

7 Workplace Etiquette Tips to Build Teamwork in Any Economy

By Rachel Wagner, January 2009

No one would dispute that today's gloomy economic news is a concern for workers everywhere. But, did you know that showing workplace courtesy and respect to those in your department or team is a winning way to build up your team?

Workplace etiquette pays in two ways for you and your team. First, it elevates you as an individual—and it's a good thing to be known as someone who shows respect and courtesy to others. In fact, research shows that workplace etiquette is essential for keeping and being promoted in a job.

Secondly—and of equal importance—workplace etiquette improves work relationships. It shows your team that you care about them, their work, and their value to the team.

Moreover, when the entire team or department embraces professional workplace etiquette, your team's stellar example can raise the bar for the rest of the organization. As the saying goes, "A rising tide floats all the boats."

Here are seven ways you can use workplace etiquette and courtesy to set you and your team apart in any economy.

1. **Attitude is everything.**

Have a great attitude like your job depended on it. You may not be in your dream job or have a dream boss, but don't wear a negative attitude on your shirtsleeve. It shows! Refrain from gossip and negative talk about anyone on your team. Rather than building you up, condescending conversation diminishes you instead. Also, be all there—don't mentally check out by 2:00. And, show yourself friendly to everyone on the team. Research from the Servcorp Index reveals that the majority of American business professionals appreciate being acknowledged by teammates when they arrive at work.

2. **Notch up nonverbal communication.**

Have good eye contact to show you are listening. Look at the upper part of the face—the eye and brow area. Looking any lower on the face is too social and intimate for the workplace. Avoid crossing your arms over your chest as this can indicate you are not approachable. Give a good handshake to those on your team, not just to your clients.

3. **Be timely, not tardy.**

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

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respect them and their time. Complete tasks and projects on time, too; don't let the team down with excuses.

4. Use proper tech etiquette.

Don't leave the team hanging. Answer their emails and phone calls in a timely way—by the end of the day if possible, and no later than 24 hours. Using proper grammar and punctuation in departmental emails is just as important as in client emails.

5. Go the extra mile—it's not crowded!

Look for ways you can help out and show support to a teammate. If he has a heavy day and deadlines to meet and you don't, step up and offer to help. Your assistance and team spirit will be appreciated by everyone in the group.

6. Contribute value to team meetings.

Focus on the meeting, not on side conversations or on your BlackBerry. Be open to others' ideas and points of view. Avoid a 'my way or the highway' attitude. It makes you appear selfish and undermines team spirit. Let others finish speaking before sharing your thoughts.

7. Show appreciation.

Everyone likes to be appreciated. Sincerely verbalize and demonstrate thanks as often as possible. Do this both publicly—when appropriate—and privately. If your boss congratulates you on a job well done and you had help from your team members, be sure to tell your boss so they can receive credit, too. They'll be more likely to rally around you on the next big project.

Truly, nothing could be easier—or better—for building up your team than when everyone engages in workplace etiquette and courtesy. No matter how uncertain the economy, using these tips will make a difference in your own job success and promotion—and in the success of your team. Ready to float *your* team's boat higher?

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