

SUMMER-SAVVY BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

By Rachel Wagner, June 2007

With warm weather upon us, many companies have transitioned to a more relaxed dress code for the summer months. But one thing to remember—business etiquette never goes into “relax mode.” Being too casual with one’s business attire or business etiquette can detract from a professional image.

Follow these tips to help you keep a polished professional image during the sultry summer months.

- **Keep a sports coat on a hanger on the back of your office door.** Even if you don’t plan to wear a suit to work during the summer, a sports coat is essential to enhance your professional image when meeting clients or guests. For women, a colorful sweater set is casual, comfortable, and professional for summer office wear.
- **Wear appropriate shoes.** Open-toed dress shoes are okay for women during warm weather, but leave the flip flops and casual sandals for the weekend.
- **Handshaking knows no seasons.** Even in a more relaxed professional environment, always give a firm handshake when arriving at and leaving from any business setting.
- **Table manners for summer salad days:** Business relationships are developed over meals, and nothing can detract from a relationship like poor table manners. Ever-popular summer salads are not always presented as a fork-only menu item. Use your knife to cut salad greens-- one bite at a time--into smaller, bite-sized pieces.
- **Cell phone etiquette for outdoor dining:** Joining a client or colleague for a meal on a restaurant patio doesn’t mean you are free to conduct cell phone calls at the table. If you must make or receive an important business call while dining outdoors, please excuse yourself; and walk to a quiet spot away from other outdoor diners.

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