



# Progress to Excellence™

Briefcase Basics Workplace Leaders Vol. 1 Iss. 1

## Business etiquette is important:

People judge you and your company by what they see and what they believe to be true. No one else sees you as you yourself do; only as they perceive you to be. The need for business etiquette is based on the need to positively influence others' perceptions.

If people perceive you to be a knowledgeable, smooth professional, they will want to do business with you. If you use skills that encourage that human response, there is a higher chance you will:

- get positive results
- earn cooperation and support
- increase commitments
- gain clients
- keep peace

## General rules for professional behavior:

When we talk about business etiquette, most people think of specific rules, such as which fork to use at a business luncheon. However, there are general rules which enable us to behave appropriately in all expected and unexpected situations:

- Be focused
- Be discreet
- Do not waste time
- Be reliable
- Be positive and acknowledge others

## Behaviors that have adverse effects on customers:

- Ignoring waiting customers
- Callous, flippant or bureaucratic behavior
- Talking "down" to a customer
- Deliberate lack of understanding
- Not knowing job and what to do
- Lack of empathy
- Instructive Behavior
- Failure to take necessary notes
- Intolerance
- Impatience
- Misinformation
- Verbal abuse
- Chewing gum

## How to handle customer complaints effectively:

1. *Listen fully and completely* to what the client is saying through both words and actions.
2. *Empathize with the clients'* concerns and strong emotions. The client may not always be right but they always have the right to feel any way they want.
3. *Act upon the complaint.* Inform the client that you will explore the situation and will get back to them if necessary. Do not exceed your authority and promise specifics. If you are not the person to act on the complaint, forward all the details to that person promptly.

Remember, any comment from a client must be treated like a worthwhile and valuable point.

## Points to remember for dealing with complaints effectively:

- Never accept or place blame
- Do not take the call personally
- Never interrupt the client's comments nor cut them short
- If a client requests your name give them your full name and, if they request it, the full name of your supervisor
- Never make promises you can not keep
- Always get as much information as you can
- Always keep your cool

**Telephone first impressions:** Your first impression is a lasting one. The moment you speak into a phone, you can set the mood of the entire conversation. In an increasingly competitive marketplace we can develop our phone skills to help promote a dynamic corporate image. By enhancing your communication skills you will be better able to identify and effectively service the clients needs.

Over 50% of all business is conducted over the phone. Remember, when talking over the phone you must convey both your attitude and your personality because the listener can not see your expression. Here are **some do's of professional telephone skills:**

Do:

- Be professional
- Use "yes" and "certainly"
- Sound enthusiastic -answer with a smile
- Answer as promptly as possible
- Return calls the same day they are received, as soon as possible
- Ask for the spelling of a person's name if you are having difficulty hearing or understanding
- Identify yourself immediately and leave your name and number when the person you call is unavailable
- When you have not been able to reach someone, ask when it would be a good time to call
- Have all calls forwarded when you have a guest or are in a meeting

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