

Business etiquette: manners in today's society

Business



Business Etiquette: Manners in Today's Society.

Etiquette and good manners are vital elements in any business, organization or the society at large. Such manners are useful in governing the way people behave and how they interrelate with one another at the workplace.

Background information.

The basic meaning and principle of etiquette dates back to around 2500 B. C where the word etiquette was used first to give advice to some young men in Egypt on how to behave in a morally acceptable manner. It refers to a specific set of rules and regulations which have been put in place to govern the behavior of people in a society. Business etiquette consists of a code of business manners which are not written down but all the employees in that particular business are expected to follow them anyway (Sabath, 1993). Business etiquette is important as it helps people to work effectively, create lasting healthy relationships and improve the working potentials in their respective careers. Proper understanding and practice of good business etiquette enables one to handle demanding situations which might be encountered in the course of business operations. It also allows real talents to be recognized and improved for higher business productivity.

Failure to observe business etiquette does not necessarily lead to business failure but it makes it hard for the business to achieve its future long-term goals. Good business manners reflect the application of acceptable behaviors in any organization. They include mastering simple things like dressing appropriately, greeting people with a firm handshake and a smile,

taking politely to everyone, good eating habits when out for dinner meetings and so forth.

The basic principle of good manners in business emphasizes on “ thoughtful consideration of the thoughts, feelings and interests of other people before ones own interests.” (Shay, 2006) This can be summarized in what is known as a golden rule which suggests that integrity, good manners, personal values, attitudes and opinions, consideration and proper thinking are the basic requirements of good etiquette in business.

Integrity helps one to act in an honest way and this is important in any business to enable the customers to have trust in its operations. Manners involve lack of selfishness, having good discipline and behaving in a morally upright manner when dealing with employees, business partners as well as clients. Business etiquette is thus an all round affair which covers the outward appearance, general behavior, goodcommunicationskills among others.

Manners in the society today.

Manners refer to particular ways in which people behave or act in the society. Such standards unlike laws are usually not enforced or strictly followed by any legal or formal system, they are supposed to occur naturally. Good manners are small rules which help people in every society to live in harmony and at peace with one another. This include using words like please, thank you, excuse me and so forth. Good manners also include practicing good eating habits, dressing in a socially acceptable way and so on.

One of the major problems facing the society today is lack of manners and overall respect for the society's norms and beliefs. Most people argue that manners in today's society have greatly deteriorated starting with the adults/parents who do not have a proper knowledge about good manners and as a result, the children they raise are under no obligation to have good manners. This has made the issue of etiquette and good manners to be of great cultural concern to the society than ever before.

The way in which the whole concept of manners is perceived in the society keeps changing from one generation to the other. For example, in the modern days skimpy dresses and tight clothes which were previously considered to be indecent are now prevalent especially among the teenagers. However, although there are major changes in manners over the years, some basic manners have still remained useful and very important for the proper running of the society (Danzel, 2003).

Today, there are three major perspectives or concepts of good manners. This include use of common sense, customs and consideration. Custom refers to a habit or a way in which people have become used to when doing certain things such as way of greeting people, shaking hands, saying goodbye and so forth. Consideration on the other hand is thinking or evaluating how other people feel and by doing this, one is able to avoid doing things which might hurt the feelings of other people in the society. Common sense is needed in all manners. For example, it is common sense to say sorry when u step on a person's foot by mistake (Rupper, 1999).

Basic ideas concerning good manners should be taught to children at an early stage in life in order for them to act in morally acceptable ways even

<https://assignbuster.com/business-etiquette-manners-in-todays-society/>

when they grow up. Good manners are important in all aspects of life be it at home, in school, at the work place and so forth.

Home etiquette;- Home is the first learning institution for every child. It is where children are taught how to relate with other people, dress appropriately, communicate effectively and differentiate between what is right and what is wrong. Good manners in the home are important because they facilitate harmonious co-existence between the family members as they recognize and respect the rights and opinions of each other. It is also important for family members to respect the privacy of each others properties and feelings. Another important aspect of good manners at home is reflected in sharing of duties as well as property. This includes sharing things like the bathroom, toilet, bedroom facilities, food and so on. Duties such as washing dishes, going for shopping among others should also be shared. Proper etiquette should thus be applied and this includes arranging personal items, cleaning the washroom after you have used it and sharing all the responsibilities in the home.

Telephone etiquette;- It is courteous to pick up a call as promptly as possible. Moreover, it is good manners to allow the person who is calling or who answers a call to finish talking before hanging up on them. In addition, if someone accidentally dials your number and on answering he or she notices that it is a wrong number and apologizes, one should kindly accept the apology instead of hauling insults to the caller. Another aspect of telephone manners includes calling people at the right time when one is not bound to be interfering with their schedules. It is good manners to avoid calling people late at night, too early in the morning, during the day when

they are busy at work or during meal times unless it is an emergency or one is sure that the person he or she is calling is comfortable with that.

Table manners;- different families have different rules concerning table manners but some universal rules apply everywhere. For instance, one should avoid eating food when it is too hot, avoid talking with food in the mouth, one should never try to reach for food which is not near and should instead request the person who is near it to pass it over, one should bring food towards the mouth instead of bending over to reach to it, toothpicks should never be used in public because that tends to disgust many people, it is wrong to comb the hair or apply make up at the table when people are taking meals among others.

Manners while on the streets;- whether it is at home, at the work place or on the streets, good manners must be observed while walking to avoid conflicts with the people encountered on the way. One is supposed to walk cautiously especially when walking on a busy street to avoid stepping or roughly rubbing other peoples shoulders. In case of a slight accident such as stepping on somebody's shoes while walking, it is courteous to stop and apologize kindly to avoid conflicts.

Etiquette at the workplace.

In modern times, the workplace has been greatly transformed especially with the increase in technological know-how. In addition to the traditional rules of conducts new areas of concern are emerging in regard to the behavior of both the employers and that of their employees. Unfortunately, the aspect of good manners at the work-place has been greatly neglected in today's

society as a result of a “ workforce stretched thin”. Overworked employees working in an uncomfortable environment can not find time to appreciate or be polite to their colleagues or even the customers. Due to frustrations and lack of motivation, the employees tend to work with haste and lack courtesy a fact which is bound to affect the productivity of the business (Sabath, 2002).

Good manners at the work place involve more than just being courteous or nice to the people around. They form an integral part of the overall business strategy which requires one to have ethical behaviors, a good attitude, proper grooming and in general, creating a friendly environment which is essential for productivity. According to etiquette experts, good grooming is very important as it creates a lasting impression to all the people whom one encounters. This first impression is very important and in any business all associates, employers, employees and customers should be welcomed with a smile and treated with ultimate respect and politeness. Proper communication when relating with fellow employees as well as with the customers is also very important. It is necessary to choose carefully what to say and when to say it. Use of criticizing and sarcastic words should be avoided at all costs. It is also important for the employer to show recognition to those employees who show excellence and improvement in their work. If possible, the employers should find a way of rewarding such employees as a way of motivating them to do better. In addition, employers should treat all employees with respect and fairness without favoritism or discrimination.

On their part, employees should dress appropriately and decently when going to work, avoid lateness when reporting for work, cultivated a positive

attitude towards their jobs, treat everyone with the respect among other things.

According to Shy (2006), bad manners at the workplace include poor communication skills such as loud laughs or use of uncouth language, excessive use of perfumes which might affect other people, eavesdropping on other people's conversations, hovering on people when they are talking on the phone, lack of respiratory etiquette, lack of basic courtesy like not using courteous words like please, thank you and so forth.

Business etiquette for attorneys.

When it comes to the legal world, attorneys are not an exception to obeying the rules of business etiquette. Attorneys are expected to observe these rules when interacting with their colleagues, clients and the society at large in order to promote integrity and justice while ensuring that at the same time, they do not compromise the competitive spirit which is highly required in their profession (Carey and Kristen, 2003).

This legal profession expects every attorney to observe code of ethics and professionalism with integrity and sensitivity. Professionalism in this case refers to the conduct and behavior which is expected to be exuded by every attorney when dealing with clients, opposing legal counsels, court rules and regulations as well as with other colleagues. It requires one to act with confidence, sober judgment, maturity, integrity and a lot of discretion when dealing with other people. In this case, attorneys are expected to adhere strictly to a code of personal morality whenever they are representing their

clients regardless of whether or not this favors their situations (Robbinson, 2000).

In addition, every attorney is expected to deal cautiously with all matters including those in his or her personal life considering the fact that attorneys represent the legal system to the whole society. Some qualities of professionalism such as poise are taught in class while others such as good morals are acquired as early as during childhood and are then advanced during one's career. It is thus clear that, in addition to acquiring and developing proper technical skills, attorneys must have a proper basic knowledge of business etiquette. This is very important because for one, the attorney is expected to make a good and lasting impression to the clients he interacts with.

Furthermore, an attorney is supposed to act with a lot of confidence and integrity in order to convince the clients that he or she is capable of properly representing them in court or in any other transactions. Secondly, the image of the client is usually judged from how well or badly the attorney represents his or her case. It is thus very important for the attorney to conduct in a pleasant manner in order to avoid distorting the image of his clients.

Proper business etiquette includes introducing people who have not met before, referring to people using their proper names and titles, not using a speaker-phone when talking to individuals over the phone unless it is absolutely necessary and so forth.

Since attorneys have very huge responsibilities entrusted to them, they are expected to be trustworthy and hard-working towards fulfilling the

expectations of all their clients. In addition, they have to make sure that they show ultimate respect for the legal institutions and processes involved. This is done through obeying deadlines, following the legal procedures put in place and behaving in a manner that does not betray the trust given to them by the clients. This requires discipline in simple matters such as answering the client's phone calls, proper arrangement of the Court papers to avoid inconveniences, proper time management, managing and containing every client's expectations, being on time when attending court proceedings, proper supervision of the associates and junior staff among others.

Business etiquette further helps attorneys to create and maintain healthy working relationships within their profession. Although attorneys are very busy, it is important for every attorney to observe some basic rules of business etiquette (Carey and Kristen, 2003). This includes:

Keeping promises, appointments and deadlines at all times.

Being punctual when attending meetings and court proceedings.

Switching off the phone or any electronics when in a meeting to avoid distractions.

Creating good and lasting impressions through a firm handshake, a smile and an impressive general outlook.

Answering calls promptly or when that is not possible say for example one is in a meeting, he or she should call or text back as soon as possible.

Proper table manners when in dining meetings. This includes things like using the correct utensils, avoid talking with food in the mouth and so forth.

Conclusion.

From the findings of this research it is clear that, good manners are very important in every society and they touch on almost all aspects of life. It is not possible to fully exhaust all the factors which contribute to basic etiquette or good manners since they are very many. The ones which have been mentioned in the the discussion above are just but a few of the overall manners needed for people to live harmoniously in the society. Manners enable a person to do the right thing and avoid things which might hurt or annoy other people. Besides making other people happy, good manners and proper etiquette helps one to get a feeling of self satisfaction and they also help in building and sustaining healthy lasting relationships both at the workplace and in the society at large.

In addition, it can be concluded that the fast pace at which the business environment in today's society is evolving has left little time for the employees to pay attention to matters concerning etiquette and good manners in their businesses. This implies that etiquette in business world needs to be upgraded because, good manners ensure happiness, a sense of security and overall success in the business.

References.

Ann Marie Sabath. (1993). Business Etiquette In Brief: The Competitive Edge for Today's Professional. Adams Media.

Ann Marie Sabath. (2002). Business Etiquette: 101 Ways to Conduct Business With Charm and Savvy. Career Press.

Danzer, Gerald. (2003). The Americans: The Changing Workplace. Evanston, IL: McDougall Littell.

Robinson, D. (2000). *Business Etiquette: Your Complete Guide to Correct Behaviour in Business*. New York: Kogan Page Publishers.

Shay, T. (2006). *Lessons in Life, For All Who Will Read Them*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Company.

Ruppel, T. (1999). Gender Training: Male Ambitions, Domestic Duties, and Failure in the Magazine Fiction of T. S. Arthur. *Prospects* 24 : 311-337.

Carey, C. and Kristen, D. (2003). *The Practice of Law School: Getting in and Making the Most of Your Legal Education*. New York: ALM Publishing.

;