

## Respect in the workplace pays dividends

by: RACHEL WAGNER Business Viewpoint

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Being respectful in the workplace isn't rocket science.

Simply put, it's treating others the way you want to be treated — in all of your everyday encounters and interactions.

It's showing the same respect and consideration to the mail room clerk and the cleaning people as you would to the boss or your clients. By doing so, you send a message that each person has value.

Respect in the workplace pays dividends, too. First, it strengthens your own "personal brand." In addition, research shows that polite workplaces tend to have less staff turnover, run more smoothly and are less prone to backbiting and internal sabotage.

Here are some relevant, yet easily doable, ways you can show greater respect in your workplace to co-workers, customers and clients.

- Use good tech etiquette. Don't leave people hanging. Return e-mails and phone calls by the end of the day if possible, or within 24 hours. When placing a phone call, ask if it's a convenient time. Always ask permission to place someone on hold. And respect a caller's confidentiality by not listening to phone messages on a speaker phone.
- When talking to someone face to face, give him or her 100 percent of your focus; avoid taking a call on your cell phone or texting. Keep e-mails brief and to the point. Before you hit "reply to all," ask yourself if all the recipients really need this information to do their job.
- For a meeting, it's courteous to show up on time and turn cell phones on silent. Resist "reading under the table" with your newest iPhone app, tweeting or checking your Facebook page.
- Be on time for work. It's even more impressive to be a few minutes early.
- Be a good cubicle neighbor. Before entering, knock softly on the cubicle wall. Don't "borrow" supplies just because there is no door. To minimize the noise level, turn your phone ringer to the lowest level, use ear buds to listen to your music, and avoid having loud phone conversations that can distract others.
- Minimize food odors and fragrances. Be mindful of heating foods in the microwave that have strong odors that can smell up the communal work area. When it comes to fragrances, wear your scent with sensibility.
- Dress with respect. When your attire portrays an image of professionalism, you show respect to yourself, your co-workers and to your clients and customers.
- Choose your words wisely. So often, people speak up only if they have a complaint about someone or their work — and they miss opportunities to thank people for what they're doing. So be deliberate and look for opportunities to use sincere words of thanks, praise and affirmation.

- Avoid using foul language, telling off-color jokes or making negative or suggestive comments. Resist gossip — it hurts reputations, relationships and careers.
- Pull your own weight, but don't take credit for someone else's work. If your boss congratulates you on a job well done and it was a team effort, be sure to mention the names of the others who helped you.
- Eat not your co-worker's food. According to P.M. Forni, co-founder of the Civility Project at Johns Hopkins University, taking someone else's food from the refrigerator is a top pet peeve of many employees.
- Show respect to your office guest. Send parking and check-in information ahead of time. Personally meet the guest in the reception area. After the meeting, be sure to shake hands and walk your guest to the reception area.
- Stand for an introduction or handshake. This reflects well on you and shows respect to others.
- Give co-workers the benefit of the doubt. Overlook little annoyances and offenses and move on.
- Go the extra mile — when it's convenient and when it's not convenient. When you look out for the needs of others, you gain respect in return.

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Rachel Wagner is a certified corporate etiquette and international protocol consultant and founder of the business etiquette firm, Rachel Wagner Etiquette and Protocol. She trains leadership teams on the topics of business and dining etiquette to polish their professional presence and the image of their company. Rachel is active with the American Society for Training and Development and the National Speaker's Association. She is author of a popular e-zine, The Savvy Professional, and is frequently quoted in the media. She can be reached by phone at 918.970.4400 or by email at Rachel@EtiquetteTrainer.com. Website: [www.EtiquetteTrainer.com](http://www.EtiquetteTrainer.com).

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