the most suitable and professional language is used, use an expert.

2 – Try and have business cards printed only on one side and in one language. In many countries people will write on the back of your card. However, this is not always necessary and if there is a considerable amount of text you may use both sides.

3 – Keep your business card simple. All the receiver needs to know is who you are, your title, your company and how to contact you. The rest is superfluous. This also helps keep your translation costs down.

4 – Ensure the translator translates your title accurately. In some cases, due to the Western liking of complicated titles such “Associate Director of Employer Solutions”, this is not always easy. It is critical the receiver understands your position within a company. Therefore simplify your title as much as possible.

5 – Do not translate your address. All this does is help the reader pronounce your address. If they ever posted you anything the postman will be scratching his/her head.

6 - It can be useful to transliterate names including company names. This then helps the receiver pronounce them properly.

7 – Make sure numbers are arranged in the correct format. For example, if for any reason you need to write a date on a business card consider the local equivalent for dates – i.e. in Europe dates are written as date/month/year or in the Islamic world the Hijri calendar is used.

8 – Ensure you use the **correct language** when having your business card translated. If you are travelling to China you would need Simplified Chinese, whereas if you were travelling to Taiwan you would need Traditional Chinese. Similar differences exist in many parts of the world where language may have political consequences, i.e. the area formerly known as Yugoslavia.

9 – Try and research whether there are any **cultural nuances** that make a business card attractive in another culture. For example in China, using red and gold is considered auspicious.

10 – Finally, always learn a bit about the **cultural dos and don'ts** of giving/receiving business cards in foreign countries. Which hands should be used? What should one say? Where should you keep it? Can you write on it?

Although technological gains over the past few decades have fundamentally changed the way people across the world contact and communicate with one another, it is still the humble paper business card that acts as the initial glue which binds two business people together. Within the international fold, having your business card translated into a foreign language goes a long way in making an impression and forming relationships.

#### Giving or Receiving Cards or Notes

If you are afraid that even a modest gift of under \$10 could be misconstrued as an attempt at influence-peddling, if you are on a tight budget, or if gift-giving is simply not your style, consider sending cards or notes as a way of fostering goodwill and promoting yourself and your business. Cards or notes keep your name, or your company's name, out there and visible.

The most common time cards are exchanged in a business setting is during the annual Christmas or holiday season—so pleasant on a personal level and so necessary in the business world.

There are, however, other reasons that cards might be exchanged, but especially:

- Thanking someone for a business referral
- Birthday or anniversary of a close friend in business or of a more casual business associate celebrating a special birthday or anniversary, such as the 21st, 30th, 40th, 50th, 60th, or 75th (for birthdays) or the 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, 40th, 45th, 50th (for anniversaries)
- Promotion
- Graduation
- New job
- Marriage
- Thanking someone for any kind of exceptional help
- Condolences
- Get-well soon

Consider keeping a stack of cards that fall into the most typical categories—birth, marriage, congratulations, anniversary, condolences—available to you so you can send one at a moment's notice. In sending cards, as in sending a gift, immediacy enhances the impact of the gesture.

#### Christmas or Holiday Cards

Keeping track of the occasional card that you exchange in business is not as monumental a task as the Christmas card list you should be maintaining.

Consider a master list, maintained by a computer, if possible, in which you note all the names, addresses, affiliations, and cards sent and received, on a yearly basis. This master list could contain all your business contacts, whether or not a Christmas or holiday card is exchanged, or it could be just for Christmas card recordkeeping.

Even if you use a computer file, however, it is less appealing even in business to send a card in an envelope with a computer-generated address label than a handwritten address. But the computer file will make it that much easier to have up-to-date and accurate records and also to turn the master file over to someone else for addressing the envelopes.

You should maintain your list throughout the year, updating it with changes in addresses, affiliations, and phone numbers. However, if you have not done that kind of recordkeeping throughout the

year, preparing the list for the holidays is a good time to enter all those changes and get your address files in order.

Follow a system for keeping track of names and addresses that works best for you. The most obvious style would be alphabetical—by the last name of the person involved, regardless of where he or she works. Another system is to alphabetize by category, either the type of business or its name, with individuals' names listed beneath that entry. Make sure all entries are up-to-date, including any changes in name, address, or affiliation, by entering any changes you have been keeping on scraps of paper or on your Rolodex.

Here is a sample of a purely alphabetical listing:

Ms. Beverly Anthony  
Vice President  
Department of Communications  
Wilburt of Company  
47-01 Culver Street  
Paradise, Connecticut 08475

Mr. Carl Becker  
Account Executive  
Raymond, Kelly, and Brown  
47 Willoby Lane  
Columbus, Ohio 47302

Ms. Beverly Parker see Beverly Anthony

Here is an example of the category master-list system:

Raymond, Kelly, and Brown  
47 Willoby Lane  
Columbus, Ohio 47302

• Mr. Carl Becker, Account Executive  
Mr. Wayne Reynolds, Chairman of the Board  
Ms. Grace Winkler, Public Relations Associate

I use an alphabetical system with annotated Christmas or Hanukkah card exchanges. After each name, I indicate whether a Christmas or Hanukkah card was sent, the year sent, whether one was returned, and, if it was a special kind (or design) of card, what it was, so as to avoid duplication in the future. That a card was also received or returned by that person is indicated with an asterisk (\*). Here is a sample:

Rosemary Wilkins  
Manager  
Communications Department  
Triad Personnel Agency  
333 Westwood Boulevard  
Los Angeles, California 90046  
'88 Xmas sent 12/16/88\*  
'89 Xmas sent 12/19/89 (Boy-snowman drawing)

Some companies have adopted strict policies regarding holiday card exchanging because of the time, effort, and expense involved. Some try to limit the length of the lists (one company of 100 employees limited the total number of names to 1,000 that the employees in this firm could send cards to); others make card-sending an individual responsibility so that the cost is borne by the executive.

One executive came up with this solution to whether or not he should send holiday cards to each of his two hundred employees: for the last three years, he has sent an interoffice memo to all his employees notifying them that he has made a donation to his favorite charity in all their names, in lieu of sending them holiday cards, and that he suggests (albeit somewhat presumptuously) they do the same.

Other companies see sending holiday Christmas cards as a necessary business expense and they try to create or buy cards that will advance the company in its public relations efforts. On the opposite page are two holiday cards sent by two different companies. The first one, from John S. Sturges of Siebrand-Wilton Associates, Inc., a consulting firm, has a typical inside message; the promotional aspect of the card was contained in the business card, which was enclosed with the card.

The second card is one I received a few years ago from the National Business Employment Weekly newspaper, a Dow Jones publication, which was sent to authors and others affiliated with the paper. It is witty, original, and the theme pertains to the contents of the newspaper, job hunting-related information.

Try to select your company card and have it imprinted by November 15 to avoid a last-minute rush. Address and mail cards by December 15 so you can get the most mileage out of your efforts. (If you send your cards so that they arrive too close to December 25, it is unlikely you will receive a card in return, thus eliminating the possibility of the two-way communication that exchanging cards provides.)

Even if a card is inscribed—with your name or that of your company—sign each card you send. If possible, write a short note even if all you say is "Best wishes for the New Year." Sending an imprinted card without a personalized greeting, or even the name of the addressee written inside the card, defeats the goodwill sentiment that is behind the sending of the card.

If you or your firm are trying to conserve energy or time in any given year and you want to send a minimum of cards, consider these three approaches:

1. Send cards only to those who send to you.
2. Send cards only to those you sent to last year: do not increase your list this year.
3. Prune your list from last year by eliminating anyone with whom you have not done business and make the list reflective of your actual business needs rather than of years of back-and-forth exchanges that have become meaningless.

Once again, a card, whether it is an occasion card or a holiday card, should be appropriate and in good taste. Avoid funny cards if there is any possibility that the humor will either be missed or misunderstood. Avoid cards with any sexual connotation. For holiday cards, if your business deals with both Christians and Jews, consider a card with a winter theme and a more nonsectarian greeting, such as "Season's Greetings." If you deal only with Christians, a more religious card is acceptable; and if only with Jews, a Hanukkah card is perfectly all right.

Instead of a traditional Christmas card you might consider simply using attractive photographs, drawings, or landscape scenes that are blank inside, or with "Happy Holiday" imprinted. (See sample on next page.)

If your card will be used for business associates, reconsider the appropriateness of sending a photograph of your family or your children. This is fine as a personal holiday card for family and friends, but it is far too personal in a business context.

Observe the policy at your company about displaying Christmas or other cards. Some may find it festive to have all their holiday cards displayed on or around their desks. Others may find it tacky or causing too much competition among workers as to who has more cards. Cards taped to desks or overhanging storage areas may also be viewed disdainfully. If cards are to be displayed, more tasteful ways can be considered, such as creating a collage with the cards on a piece of green construction paper cut into the shape of a Christmas tree; running a string that cards can be hung over; or simply keeping the cards in a stack or in a basket on your desk.

#### Condolence Cards and Notes

One of the hardest notes to write, but one of the most important in terms of extending your goodwill when it will mean the most, is the note written at the time of sympathy. Even if you send a commercial condolence card, a personal note should be added to it.

Whether the condolence note is to a family member about your direct loss of a valued customer, client, or co-worker, or you are consoling your business associate about his or her loss, it is difficult to express sympathy in words. Many people tend to avoid dealing with the situation for fear of appearing unbusinesslike, or become so frozen by their emotions so that they seem rather cold and insensitive.

A useful way to improve any condolence note is to avoid such clichés as, "Words are inadequate to express my sadness." Instead, just use words as best you can to express your sadness.

If you knew the person who died, write even a brief line or two about the deceased, appropriately sharing a positive memory that will give the family something to add to their store of memories. This is not the time or place to air your gripes.

If you are consoling a business associate who has lost a family member, avoid clichés about what they must be feeling and avoid trying to compare losses, such as "I still remember how I felt when my



grandmother died five years ago." Instead, simply express your sorrow at the death of your business associate's family member. If you have made a donation in that deceased person's name, it may look less self-serving to have the organization that received your donation send a separate notice to that effect to your business associate. Leave that information out of your condolence card; otherwise it may look like you are trying to take advantage of the sad circumstances by playing the good samaritan.

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## **Lecture 4**

### **The Business Breakfast, Lunch, or Dinner**

#### **1. Business Breakfast**

#### **2. Business Lunch**

#### **3. Business Dinner**

Combining business with eating may be one of the most effective ways for a rising executive to move up even faster—as long as he or she shines in those situations. But business breakfasts, lunches, and dinners all have their advantages, disadvantages, and distinct rules. Some overall standards and tips apply, such as basic table manners, but there are other guidelines you should know about that will increase the likelihood that these eating events will thrust you forward on your professional ascent.

The business breakfast, for example, may be the best meeting time for business executives who work straight through lunch, whose lunch calendars are booked weeks in advance, or who need to get together to prepare for an event happening later that day. But the business lunch may be the least compromising food-related circumstance for a male-female business interaction to occur. The business lunch is far less ambiguous than the business breakfast, which could raise questions of where the pair spent the night before, or the business dinner, which could evoke gossip about where the pair will go at the end of the evening.

The business lunch is a marvelous opportunity to get better acquainted with those you work with and for, whether that means your clients, co-workers, superiors, or subordinates. For example, a consulting firm with 3,000 employees that is based in Illinois has a policy of its unit managers and groups going out for lunch or dinner instead of giving Christmas gifts, with guidelines in terms of reasonable expenditure and time away from the office.

Since success in practically every business these days rests on relationship-building, the informality of and added time available for a business lunch, versus a rushed meeting in the office or a faceless telephone conversation, may enhance your career.

There are, however, drawbacks to a business lunch if you fall into the trap of any of the following practices:

1. Showing such poor table manners that your prestige is lessened.
2. Blurting out too many inappropriate personal things about yourself so that your professional image is compromised.
3. Having so many alcoholic drinks that you are viewed as having a drinking problem; or if you become tipsy, offensive, or just plain drunk, and end up insulting other guests or even jeopardizing your career by arriving back at the office in bad shape.

Otherwise, the business lunch is a fun and productive opportunity to do business, get you midday nourishment, and feel connected to those you work with and for. One benefit of the business lunch over the business breakfast is that you may be more awake and relaxed at noon or 1 P.M. versus 7 or 8 A.M. Also, having a business lunch on your calendar, you may be in especially top form that morning, accomplishing so much at work that you exude confidence and self-esteem at your business lunch meeting. You might also have been using some of that time between arriving at work and meeting for lunch to make last-minute preparations for your business lunch, so that you can accomplish more than if you just rolled out of bed and into a business breakfast meeting. You might find the morning hours more convenient for a 7 to 8 A.M. game of tennis, with the benefits of before-work exercise as well as a definite starting and ending time that a business breakfast lacks.

Lois Wyse, co-founder and president of Wyse Advertising, says in her chapter on "The Power Lunch: Getting What You Want on the Table," in her book, *Company Manners*, that the power lunch is so important that the editor of *Good Housekeeping* magazine gave up hosting a noontime radio show because, "The job of an editor is to have lunch."

Wyse personally feels it is important to get out of the office at lunch-time, whether or not you have a power lunch planned, even if all you do is go to a museum or take a walk. She finds she needs to personally connect to the world during the lunch period. "It's depressing to stay in the office and have yogurt at your desk on a regular basis," writes Wyse.

Another advantage of the business lunch is that people who are otherwise not accessible to you—because family or even recreational commitments eliminate any time for getting together except during office hours—can be yours if you make that phone call and invite them to lunch. You may have to compromise about where to have lunch—if you are going to get more out of the lunch or if you initiated it, you may want to volunteer to go to your invitee's neck of the woods than have him or her travel all the way to where you work—but at least you get to connect and keep that all-important business-related relationship going.

A key business-lunch-related idea to remember is that you should not throw around the phrase "Let's do lunch" to a business colleague unless you mean it. The business lunch is serious business to anyone in the work world; only suggest it if you mean it. If you mean it, set up a specific time and date. If you only mean you would like someday to do lunch, state that as well, "When we get over this pretax deadline crush, let's find time to do lunch," a harried but sincere accountant might say.

If you invite someone to a business lunch and you go to a restaurant, food selection is up to the two of you. If you invite several persons to the executive dining room, you may want to plan the menu with the help of the chef so that your lunch seems more formal and prearranged. It also takes on a more cohesive feeling when all four participants eat the same foods, a course at a time.

Some companies today even employ a chef, and keep a small corporate dining area (that may double as a conference room when the meal is finished) in recognition of how important the business lunch, as well as serving good food, has become to the business community. If you are hosting the lunch, the menu you select, as well as the quality of the food you provide, just like the suit or dress you wear and the way you speak or write, are part of your company or business image. Take the time to plan a menu that is imaginative but not so extreme, like tongue as an appetizer, that few want to partake of your selections. Those in the business community, however, look forward to diversity at the business lunch as one of the perks of working.

Many of the concerns regarding the business dinner are the same as for lunch, namely the type of invitation you will extend—verbal or written; where the meal will occur—a company or public facility versus a private home; and the food and refreshments that will be served. (As an invited guest, your main concern is making sure you RSVP.) There are some differences between the business dinner and the business breakfast or lunch. First of all, it tends to be more formal than the business breakfast or lunch. This formality extends to the way invitations are made—usually in writing rather than by phone—as well as to the kind of dress expected. Whereas the attire worn to work that day is perfectly acceptable for the business lunch, the business dinner may require a change of clothes, especially for women, to something of a dressier nature.

Another consideration for someone hosting a business dinner which is not usually a concern for a business lunch is transportation. If possible, it is polite to provide transportation for your guests, especially transportation home for those guests who did not drive private cars to the dinner. Another concern is entertainment or music, which is more likely to be provided at a business dinner than at a business lunch. That entertainment might include a guitarist, a chamber ensemble, recorded background music, or even a standup comedian employed just for this occasion.

The business dinner also requires a decision about whether the dinner will occur on a weekday night or a Saturday night. Although most business lunches will occur during the Monday through Friday workweek, it is possible to have a business dinner on a Saturday night, especially if the dinner includes guests from a variety of companies who work in different parts of a city and have conflicting hours. For those types of dinner guests, getting to a dinner on a weekday night might be more of a hardship than giving up part of their leisure time on a weekend.

Finally, the business dinner requires a decision about whether or not spouses or romantic partners are included, rarely a consideration for the business breakfast or lunch.

Business dinners allow for more creativity in terms of place and menu. Rather than just your typical company dining room or restaurant catering to the business trade, you have a range of interesting places and experiences to choose from—from chartering a boat or yacht to take your guests down the river while they dine, to renting an elegant dining room that has the feel of a dinner party at a private home but is really part of a tastefully renovated townhouse whose owner is a gourmet chef and whose dinner guests are all private corporate dinner parties. (See the appendix for some sample business dinner menus.)

When you mix business with salad at lunch or with an appetizer at dinner, remember that the business comes first. Even if you or your business-lunch colleagues slip in some appropriate but personal information, such as the college or graduate school you attended, or family-related tidbits that somehow tangentially apply to the topics at hand, the primary focus should be business. Let's say you are a consultant and are meeting with a potential client. You might spend most of the lunch just chatting about work-related issues, but not quite zoning in on "closing the sale," so to speak; focusing on the business aspect of the lunch should occur by the time you finish the entree and before dessert and coffee, if not before. If you are the one with the stronger business agenda, it is important that you keep in control throughout the lunch and get the business part of it accomplished. It is frustrating to have a pleasant business lunch, to feel connected to your colleague, boss, or potential client, to even feel positive enough about the connection to pick up the rather large tab, only to realize an hour or so after the meal ends that you failed to do the business that was the initial reason for setting up the meeting.

Having a business lunch that is pleasant, nonpressured, yet true to its business motives might at first be difficult to pull off effectively, but with practice, it is possible.

By the way, be careful not to boast too much at a business lunch about how busy you are, or that potential client or employer might say, "I guess you are too busy to do a job for us," a point of view you have unwittingly created that may be hard to undo.

Consider your goals when you decide if you will ask someone to, or accept an invitation for, a business breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Could your business be conducted better in the office than in a food-related setting? Is the more casual atmosphere of a lunch in your best interest? If persons from a variety of firms or locations are involved, perhaps a business dinner is better since it allows more flexibility about arrival and departure times as well as the location of the dinner?

"Be up front about why you are taking someone to lunch," says business etiquette expert Randi Freidig. Since any kind of meeting that revolves around a meal may take from one to three hours of someone's time, make sure it is warranted. Continues Freidig: "Maybe it is something that could have been sent to them in the mail or you could have referred them to the right person. Everybody's trying to balance their lives, so be very respectful of people's time. Maybe you could do something over the phone. But sometimes people like to get away from the phone, and a meal is a fairly uninterrupted time to do so."

The first "who" to consider is with whom it is productive and appropriate for you to have a breakfast, lunch, or dinner meeting. The first scenario is where you know the person you are having breakfast with, either because you work together or have had dealings before, and breakfast is simply the most convenient time for both of you to have your meeting. Or you might have lunch with a co-worker as a way to combine eating with discussions about a project you are working on together.

In the second scenario, the breakfast meeting is your first meeting with each other, possibly following up several phone calls or letters. In that case, your ability to quickly and accurately size up the person you are meeting with will help you to know how to handle yourself during the breakfast meeting as well as in the relationship that may ensue. A meal is more open-ended than a meeting at an office. Should you open yourself up to that situation with a person or persons unknown to you?

The "who" of these business-related meals is important, especially if you initiate the meetings, because usually the one who initiates the meeting picks up the tab. Except for extenuating circumstances where the meeting is considered of mutual benefit and the more senior person picks up the tab, be prepared to pay for the meal if you do the inviting; otherwise, avoid a meal situation.

Once you decide that a breakfast, lunch, or dinner meeting is appropriate, where to have it is a matter of what type of eating facility fits your needs. Just some of the numerous options are the coffee shop near your office, the executive dining room, the breakfast room of a hotel, an elegant restaurant, a restaurant near a tourist attraction, the hotel suite of a visiting business executive (only if this is not compromising; and it may be better to have other colleagues along), or someone's home or apartment.

The choice of location should be a matter of courtesy and consideration. Do you wish to impress the other person, or does he or she wish to impress and please you? It shows consideration if you travel to a restaurant that is close to someone else, so keep that in mind when the place you meet is chosen. But you should also consider such etiquette issues as whether the person you are having breakfast with has a physical problem that might make it more reasonable for you to go to him or her; for example, if someone is in a wheelchair, is in the later months of pregnancy, or has a foot in a cast.

Another concern is who will get more out of this meeting. Is it in your best interest to ingratiate yourself with the person you are meeting with by going closer to his or her neck of the woods? If you do want to be the one to pick the place, it is more likely to happen if you are armed with a list of three possible restaurants and their addresses.

Try to pick restaurants that reflect the business level of the people you are meeting. In major cities, the dining room of a nice hotel can often be an elegant and quiet place to have a meeting, especially since most of the hotel's clientele (and staff) are geared to breakfast business meetings. But it can also be expensive, so be prepared with a credit card, ample cash, or the expectation that someone else will pick up the tab. If the person you are having breakfast with is staying at that hotel, it is probably better to suggest meeting at another hotel dining room, or he or she might think you are manipulating payment of the bill onto his or her room charges.

If a man and woman are having a breakfast meeting, make sure it is at a public restaurant, or if someone insists it will be easier to talk in a hotel suite with room service sending up breakfast, make sure there will be enough persons along to ensure a professional meeting without any possibility of hanky-panky or of rumors flying. If necessary, bring along your secretary or a co-worker to neutralize a situation that could be potentially anxiety-provoking or even damaging.

For some, the earlier the better when it comes to having a breakfast meeting—6 or even 7 A.M. is more convenient than 8 or 8:30 because it means they might get into work too late. Be careful you do not compromise yourself by agreeing to the earlier hours. This could happen not just by being seen coming out of a restaurant with someone at 7 A.M. but by being too tired at that time in the morning to function, let alone conduct a meeting and have a meal. If the time someone picks for a breakfast meeting is just unworkable for you, try to arrange a meeting in his or her office at a later time, or even a lunch date.

If a business lunch is more convenient for you or for those you care to dine with, be prepared to allocate at least two or more hours for your meeting and meal (depending on how far you have to travel and the kind of restaurant chosen), or it will seem too rushed.

A business dinner, depending on its starting time, may last anywhere from two to four hours. If the business dinner is truly combined with work, it may last until 11 o'clock at night. If possible, be considerate of the social and family obligations of those you are dining with when you consider what kind of meeting—breakfast, lunch, or dinner—would facilitate your professional goals. For example, a working mother who has to scramble to find evening childcare and deal with the stress of not putting her two toddlers to bed that night might find it more considerate if a meeting could be conducted over lunch rather than an evening dinner meeting.

Any meeting arrangement implies a promise to another person that you will appear at the agreed-upon time and place. For breakfast, lunch, or dinner meetings, there may be other people involved for whom your presence is considered essential, whether that means other participants in your meeting or even the restaurant that has reserved space for you and your meeting party. Furthermore, the persons with whom you have agreed to meet have blocked out time in their busy calendars to be able to have this meeting with you. Once you accept an invitation for a meeting—or your invitation is accepted—you and the other participants are obligated to follow through on that business function. Terms that should be agreed upon include the who, where, and when of the meeting. If someone tries to change them, you can reconsider the meeting, if necessary. For example, if you are under the impression you will be having a private breakfast meeting and your invited guest calls to tell you he plans to bring along his secretary and a manager visiting from another city, you can decide if this breakfast meeting is in your best interests and if you have to follow through on it. It might be better to reschedule for a more convenient time when it can be just the two of you.

If you have to cancel, do it as soon as you realize you have a conflict that prevents you from keeping your appointment. A reason for your decline is unnecessary, but if you want to provide a reason, make it believable and sincere without being so detailed as to be inappropriate. Try to be tactful when providing reasons for canceling so that the person you are canceling with does not feel less important than your new commitment. Attaching the reason to obligations rather than to individuals may prove helpful. For example, "I am closing on a new co-op apartment and I have to meet with my broker at the time we were planning to have breakfast," instead of "I have to meet with my broker." Or "I need to work through dinner to get this report to the printer by our deadline" instead of simply saying "I cannot get away for dinner tonight."

To offset the disappointment of canceling, try to reschedule immediately for another time and date. Reassure the other party or parties involved that you do not foresee anything interfering with your next meeting. Apologize profusely for canceling, since you do not want to get a reputation for being unreliable.

When you enter a restaurant, first check your overcoat and briefcase. (Of course, keep with you any materials you may want to present during your meeting.) By checking your coat, you avoid the problems that may occur if you place it on the back of your chair and someone walks by and accidentally knocks it down. If there is no place to check your coat, see if there are coat hooks or a self-service coat rack somewhere in the restaurant. Certainly if there is no one responsible for these self-service situations, take any valuables, including an expensive coat, along with you to your seat.

If you or those you are meeting made a reservation, it is polite to wait until your entire party arrives to be seated. This is because waiters do not make any money if you are sitting at a table awaiting other guests. They could lose one or two seatings of tips that way. (If you frequent a restaurant often, as a courtesy you may be allowed to be seated in advance.)

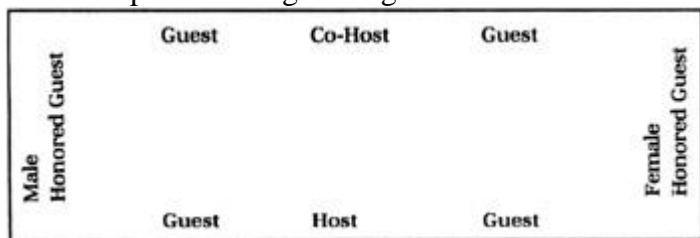
Always wait until a table is completely cleared and reset before you sit down. The host will lead the way for a woman, who will then have her seat pulled out for her.

As Marjabelle Young Steward and Marian Faux point out in *Executive Etiquette*, if you have to spread out papers at a meeting with just one other person, you still might want a table for four, rather than for two, and then you might have good reasons for wanting the other person to sit at your right rather than across from you, or vice versa.

At a business dinner, it is customary to separate spouses in the seating arrangement—whether by putting other people between them at one table or by seating them at separate tables if there are two or more tables. This allows married couples to converse easily with others. Unless there is a very good reason to take objection to this practice, try to comply.

Here is a seating arrangement that William Thourlby in *Passport to Power* indicates is a popular one when entertaining at home or at a restaurant. Writes Thourlby: "The host and co-host (or couple) take their places on opposite sides of the table, indicating that honored guests are to be seated at the ends of the table, usually with the woman guest to the right of the woman host."

- Popular Seating Arrangement at Home or in a Restaurant



[Reprinted from *Passport to Power* by William Thourlby (New York: Forbes/Wittenburg & Brown, 1990).]

As etiquette expert Randi Freidig notes: "Remember you are there for business first, not to eat. Don't order things you love to eat but are real difficult and messy things, like French dipped sandwiches and French onion soup. For me, since I was brought up by Norwegians on meat, potatoes, and gravy, I have a hard time with fettucini. I have to concentrate a lot on getting the fettucini from the plate to my mouth."

Stick with familiar foods and eat slowly since that is polite; it also indicates you are confident, reserved, and in control of yourself and your food.

Smoking is tolerated but less acceptable in the United States, although some diners may still want to smoke at the table. Smoking should not be done at the table. A smoker should ask to be excused at an opportune time, and smoking should be done at designated smoking areas in a restaurant or outside the hall of an apartment or in the outside open air. Depending on how much you want to ingratiate yourself with the smoker, particularly foreigners for whom smoking is still more acceptable, you may decide to allow him or her to smoke at your table. The smoker should always ask, "Do you mind if I smoke?" to the host or hostess, although it would be even nicer to make sure everyone at the table is in agreement. If the smoker does not ask if anyone minds, and you or another guest does mind, try to voice your objections in a neutral way, placing the blame on a medical problem rather than the smoker's offensive habit. For example, say, "I'm sorry but I'm allergic to smoke. Would you mind smoking on the terrace?" If the smoker is the guest of honor, you may decide to let him or her smoke without such comments or restrictions.

As mentioned before, the meal is the excuse behind the business that is to be conducted, so try to stick to business. If you do talk about something else, make it interesting conversation rather than personal matters.

Etiquette dictates that whoever initiated the meeting, or whoever is in a senior capacity, should pick up the tab. However, there are exceptions. For example, if one person is on a business account and the meeting is business-related, and the other person is a freelancer or self-employed, the salaried person who can charge it as a business expense may want to pick up the check even if the other person initiated the meeting. You might also suggest going Dutch if there could be any possibility of misconstruing the situation as an attempt to win someone's favor when neutrality is essential. (This is true of many persons in

the media, such as journalists or television reporters, for whom accepting even a business breakfast could be misinterpreted as attempting to influence someone and might be looked upon unfavorably by employers.)

When it comes to lunch in a corporate dining room or lunch in a restaurant with one person as the host or hostess, it should be clear from the format of the business lunch that the host is taking care of all costs (except possibly tips for the coat checker or the bathroom attendant, if an outside facility provides such services).

Although the formal, written thank-you note may be more commonly associated with more elaborate executive entertaining, saying at least "thank you" after the event is important for the business breakfast, lunch, or dinner as well. Claudia Kahn, who is head of corporate public relations for Merrill Lynch, says that a failure to send thank-you notes is one of the most overlooked aspects of business etiquette. Says Kahn: "We go out of our way to encourage sending thank-you notes," especially whenever an executive is invited to a business dinner. Kahn thinks it is important to send thanks, yet people tend to forget, or fail to make it a priority, so they make time to do it. Therefore it may be nice to telephone a thanks, but a written one is more proper.

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## **Lecture 5**

### **TABLE MANNERS**

## 1. Importance of table manners

### 2. Table manners basics

The basics about table manners from your own upbringing are: "Wipe your mouth with a napkin." "Don't talk with a mouth full of food." "Don't begin eating till the host or hostess is seated and begins." "Bring your food up to your mouth, don't hunch over and shovel it in." Additional help or a refresher course about table manners may be necessary, however, if you feel yours are not up to par. Furthermore, some of the younger rising executives, raised by dual-career couples, may not have received the around-the-table training at home since often they ate at separate times. Image consultants and etiquette gurus do offer table manner seminars and courses for those who need basic training or a refresher course.

The obvious guidelines about table manners apply: use a napkin; put your fork down between bites; cut your food as you go along, rather than all at once as you do for an infant or child; and ask to have items passed that are too far away to reach.

In *Executive Etiquette*, Marjabelle Young Stewart (and Marian Faux) points out that there are two methods of eating: the American and the Continental. The American method of eating involves cutting a piece of food with the knife in the right hand, and the fork in the left hand, laying the knife down on the plate, then transferring the fork with the tines up to the right hand, and then bringing the food to your mouth. In the Continental method, your left hand brings the fork to your mouth with the prongs down. Stewart suggests that both methods are fine, but whatever method you use, you should be comfortable with it. If necessary, practice the method in your own home before you try it out in a public situation.

Try not to finish every last piece of food on your plate, and try to keep pace with the others with whom you are dining. Eating too slowly or too quickly draws attention to your eating habits, and you want your habits to be so impeccable that the focus is on the meeting part of the meal get-together, not the eating part. Rather than using your fingers to get at foods that are hard to pick up, use just your fork or a piece of bread as a "pusher."

To look in-the-know and sophisticated, avoid mistaking the busboy or maitre d' for the waiter.

Ask to be excused if you have to use the restroom or make a telephone call. Women should not powder their noses, look in a mirror, or put on lipstick at the table. Those actions should be reserved for the restroom.

Business etiquette inspires in the office what table manners inspire in the family. family.

Remember sitting at the dining-room table and eating a holiday meal as a parent carefully monitored your every move? Did you remember to put your napkin in your lap? Did you forget and put your elbows on the table or chew with your mouth open? Undoubtedly, any slip in table manners would be dealt with after the guests had gone home.

Those stern looks your mother or father shot across the table, however, were actually preparing you for your career in the business world. The values you learned, even the most painful of those lessons, instilled tools that were destined to help you attain success in your business relationships—civility, harmony, acceptance and respect.

How often do these tools come in handy as you negotiate a deal or mediate a disagreement? How many times has the ability to accept reality or a final judgment allowed you to move seamlessly to the next project? When have these and other tools made it possible for you to enter a new arena of self-confidence, feeling equipped to do what you do best?

Business entertaining is often a requirement to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

Form relationships.

Express gratitude for previous business.

Celebrate and reward business success.

Create an atmosphere for decision-making away from the office.

Knowing and practicing the etiquette of entertaining becomes a valuable business tool for every member of your team. Use your experiences to mentor others.

Top Ten Tips for Attending Business Meals:

Arrive promptly and remain standing until the host indicates where you should sit.

Place your napkin in your lap as soon as you are seated.



Never order the most expensive item on the menu. Avoid ordering hard-to-handle foods when trying to make a positive first impression, e.g., spaghetti, barbecue ribs, onion soup.

Start eating when your host begins eating.

Don't know which is yours and which belongs to the person sitting next to you? Remember "BMW"—the Bread plate is on your left, the Main plate is in front of you and your Water glass is on the right of your plate.

If you use a packaged sweetener, tear off only a corner, and place the empty container on the table, just under the edge of your bread plate.

Never salt your food before tasting it first. Salt and pepper are always passed together, even if someone asks for one.

Pass food counterclockwise around the table the first serving. Then pass food to the person requesting it in the shortest route.

If you eat an olive with a pit or find gristle, bone or other things in your food, quickly remove it from your mouth and place it on the side of your plate.

Place your napkin on the chair if you leave the table during the meal. Your napkin stays in your lap until everyone is ready to leave the table. Then place it, folded, to the left of your plate.

"Always" rules for savvy hosts at business events:

Invite a variety of personalities and business types.

Extend invitations in plenty of time—about two to three weeks ahead.

Treat every guest as a V.I.P.

Never make issue of a mistake, such as accidental spills or misuse of silverware.

Watch alcohol intake. People are watching your lead.

Smile. Mingle. Visit. Introduce. Put your guests at ease.

When hosting a reception:

Reserve only for special occasions—retirements, anniversaries, opening nights!

Hold your event between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. or 10:30 p.m. and midnight, depending on regional preferences.

A reception is not a place for lengthy discussion. The idea is to mix and mingle socially with many people.

Plan entertaining thoroughly, carefully and well in advance.

If your budget allows, a meeting planner or staff assistant can save wear and tear...on you!

Consider how to best facilitate business objectives. Plan for sufficient room and privacy with plenty of comfortable seating.

Have good food and adequate service staff in the kitchen.

If you must cut down on expenses, invite fewer guests. Never sacrifice quality for quantity.

Initiate introductions. Don't wait. Just do it!

When introducing yourself to strangers, relax. They are probably feeling uncomfortable, as well, and will be delighted you took the initiative to make the introduction.

When introducing someone to your client, mention the client's name first. "Mr. Client, I'd like you to meet my boss, Bill Jones."

When introducing a person into a group, mention that person's name first. "Paul, I'd like you to meet my friends."

When a business breakfast is effective:

When you know the person's best alert time is in the morning.

To brainstorm when everyone is fresh at the day's beginning.

When there are few issues to discuss.

To introduce a new employee.

To discuss an upcoming meeting or event.

To tie up loose ends.

When a business lunch is effective:

To get to know someone more personally.

As a first meeting with a client.

During the interview process.

To discuss a proposal or plan of action.

When a business dinner is appropriate:

To entertain out-of-town business associates.

As a special acknowledgment for a job well done or other recognition.

As an opportunity to invite spouses.

To keep the time frame open-ended, so no one feels rushed.

How to offer a toast:

Never offer a toast before the host.

When the host offers a toast to the guest of honor, raise your glass, nod your head toward the honored guest, and take a sip along with everyone else.

If you would like to make a toast, subtly request permission from your host. Keep remarks short and positive.

You may make or take part in a toast with a nonalcoholic beverage.

When you are the guest of honor, acknowledge the host's toast with a smile (do not raise your glass). You may extend a toast to him in return.

Awkward situation? Don't know what to do?

Someone uses your bread and butter plate? Put your bread on your dinner plate.

Someone drinks out of your water glass? Order tea.

Someone has had too much to drink? Help remove them from the situation.

You're trying to have a conversation while sitting next to people who are talking too loud? Suggest moving to another table or finish the discussion at a later time.

In countries where food is at a premium, leaving food on your plate is considered bad manners. In America, feel free to leave some food on your plate since our servings are often super-sized helpings.

If you're conducting business during a meal:

Start with casual conversation.

Turn the conversation gradually to business, but begin before dessert! Say, "I appreciate you taking time away from the office so that we can discuss..."

When attending a business buffet, the best etiquette is not to pile your plate high. Take only what you'll eat. You can go back for second helpings.

Eight tips for eating while standing:

Assume food served without utensils is finger food.

When standing, balance your drink and your plate of food in your left hand with your cocktail napkin under the plate for easy wiping.

Since people are more conscious of germs today, you might move your plate to your right hand to eat with your left after shaking hands.

Place a napkin under your glass when setting it down.

Enjoy the foods you can eat. Don't discuss those you can't.

Mingle. Avoid monopolizing anyone's attention.

Accept refreshments, even if you do not eat or drink them.

Never feel awkward asking for a nonalcoholic drink.

To leave one group of people and move to another at an event or reception graciously, simply say, "Excuse me. I've enjoyed talking with you." Then walk away.

When the party's over:

Thank the host for the invitation.

Compliment the host/hostess on the party.

Leave just a bit before the appointed hour.

Send a handwritten, thank-you note within one to two days.

Be a good guest when you receive an invitation:

RSVP—these four little words remain a mystery for many. However, when you receive an invitation asking for an RSVP (from the French—*repondez sil vous plait*—which means "please respond") simply call or e-mail the host to say whether or not you plan to attend.

Respond quickly—one week maximum!

Can't attend at the last minute? Don't earn the reputation of a "no-show." Call your host before the event. In the rare case you are not able to attend, call the next day to apologize.

For smooth entertaining, understand the restaurant service staff and their functions:

Maitre d'—the headwaiter who leads you to your table.

Captain—the waiter who takes your order and supervises your meal service.

Wine steward—the expert (often called "sommelier") who can guide your wine selection.

Waiter—your server.

Knowing when and how much to tip is imperative:

Good service equals a good tip. Don't be cheap when the service is outstanding. These minimums are courtesy of the American Society of Travel Agents.

Parking attendant—\$1 to \$2

Valet—\$2 to \$5

Taxi or limo driver—15%

Waiter/waitress—15% to 20% (excluding tax)

Wine steward or sommelier—\$3 to \$5 per bottle

Bartender—15% to 20%

Hotel bellman—\$1 per bag

Doorman hailing a taxi—\$1

Concierge—\$2 to \$10

Cloakroom attendants—\$1 per coat

#### A Review of Basic Table Manners

- Lay a napkin across your lap. Except when eating lobster, do not use it like a bib.
- Hold cutlery correctly and work from the outside in, with fork on the extreme left and the spoon or knife at the extreme right.
  - To indicate you have finished eating, place your cutlery on your plate in the clock position of about ten to four.
- Pass the salt and pepper together.
- Take a piece of bread from the bread basket and put it on your separate bread plate. Eat only one piece before the meal; it is poor manners to eat all the bread and have to ask the waiter for more.
  - Do not use toothpicks at the table. Excuse yourself, go to the restroom and, in privacy, take care of any pieces of food that are caught between your teeth.
  - Do not dunk anything.
  - Do not chew with your mouth open.

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## **Lecture 6**

### **BUSINESS DRESS**

- 1. Image and business dress**
- 2. Image Self-Evaluation**
- 3. Do's and Don'ts of Business Dress**

Image is the sum total of our appearance, speech, demeanor, and even our people skills. Image is what the noted late sociologist Erving Goffman referred to as impression management. There are as many images as there are people, but what we are concerned with is whether or not your business image fits the type of work you have to do and the company you have to do it in. A car company, an industry which has been one of the foundations of the economy in the United States, chose well when it picked Lee Iacocca, someone with a fatherly image, to lead a revitalization of design and production. A major movie studio, when a Japanese company bought it to take it from its "has-been" status and revitalize it as one of the new creative, economic leaders in the field, was wise to pay millions of dollars to put the two hottest independent producers at its helm. Their image of megahits became instantly associated with the new movie studio.

Some aspects of our image we are born with, such as height, bone structure, or facial features. But even those physical aspects of image may be changed by us doing everything from keeping in shape instead of becoming overweight or obese, applying just enough makeup rather than too much or the wrong colors, or even having cosmetic surgery, if necessary. Clothing may definitely enhance or detract from someone's basic physical self. If your taste is questionable, consider a "personal shopper" who, with your corporate image in mind, suggests clothing selections that suit your body type, coloring, and corporate image. An executive in Washington, D. C., for example, never really felt comfortable with her clothing choices for work. Although she was always well dressed, shopping was stressful for her. Since she started using a personal shopper, some of the anxiety has been removed from her business clothes shopping. She is also more likely to update her wardrobe every six months, rather than every couple of years.

Voices may be trained to be more pleasant or softer. Speech may be modified so that specific words or how they are spoken make a better impression. Nails may be cleaned, polished, or colored. Hair may be coiffed, curled, or colored. Just how important nicely done hair is for the executive woman is evidenced by the growing number of 6:00–7:30 A.M. and late-night hairdressers, who cater to professional women, as reported by Deirdre Fanning in the *New York Times*. Executives in all fields, from advertising, law, banking, and interior design, to newscasters, may have their hair done as often as three times during a business week before or after work.

An exercise regime tailored to your current physique, weight, and endurance will give you extra stamina and strength. Not only is being in shape good for your heart, health, and self-esteem, but some

companies officially or unofficially discriminate against overweight employees or applicants in terms of advancement or hiring opportunities.

Image consulting is a new field that emerged in the 1980s to fill the needs of corporations and individuals in enhancing their professional appearance. The 1994–95 edition *Directory of Personal Image Consultants* compiled by Jacqueline Thompson lists hundreds that do image consulting with specialization in the areas of speech, etiquette, dress, color, motivation, and career development.

Remember that personal habits that are demonstrated while you are communicating, whether that means inappropriately combing your hair during a business meeting or chewing on celery or gum during a telephone call, are all part of the image we convey. How positive or negative that image is not only reflects on us but on those for whom we work. It may also be a factor in why someone wants to continue to do business with us or our firm, or switches to another executive or professional. (I remember all too well how uncomfortable it was to have an orthodontist with halitosis! An expectant mother told me she was uneasy being treated by an obstetrician with long, dirty nails.)

The theme of a talk by outplacement counselor John Artise at a luncheon meeting of the Sales Association of the Graphic Arts was "Mind Your Manners." Artise stressed how everything—from how you look to sales etiquette over the phone to keeping client confidences—may be the deciding factors in whether a client stays with one salesperson (or service provider) versus another. Advocating a holistic approach to image, Artise said: "You should convey the impression that there is a harmony and a balance about you, and that includes everything from the color coordination of your clothes to your grooming, attitude, and demeanor."

Unfortunately, it is hard for any of us to assess accurately how we appear to others since research has shown that most people are extremely poor judges of how others see them. If you are unsure what impression you give others, set up a situation outside your job, with friends or acquaintances giving you feedback as to your appearance, self-confidence, and communication skills. If that approach is discomfiting to you, consider finding a course or seminar given by an image consultant where part of the session is a stock-taking, with feedback, by your teacher and other students, as to what first impression you are actually making on strangers. You might also ask a friend or relative to videotape you. Then, in the privacy of your home or office, you can review the tape and critique your image. If being videotaped is uncomfortable for you, you might at least have a still photograph taken of you. Even critically studying that photograph will provide evidence of some basics of your image, such as if your shape appears too thin, too fat, or just right. Is your outfit appropriate, striking, or too casual? Are you smiling, sad, inexpressive, or bright and cheerful? Are your accessories coordinated and attractive?

Some businesspersons, or their bosses, are finding that seminars on creating a positive professional image offer valuable basic information, but some employees with problems in this area also need a more individualized approach. To overcome image problems that may be hampering a manager's ability to command authority, ask for and receive a raise, or represent the company in an exemplary way, private image coaches are being hired by companies or by the employees themselves, as discussed in Claudia H. Deutsch's *New York Times* article, "To Get Ahead, Consider a Coach." In addition to videotaping a client to review how he or she actually appears, coaches, who may be management consultants, sociologists, psychologists, psychotherapists, or human resources experts, may role play problem or threatening situations, such as asking for a raise or reprimanding a subordinate, helping the employee to improve his or her mastery of the situation. Written tests may also be given and analyzed to determine the client's strong areas and deficiencies. Co-workers, employers, or employees may be interviewed to give their opinion of the client's corporate/business image, or a coach might observe a client at work to provide data for his or her own opinion of the client's behavior. Videotapes showing ideal behavior, such as effective ways of walking, talking, or interacting with customers, may also be reviewed.

Do you even know what kind of image you project? What will help you succeed as a vice president for a bank based in Richmondville, New York, may not be the image you want as marketing manager for a beverage distributor in Atlanta, Georgia. To help you learn more about your current image, take the image self-evaluation test that follows.

#### Image Self-Evaluation

Circle the answers that most closely fit your current job situation.

1. When it comes to punctuality, I am on time

- a. all the time
- b. most of the time
- c. rarely
2. At my level, dress should be
  - a. what I wear
  - b. more formal than what I wear
  - c. I am not sure
3. I answer letters
  - a. right away
  - b. within a week
  - c. sometimes never
4. My handwriting is
  - a. easy to read
  - b. adequate
  - c. illegible
5. I chose my eyeglasses
  - a. for appearance and to correct my vision problems
  - b. to correct my vision problems
  - c. I did not give my glasses much thought
6. I go to the hairdresser/barber
  - a. as needed
  - b. once every three months
  - c. rarely
7. I think about my image
  - a. everyday
  - b. rarely
  - c. never
8. On my last job, my boss said my image was
  - a. outstanding
  - b. average
  - c. in need of work
9. In terms of honesty, others would say I am
  - a. always honest
  - b. honest most of the time
  - c. dishonest in business but honest in my social life
10. If I am at a business lunch and my hair is out of place, I would
  - a. fix it in the restroom
  - b. leave it alone till I got back to the office
  - c. I probably would not even know it was out of place

How many c answers did you indicate? You need to learn about the basics of creating an image; your c responses suggest areas you need to give special attention. Your a answers reflect your solid understanding of basic grooming and related image issues. Your b answers indicate those areas you might want to work on.

Look over your answers. Which aspects of your image are you pleased with or do you want to change? Work on each change you want to accomplish, one concern at a time, until your image is as professional and flattering as possible. After you finish this book, go back to this self-evaluation and take it again, noting how your image has improved or where changes still need to be made.

How important is image to a rising executive? It should be one of your most vital concerns, that is, if you want to impress a headhunter like Howard S. Freedman, Vice President at Korn/Ferry International, the largest executive search firm in the world. Says Freedman, author of *How to Get a Headhunter to Call*: "People with a touch of class are still the ones who have an edge. It's as simple as that. First impressions, including how you dress and carry yourself, are important."

## Do's and Don'ts of Business Dress

After having a pleasant and winning attitude and image, how you dress for work ranks as one of the key elements to correct business etiquette. You will first be judged by how you look (next by how you speak, and third by the office you work in). Neat, appropriately dressed rising executives will inspire more confidence than those who are disheveled, inappropriately dressed, or too flamboyant. In some industries, to avoid the element of personal choice which might lead to questionable attire in some cases, the so-called "soft" uniform has been introduced. In those situations, employees are given a range of acceptable outfits that they have to buy and wear, with the result looking more or less like a uniform. (Airline attendants or fast-food restaurant employees have a uniformed look, whereas some bank employees who are actually wearing soft uniforms seem to be wearing mix-and-match sportswear.)

Although most companies do not have the rigid dress codes apparent when "hard" or "soft" uniforms are worn, there are standards of acceptable dress, at each level of the corporation, that you should know about. Some companies may even have a written dress code, although at other companies the code may be a more informal one that requires you to look like others at your level. A manufacturing company based in Buena Park, California, only has a dress code in terms of safety issues, according to its former human resources manager. Some companies may have a "dress down" Friday, when all levels of employees are allowed to dress more casually—but the line is drawn at rubber thongs or shorts. Shirts without ties are okay and executives may even wear jeans.

Says the manager of human resources for a San Diego-based insurance company: "Except for casual Friday (after we get paid), we expect our executives to dress appropriately in professional dress, which means women are to dress professionally with appropriate shoes and nylons. Men should wear dark shoes, dark socks, pressed slacks, pressed shirt, a tie."

As image consultant William Thourlby writes in *Passport to Power* about the importance of our dress: "There is probably no sphere of human activity in which our values and our lifestyles are reflected more openly than in the way we present ourselves to others by the way we dress.... The power to inspire, control and even manipulate those with whom we come in contact, lies in the decisions you make regarding how you choose to package yourself."

What dress is expected of you may differ within the same company based on the job you hold, with distinctive looks for secretaries, sales representatives, assembly-line workers, managers, vice presidents, or presidents. There may even be differences among divisions within the same company if division heads are personally allowed to set the standards for their employees.

There may also be differences on acceptable dress depending upon the profession you are in, or whether you are self-employed or working for a small company or a major corporation. Someone who writes screenplays for a television series who is self-employed might dress casually at home when writing scripts, but wears typical business attire when meeting with studio executives. A writer on staff at a small, independent company might wear very casual dress all the time at work, whereas another staff writer, employed at a major network, might dress daily in corporate business attire.

If you work behind the scenes in a television newsroom, for example, it may be perfectly acceptable to wear jeans and a shirt without a tie. But if you work on camera for the same station, a business suit may be required of both men and women. If you work on Wall Street, even if it is behind the scenes, the kind of dress permitted in a newsroom would be considered unconventional, inappropriate, and would garner negative attention.

Dress may differ depending upon what section of the country you work in, and whether you work in a city or a more rural area. East Coast major cities, like New York, Boston, or Philadelphia, may be more conservative than West Coast major cities, like Los Angeles or San Diego. San Francisco may be more like New York than Los Angeles. I remember, years ago, when I was looking for a job in San Francisco at an advertising company, the employment agency I went to told me to change out of my too-flamboyant black opaque stockings and into sheer hose instead. Smaller cities or rural areas may be more casual than larger cities. A suit may still be required if you work in a smaller city or town, but it might not have to be a dark, conservative suit or the latest fashion statement.

Study the type of dress of successful people at your level at the company you work for. For women, what suits or dresses do they wear? What are the most typical styles or colors? How much jewelry is worn,

and what type? What types of handbags and other accessories do they wear? What types of attaché cases do they carry? Do they use perfume?

Chairman Harold Burson of the public relations firm Burson-Marsteller notes: "In my experience, people conform fairly well to appropriate dress, or they learn very, very fast."

In Kathleen A. Hughes' *Wall Street Journal* article, "Businesswomen's Broader Latitude In Dress Codes Goes Just So Far," it is pointed out that business-dress researcher John T. Molloy asked managers to describe their employees' style of dress, and then tracked their careers for three years. He found that female office workers whose clothes were labeled "extremely feminine" "were typically paid less and promoted less frequently. The highest-paid women, on the other hand, were those whose dress was described as professional, dull, conservative, non-sexy or non-frilly."

For men, what color and style of suits do they wear at your company? What pattern and color are their ties? What color and style of shirts? Is white the only acceptable color, or do executives wear blue or even pink shirts? What kind of attaché case do they carry?

Hughes reports that since acceptable business dress is more uniform for men than for women, the mistakes men make in how they dress are less dramatic than those of women, but just as damaging to a rising career nonetheless. She notes in particular that men "...are often judged harshly for looking too sloppy, too casual, too quirky or too flashy." (Should you really wear the tie with a huge fish on it that your eight-year-old daughter bought you for Father's Day?)

To avoid looking sloppy, if a man or a woman has to carry additional materials that do not fit into a attaché case, what is the most acceptable carryall? (How often have you seen a distinguished-looking executive carrying a \$200 attaché case, only to have extra newspapers or other reading materials in a plastic shopping bag?)

Remember that you should be serious about your business wardrobe. You should not risk your professional image by wearing clothes that are either too cheap, too old (worn-looking, baggy, in need of repair), out of style, or inappropriate for the environment in which you work.

As image consultant Susan Bixler notes in her book, *The Professional Image*: "The best business wardrobes begin with a plan. Just as companies project their income and expenditures, you need to plan specifically how you will invest the next fifty dollars or five hundred dollars or one thousand dollars you spend for your clothing." Bixler suggests you go through your closet and sort your clothes into four piles: useless; marginal; worn regularly and comfortable; and sportswear or formal wear.

Be very careful about what clothing you wear when you interview for a new job, especially if you are changing the kind of work you will be doing, because what clothes work at your current job may be completely out of place at the new one. Dress for the job you are applying for, not the one you already have. This point is illustrated by Wayne, a forty-year-old struggling to support his family on \$40,000 a year. He had an opportunity to get a new job, at nearly twice his current salary, but the interview process was grueling. Wayne had been working in the creative end of the entertainment business, at a job that tolerated informal dress—casual pants, even jeans, and knits or shirts without ties—but at his new job, he would need traditional business suits. Because he had only one suit, Wayne hoped the interviews were spaced far enough apart so no one would notice he was wearing the same clothes each time. (His finances were too tight to buy a second suit unless he did, in fact, get the job and needed it for his career. Otherwise, casual clothes would do just fine.) If Wayne got the new job, he would be representing his new employer to the media, so they wanted to be sure he would make the right impression. They carefully looked over Wayne's clothes and coat.

Wayne did get the job, and the first thing he did upon learning the news was to rush out to the well-regarded Brooks Brothers store. The suits he chose would be tailored in time for his first day of work, two weeks away. He also bought two more suits at another store that caters to executives. To complete the picture, Wayne bought new ties, shirts, shoes, and a British raincoat that seemed to announce class and distinction.

#### Business Dress Do's

1. Whatever the dress code for your company, follow it. (In California, employees of some companies, such as independent film companies, rarely wear suits. Don't try that if you are a manager at a Boston bank.)



2. Within the dress code for your company, figure out the colors and styles that are most flattering to you. Paisley ties are appropriate for executives, but you may look better in a red and gray paisley rather than a blue and maroon one.

3. If you wear jewelry, it should be subtle and low key, not flamboyant, very large, or too noticeable. (For women, jewelry can still be part of the "look" of an outfit of a particular color without looking too much like the costume jewelry one might wear to a festive Saturday night party.)

4. Every part of your outfit—from your shoes to your tie or the barrette in your hair—should go together and be kept in tiptop shape: polished shoes, a pocketbook that does not look worn, fashionable shirts, well-pressed suits or dresses, ties without stains.

5. For men: Make sure your non-button-down shirt collars have stays in them.

6. For men: Make sure you take into account the standard dress code as it relates to the change in seasons—in general, in the East and Midwest, white and tan between Memorial Day and Labor Day only.

#### Business Dress Don'ts

1. For both sexes, white shoes are taboo before Memorial Day and after Labor Day.

2. Do not wait for someone else to point out that your shoes need to be polished.

3. Never wear the same suit or dress two days in a row.

4. Never wear white socks with a dark suit.

5. Never wear a tie with food stains unless it blends in with a dark paisley pattern.

6. Never wear riding boots to work (unless you are one of the top executives of the company with such a noteworthy job-performance record that no one would mind if you even brought the horse).

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## **Lecture 7**

### **Business Gift-Giving and Receiving**

- 1. Business gifts**
- 2. Reasons for Gift-Giving**
- 3. The When and How of Gift-Giving**
- 4. Thank-you notes**

There is probably no other area fraught with so much confusion and unfair bad-mouthing as the business practice of gift-giving. Yet, when the motives are clearly the fostering of goodwill and relationship-building, rather than a manipulation of influence through material goods or favors, business gift-giving and receiving may enhance business and a positive business climate.

In Japan, business gift-giving has been an established institution since feudal times, notes Yumiko Ono in the *Wall Street Journal*. Called *oseibo*, it occurs during the first two weeks of December. Today, the Japanese spend over \$10.5 billion each year on *oseibo*, giving such traditional gifts as seaweed, cooking oil, or instant coffee to bosses and others that they wish to impress.

Except during the holiday season, Americans do not have a set time, or type of present, that is appropriate in fostering goodwill in business. In the United States, any legitimate reason to give a gift is an excellent opportunity to cement a business relationship or to make known your positive feelings about an employee, client, or customer.

Some companies, however, because of the nature of their business or their own corporate culture, have strict policies against certain types of gift-giving, such as from a client or any other company that does business with the company. These policies help to prevent a conflict of interest that might compromise the integrity of the company and its employees. The employee handbook of a major financial services institution states its policies on gifts and gratuities in this way:

*Employees (including members of their immediate families) may not, directly or indirectly, take, accept, or receive bonuses, fees, commissions, gifts, gratuities, excessive entertainment, or any other similar form of consideration, of other than nominal value, from any person, firm, corporation, or association with which [name of institution] does or seeks to do business. Conversely, it is generally against corporate policy to give gifts or gratuities absent special approval by the General Counsel or his designee.*

When conflict of interest is not an issue, business gift-giving usually involves small gifts—everything from pens, pencils, baskets of fruit, chocolates, figurines, silver letter openers, tickets to a sports event, a book, a picture frame, a piece of clothing for a newborn baby, flowers or plants, or donations to charities in the name of the honored person, to providing a service, such as advice, tutoring, or training.

One way to control the possibility of abusing the positive business spirit of gift-giving and receiving is to keep the cost of gifts relatively small, below \$50, and preferably between \$10 and \$25—except for very special occasions or gifts bestowed by the highest levels of a company. Indeed, U.S. government allots a maximum of \$25 for a business expense for a business gift, and the President of the United States is restricted from accepting any gifts that cost more than \$100.

No one is going to be manipulated into making a major business decision that goes against his or her ethics or the needs of his or her company because he or she receives a \$10 basket of soaps or a \$25 pen. What will be exchanged, however, is a concrete extension of the goodwill and favorable spirit shared by those who work for the same company or by certain business executives who want to convey their caring for certain clients or customers.

Letitia Baldrige suggests these additional cost guidelines for business gift-giving in the USA:

- Spending \$10–\$25 by junior executives or middle managers to their clients
- Spending \$25–\$50 by middle-to-upper managers
- Spending \$50–\$100 by senior executives for their top customers or close business friends

- \$100 or more should be spent only on very important or rare occasions

Another requisite to gift-giving beyond the cost of the gift is that there be an appropriate and immediate occasion for the gift, whether that includes congratulating someone on the birth of a baby or thanking someone for inviting you to the phenomenal business Christmas party that he or she hosted. There should be a legitimate and obvious reason for the gift as well as a definite positive feeling between you and the gift-giver or receiver so that neither one will remark, "I can't believe so-and-so sent something to me." Letitia Baldrige wisely points out that you should *not* send a gift to someone with whom you are negotiating a deal; it could be seen as trying to influence the outcome of the deal.

Similarly, you should be sensitive to what is going on in your life and how your actions might be perceived by those to whom you give a gift. Look at the executive who suddenly realizes he failed to get another executive a baby gift when his second daughter was born ten months before. He now wants to get the executive a baby gift because they have become closer business colleagues in the months since his baby was born, and he feels guilty that he never gave his colleague a baby gift. Since the etiquette is that you have a year from the wedding to give someone a wedding gift, he wondered if the same rule applied to his situation. (If baby gifts are not given immediately, it loses its impact as a baby gift. Even if you technically have a year to give a wedding gift, waiting longer than a month also loses its effect.)

But, it turned out, the etiquette of giving a baby gift ten months late was not even the issue. This executive's wife was expecting their second child within a month. The couple decided that it would look as if they were setting it up so the other executive would feel obligated to get them a baby gift if they suddenly gave his child one. (If the gift had been given at the appropriate time, that is, immediately, this issue would not have come up.) Instead, the couple decided to let it go and if the executive got their baby a gift they would then get his child a gift out of reciprocity.

Incidentally, if for any reason you feel it is inappropriate to accept a gift—your company forbids it, you think the gift is too personal or too expensive for a business situation, or you fear a gift might compromise you in any way—return it as soon as possible, including a brief note that might say, "Thank you for your recent gift, but I am unable to accept it." Keep a copy of your note for your files and make sure you return the gift in a way that you receive a written record of its return, which you also should save in case you need that documentation in the future.

*Reciprocity* is an important aspect of gift-giving. The fact that most people feel obliged to return a gift of equal value is a rule of human nature that you can use to your advantage in the business world. That is why gift-giving—like Christmas cards or executive entertaining—is usually a question of keeping the scales balanced since you get what you give. If you receive a gift from a client and fail to send the client one in return, the relationship will be off balance. For that reason, it is important to be sensitive to how you handle the gifts others give you, as well as the ones that you give.

#### Reasons for Gift-Giving

In general, the reasons for giving a gift in business are to advance goodwill or to advertise and promote a product or a service. Gift-giving is one way of demonstrating that you practice one of the basic etiquette principles, namely, showing an interest in others. By giving a gift to denote a special occasion or event, you are taking the time and trouble to show an interest in someone else's life. Your thoughtfulness is probably more memorable to the recipient of your gift than its monetary value (especially if you follow the \$50-and-under rule).

In all situations considered appropriate by the company and society, such as a married executive having a baby, find out if the company policy is to send a card, a gift, or even have a shower for a female. If the situation is viewed somewhat more ambivalently, such as a single woman having a baby, it is proper to recognize the joyfulness of the event, but greater discretion may be more appropriate in such situations. Similarly, if someone you work with is getting married, how grandiose a celebratory display you should engage in may be tied to the circumstances. For example, more discretion should be used if one of the two parties has just gotten out of a difficult divorce and there are children involved than if the pair is unattached and in their thirties.

What is important is that you acknowledge all these events in some way appropriate to your relationship and the circumstances. Even if you just send a card to someone who is sick, you are doing something to indicate your concern about those you work for or with. The boss of a forty-year-old woman who works both as a secretary and a production assistant on shoots for the production company of which he

is part owner, gives her a lavish reception when she marries, and that is appropriate. The editor at a newspaper gives his secretary a \$50 gift certificate as a present when she marries, also an appropriate gesture.

Within the general motivations of advancing goodwill or advertising for gift-giving, here is an extensive list of more specific reasons for sending a gift to those you work with, clients, customers, or service providers (those who deliver your mail, dry cleaners, hairdressers, waitresses or waiters who frequently service you, accountants, florists, physicians, dentists, etc.):

#### Congratulations

- Birth of a baby
- Wedding
- Promotion
- Earning an award
- Write-up in the newspaper or magazine
- Appearance on television
- New job or the opening of a new store
- Graduation
- Notable achievement of any kind, such as acquiring the hundredth client, achieving  $x$  amount in commissions, selling  $x$  number of books, selling the first painting, etc.

#### Good Luck

- Retirement
- Special birthday (21st, 30th, 40th, 50th, 60th, 75th)
- Special wedding anniversary (every five years up to the 30th, then the 40th, 50th, and 60th)
- Special work-related anniversary
- Relocating to another division, town, or city
- Switching careers
- Buying a new house

#### Thank You

- For an extraordinary job done during a difficult time (usually recognized by a boss of his employees)
- For a rush job (of a service provider, such as a printer)
- For doing someone a big favor that is completely optional
- For showing you around when you were in another city
- For hosting you at a special business breakfast, lunch, dinner, or other event

#### Apologies

- For a misunderstanding
- For offending someone
- For forgetting or failing to attend an important event such as a store or gallery opening or a holiday party

#### Expression of Caring or Sympathy

- For death in the family
- For illness
- For bad career or financial setback such as losing a job, declaring bankruptcy
- For upcoming surgery or recovering from hospitalization

#### The When and How of Gift-Giving

We have already established that the closer the gift-giving is to the time of the event that the gift acknowledges, the better. Of course there is common sense involved here. A birthday present that arrives a month late looks a lot sillier, and loses almost all of its impact, compared to a present for a promotion that arrives a month after the event.

You may need a master list that is revised on a yearly basis to help you to keep track of birthdays, anniversaries, and holiday gift-giving that reoccurs from year to year. This master list could be arranged on a month-by-month basis with a code for each type of gift; for instance, just the name and date for a birthday, an asterisk (\*) before the date for an anniversary, such as the first day working at the company,

and two asterisks (\*\*) or an H before a date for someone who should receive a holiday gift. Here is a sample list:

#### Master List of Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Holiday Gift-Giving

##### January

- 5—Marilyn Williams (secretary)

##### February

- \*12/87—Marilyn Williams (anniversary of first day on the job)

##### March

- 15—Brian Jones (boss)

##### December

- H—Marilyn Williams
- H—Wayne Little (receptionist)
- H—Tom Wyatt (colleague who provides advice and help throughout the year)

Giving a gift in person need not be a steadfast rule. First of all, a lot of gift-giving is done for long-distance relationships; indeed the gift is a way of cementing a relationship that is harder to maintain than the one you have with a nearby co-worker with whom you have lunch once a week. In those long-distance situations, giving a gift in person is impractical. Also your motives may be questioned if you try to get an appointment with a busy executive so you can give him or her a gift. The gift may then look like an excuse for getting your foot in the door, and the emphasis will shift away from the real reason for the gift.

Remember, with gifts, as with the questions people ask you, you are only responsible for being appropriate as to the *why*, *what*, and *how* of your gift, not for the response of the recipient. People react in all sorts of ways to receiving a gift and it could have little to do with you or your gift; it could have everything to do with their own unconscious views of themselves that makes it comfortable or uncomfortable to receive gifts from others (or their company may prohibit gift receiving). Someone with low self-esteem may actually feel uncomfortable and angry because you have given him or her a gift. If a nice, appropriate gift seems to elicit anger rather than gratitude, try not to take that reaction personally; it is a reflection of the temperament and psyche of the receiver rather than a reaction to your appropriate and thoughtful gift. (If, however, you know someone has a reputation for disliking gifts, avoid stepping into such gift-giving situations that will backfire and consider an alternative, such as a card or providing a service.)

Any gift should be wrapped nicely, even if it is an inexpensive item, like a small box of chocolates. Think of the wrapping of the gift as the first impression your gift creates—just as the clothing you wear and the office you work in are other first impressions you make in the business world. Keep a supply of all-occasion wrapping paper in your office or at home—red polka dot or multicolored striped paper is suitable—as well as a package of assorted bows for that extra touch.

How a gift is presented can endear you to someone as much as the gift itself. You have to be creative and show you really know the person to whom you are giving the gift if it is to have its full impact. For example, a vice-president of communications went to Scotland for a week with his wife to celebrate their thirtieth wedding anniversary. Upon arriving at their hotel in Edinburgh, they found in their room a bottle of champagne elegantly displayed in a basket with a card from both the chairman and president of the company congratulating them and wishing them a wonderful trip. It was the perfect gift, and having it waiting for them in their hotel was the perfect way to present it. It would have been far less effective if someone had given the executive a bottle of champagne on his last day at work before his trip began.

Another important issue to keep in mind is that except for rare exceptions, such as congratulating someone on a marriage or a birth, gifts should be exchanged with employees or clients, customers, or service providers but not upward to bosses. The implications of giving a gift to a boss are obvious; however, if a boss and an assistant have a tradition of exchanging Christmas presents, that precedent should be respected. In those exceptional situations, the employee should be careful that the gift is within the appropriate price range and that it comes from the heart, reflecting a truly exemplary working relationship. When all those guidelines are followed, a boss may point with pride for years to a gift from an employee. A top executive at an advertising company in New York, for example, keeps the sterling silver miniature basket that her secretary gave to her one Christmas on her desk, using it as an unusual business card holder.

Another executive brings home with joy the eight enormous balloons that his secretaries surprised him with for his birthday.

Whatever gift you give, try not to be overly commercial. In other words, especially if you are in a product business, if you give a sample product, or engrave a gift with your company's name or logo, make it discreet and secondary to the gift itself. An attractive calendar with your company's name, address, phone number, and slogan imprinted discretely in the corner will impress the gift recipient more than if the calendar looks like a self-serving advertisement that someone would be less likely to use or display.

Practically every gift can be inscribed or engraved but, once again, consider if that will further the reason you are sending the gift. It might be as useful to enclose a business card with your gift, or have packaging with the company's vital information that can be removed, so just the gift remains.

An inexpensive but impressive way to give numerous gifts without breaking your bank account is to accumulate little figurines or craft items at any time during the year when you are traveling. If you spend a week in the Outer Banks of North Carolina and you have the foresight to buy examples of local balsa wood carvings for under \$10 you will be set for holiday gift-giving. All you may need are boxes and wrapping paper. (If you wait until right around the holidays it will be harder to come up with such a unique and attractive gift for under \$10. You will probably end up spending a lot more money or getting something trite or cheap looking.)

Here are just a few of the many inexpensive gift items that are appropriate as business gifts:

- Photo album (especially for wedding, birth, anniversary, or retirement)
- Picture frame
- Reference (dictionary, thesaurus, etiquette guide) or other books (especially if you know the hobbies or interests of the recipient, such as cooking, fishing, interior design, or detective stories)
- Illustrated calendars
- Cooking supplies
- Coffee mug
- Desk accessories such as paperclip dispenser
- Engraved stationery
- Gag gifts (upon leaving company or getting a new job; select carefully)
- Drinking glasses (for engagement, wedding, or anniversary congratulations)
- Decorative or serving bowl
- Jewelry
- Pen
- Pencil
- Perfume
- Photograph (framed)
- Prints (framed)
- Scarf
- Travel items (for a new job requiring travel or an upcoming major trip)
- Watch (retirement, departmental gift to secretary at holiday time)

If you wish to emphasize the advertising and promotion aspect of the gift you give, you can have any of the above-mentioned gift items engraved or imprinted upon. Several mail-order companies specialize in doing just that, and some of their products are inexpensive yet useful and attractive. Products that are especially popular as business-promoting gifts as well as being useful to your clients or customers include:

- Calendar
- Calculator
- Golf balls or golf tee
- Luggage tag
- Key ring
- Mug
- Napkins
- Pads
- Pen or pencil

- Playing cards
- Pocket magnifier
- Ruler
- Sports cap
- Teddy bear (with imprinting on removable shirt)

Flowers, instead of a plant, may be a more appropriate gift for a new mother or someone who is convalescing, since plants may require too much care for someone who is facing new responsibilities or health concerns. Flowers make the same point and can be left behind for other patients in the hospital or be brought home.

Some etiquette experts suggest that times have changed, so that men may receive flowers as a gift, not just women. It is my observation, however, that flowers may be provided for a male executive's desk on a steady basis for decorative purposes, but a gift of flowers would still make most men uncomfortable. A way to avoid embarrassing the male executive you are sending flowers to, or having your giving flowers backfire, is to ask his secretary if he ever received flowers as a gift and, if so, what his reaction was. The best advice about flowers for men, however, is that when in doubt, give something else.

Some individuals may prefer a donation to a favorite charity in lieu of flowers at the time of bereavement. Check with the executive's secretary to find out what the executive or his or her family prefer before you automatically send flowers.

Another gift that has to be given with caution is any type of liquor. First of all, you want to be sure that the person you are giving liquor to does in fact drink and drinks whatever liquor you choose, whether it is scotch, gin, vodka, or wine. Not only should you give the kind of liquor someone drinks, but it should be his or her favorite brand, if possible. Once again, a call to the executive's secretary may provide you with the information you need. If you know you will be giving an executive liquor for an upcoming event or for the holidays, and you dine together beforehand, make a note of what he or she orders, or somehow get a conversation going about different brands of favorite drinks to determine what the executive in question favors.

#### Giving of Oneself

It is also important to note that some of the best gifts are the ones you give of yourself, rather than the ones you buy in a store. These gifts should be valued and acknowledged by those to whom you have given them. If they are not treated in the same way the recipient would treat a wrapped present, then you are wasting your valuable time and talents on the wrong people. For example, say you are an expert in office management. You might provide someone who just got a new job with a half-hour of your valuable time, advising him or her on how to set up a new office. This gift could be volunteered by you or in response to a request for help. In any event, such time and effort should be treated as a present and acknowledged in the same way you would acknowledge receiving a sugar bowl for a wedding present.

You might be in a time crunch and someone else's secretary types up your report. That too is a gift and you should acknowledge it appropriately. It is especially important to ask those we refer to a business associate to express gratitude appropriately, for their poor manners reflect upon us. The niece of a business colleague, for example, called me and asked if I could help her find a weekend house at the beach. I gave her the name and phone number of someone I knew who was looking for additional house members. A few weeks later I heard from the man that she had, indeed, become part of their household for the summer. But the woman never called to thank me for my suggestion. A few months later, when I saw her aunt at a business function, I commented on her niece's behavior and she said she would say something to her about it. The point is that we all want to avoid being commented about in a negative way. When someone helps beyond the call of duty, show gratitude.

Visiting someone sick in the hospital is another example of giving of oneself. However, you should be certain that your visit is appropriate. Male bosses may feel uncomfortable visiting a female employee at the hospital because of the bed clothes or bathrobe she might be dressed in, just as a female boss might feel uncomfortable visiting a male employee in the hospital. Use your judgment about when such visits are appropriate and when they are not. (You should also make sure a sick or hospitalized employee wants visitors.) It might be better to send flowers to the hospital, or wait to visit the employee at home. If the situation might be a compromising one, another possible solution is to visit the hospital or the home with one or two other co-workers or employees, or to send another employee as your representative. Sometimes

a thoughtful phone call will go a long way in such situations; the employee might actually prefer it to being visited by co-workers, superiors, or subordinates.

#### Thank-You Notes

Presents require a thank-you note or a phone call of thanks—notes or greeting cards do not—so let us consider what makes for an effective thank-you note.

There are four criteria of effective writing—thought, readability, correctness, and appropriateness. Thought, the content of your writing, is what you say in your thank-you note. If possible, avoid clichés like, "Thank you for your lovely gift"; be as original as possible. Try also to be specific in what you write. Say something about the gift—what it means to you, why you are pleased with it—or about the gift-giver. Avoid flowery language, or exaggerations, like "This is the most fantastic pen-and-pencil set I have ever received," unless, of course, it is the truth.

Readability, or clarity, is best accomplished using short words, sentences, and paragraphs. A few well-chosen words about the gift is what is called for. For overall length of the note, use your discretion. Your best friend who is also your client might be miffed by just two lines, whereas a distant business acquaintance you rarely interact with might find two well-chosen lines about his wedding present just fine.

The correctness of your thank-you notes refers to the grammar and spelling you use. As noted before, use whatever aids you need—dictionaries, thesaurus, grammar texts, on-staff or freelance communication editors or experts—to make sure your thank-you note is as correct as any other piece of executive writing that bears your name.

Appropriateness, the tone of your writing, requires that you tailor the tone of your thank-you note—your choice of words, how informal or intimate a style you follow—to fit the person to whom you are writing as well as the occasion that the gift denotes. A thank-you note for a promotion present to a close co-worker will have a different tone than one for a donation on behalf of a deceased relative made by the chairman of the board.

The best way to judge the effectiveness of any thank-you note is to ask yourself: "If I received this note, how would I react?" Is it interesting? trite? thoughtful? exaggerated? Good writing often means rewriting, so feel free to make notes, and even drafts, before writing the final one.

If you and other family members, such as a fiancé (or fiancée), spouse, or child (in the case of graduation gifts), have jointly received a gift, you must decide whether you alone will write the thank-you notes or whether the others will help you. In a business situation, it may be more appropriate to write on behalf of the other recipients and sign the note, "Carol Konrad and family." If the other person is willing, he or she could write a second, short note.

You have to decide if you will use imprinted thank-you cards, small-size stationery imprinted with just your name, or illustrated cards (with paintings, flowers, or other decorative images) for your thank-you note.

#### Keeping Track of Gifts Received or Given

Keeping track of when you acknowledge a gift is an efficient way to make sure you have fulfilled this part of the gift-giving process. Consider purchasing a book, such as *The Lifetime Book of Gifts and Invitations* by Richard Borah (North Woodmere, New York: Leichester House, Ltd.), which provides a place to record every gift received (or given), the date, from or to whom it was given, the occasion, a description of the gift (if given, where bought and cost), and if an acknowledgment was received or sent.

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## **Lecture 8**

### **INTERNATIONAL ETIQUETTE**

#### **1. International etiquette essentials**

#### **2. Business etiquette peculiarities of some countries**

Understanding the basic business manners in other countries is a major concern for executives who travel abroad. It is also useful to know foreign business etiquette if you are doing business in the United States with someone visiting from a foreign land or conducting international business by phone.

In some cases, you need not leave this country to need to know about the etiquette of a foreign land: hundreds of Japanese companies have set up offices in this country in just the last ten years, for example. Other countries, such as England, own and operate major American companies as well.

Although the world does seem to be shrinking in some ways, the necessity of respecting and observing the business manners of another nation is as important as ever. In fact, it is more important since readily available information about foreign business etiquette means there is less of an excuse for ignorance.

This lecture is based on my firsthand experiences in conducting business in such countries as France, The Netherlands, India, England, Nepal, Italy, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, Germany, and Austria, additional interviews with men and women from those countries or who worked there for a period of time, including international protocol authority Dorothea Johnson.

You need to know enough about the etiquette in a particular country so you do not unwittingly offend its customs. Behavior also affects the business you may do. For example, a Florida-based company that administers addiction-recovery programs for those with drug, alcohol, and food addiction problems would never think of offering a food-addiction program in their hospital in Ireland. The Irish just do not see food problems as an addiction in the same way they view alcohol or drug abuse, explains the company's personnel director.

Behavior also affects whether or not an individual will be allowed to continue doing business in another country. Expert Dorothea Johnson tells the story of an American executive who was sent by his

company to work in an office they were opening up in China. "He was given three hours to leave the country," says Johnson. "It seems he had pinched a waitress you know where, and the Chinese simply don't tolerate that kind of thing," Johnson continued.

Before addressing the etiquette of individual countries, here are some general international etiquette tips. According to Roger E. Axtell, editor of *Do's and Taboos Around the World*, the four basic areas you have to get right are:

- How to say people's names
- Eating
- Dress
- Language

You may know all the rules for the typical American business situation, but for each of these concerns and for each country you are doing business with, whether it is China, Japan, England, or Israel, you should learn what is proper.

Most countries are more formal than the United States. When in doubt, use someone's full name rather than just their first name. In some countries, it is considered polite to eat the food of the country you are visiting ("When in Rome . . ."). If you are having a meal at an ethnic restaurant in the United States with someone from another country, it is also polite to eat the traditional foods on the menu (rather than a burger and fries).

If you are conducting business in a country where English is not the first language, and you are unable to speak in the native tongue, consider having a translator along at your business meetings. That way, if your foreign business associates wish to speak in their native tongue they may; you are not forcing them to speak English just for you.

When traveling, unless you can wear native dress, such as a sari, with incredible flare and comfort, dress in a business suit or dress and, if it is appropriate and unoffensive, wear the local dress for fancy or ceremonial occasions.

International expert Dorothea Johnson, who has been training diplomatic attachés for decades, points out that the biggest fault she sees with Americans in doing business with other cultures is their hastiness. Says Johnson: "We operate under the theory that time is money. Do you know what the Japanese say about us? They say that we practice 'ready, fire, aim.' We fire before we aim. Americans do not take the time to prepare. But if you know the rules, you can play the game better." One of the ways that the hastiness of Americans backfires when doing business with other cultures, Johnson continues, is in how quickly they want to jump right in and get the business out of the way. But people of other cultures spend more time first building a relationship with each other; the business deals evolve out of that trust.

#### Australia

According to Neil Allison, Australian Airlines Sales Manager for the Eastern United States and Canada, business dress is basically the same in Australia as it is here—suits and ties for men, suits or dresses for women.

In warmer climates, such as in Cairns, a more informal attire, such as safari suit or dress shorts without a jacket or tie, is permissible.

Allison notes that everyone in Australia speaks English. You would introduce yourself by providing your full name and then firmly shaking hands.

Business meals are eaten at restaurants, rather than private homes. Says Allison: "Exchanging gifts is not the norm. However, for international business meetings, it would be appropriate to give a small present that represents the area that you are from, perhaps a tie, baseball cap, or pin."

Australians are "informal and friendly," Allison claims, and the most common faux pas an American makes when doing business with an Australian is "perhaps not listening enough." "Don't be frightened to admit when you don't know something. Australians will not hold it against you. In fact, the reaction would most likely be one of increased trust for not bluffing your way through."

#### Canada

There are two official languages in Canada, English and French, although English is spoken almost everywhere except Quebec and in some parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. (When you call the Canadian Consulate in New York, the operator answers, "Canadian Consulate, bonjour.")

Canada is a more formal country than the United States. Conservative is one way to typify how the Canadians conduct themselves in business. Businesspersons are less inclined to get on a first-name basis than are Americans.

Business dress is similar to that in the United States, with men wearing suits and ties and women wearing business dresses (more often than suits). But businessmen may dress in a more European way in a Canadian city, such as Toronto, which has more to do with fashion.

It is customary to shake hands in business. Business entertaining is more likely to be done at a restaurant than in someone's home. Any kind of food would be appropriate except for official Canadian functions, when something distinctively Canadian might be served, such as sockeye salmon from the west, Arctic char (type of trout), or Nova Scotia salmon. British Columbia produces cider, and Ontario and British Columbia are developing their own wines.

The worst faux pas an American doing business with a Canadian might commit is to say to a Canadian, "You and I, we Americans. . . ." Canadians are touchy about being taken as Americans. Just because Canadians speak English does not mean they see themselves as American, and it is presumptuous to think they should. In fact, if Canadians feel any ties, they would be sentimental ones—to England.

Business hours are about the same in major Canadian cities as in the United States, with most nonretail businesses closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

There are women in business in Canada, but overall women are seen in a more traditional light than in the United States.

#### Central and South America

Although specific customs may vary in Venezuela or Argentina, Axtell points out certain generalizations for all these countries that you should keep in mind when you are doing business. For example, those in Central and South America have a different idea of what is appropriate "personal space" or distance from another person. They will tend to stand closer to you when you speak, and that is perfectly correct. (If you pull or step back, it may be seen as impolite.)

As in Japan, business cards should be printed in both English and the local language.

It is acceptable to be thirty minutes late.

Lunch is the main meal of the day throughout Latin America, often followed by a siesta (nap).

Gift-giving is customary; perfume for women and men's accessories for men are appropriate gifts.

Sociable is one way to describe those of Central and South America. It is not uncommon for a business meal to last hours.

#### People's Republic of China

Trudi Gallagher, a real estate sales associate with Houlihan Lawrence, Inc., in Armonk, New York, spent a year in China with her husband, who was sent there by American Express. Says Gallagher, "Patience is the number one thing for the Orient (China, the Philippines, Hong Kong)." Gallagher suggests sitting back and watching Asians, rather than taking the initiative, until you know their rules.

In China, business entertaining is done banquet style, big affairs, with two to four tables of eight to ten persons at each table. The host is in complete control of what occurs. No one starts to drink or eat till he does, and no one leaves until the host gives the signal. Gallagher explains that the project her husband came to China to accomplish reached an impasse. Rather than be upset or discouraged, the Chinese businessmen explained what happened philosophically. They said, "We loved your husband. He is a teacher to us. China isn't ready. It wasn't your fault. It wasn't our fault."

Very few women in China are in business, except for such small operations on their own like a grocery store or selling factory-overrun clothing.

According to *Mastering Business Etiquette and Protocol* by Marilyn Pincus, there is some business-related gift-giving in the People's Republic of China. But any gift-giving should occur after all business transactions have been completed. One gift to avoid is a clock, since the word for clock in Chinese resembles the word for funeral. "Small mementos are appreciated" and ". . . Offer a good

#### England

"First and foremost is the British attention to detail," says Linda Phillips, co-director with her husband Wayne of the Executive Etiquette Company in Taunton, Massachusetts. The Phillipses lived in England and were privately tutored on the business manners of the British.

Formal is the rule in England. Says Phillips:

Even in correspondence, take the more formal approach. You would never, never address someone by their first name, unless they give you permission to do so. The American style is more casual. We tend to call people by their first name. That would be unconscionable in England.

The idea of titles is important but you never give yourself an honorific [title]. You will hear an American doctor say, "I am Doctor Smith," but in England he would say, "I am John Smith," and someone else calls him "Doctor Smith."

The British are very formal in introductions. Whose name is said first in an introduction is very important. The Japanese bow. The British look for whose name is said first. You're introducing someone to another person. For example, in a business situation, the client would have priority in an introduction because the client is the most important person. Let's say the client's name is John Smith. "Mr. Smith, may I present Mr. Robert Brown, the president of our company." In this instance, the client's name is first because the client is the more important of the two. If introducing a colleague to a superior, the superior's name is first.

Business dress in England is formal too, with women wearing business suits or dresses and men wearing a suit and a tie. Hats are removed after entering a building.

Axtell points out in *Do's and Taboos Around the World* that it would be poor manners to talk with a British person about business after the business day. To the British, "shoptalk" should conclude with the end of the workday, even if you have drinks or dinner with a business associate. Phillips explains further: "Never discuss business until after food is ordered unless a client has brought it up first. This is a courtesy to the staff [waiter]."

Phillips also points out that you have to use "silent service" to let the waiter know you are through with your meal, which is indicated by the way you place your utensils. If you are still eating, but are resting, cross your fork over your knife. "That cross says, 'Don't remove my plate.'" If you have finished, place your knife and fork in a parallel position. "Let's pretend that your plate is like the face of a clock," says Phillips. "The tongue of the fork and the blade of the knife would be pointing to somewhere between eleven o'clock on the face of the clock and the tips of the handles would be around five o'clock in a parallel position. The fork tines are down."

A lot of business in England is conducted over tea. Linda Phillips shares the intricacies of the tea ritual so you will handle yourself in the proper way:

It is always afternoon tea, never high tea. In fact, high tea is considered slang. It is really a poor man's supper. It comes from the contraction of "isn't it high time we had something to eat." But in the United States you often see in hotels a listing of high tea and of course the British would laugh at that. It's really afternoon tea. You never hear them say "high tea." That's a common American faux pas.

The tea is very important to the British, and it comes in courses. You're first presented with a choice of tea. Your waiter or waitress would identify which types they are serving. You would choose the type you like and it is brought to the table. It is loose tea and it would be accompanied by another pot, which would contain hot water.

When it's brought to your table, you allow it to steep or brew or mash for a few minutes. Then you would pour. Of course, if you were taking someone to tea and you were the host executive, you would say, "May I pour?" and you would offer them the tea first. You would put the strainer on their cup so it would collect any loose leaves, technically called bastard leaves. You'd pour that into the cup and you would pour the tea into the cup. Then you would take the strainer and rest it on a bowl of its own. That bowl is called the slop bowl. You take those bastard leaves, emptying into the slop bowl, and resting the strainer on that bowl. If the tea is too strong, add a little hot water.

You either drink the tea black or with milk and one lump or two of sugar, never with cream.

Sandwiches, such as watercress or cucumber, would accompany the tea. You eat with your fingers because they are finger sandwiches.

After the tea and sandwiches, you have the scone. A scone is a small sweet-tasting bread with raisins. You bring a little bit of butter and jam to your side plate. You cut the scone in half and you only butter or jam the portion you're going to bite. You don't butter the entire scone. The real test is how you eat a scone. You spread the jam and butter as you eat it, bite by bite.

You may end the ritual of tea with a little bit of Sherry, and with a little bit of luck, you'll be celebrating a new account.

## France

Cautious is the word to describe the French in business according to Howard Seligmann, an investment attaché, who lived in France for six years and is married to a French woman. Says Seligmann: "There is a protocol in France. There is not as much correctness as [with] the British but the French are cautious."

Conducting business over meals is common in France. A business lunch may last from an hour and a half to two hours. A business dinner, including entertainment, could last the evening.

Introductions have to be made by someone known to the person you are doing business with—through an attorney, a banker, or a friend. "But once the introduction is made and legitimacy is proven, the door is open, of course," says Seligmann.

There are fewer women business executives in France than in the United States.

Even though most Frenchmen speak English, many will not admit it so it is probably best to bring along "someone of respectability," says Seligmann, "who can speak the language—an acquaintance, another business associate."

Business entertaining is done at elegant restaurants more often than at someone's home

## Germany

Barbara Chizmas, head of Chizmas Business Etiquette International, based in Redlands, California, lived in what was formerly West Germany for three years, working primarily with German executives. There is greater formality in Germany than in the United States. Chizmas talks about German formality as well as other aspects of German business manners, such as introductions, seating, dress, and conversation:

Introductions are the same as in the United States—you say the higher-ranking person's name first. If it is a very formal presentation, use the word "presents." "Herr Schmidt, may I present Frau or Mrs. so-and-so." If less formal, say, "Herr Schmidt, I'd like you to meet Frau so-and-so." You present the less important person to the more important one.

Dining etiquette is distinguished by the Germans eating continental style—holding the fork in the left hand continually and the knife in the right hand. You never put the wrists below the table. In America you have the left hand in the lap when you're not using your knife. Anytime you eat European style, you have both wrists on the table.

The biggest difference in the way Germans conduct business is the degree of formality. They are very reserved and very formal. In fact, people often perceive them as unfriendly. Where we [Americans] strive for instant rapport, they look upon it almost as a negative. They make appointments very far in advance. To do anything on the spur of the moment, such as making an impromptu presentation, is not appreciated. They would consider that a lack of planning. For example, I would talk about the vacations I was planning three or four weeks in advance. They plan their vacations six months to a year or more in advance.

There is also a strong emphasis on punctuality.

Dress is conservative. Men don't have to wear dark suits to the extent that they do in other countries, but pants are still taboo for women.

The whole culture is geared to women staying home. All the stores close by 5:30 p.m. and they're closed Saturday at noon. Once a month, there is absolute bedlam when they have "long Saturday" with stores open until two.

Lunch is the big meal of the day. School children, and even many people who work, come home for lunch for about an hour to an hour and a half every day.

Lunch is the main meal for business meetings.

Ask permission to take notes at a meeting.

Don't ask where they were during the war and don't even ask if they're married or not, or if they have children.

When you're speaking with a German or shaking hands, never leave either hand in your pocket. That is considered very disrespectful.

Use a translator if you're conducting business a

## India

Food customs are very important. Most Hindus are vegetarians and consider the cow a sacred animal, so try to avoid eating meat in the presence of a Hindu. Muslims will not eat pork or drink alcoholic beverages.

Do not be offended if you observe cow manure drying on the tops of walls throughout Indian cities and towns. It is used for fuel.

Once again, try to observe the customs of those you are doing business with, although western-type meals are available in all major Indian cities such as Delhi, Bombay, or Madras.

There are dozens of religious groups in India, in addition to the Hindus and the Muslims, such as the Sikhs, who identify themselves by the turbans they wear and do eat meat, and the Jains, who practice nonviolence and do not eat meat, honey, or root vegetables (such as potatoes, radishes, turnips, or garlic), and do not engage in certain professions such as agriculture or trade.

Almost everyone you will do business with in India will speak English. Greetings are the same—"Hello" or "Good morning." A more formal greeting is to join palms of both hands together, but shaking hands is perfectly acceptable.

Wear business clothes that are acceptable there. It is unnecessary for women to wear saris when they do business in India. If they do wish to wear a sari, they should be sure to wrap it in the traditional way and to wear one only to a party, not for any official purposes. Instead, women should wear a suit with a regular knee-length skirt, or a pantsuit. Pantsuits are even worn by Indian women—in two styles, depending on whether the top is loose-fitting or more tailored to the body.

When I was doing research in India and stayed with a family in Bombay, the emphasis was on the honor I bestowed on the family for staying with them. When I left after a few days, the family gave me gifts—a beautiful sari, food, and some trinkets—to thank me for being their guest.

Be careful not to overtip in front of residents. They will explain to you that this may spoil the rickshaw drivers or other service workers who will expect more from them.

Remember there is a very strict caste system in India. Be aware of the caste of the businesspeople you are dealing with and any restrictions they may have—such as not being able to mingle with lower castes—so you will not ask them to do things against their principles.

Do's and Taboos Around the World suggests two things: punctuality and using your right hand to accept or pass food. It also suggests avoiding conversations about pers

## Israel

Straightforward is the word Howard Seligmann, Investor Attaché for the Israeli government, uses to describe Israelis. "Sometimes Americans will be surprised by the straightforwardness or straightforward attitude that Israelis have as opposed to trying to hide something."

Seligmann, who lived in Israel for a year and has been there many times, explains some of the common business practices:

Israel is very cosmopolitan. You greet someone with either a "Shalom" or "Hello." Virtually everyone speaks English as well as second or third languages, especially in the business environment.

When you introduce someone, you would say, "This is Howard Seligmann." After one or two meetings, we might even call each other by our first names. Even at the first meeting, someone might say, "Why don't you call me Howie."

Giveret is a terminology [word] which, in Hebrew, since the beginning of time has meant Ms.

Many times a restaurant will serve both Middle Eastern food like falafel or humus as well as Western food. Nobody will be looking to put you under pressure [to eat Middle Eastern food].

[Business over meals?] It's a way of doing things. It is a way of working. It is acceptable as well as having a meeting and inviting someone for dinner afterwards. It is not impolite to discuss business at dinner. Discussing family is a nice thing. But in the rest of the Middle East, it is an insult to mention one's family [in a business meeting].

If you are coming from America, a gift is unnecessary [for a business dinner]. But a small book for someone's child would be appreciated, or flowers for someone's wife.

Israelis are serious but physically [their physical appearance is] very casual. You have a business executive who might not be wearing a tie. They'll wear a jacket and have their shirt opened up, or [wear] a dress shirt and not a tie.

There are more women in the business world in Israel than in most other countries. After all, women serve in the army and one of Israel's great leaders was Golda Meir. (One out of three doctors and dentists is a woman, notes Seligmann.)

#### Italy

Having a certain reserve is how an Italian trade analyst describes Italian businesspersons, that is, they are quite formal.

In business, you introduce yourself by saying your last name only, such as "Smith," and then shake hands. Even women shake hands. The custom of kissing a woman's hand is more likely in a social situation than in a business one.

Italian businesspersons are more conservative than American ones and they dress more formally.

Do not assume that all Italians speak English when you are doing business. When in doubt, bring a translator along.

Business entertaining is done at restaurants, not in the home. In Rome, businesspersons take a long midday break and work until 7 P.M. In Milan, business hours are more comparable to American ones—9 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Gift-giving varies, though it is customary to give something nominal as a Christmas gift, such as a bottle of cognac or something like that.

What is the worst faux pas an American could make? Said an Italian businessman: "The biggest failing of Americans until recently is to think that all Italians come from Sicily, or speak with a Sicilian accent, simply because the majority of Italian Americans come from Sicily or Southern Italy. Italy is a very varied country, where there are all types of physical types—short, tall, fair, dark, redhaired. Not really one prototype Italian. Likewise, there are different colloquialisms and different dialects and accents and different customs."

#### Japan

According to Diana Rowland, author of *Japanese Business Etiquette*, the exchanging of business cards is extremely important when starting to do business with the Japanese. Rowland, who heads San Diego-based Rowland and Associates, a company that trains people who want to do business with Pacific countries (Japan, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand), explains why:

Business cards are extremely important because the Japanese are very hierarchical. Two people need to determine right away what their relative status is. The most common way of doing that is by exchanging business cards.

They will first of all look at [the card to see] the company you work for and its relative status to theirs. If one comes from a very large prestigious company and the other comes from a smaller firm, then the person from the larger firm is going to have a higher position than the one from the smaller firm. [They look for] your position within the company. The title has to be very clear, which is not easy because we don't have the same exact positions in America as Japanese companies, but you need to get as close as you can. For example, we might have hundreds of vice-presidents at an American company, but the Japanese usually have only one.

Business cards are a representation of the person so you need to treat them with care. Don't carry them in your wallet stuck in your rear pocket. Have a card holder and carry it in a front pocket or inside a coat pocket. Women may carry it in a holder in their pocketbook.

Always treat their card with respect. Don't clean your fingernails with it or pick your teeth with it. I've seen Americans do this.

Giving or receiving anything with two hands elevates the other person. This can be important when meeting someone of a much higher status. If the person is of a lower status than you, you could be sending the wrong message. But it's always better to err on the side of being polite in Japan.

If the person is of a lower status than you, give it with one hand, and receive their card with one hand. But it's still nice to hold their card with two hands, or hold it with your right hand and touch it with your left hand as you carefully read it. If you don't pause to read it, it implies that the person you received it from is not important. Make remarks about it. "Oh, you're the section chief of the products department," or something like that.

Put Japanese on the reverse side [of the business card], but be sure it's a good translation. I know of somebody from a telecommunications research company that had his cards translated for free . . . when he got to Japan, everybody he gave it to laughed. He was head of the light guides department, which had to do with fiber optics, and it was translated as "Chief Lighthouse Keeper."

According to Do's and Taboos Around the World, shoes should be removed before entering a Japanese home. The first greeting is not a handshake but a "long and low bow."

Use a complete name—never just your first—in introductions. "To say 'Mister (last name),' simply say the last name and add the word san," writes Axtell.

It is best to avoid talking about World War II.

Punctuality is important.

It is perfectly acceptable to talk about business after the workday. In fact, the Japanese carry their business meetings into the evening hours at the geisha houses, private clubs, bars, and nightclubs that they frequent.

How would Japanese business etiquette expert Rowland characterize the Japanese? "Extremely formal," Rowland says. "They place a high value on protocol."

What is the major faux pas to avoid when conducting business with the Japanese? "Certainly pushing to get right into business" explains Rowland. "It's a long-term prospect in Japan. The thought is that once you decide to do business with somebody, it's like deciding to get married. Very rarely is it a single transaction. A lot of time has to be spent investigating a person or the corporation ahead of time and deciding if this is a person they feel good about working with the rest of their lives." Another major mistake Americans might make, according to Rowland, is to be informal in a formal situation. Work is a formal situation. "Telling jokes or touching people, things like that, are simply not done during work hours," says Rowland.

The Middle East (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Libya)

According to Do's and Taboos Around the World, here are some overall suggestions if you visit Middle Eastern countries (see separate entry for Israel) <sup>[1]</sup>: All business activities cease five times a day for Islamic prayers. Although visitors need not kneel to or face Mecca, you should respect your host's right to do so. During Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, work ceases after noon. Thursday or Friday is the Muslim day of rest and worship.

Outside the home, handshakes are common. However, your host may greet you in his home with a kiss on both cheeks, which you should duplicate. Like Japan, business cards should be printed in English on one side and a translation into the local language on the back of the card. Avoid talking about religion or politics. You should be on time, but your host may be late.

Use only your right hand to eat. There is a prohibition against pigs, pork meat, or alcoholic drinks.

<sup>[1]</sup>Because of its invasion of Kuwait, a boycott on doing business with Iraq was imposed in the summer of August 1990. Check to see if that, or any other, restriction still applies on visiting or doing business with Iraq

Russia (Russian Federation)

As most everyone knows by now, in 1991 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, also known as the U.S.S.R. or the Soviet Union, dissolved and Russia, which had been the largest republic, became an independent country. Russia, no longer a totalitarian country, is now governed by a President, elected by voters to a four-year term, and a prime minister, appointed by the President with the approval of the State Duma.

Just as it was a faux pas to call the former U.S.S.R. Russia, it is now a faux pas to call Russia the Soviet Union, or to be unaware of how Russia has changed, politically, socially, and economically since the end of communist rule in 1991. For further discussion about doing business in the new Russia, see: See Russian Etiquette & Ethics in Business by Drew Wilson and Lloyd Donaldson (NTC Business Books, 1996); The Russian Way by Zita D. Dabars and Lilia Vokhmina (Passport Books, 1995); and Business Ventures in the Former Soviet Union by Joseph a. Kliger (Pennwell, 1994).

John Wagner spent two weeks in Russia when it was still the Soviet Union, doing business for FMCS (Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service) and the Academy of Sciences. Wagner did not find those he met with to be always punctual, but they were concerned if someone was late. Explains Wagner:



I was doing a number of presentations and training for a whole host of audiences. I made myself on time. I didn't always get to speak on time. There were so many contingencies that were always coming up. I don't think they were particularly offended that a program didn't start at nine o'clock. I think they might worry if they don't know where you are—about your well-being as an individual—rather than starting on time. They would worry about what happened to you. "Let's make sure we know where he is."

Since credit cards may not be accepted in a restaurant, bring cash. Tipping is discouraged "but it never hurts to leave a small amount of money on the table," writes Jankowic. Wagner comments that you may also tip with goods. A pack of cigarettes is welcome or a small gift of your country, like a memento of Washington, D.C., or a United States flag. Says Wagner: "They're very much into enamel pins, such as a pin of your profession, or flags, especially if it shows the Soviet and American flags together."

#### Switzerland

According to real estate sales associate Trudi Gallagher, who was born and raised in Switzerland, the Swiss are basically very frugal people who spend their money only on things of good quality. Says Gallagher:

The standard of living is extremely high. The Swiss are very private people and it will take a long time for a foreigner to be invited into a home. There is one similarity the Swiss and the Germans share in that they have the polite (Mr./Mrs.) or the familiar (first name) forms of address. If you meet someone and call them Mr. and Mrs., you probably will call them that forever.

The Swiss entertain in restaurants and hotels. It takes quite a while for them to get to know you, and to invite you to their home. They are very private people and are closed-mouthed.

The Swiss adapt easily and are very inquisitive. Four languages are spoken within the country. Everybody will try to speak English when you visit Switzerland. Tourism is one of their main industries so they want to accommodate foreigners.

The biggest faux pas is comparing them to the Germans. Or breaking your word. When the Swiss give their word, they mean it. They are also very punctual and very correct. Down to making sure the i is dotted.

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## **Lecture 9**

### **SPEECH ETIQUETTE**

- 1. Basics of speech etiquette**
- 2. Speech**
- 3. Telephone Etiquette**
- 4. Effective Communication at Meetings, Conferences, and Seminars**

After your appearance, when you address people in person, people will judge and form their opinions about you by what comes out of your mouth. When the first contact is by mail, they will judge you by how you communicate even before reacting to your appearance.

Your ability to communicate properly, courteously, and intelligently will probably be one of the most significant, if not the key element, in your chance to enter, thrive, and advance in the executive arena. Recognizing how pivotal communication skills are to success in the business world, more business schools are including in-person interviews to screen their applicants. This is in response to the complaint of a growing number of company employment directors that "some students can't communicate."

#### **Speech**

Proper speech refers to the tone, enunciation, pronunciation, loudness, and correctness of the words that you use. Speech is a key part of your image since, in person, it may be noticed simultaneously with the way you are dressed and, on the phone, it is the one way your image is conveyed. (Of course in rare cases an instant still photo image may be transmitted as you speak. For now, that is the exception rather than the standard for phone calls.)

Tape your voice and listen to it. Are you speaking clearly? Are there any unique ways of pronouncing or using words that are particular to your region that might be misunderstood or unclear to others? Do you speak too quickly, giving the impression that you are tense? Are you driven to tell an entire story without having an interactive conversation that allows the person you are talking to to make comments or even get some relief while listening to you? Is your voice so soft that words may be missed or someone has to constantly say, "I can't hear what you're saying. Could you speak up please?"

If you have voice mail or a phone machine at work, call your own number and listen critically to your own recorded message. How does your voice sound? How appropriate are the words you use? Are your words too familiar or too aloof? Is the tone of your voice too sexy for a work-related recording?

Your voice and the words you utter are another part of your professional image. Take the time to enhance your speech by practicing the pronunciation of the names of those you work with or the individuals or companies you do business with so you never embarrass yourself. (No one likes his or her name mispronounced.)

One of the most important aspects of speech to keep in mind at the executive level is that foul language is not proper business etiquette. Even if your company president or your superior uses an occasional foul word, this is not justification for duplicating that speech pattern.

That foul language is heard even at the executive level in a variety of industries is a shocking truism. It is important that you take stock of your own behavior and guard against the use of expletives, especially when you are angry or frustrated. You never know what client, customer, or company executive is within earshot. For example, Janet Drake, Manager of Human Resources for Cogniseis Development,

Inc., a software development company based in Houston, Texas, decided to sit in on her managers when they were interviewing possible job candidates just to see how they were representing themselves and their company. "One said a few profanities during the interview," Drake explains. "He said 'Something is a pain in the (rear),' but that is not the word he used. He could have chosen a better sentence [word] to relay it. I wish he hadn't done that because it makes a candidate think that that [using that kind of language] goes on in the company all the time."

At another software company, the executive staff is "pretty casual" and an occasional foul word is tolerated—but everyone recognizes that it is poor form in a business setting. The human resources administrator explains: "At a division meeting, for example, the division head was giving an address to his employees and he said, 'That's a real bitch to deal with.' There was a sprinkling of laughter around the room, laughing because we can all take it. There's nobody around this place that can't listen to that, but we do remember it's not appropriate to say bitch to people in a business meeting, but it [using foul language] does happen."

A personnel director at a manufacturing company notes that an occasional executive at her company will use foul language. "Foul language is not considered particularly inappropriate," she notes. "In my office, people will frequently use the expression 'f--- up' and they'll frequently say, 'Pardon my French.' The unspoken dynamic here is that if it's acknowledged [that it's inappropriate] it's okay."

It is not just foul language that should be banished from any business setting, off-color or improper words should not be spoken as well. How much negative attention someone gets by uttering such a word is typified by the fact that personnel directors, executives, or etiquette experts I interviewed could recall each and every instance of an improper word.

As Sharon Peake Williamson, Manager of Public Information for Mead Corporation, headquartered in Dayton, Ohio, points out, it is not just the swear words that anyone who wants to get to the top should avoid. Says Williamson: "It's a sign of something wrong if you have a lot of bad language. I've found that bad language usually correlates with stress. To me, bad is not just the swear words. It's sexist or racial language, or any manner of showing that you don't respect your employees or co-workers." Remember, your language reflects on your employers as well as on you.

Seattle-based etiquette expert Randi Freidig finds that inappropriate conversation is one of the biggest etiquette faux pas when it comes to speech. She tells this anecdote about what a young man said when there was a lull in the conversation among a group of men and women who were attending a conference: "He said, 'Excuse me. Can anyone tell me if any animals other than humans menstruate?' He probably grew up watching TV and saw people standing on the corner under an umbrella talking about their hemorrhoids.'

#### On the Phone: Telephone Etiquette

As companies become more cost-conscious about the expense of traveling, and individuals seek to maximize how many contacts they may make in a certain amount of time, the phone has become the favored way of connecting within and outside of companies. The telephone imposes certain demands on its users since such nonverbal cues, like the clothing someone is wearing, the way they move their eyes when a statement is made, or the office in which someone is sitting, are unavailable for scrutiny as a way of judging how the interaction is going. There are still, however, nonverbal cues that an astute telephone user can utilize, such as the timing of a pause, the length of a pause or silence, the increase or decrease of noises in the background, or the quality of the voice to indicate enthusiasm or agreement. Even how quickly someone answers a phone—on which ring the call is answered—can, rightly or wrongly, be taken as an indication of how busy the person being called is, how close the phone is to the person being called, or how anxious or eager the person being called is to pick up the phone.

It is important to remember that when you place a call, you are doing so because it is a convenient time for you. It may or may not be a good time for the person you are calling to speak to you. Do not take offense if someone asks you to call back later, or asks to return the call. You would probably not drop everything for a call if you were in the middle of something, and it is reasonable to expect the person you are calling should be granted the same freedom to say "No, now is not a good time to talk." When calling someone whose habits you are unfamiliar with, you may even want to begin the conversation by asking, "Is this a convenient time to talk?"

A telemarketing consultant finds that the biggest breaches of phone etiquette occur when you call a company and the person answering either does not identify the name of the company, does not give his or her name, or says the name so quickly you cannot understand it anyway. "Another thing," she says, "is that they will rifle through the name and then say please hold, without asking whether or not you have the time to hold. Another annoyance is putting someone on hold without coming back and asking whether or not you can continue to hold. The biggest faux pas when trying to sell people on the phone is failing to know if that product is even feasible for that customer. Like someone calling you at home trying to sell you aluminum siding when you have a brick house." (That last faux pas would have been avoided if the caller had adhered to the fourth basic etiquette principle of being concerned with others, not just yourself.)

Here are other tips for improving your telephone etiquette:

1. If you are an unknown caller, it is perfectly appropriate for a secretary to ask you to identify yourself and to ask why you are calling. Give your name and a brief explanation.

2. It is rude and poor etiquette to pose as the personal friend of the person you are calling just to get your call through.

3. Career consultant Nella Barkley notes that the biggest breach of etiquette in business is failing to return phone calls. You should return phone calls as soon as possible but certainly within twenty-four hours.

4. If you are returning someone else's call to you, and he or she is not in or is unavailable, leave a message to say that you tried to return the call. You can still call back again, or leave a time and place where you can easily be reached. To avoid telephone tag, try to give a few times you will be available to take a return call.

5. If you need to have a long telephone conversation, such as an interview or a discussion of a report, try to set up a telephone appointment for your call so you know the person you are calling will have enough time to talk to you.

6. As more and more phone companies around the country offer caller-identification systems—whereby the number of the caller is flashed on a screen so you can decide by the number or other information about who is calling whether or not you want to answer the phone—discretion is necessary to avoid intimidating or embarrassing your caller. For example, if you know the name of your caller because you recognize the phone number, avoid saying his or her name until it is volunteered. It is jarring to the caller to have a feeling that "Big Brother" is watching him or her. Furthermore, the verdict is not in yet on whether these new calling systems are ethical or an invasion of privacy. Keep that in mind if you let it be known that you are engaged in prescreening your calls.

7. Do not chew or slurp loudly while you are on the phone. If you must sneeze or cough during a conversation, try to cover the mouthpiece of the phone so you will not be overheard. If it seems loud enough for the caller to hear, say "excuse me."

8. If you have call waiting—whereby when you are on the phone with someone you hear a beep and may put the first call on hold and talk to the second caller—try to finish up the first conversation before talking extensively to the second caller. If possible, just find out the name and phone number of the second caller. Say, "I'm on the other line. May I call you right back when I finish?" Except in absolutely dire emergencies, if you get off the first call because you prefer to speak to the second caller, you may offend your first caller who will see himself or herself as less important than the second call. However, if you have already finished your conversation with the first caller and were simply shuffling your feet on the phone because you did not know how to terminate the conversation, saying that you have to take the second call is definitely a way out.

The rule, then, to be polite, is that your first call should only be terminated for the second call if you have already finished the conversation. If you are involved in a very intense conversation with the first caller you may, in fact, ignore the beeping that indicates a second call is trying to get through. In case you think the person you are already talking to will be confused by those beeps, simply say, "I have call waiting, but I'm not going to interrupt our call. Don't worry. They'll call back when they don't get an answer." In that way, you are taking control of your phone and not letting anyone, even if you have call waiting, interrupt a key conversation unless it is appropriate to do so.

9. As long as you are sure that your call has been computer generated, it is perfectly acceptable to hang up on such a caller. (I recently heard of an insurance salesman who programmed his computer to

electronically call 2,000 persons over just one weekend. Even if he only sold one policy, it seemed cost-effective to cold-call strangers in such an impersonal way.)

10. If you have—or will have—extensive phone contact with a customer or client, try to meet face to face at least once. It will help to cement that relationship and to personalize your phone contact for a long time to come. You will get a lot of mileage in hours of future phone contact for even a fifteen minute to half an hour face-to-face meeting.

11. If you anticipate a long conversation, start off by asking, "Is this a convenient (or good) time for us to talk?"

12. With very busy people, set up a phone "date" and stick to it.

#### Polite Ways to End a Phone Conversation

It is a predictable situation that many of us find uncomfortable: telling someone that we have to get off the phone. The hardest type of caller to do this with is the person who simply talks far too long or goes off on unrelated tangents. We may not have a pressing appointment, and we may not have a call to return at that moment, but if we continue to stay on the phone we will never get any other work done and we just might miss an appointment later on. It is impolite to tell someone that he or she talks too much, is boring you, or is far afield from the original reason for your call. Tact is the most important ingredient in getting off the phone with a long-winded caller without offending him or her. In your tone of voice, convey a sincere interest in what is being said, but a matter-of-fact statement to the business truth we all live with: "I wish I could talk longer, but I have to get back to something I was in the midst of" or "Thanks for the call, but I have something pressing I must do now."

There are other situations that can be used to get off the phone without offending someone, but it is better if the situation actually exists so you do not have to live with the guilt of being a "white liar":

"Excuse me, but my next appointment just arrived. I have to go now."

"I don't mean to cut you off, but I have to leave for a meeting or I will be late."

"I'm sorry but I have to catch a train."

"It's been great talking to you, but I have to take another call. Can I get back to you a little later?"

"I stepped out of a meeting to take your call. I'm sorry, but I have to get back to it now."

"I'm in the middle of something, can I get back to you?"

"It was so nice to hear from you, but I have to go now."

End a phone conversation as you would a memo—with some idea of what action is now expected.

For example:

"Let's talk again in a few days."

"I'll call you next Monday with the answers you asked for."

"Call me when you find out if you can make that meeting."

"Let's talk again and see what we've both come up with."

Let's say you are talking to someone in September, someone you do not talk to very often. You should still resist the temptation to state overtly how long it may be till the time you speak again, like saying, "I guess we won't talk again till after the New Year." Even if it is true, it sounds too distant and impersonal. Instead, be upbeat and positive: "I hope to talk to you again" or "I look forward to talking to you again sometime."

#### When Someone's in Your Office: Calls to Take or Screen

If someone is meeting with you in your office, ask to have calls held. It is polite to put the person you are meeting with first, not the telephone interruptions. It also avoids having the person sitting in your office over-hear private or confidential information. It makes the person you are visiting with and talking to feel important when you avoid countless interruptions. Furthermore, although having interruptions may make you look important and busy, it also makes you look rude.

When you are meeting with someone in person, let your secretary know what phone callers should be put through, and who should be asked to call back or be told that you will call them back. Make these rules clear or you could be very embarrassed. For example, an executive's wife called. When asked if she wanted to hold or if her husband could call her back, she said it was "important" and would hold. The secretary did not tell the wife that her husband was on a three-way phone interview call; the secretary interrupted the crucial call her boss was having by showing him a note that said, "Your wife is on the phone; she said it was an emergency." Not only did this interrupt the conference call, the executive was

worried about the "emergency." If his wife had known her husband was on an important call, she most certainly would have said she could be called back. The executive also had to explain to his secretary that there is a difference between important and emergency so he could avoid future miscommunication.

Be careful about ignoring calls that "fall through the cracks." These are calls that somehow never get returned, or returned in a reasonable amount of time, because of various reasons, such as "telephone tag," which has you going back and forth for days or even weeks, and you finally get fed up leaving and taking messages without making contact. Perhaps someone calls at an inconvenient time and you say you'll get back to him or her, but you are already into something else by the next day, and you no longer have a pressing reason to return the call; it is not until a few more days go by that you realize you never called that person back. Perhaps calls are logged during your vacation and, once you return, you are so involved in the new day-to-day demands on you that those old calls never get returned. Maybe you leave a message to be called back and you act as if leaving that message is the same thing as making contact. Should you wait to be called back? Should you leave a few more messages? Should you continue to call until you make contact? Perhaps you call someone with a question but he or she is not in. You leave your name and number, but by the time your call is returned, you have already had your questions answered by someone else, who was in when you called. Now that person you no longer need has returned your call and left a message for you to call back.

Do you call, even though you no longer have a pressing need for their help? Do you chitchat, even confess you no longer need them, but you are returning their call anyway? Or do you try to follow through on your original reason for calling, even if it is somewhat outdated or unnecessary? Do you come up with a new reason for the call so your combined efforts are not wasted?

It is best to return all calls so those calls do not fall through the cracks, generating bad feelings or giving you a reputation for failing to return calls. You could explain that you were on a deadline and that you had to finish up the reason you called initially without their help. But you might also think of another way that their ideas or services would be useful without creating unnecessary work for yourself, even if all you do is business small talk. In that way, all the back-and-forth calling, and eventual conversation, would still be worthwhile for both of you in the larger scheme of things—strengthening interpersonal relationships.

The wrong word at the wrong time has caused many qualified job applicants to be screened out from a coveted position, the rising executive from the next rung on the ladder, or if the communication is detrimental to the company's bottom line or image, from the job itself. Communication is so important that most large companies have entire divisions devoted to it to ensure that the correct message is disseminated; that the all-powerful word is used properly, effectively, and with care.

- After three interviews had to be rescheduled, Tom, a qualified job applicant, is taken off the list of candidates because he writes an angry letter complaining that his time is also valuable and he resents being treated in this manner.

- Once John got a new job, he wrote to all the business associates who had previously conveyed their shock that he had been fired and had offered their help to John in finding a new job, if he needed it. But John's "thank you's" were far less effective than they could have been—and even offended some—since his letter was a photocopied form letter.

- When Brenda, a junior executive, was asked to resign, some of the reasons included her occasional swearing and being verbally abusive to secretaries.

The actions of Tom, John, and Brenda are examples of poor business communication manners. At work, you have to conform to business etiquette in what you say whether it is in person, over the telephone, or in writing. Even what you say over an intercom is up for scrutiny, since someone in your office or walking by it might be eavesdropping, or a caller might also hear the intercom if you forgot to put a caller on "hold" or "mute."

As an effective executive communicator, you also have to be concerned with rhetoric, or persuasive speaking, as well as elocution, the way you speak or utter words. Here are some guidelines for appropriate executive communication:

## Making Conversation

Not only is it polite to include descriptions when you introduce people, it facilitates conversation since everyone starts off with at least one or more facts to begin an exchange. Using the previous example, a business conversation between Sally Holmes and Alice Hastings might go something like this:

- "Alice, I think it's wonderful that you've had your poetry published. Have you found any other executives at Worthington Pen Company who are also poets?"

There are two parts of making conversation in a business setting that you should be concerned about: speaking and listening.

There is that old cliché that a good conversationalist is someone who lets other persons talk about themselves. That's a bit simplistic and a bit too one-sided, but it does make the point that you should not dominate a conversation. If you have to err on the side of one extreme or the other, err on the side of listening more and speaking less.

Talk about topics that are of mutual interest and appropriate in a work setting—business small talk—everything from general business trends to art, opera, music, movies, theater, sports, or best-selling books. Especially if you are conversing with someone outside your company with whom you hope to do business, stay away from controversial or emotion-charged topics, such as politics, religion, women's rights, as well as specific questions about someone's income or the cost of their house or rental. You do not want to seem nosy or to get into heated arguments that sway your potential client or customer away from working with you because of the ideas you hold that really have little to do with the business at hand. (The ideas may not even be cherished or important ones, but views you express that unwittingly enrage or push away your potential client. For example, you might get into a heated argument against vegetarianism only to discover the seemingly conservative businessman you are talking with, and hoping to do business with, had given up meat, fish, and chicken two years before. You really are not all that fired up against vegetarianism, but the damage has already been done.)

One way to head off such compromising conversations is to put your toe in the water about most matters by asking questions. For example, "Have you ever lived in the country?" is a good way of finding out just how much you might say for or against the country without striking a negative chord. If you had not asked the question, and you are making business small talk, you just might hit a raw nerve if you talk about how much you hate the country and how eager you are to find an apartment in the city, when the executive you are talking to detests the city and prefers the country and those who like to live in it.

Listen because it is polite and because you may learn a lot about the person who is speaking, whether a colleague, employer, or superior. You will probably learn more by listening than you will by speaking, but of course speak enough so it is a true conversation and not a monologue.

One way to make someone realize you are truly listening is to repeat back to the speaker an idea or statement he or she has just made, but in different words. For example:

- "Then what you are saying is that there is a need for more movies about Wall Street if the public is to fully understand what brokers and analysts really do."

You might also nod your head or occasionally say "uh-uh" so your silence is not misinterpreted as indifference.

Executive communication should avoid volunteering, or asking, intimate personal details of a worker's life, such as marital woes or a parent's medical problems. Most of the time, those topics are too personal to ask or volunteer in an office or work setting. If you are the one being inappropriately asked such personal matters, politely decline to answer by saying, "I do not think that is an appropriate question." Remember: you are responsible only for your answers not for someone else's questions.

Avoid volunteering intimate inappropriate details about yourself in a work situation, because it can only come back to haunt you later. It is, quite simply, inappropriate executive work behavior. You may overhear someone commuting on a train bragging about her Friday night conquest the weekend before, and it may be interesting to eavesdrop on another's intimate conversation, but such conversations are offensive and a violation of etiquette in an office setting.

Be careful of the technique of someone telling you something inappropriate about himself or herself as a way to entice you to share something inappropriate about yourself. For example, a co-worker airs his dirty laundry with you, hoping, whether consciously or unconsciously, to elicit from you an airing of your own dirty laundry. Do not fall for this tactic. You may be trustworthy in keeping your co-worker's personal

business to yourself, but he may go right to the boss with your intimate information, and you may be out on your ear before you even have time to straighten things out.

#### Effective Communication at Meetings, Conferences, and Seminars

What procedures should others follow when wanting to meet with you in person at work? Make your rules known about how co-workers and subordinates may contact you in person. For example, you may find it useful to your job to have an open-door policy; or you may find it too intrusive, and guidelines need to be created. ("Call before you drop in on me, except in emergencies." "You can drop in on me the first half-hour in the morning and the first hour after lunch. At other times, call ahead and arrange a meeting.")

When it comes to superiors, anytime your boss wants to drop in is usually fine.

To make the most of any meeting, conference, or seminar, have an agenda, whether you are conducting the meeting or attending it. If writing materials are not provided, make sure you bring your own so you can take notes.

Arrive on time. Notice if there are any instructions on the chalkboard, or on large sheets of paper at the front of the room, advising you to do certain exercises or consider certain ideas while awaiting latecomers.

Begin the meeting on time (if you are running the meeting). Do not penalize those who are punctual by making them wait for those who are late.

Participate in a conference, meeting, or seminar when you have something useful to say, but not just to draw attention to yourself. Saying too much is as inappropriate as saying nothing.

Make your unspoken expectations concrete and known so you as well as those you are meeting with can fulfill those goals. If you fail to concretize your expectations, you may be unnecessarily disappointed that a meeting, conference, or seminar wasted your time. But by being specific about what you expect to get out of the encounter—for example, "I plan to learn what is so special about the new computer we are introducing next month" or "I plan to make one new professional contact with those in the East Coast office"—you can gauge whether or not you have in fact achieved something.

If your company is small and has few formal meetings, with most reports being oral, make a written record of what occurs. Kenneth A. Snella, Vice President of Berkshire Electric Cable, a manufacturer of low-and medium-voltage electrical wire and cable, explains why that is helpful: "Document everything that happens, even if it is verbal. Keep your own day-to-day diary, not so much for going back and hanging somebody, but just being able to put things in a proper perspective for recall six months down the road." Berkshire Electric Cable, a company of about 120 employees, has few formal meetings. "We're Tom Peters all the way," says Snella. "Impromptu meetings, resolve the problem, move along to something else."

#### Follow-Up: In Person, by Phone, by Letter

Following up is a key aspect of effective executive communication. Quite often, the initial communication, whether in person, by phone, or by letter, is very short and quick. It is the follow-up that may take minutes, hours, or days to accomplish. Examples? You ask someone to find out a certain statistic for you. Asking takes a minute. Finding out the information might take hours. Tracking down the person to whom you made the request and getting the information from that person may take one, two, or ten phone calls, letters, or visits to his or her office.

There might be lots of reasons that people fail to follow up, everything from being overworked and overextended with too many projects to attend to, to disorganization, to simply not having the answer and being reluctant to admit it. But you have to follow up if you want to be known for politeness and courteousness. As etiquette expert Barbara B. Chizmas tells her corporate clients: "I tell people, 'I'm in the little things mean a lot business.'"

Follow-up is a seeming "little thing" but it means a lot in terms of how effective an executive communicator you are.

"You can lose clients if you don't do your follow up," says executive recruiter Howard S. Freedman of Kom/Ferry International.

What form might that follow-up take? If you have been invited to a lunch or a more formal function, you should call (or send a note) to accept or decline the invitation. After job interviews, you might send a note to the interviewers, thanking them for their time, expressing your pleasure at meeting them, and emphasizing your interest in that particular job.



Follow-up allows the opportunity to reinforce a growing business relationship. It also allows another chance to make a pitch if a sale has not yet occurred. For example, in trying to get a company to take a product, a telephone follow-up might be used in this way:

- Seller: "Did you receive the material I sent you a few weeks ago?"
- Potential Customer: "Yes, but I just got back from a three-week trip and haven't had a chance to consider it."
- Seller: "Vacation or business?" (Trying to make business small talk.)
- Potential Customer: "Business. I literally just got back today."
- Seller: "I'm sure you must have a lot of work that piled up in your absence. Listen, I just wanted to make sure my packet got to you. Also, I just got some additional material. Would you like me to send it?"
- Potential Customer: "Sure, I'd love to see it. But I might not be able to get back to you for a few weeks."
- Seller: "Don't worry about it. I understand. I appreciate your interest."

Another very important reason for a follow-up is, quite simply, that your material may not have arrived, or your phone message may not have been received. Mail can be addressed to the wrong person or address. Packets can be switched so that persons receive the wrong material, or it never arrives at all. As farfetched as it sounds, it does happen that someone calls the wrong number and leaves a message on the wrong phone machine, and then awaits a return call that will never come since the right person never got the message. For inquiries with a low priority, a follow-up note or call after a reasonable amount of time—one to three weeks, depending on the situation and relationship you have—is not pushy, and assures that you have another chance to connect or reconnect. For matters or concerns of utmost priority, following up on the same day or next would be appropriate as long as there truly is a sound reason for a timely response.

Sometimes people may fail to follow up because they think they know what the other person is calling about, and they do not want to deal with that demand on them. Quite often, however, the reason is not the assumed one, and failing to return a phone call is simply seen as rude.

For example, an editor asks an author to agree to allow an article to be reprinted in an anthology without any additional recompensation. Initially the author says no. A few hours later, the author calls the editor and leaves a message that she has decided to allow the reprint and that the editor should return the call. The call is never returned. For months, the author was annoyed at being ignored by the editor and just as happy not to participate at all in the project. When, months later, she then talked to the editor on another matter, she was surprised to learn the editor had gotten her old message, agreed to reprint the material, and did not see any reason to return the call.

Here's another example. You are involved with someone on a certain project and you call on another matter. The person you call either ignores your call or has someone else call on his or her behalf, acting as if he or she already knows what you want. Example: Someone is trying to sell you something and you ignore one or two phone messages to return the call, only to discover he is calling to ask if you would like to have two free tickets to a basketball game that night because he is unable to attend.

As a telemarketing consultant says about those who fail to return calls: "Little do they realize they may be missing sales opportunities by not following up."

Another time following up fails to occur is if someone leaves too extensive a message on a phone machine. Since you do not want whatever is being offered on the machine, you figure failing to follow up is permissible, but it is not. Your "no" still has to be communicated.

But let's say someone has left a long invitation to a luncheon next week on your machine. The time, date, and purpose are all stated, and you realize you have a conflicting appointment that day so you cannot attend. In this case, failing to follow up, if you want to keep the goodwill of the caller, will be seen as rude and an example of poor communication.

If you do not want to burden someone you are calling with the need to follow up, tell a machine or a secretary just that: "I just called Mr. Davis to catch up on the meeting I missed last week. There's no need for him to call me back. I'll see him next week and we can discuss it then."

Upon whom the responsibility for following up falls depends on whether or not you solicited or initiated this offer or contact. If someone is contacting you for the first time, and you have not asked to be

contacted, and if he or she needs you more than you need him or her, it is polite for the caller to call again until contact is made. The effort for a follow-up should be on his or her back.

In one instance, failure to follow up within the proper time frame resulted in a potential loss of \$300,000. An agent at a reputable New York literary agency representing a screenwriter had an offer from a producer for a writer's script. After consulting the writer and negotiating a tentative deal with the producer, the agent then waited to get back to, or follow-up with, the producer because she did not want to, in her words, "appear too eager."

Ten days after the producer had made the offer, the agent called to say the writer had accepted the producer's offer. However, by then the producer had already purchased another screenplay and was working on the new project.

By failing to follow up quickly enough, the agent had lost a sale that could have netted her client \$300,000. Not only did the agent lose the deal, she also lost the client, who immediately changed agencies.

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## **Lecture 10**

### **International Negotiation Etiquette**

- 1. International negotiations etiquette issues**
- 2. Negotiation Preparation**
- 3. Typical Negotiation Mistakes**

#### 4. Negotiating with other countries

International negotiation involves “discussions of common and conflicting interests between persons of different cultural backgrounds who work to reach an agreement of mutual benefit.” The etiquette of international negotiation involves knowledge and use of proper procedures and behaviors to assure that an agreement is reached amicably—an agreement that emphasizes what the two parties have in common and deemphasizes possible conflict.

Guidelines for proper negotiation etiquette depend somewhat on whether the culture is high context or low context. In high-context cultures, the nonverbal aspects of communication are important; communication is indirect; and silence is used to communicate. In low-context countries, the message is explicitly stated; messages are direct; and nonverbal aspects are unimportant. The following recommendations for intercultural negotiators are directed toward low-context negotiators (such as those from the United States, Germany, and Switzerland) who are negotiating with high-context adversaries (such as the Japanese, Chinese, Latin Americans, and Arabs):

- Study your opponents’ culture and history to be prepared for the negotiation; learn the language.
- Work on establishing a personal relationship with members of the opposing team.
- Acknowledge that members of the opposing team may not understand your message and that what you say will be interpreted according to the other culture’s background.
- Be aware of nonverbal messages you may be sending through your body language; try to read between the lines; what your opponents are not saying may be as important as what they are saying.
- Since status and face are important in some cultures, establish yourself and your adversaries as equals; avoid anything that would lead to loss of face, such as public criticism, losing your temper, or unpleasant surprises.
- During negotiations, leave room to bargain. Start high and save a trump card for the final round.
- Be patient; allow your opponents sufficient time for making decisions.
- Remember that face-conscious negotiators must feel that they are leaving with a favorable outcome.

##### Negotiation Preparation

Successful international negotiation etiquette requires attention to negotiation preparation, including selection of the site, team members, and interpreters.

Negotiation preparation begins before departure. Although the meeting site is not very important to U.S. negotiators, it may be important in other countries. In some countries, such as Asia and Latin America, you are expected to go to their country, especially for a first meeting, as they are more comfortable in their own country. Problems associated with negotiating on the other company’s turf include having to deal with jet lag and cultural shock, in addition to contending with another language and business practices that are unfamiliar. If the negotiations take place at your company, you have the home field advantage. You are not tired from travel, you have access to your office staff, and your foreign colleagues will speak your language and will need to adjust to your way of conducting business. However, you are responsible for all the social amenities associated with your foreign colleagues’ visit, including transportation, meals, and entertainment. More specifically, meet their flight, take them to their hotel, and send a car to take them to and from the meeting; feed them; and make sure that evening entertainment is provided so that they do not sit alone in their hotel rooms at night. This would be a good time to remember the Platinum Rule: Do unto others as they would have done unto them. In other words, attempt to accommodate the customs, preferences, and needs of your international guests insofar as possible. Needless to say, this means doing some research to determine cultural differences in dining and entertaining.

The selection of team members should be done with care. Important considerations include gender and age as well as the rank, expertise, and personalities of potential team members. Including someone on the team who is from the culture you wish to do business with or who has at least spent some time there is recommended. Selecting someone with expertise in the host-culture language is often a good idea. When you plan to include a woman on your team, it may be wise to alert the other culture so that they can become accustomed to the idea. This would be especially important when negotiating with countries that

do not typically include women on their teams. (Etiquette for women negotiators is covered in a later section of this chapter.) The number of team members should also be considered. On U.S. and Mexican teams, the number is usually two to three, while it may be four to seven on Japanese teams. When in doubt, ask about the number of team members the opposing team has so that each side will be equally represented. Keep the same team members during negotiations.

#### Translation And Interpretation Issues

Unless one of the team members is fluent in the host-culture language, it may be necessary to secure the services of an interpreter. Select the interpreter carefully as this person can determine the success or failure of the negotiation. A missed negative, for example, can prove disastrous. If you hire a professional interpreter in the host culture, try to find one who is bicultural. This person can alert you to local customs that may have an impact on your presentation and may provide useful suggestions on cultural differences in nonverbal behaviors that may affect the effectiveness of your presentation. Allow sufficient time to meet with the interpreter to provide written materials that would be helpful in understanding your business proposal and to explain any technical terms. Even when using an interpreter, it is a good idea to give your closing comments in the language of the host country. However, make sure your use of the language is accurate to avoid possible embarrassment.

President John F. Kennedy, in an effort to show his solidarity with West Berlin citizens just after the Berlin Wall had been built, said: "Ich bin ein Berliner." The translation of that phrase is, "I am a jelly-filled doughnut," a popular pastry in Berlin.

When conversing in English with people in a country whose primary language is other than English, you will increase the chances of being understood correctly if you use short sentences and words; avoid humor; avoid jargon, slang, and idioms; and provide examples whenever possible. In situations in which people do not have a common language, the services of an interpreter may be needed.

When using a translator, it is important to realize that the translation may not be the meaning intended. In his book *Blunders in International Business*, Ricks points out numerous errors in translations that have proved embarrassing, to say the least, and in some cases have had a negative impact on sales.

- The message "Buy American Made," which was to be placed on T-shirts trying to convince consumers to buy U.S.-made cars, rather than Japanese-made automobiles, was translated into Japanese as "Buy an American Maid."

- A U.S. manufacturer advertised its car battery as "highly rated"; after translation, the battery, when introduced in Venezuela, was described as "highly overrated."

Interpreters selected to help people who do not share a common language should be both bilingual and bicultural to assure that the intended messages are conveyed. Suggestions for using interpreters in business situations include the following:

- Become acquainted with the interpreter prior to your interaction with the intended business associate; find out about cultural differences in nonverbal behaviors, such as eye contact and gestures, as well as local customs regarding small talk.

- Ask the interpreter to apologize for your lack of ability to speak the other person's language.

- Speak slowly and avoid words with multiple meanings; for example, use the word *expensive*, which has only one meaning, rather than the word *high*, which has more than 30 meanings. When you must use technical terms, review them with the interpreter in advance.

- Suggest that the interpreter translate in phrases or short sentences, rather than waiting until the end of a long sentence.

- During the conversation, speak to your colleague rather than to the interpreter.

- Learn a few words and phrases in the other person's language so that your parting comments will be in your colleague's language.

A final thought when using interpreters is to avoid sarcasm or innuendos, because they are difficult to translate. Try to state concepts in more than one way to be sure the point you are making is understood. Also, remember that the word you have used may not have an exact duplicate in the other language. Not all languages have the same verb tenses; many verbs have multiple meanings. In the English language, for example, the verb *get* can mean to buy, borrow, steal, rent, or retrieve. When interpreters are bicultural and have ethnic compatibility with persons for whom they will be translating, the chances of a successful translation increase.

## Relationship Building

Building a relationship, which is not very important in the United States, is important in a number of countries, including those of Latin America. To start building a relationship, it is important to have an introduction. A professional reference by someone who is highly regarded in the host culture is helpful; a personal introduction is of value in opening doors. People wishing to conduct business with governmental employees in Latin America will need to use an intermediary to get an appointment. The time spent in relationship building is well worth the effort. A good place to start is meeting with your international colleagues for lunch or dinner. Just keep in mind that table manners count and that business is not to be discussed during these times when the two teams are getting to know each other.

An international consultant emphasizes the importance of table manners when dining in other countries, especially in France. “The French get quite disturbed watching an American switch the fork and knife back and forth between hands. Although it is the norm in America, only peasants and vagrants in France eat this way. So it can be embarrassing for a Frenchman to be seen in an exclusive restaurant, even with a prominent American business executive, if that executive appears unsophisticated.”

Gift giving is also important to building a relationship in many countries. Asians will usually initiate the gift giving; U.S. negotiators should not attempt to “outdo” a gift from Chinese or Japanese negotiators. As Lewis points out, “It is a game you are not going to win anyway.” Remember not to open gifts in the presence of Asians and Arabs because of the possibility that someone will lose face.

## Opening Talks

Opening talks begin promptly in most cultures and include a short time for small talk, especially in the United States and Australia. The Swedes also value promptness and typically engage in small talk. People of Finland, on the other hand, do not engage in small talk; they get right down to business. The length of small talk varies; in Spain and Italy, small talk may last for 10–30 minutes while waiting for everyone to arrive. In Germany, however, small talk is very brief; after formal introductions, everyone gets down to business.

Opening the presentation with a joke, which is a common practice in the United States and most European countries, would not be considered appropriate in some countries. Germans, for example, take business seriously and do not feel that jokes are appropriate during negotiations. Because of the risk of telling a joke that no one understands or that may be offensive to some people in attendance, it is better to avoid humor when conducting business internationally. Although Asians will laugh at jokes to be polite, they do not appreciate jokes about religion, sex, or minorities and usually do not understand U.S. humor.

Agendas are common in such countries as the United States and Sweden; an agenda is an indicator of a well-planned meeting. Agendas are not considered in a positive manner, however, in such countries as the Middle East and Latin America. In fact, they are considered a hindrance to successful negotiations. The Japanese also do not typically use agendas, perhaps because of the tendency of Japanese negotiators to discuss a number of topics simultaneously.

## Discussions And Agreement

During the discussion phase of negotiations, a variety of nonverbal behaviors may be displayed; these behaviors will have different meanings, depending upon the culture. The French enjoy debating, so a lively discussion can be expected from them. Negotiators from Argentina sometimes become emotional. Spanish negotiators may argue with each other to the extent that Asians may conclude that they are fighting. Smiling may signify happiness with the progress of the negotiations by Germans, Britons, and Scandinavians. However, among Asians, the smile often indicates a lack of understanding. In addition, Asians may say “Yes,” which does not typically signify agreement. “Yes” may actually mean, “Yes, I understand.”

At the close of negotiations, delays are common in some countries, so it is wise to allow extra time for the completion of the deal. Delays are common in India as well as in Asian and Latin American countries. While the final step is usually the signing of the contract, the nature of the contract may be different from contracts to which U.S. negotiators are accustomed. The contract is viewed as binding in the United States; however, in Asian countries, it is a guide for future negotiations. As a result, negotiations may continue for some time after both parties have signed the agreement.

## Typical Negotiation Mistakes

Mistakes that are sometimes made during negotiations may negatively affect the outcome. Talking too much and failing to listen are two of these mistakes. People from other countries have pointed out that U.S. Americans are guilty of these mistakes. One New Zealander expressed his frustration with this alleged characteristic of people from the United States. He said, "If you Americans can't learn to shut up and listen more often, could you at least lower your volume?" Showing discomfort with silence is another mistake that is commonly made. Remaining silent after you have asked for your international colleague's business will result in a more positive outcome than continuing to talk; a period of silence will give the other side an opportunity to consider your request. U.S. negotiators, who are uncomfortable with silence, should consider the following well-known quotations on the importance of silence.

"It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt."

—Abraham Lincoln

"Never miss a good chance to shut up."

—Will Rogers

Other mistakes made by negotiators include making a negative initial impression, failing to ask important questions, assuming understanding by representatives of the other culture, using unfamiliar and slang words, interrupting the speaker, failing to read nonverbal cues, failing to note key points, and making statements that are irritating or contradictory.

**Etiquette For Women Negotiators**

Women who are members of international negotiation teams should be aware of how they are perceived in the world of global business.

"Women have a tremendous advantage over men in international negotiating. They very often are adept at reading nonverbal cues sent out during a negotiation. Studies show that men primarily pick up general ideas and conclusions from a conversation, while women often get more information from body language, intonation, voice pitch, and eye movements."

In addition to getting a feel for how they are viewed in various cultures, businesswomen should polish their social skills to avoid unintentionally offending people with whom they wish to conduct business. The consequences of failing to observe rules of appropriate social behavior can be serious as emphasized by Rossman: "A businesswoman who unknowingly breaks a social taboo may find other doors in the same locale permanently closed. On the other hand, businesswomen who take the time to become attuned to cultural considerations can negotiate contracts, make deals, and more important, open entire markets for their companies."

The following 10 guidelines for women planning to negotiate internationally are offered by Axtell:

- Be aware of cultural variations in behavior to better understand actions of international counterparts.
- Do not expect to be treated equally; acknowledge that even in the United States, women and men are not treated equally.
- Show respect for the norms of the host culture and try to work within the norms of their system.
- In advance of your encounter with members of the host culture, study their history, food, languages, literature, and other specifics of the culture. Recognize, however, that despite studying a culture prior to visiting it, embarrassing errors can still be made.

An experienced international businesswoman asked her Australian male host to join her for lunch. She wondered why her colleague was rather cool toward her during the meal. What the businesswoman later learned was that by singling him out in front of his "mates," she had unknowingly caused him much embarrassment.

- Find a mentor who has experience in international business who may be able to open doors for you; expand your network of international contacts.
- Act with diplomacy, tact, self-confidence, and self-control; behave in a professional manner at all times.
- Because of the importance of building personal relationships, be patient, flexible, and compassionate.
- Maintain a good sense of humor; acknowledge that you will make mistakes; learn to see the humor in the situation.

- Recognize the importance of humility, a key to success in many international encounters.
- Differentiate between gender differences and cultural differences; when difficulties arise, women sometimes assume that gender differences are at the root of the problem when, in fact, the difficulty may be cultural differences.

Additional suggestions for women who wish to be successful international negotiators include becoming knowledgeable about the negotiation topics and associated issues, preparing a plan for the negotiation including goals and alternatives, and demonstrating a cooperative attitude conducive to discussing and resolving conflict.

#### Country-Specific Information

Country-specific information on international negotiation etiquette for the United States and for the countries with which the United States conducts most of its international business is provided in the following sections:

##### Brazil

- Portuguese is the primary language; have handout materials in Portuguese. Although English is spoken, it is a good idea to have at least one member of your negotiating team who speaks Portuguese. Do not speak Spanish.
- Keep the same team members throughout the negotiation.
- Consult a Brazilian accountant or lawyer for issues related to the agreement; bringing your own legal counsel may be resented.
- Upon meeting members of the Brazilian negotiating team, shake hands with everyone. Use titles with the last name; however, sometimes Brazilians introduce themselves using their titles and first names. It is not necessary to bring a gift at the initial meeting.
- During the relationship-building stage, remember that soccer is a good topic of conversation; avoid discussions of politics and Argentina, Brazil's traditional rival.
- U.S. persons should not refer to themselves as Americans since Brazilians view themselves as Americans also.
- When making agreements, remember that Brazilians use periods for punctuating thousands; for example, 3,340 would be punctuated 3.340.
- Present a gift during a social event after the formal negotiations are concluded.

##### Canada

- Canada is a bilingual country; English is the primary language in all provinces except for Quebec, where French is the primary language. English Canadians are low-context communicators, while French Canadians are high-context communicators. Written materials should be prepared in French and English in Quebec.
- Canadians are conservative, reserved, and very formal; however, they appear to be open and friendly. They observe strict rules of etiquette. French Canadians in particular are very protocol-conscious.
- Negotiation team members are selected for their expertise, knowledge, and prior negotiation experience.
- Time is important to both English and French Canadians. Negotiations are expected to begin and end promptly.
- When meeting Canadian businesspeople, give a firm handshake and eye contact. Use titles and last names until Canadians suggest using their first names.
- Business gifts are appropriate after the contract is signed; gifts are opened in front of the giver. A gift from your country is a good choice; however, a gift may be a meal or another type of entertainment.

##### China

- Patience is necessary when negotiating with the Chinese; developing a relationship before conducting business is important, so plan to make numerous trips before finalizing an agreement.
- Business cards should be printed in gold ink in Mandarin Chinese on one side and in black ink on white paper in English on the other.
- Address most people using their professional title (Doctor, President) or "Mr." "Mrs.," or "Miss" and their last name. Remember that in China, the surname comes first; the given name is last.
- Rank is important; address the highest-ranking person first.

- Use black and white for business materials; colors have special significance in China, so it is best to avoid the use of color in presentations and handout materials.
- Bringing your own interpreter to meetings is recommended.
- When preparing contracts, remember that the Chinese write the date with the year first followed by the month and then the day.
- Exchanging gifts is customary, but only after all negotiations are concluded. The Chinese will decline a gift three times before eventually accepting it. Gifts will not be opened in the presence of the giver. Gifts to avoid include white flowers, clocks, and handkerchiefs (which are associated with death) as well as knives and other cutlery (which signal a desire to sever the relationship).

#### France

- The French take pride in their language; they will expect you to speak French or to apologize for not speaking their language. It is highly advisable to have at least some members of your negotiating team who speak French.
- Building long-term business relationships is important to the French.
- When conducting business with the French, manners, status, education, family, and individual accomplishments are keys to success.
- During introductions, use titles with last names; when speaking French, use the *vous* form until given permission to use *tú*.
- Have business cards printed in French on one side (include your academic credentials) and in English on the reverse side. Treat business cards given by the French with respect.
- Be aware of the importance of hierarchies. Learn who the higher-ranking persons are and cultivate their friendship.
- Business gifts are not appropriate at the first meeting. Gifts at later meetings should be tasteful and may include books or music; avoid gifts containing your company logo or a bottle of wine since fine wines are French specialties.

#### Germany

- Third-party introductions are necessary; appropriate references include lawyers and bankers.
- Punctuality is especially important to Germans; arriving even five minutes late for an appointment or a meeting is an insult.
- Allow sufficient time for negotiations, as Germans feel it takes time to do a good job.
- Although meetings may be conducted in English, translate all promotional materials into German. Make sure your proposal is precise and detailed and that your presentation is well organized and professional. Using an interpreter is recommended.
- Status is important. People of higher status enter a room first.
- Take an ample supply of business cards. One side of the business card should be printed in German, the other side in English. Education is respected, so include advanced degrees on the card. In addition, include the date your company was founded if it has been in business for a long time.
- Conversations with Germans when getting acquainted should not include personal questions or political questions that may prove embarrassing. Sports of all types, especially soccer, are recommended topics of conversation.
- During business discussions, do not make attempts at humor; Germans take business seriously and do not smile in business situations. Maintain poise and self-control. Be direct, but be honest as Germans dislike exaggeration.
- Business gifts that are small, inexpensive, and of good quality are preferred. Imported liquor or wine, electronics, or gifts from your country are appreciated. Beer is not a wise choice; any foreign beer you choose could probably not compete with German beer.

#### Japan

- The traditional greeting in Japan includes a bow; when dealing with people from other cultures, a handshake is often included with the bow.
- Exchanging business cards is important; have cards printed in English on one side with the Japanese translation on the reverse side. The business card should be presented with the Japanese side facing the recipient; cards are also received with both hands. Business cards are treated with respect and



should not be placed in one's pocket. They are examined carefully before placing them in a briefcase or business card holder.

- Be punctual; being late for meetings and appointments is rude.
- Intermediaries who are not associated with either company and who are of the same rank as the Japanese negotiators are recommended, especially in conveying bad news. Use a Japanese lawyer, not one from a U.S. firm.

- Remember that throughout the negotiations, "yes" or "we will consider it" may actually mean "no."

- After the contract is signed, it is permissible to continue to negotiate, as contracts are not viewed as final agreements.

- Gift giving is important to the Japanese. Gifts are often given at initial business meetings. Since wrapping is important, having gifts wrapped after arriving in Japan is recommended. Appropriate gifts include electronic gadgets or imported cognac or Scotch; avoid giving four of anything.

- Follow these additional guidelines during negotiations: Be polite, be indirect, and use "I'm sorry" when appropriate. Avoid humor; avoid hard-sell, high-pressure techniques; and do not compliment individuals as Japan is a group-oriented culture.

#### Mexico

- Building a long-term relationship is important in Mexico; maintaining contact with Mexican colleagues between visits is recommended.

- Include an upper-level manager on your negotiating team, as status is important in Mexico. Mexican negotiators are typically selected based on education, family connections, and influence; they are usually male and occupy high-level positions.

- Because Mexicans are concerned with status, staying at a prestigious hotel and dining at fine restaurants are recommended.

- Since Mexicans avoid saying "no," written agreements are essential to make sure that the oral "yes" does in fact signify agreement.

- During negotiations, an emotional approach is more effective than a logical one. In other words, emphasis should be on trust, pride, and personal benefits rather than on the details of the contract.

- When negotiating with Mexicans, anticipate their need to finance purchases; expect to work out financing issues.

- Time is more relaxed in Mexico. People are considered more important than tasks. Being on time for meetings is important; however, be prepared to wait.

- Here are some final reminders when negotiating with Mexicans: They place great importance on diplomacy, courtesy, tact, respect, and good manners. Also remember that Mexicans, unlike U.S. persons, are not risk takers and have a pessimistic attitude in situations involving risk.

#### South Korea

- Building a relationship is important before conducting business in South Korea; allow time to get to know your South Korean counterparts, which may necessitate making several trips before a contract is signed.

- Business cards are important and are given out often; have the cards printed in Korean on one side and in English on the reverse side. Use your right hand when offering your card. Avoid writing on a business card or treating it with disrespect.

- When selecting negotiation team members, remember to include older, senior executives from your company, as age and status are important to South Koreans. Women are not usually included on negotiating teams, so tell your South Korean counterparts in advance if a woman will be on your team to give them time to adjust to the idea.

- While concern for promptness was not important in the past, South Koreans now consider time in much the same way as do U.S. business-persons. Thus, being on time for meetings and appointments, as well as for social engagements, is important.

- Written materials may be in English; presentations may also be in English. However, having a translator available is recommended to make sure your proposal is clear.

- During the initial stage of negotiations, begin with a bid that will permit compromise. South Koreans, while starting with an extreme position, expect to compromise to achieve a "win-win" outcome.

- During meetings, remember that South Koreans tend to give a response that is pleasing to the other side and may be uncomfortable saying “no.” Rather, South Koreans may use nonverbal signals, such as tipping back the head, squinting, or sucking air through the teeth, to convey a negative response.
- A written contract is important.
- Final suggestions when negotiating with the South Koreans include showing respect for the elderly, complimenting others, and being modest about your accomplishments. Do not criticize anyone publicly; this includes criticism of the competition.

#### Taiwan

- Arrange for a personal introduction if possible.
- Business cards are important; have the cards printed in Mandarin Chinese (using gold ink) on one side and in English on the reverse side. Treat business cards with respect.
- The negotiating team should include older, senior-level executives as Taiwanese respect age and seniority. Since women are not usually included on negotiating teams, advise your Taiwanese counterparts if you plan to include a woman on your team to give them time to become accustomed to the idea.
- Allow ample time to build a relationship with the Taiwanese; patience is required, especially when dealing with delays. Several trips to Taiwan may be necessary before a contract is signed.
- During negotiations, keep in mind that the Taiwanese consider saying “no” to be rude, so when they say “maybe,” it usually means “no.”
- Avoid embarrassing another person; face-saving is important in this culture. Also avoid criticizing competitors.
- Bargaining is common during negotiations; expect to make concessions.
- Final suggestions for negotiating with the Taiwanese include being honest, sincere, modest, and respectful—especially to the elderly and to high-ranking Taiwanese team members; refrain from emotional displays, speaking loudly, or using excessive hand gestures during conversations or when making presentations.

#### United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland)

- Although there are slight behavioral differences in people from the four major regions, punctuality is expected throughout the United Kingdom.
- Introductions are often made by third parties; these third parties have no additional duties. Be prepared with business cards during introductions.
- Sending your senior executives to negotiate with your UK counterparts is recommended because they are usually treated with greater respect.
- Observing rules of etiquette is important on both business and social occasions in the United Kingdom; these rules include appropriate attire, proper table manners, and a calm, composed demeanor. Emotional outbursts are inappropriate.
- UK negotiators can be ruthless and tough, yet they are tolerant and willing to compromise; avoid hard-sell techniques; UK negotiators are direct and are typically interested in short-term results; their skill in negotiation should not be underestimated.
- Remember that the British are rather formal and value their privacy. Thus, asking personal questions and controversial topics should be avoided. They are often critical of themselves and use self-effacing humor; however, it is unwise to participate. Simply listen and remain silent.

#### United States of America

- U.S. negotiations take place at a more rapid pace than in many other cultures. Bringing a final contract and having it signed at a first meeting is not uncommon. Statements such as “Let’s get to the point” indicate a desire to speed up the negotiation process and reach a decision.
- Building a relationship with prospective clients is unnecessary. After a brief period of chitchat or small talk, getting right down to business is the norm.
- During small talk, U.S. persons may ask about a person’s profession or job; this is not considered intrusive. Other conversation topics may include travel, music, books, and sports; however, controversial topics, such as religion, politics, and money, are inappropriate.

- Exchanging business cards is not as important as it is in many cultures. Usually, business cards are exchanged only if there is a reason to get in touch with the person later. The U.S. practice of writing on business cards and putting them in a wallet or back pocket is not viewed as disrespectful.
- Punctuality is extremely important. Being on time for business appointments and meetings is expected; however, arriving a few minutes late for social engagements is acceptable.
  - Business meetings may take place at breakfast or lunch; the host invites and pays.
  - U.S. space requirements should be considered during negotiations. Standing too close (up to 18 inches) can cause discomfort for U.S. persons.
  - Using cell phones and other electronic devices during meetings, though quite rude, is common. The practice is understandably irritating to people from other cultures.
  - Remember that U.S. negotiators are uncomfortable with silence, tend to be informal, value honesty, and expect an agreement to be honored. They are not concerned with saving face and are quick to offer constructive criticism, which may cause discomfort or embarrassment for negotiators from other cultures.

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