

Business Etiquette

Success is within your grasp.

Professional etiquette isn't just about dress codes and business cards—it's about getting ahead. Regardless of your specific industry or career, you can navigate any on-the-job situation with confidence by learning to:

- Handle office politics and deal with difficult coworkers
- Thrive in any business settings, from interviews to dinners
- Do business like a local, whether you're in Shanghai or São Paulo



Job Search Etiquette

Good etiquette during a job search won't guarantee that you'll be hired for a job, but it'll definitely help make sure your qualifications shine as brightly as possible. Bad etiquette, on the other hand, will ensure that your prospective employer won't pay attention to your qualifications at all.

Cover Letters and Résumés

Your cover letter and résumé are your first chance to make an impression on a prospective employer. Investing the time required to make these documents flawless shows an employer that you respect both yourself and the position for which you're applying.

Cover Letter Etiquette

- **Know your audience:** Research the company and tailor your letter to it. Make every letter unique.
- **Follow instructions:** If you're responding to an ad, provide exactly what's requested. If an online ad requests no attachments, for instance, don't send any.
- **Use a formal tone:** Make sure you come across as thoughtful, responsible, and employable.
- **Use a traditional font and paper:** Use a classic font, such as Times, on white or off-white 8.5" x 11" paper.
- **Keep it short:** Your goal should be to make it easy for a prospective employer to read your cover letter. If you make it too long, employers might not read it all.
- **Avoid personal information:** Unless one of your hobbies relates to the job, don't mention your private life, political views, or religion.
- **Proofread:** Proofread and spell-check your letter, then have someone else read it again.

Résumé Etiquette

- **Be accurate:** Each detail in your résumé must be factual. Potential employers may check up on you.
- **Keep it brief:** Your résumé should fit on one page unless you have extensive work experience, in which case it can be two pages at most.
- **List skills, not just positions:** Skills are as important as job titles. Describe your skills and accomplishments as specifically as possible, using strong, active verbs.
- **Don't forget the basics:** Include your name, address, phone number, and email address.
- **Show restraint:** Don't include information about your educational credentials (GPA, test scores, etc.) unless you've graduated in the past five years. Photos and detailed personal information are also unnecessary.

- **Proofread:** Grammatical or formatting mistakes on your résumé make you look careless.

Interviews

Following proper etiquette at job interviews makes you seem professional. It also helps convey your thoroughness, conscientiousness, and ability to work with others.

Top 10 Interview Etiquette Tips

1. **Study:** Bone up on the company before your interview. Review your résumé and be prepared to talk about every item on it.
2. **Be prepared:** Bring a pen, a notepad, and additional copies of your résumé.
3. **Arrive early:** Do whatever it takes to arrive at your interview five minutes early. Never arrive late.
4. **Look professional:** Dress neatly and conservatively (see Business Dress). Turn off your cell phone, and don't chew gum, eat, or drink.
5. **Be polite to everyone:** Don't save your charm for the interviewer—be courteous to everyone you encounter.
6. **Show deference:** Don't sit down until you've been offered a seat.
7. **Listen carefully:** Pay careful attention to your interviewer's questions and maintain eye contact. Answer straightforwardly and succinctly.
8. **Follow up:** If you don't know an answer, be honest but promise to find out. Then do the necessary research and follow up with an answer after the interview.
9. **Ask questions:** Asking questions at the end of your interview gives you a chance to show off your smarts as well as your listening skills. Ask about the company or your job duties, but don't ask about salary, benefits, or any information published on the company website.
10. **Say thank you:** At the end of the interview, shake hands with the interviewer and thank him or her. Mail or email a thank-you note within 24 hours.

Respecting Your Coworkers

Your house may be your castle, but your workplace isn't. Your office is shared space, and you should treat it as such. Show respect for your coworkers in the following ways:

- **Try to mesh with the company culture:** When you arrive at a new company, observe the patterns of office life and adapt to them.
- **Value diversity:** Be sensitive to differences. Never tease or mock anyone.

- **Respect privacy:** Unless someone offers information about their personal life, don't discuss it. Avoid asking about a coworker's age, relationship status, sexual orientation, politics, religion, or health.
- **Watch the volume:** Keep your voice down. If you listen to music or must use a speakerphone, make sure the noise doesn't bother anyone else.
- **Pick up after yourself:** Leave common spaces, from conference rooms to kitchens, as neat as you found them. Don't bring smelly foods into the office.
- **Less is more:** When it comes to personalizing your workspace, a few subtle details (a framed photograph of your family, a small plant) go a long way. Avoid personalizing in a way that might offend others.
- **Close the door:** If you have an office, shut the door when you have visitors, when you're having a confidential conversation, and when you really need to concentrate.
- **Honor the cubicle:** Treat cubicles like the private offices of your coworkers. Give them the courtesy and privacy they deserve.

Business Dress

A few decades ago, the rules of business dress were simple: business suits for men and women. In recent years, the dress codes in many industries and companies have relaxed, giving employees greater freedom to choose what to wear to work. Most employees welcome this freedom, but it does require you to be more attuned to dressing right for every situation, both inside and out of the office.

Business Dress Basics

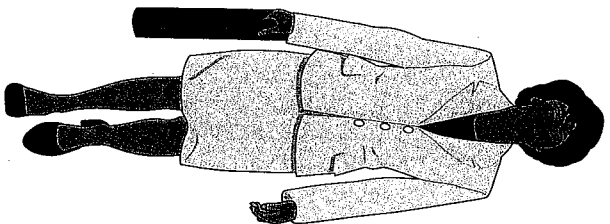
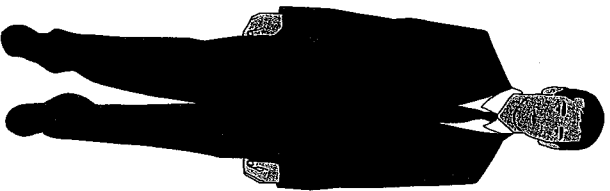
Though there's no longer one single standard of business dress, there are still general guidelines you should follow:

- **Follow the dress code:** Many workplaces have abandoned written dress codes (though if yours has one you should follow it closely). Instead, observe the people around you and try to dress in a similar fashion.
- **Subtlety is the best policy:** Creativity and individuality are great, but if your dress makes you stand out at work, your coworkers might take that as a sign that you don't respect the company or its culture. Unless you work in a very progressive field, visible tattoos and multiple piercings could also be a problem.
- **Remember who you work for:** When you meet with clients or associates from outside your company, they see you as a representative of your company. For

- these kinds of meetings, you may want to dress more formally than you would for an ordinary day at the office.
- **Dress for promotion:** Dress as if you already have the job you want to get. Looking the part will help others imagine you in the part.
 - **Practice good hygiene:** Bathe daily, wear deodorant, and keep your clothes clean.
 - **Look tidy:** Style and trim your hair (including facial hair), keep your nails clean, and don't wear clothes with wrinkles or holes.
 - **Limit makeup and fragrance:** Too much makeup can make you look fake, while too much perfume or cologne can be overpowering and unpleasant.
 - **Cover up:** Avoid overly tight, short, low-cut, or revealing clothes.

Traditional Business Attire

If you work in an office where the dress code is traditional, or if you're meeting with clients or associates who tend to dress traditionally, you should dress accordingly. In general, the fields of finance, healthcare, insurance, and law are more traditional, while entertainment, media, fashion, publicity, and technology are less so. Even if your particular job will never require you to dress in a traditional business suit, it still helps to know the rules of traditional business dress for comparison purposes.



Clothes	Men	Women
Suit	Wool or cotton in dark colors, tan, beige, or gray. Subtle pin-stripes are okay, but shiny and pastel aren't.	Tailored, classic suits in wool, cotton, or linen. Dark colors are the most formal. Skirts should be hemmed around the knee.
Shirt	Long-sleeved white or light-blue shirts. Choose spread or point collars.	White, cream, or any understated color that coordinates with your suit.
Tie or scarf	Should be silk, understated, coordinate with your suit and shirt, and stop at the top of your belt.	Cashmere, wool, or silk. Should be understated in color and tied neatly.
Socks or hosiery	Should be dark, match your pants, and cover your calves when you sit.	Should be subtle. Avoid patterns.

Shoes	Oxfords, wingtips, or loafers coordinated with your suit (black with black, gray, and navy; brown with tan or brown).	Low-heeled pumps (about 1-2").
Jewelry	A wedding and/or class ring and a simple watch. Other jewelry should be subtle, if worn at all.	Small, classic pieces such as pearl studs or a delicate gold chain.
Belt	Should coordinate with your shoes, be made of leather, and be no wider than 1 1/4". Use a simple buckle only.	Belts should be subtle. Metallic buckles should coordinate with your jewelry.
Outerwear	Full-length overcoat or knee-length peacoat or parka.	A simple, dark-colored wool or twill overcoat.
Bag	Laptop case or leather briefcase.	Simple, subtle, and well made.

Business Casual and Casual Fridays

Many businesses have adopted a less formal dress code called business casual. Some businesses follow business casual guidelines year round, while others institute them only in the summer or on casual Fridays.

Clothes	Men	Women
Tops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blazers or sport coats • Button-down shirts • Polo shirts • Sweaters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blazers with knit tops • Twin sets • Simple sweaters • Blouses
Bottoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khaki or flannel pants • Nice jeans (if allowed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wool or cotton pants in muted colors • Simple skirts in dark colors or subtle prints • Nice jeans (if allowed)
Shoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown leather shoes • Nice sneakers (if allowed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-toed heels • Slingbacks • Loafers • Flats • Nice sneakers (if allowed)

Power Politics in the Office

A clearly defined hierarchy of authority within an office allows people to understand and perform their roles effectively. Supervisors and employees alike must practice proper etiquette in order not to disturb the chain of command.

When You're the Boss

Many bosses take the position that their only goal is to meet deadlines and get things done. These bosses often treat their employees like cogs in a machine. Though these tactics may work in the short term, in the long term they breed low morale and productivity. A far more effective policy is to try to gain the loyalty and admiration of those working under you by showing them respect. Here are some specific ways to do that:

- **Ask rather than tell:** Instead of issuing orders, present assignments to employees as requests. That doesn't mean you should be wishy-washy or passive-aggressive. Just issue a clear, direct, and concise request.
- **Be clear when giving instructions:** Make sure your employees understand their responsibilities and your expectations.
- **Don't be afraid to admit a mistake:** If you take responsibility, employees will follow suit, and your workplace will be both more pleasant and productive.

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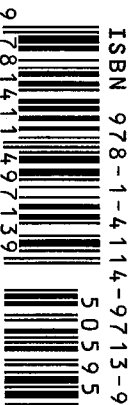
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- **Encourage questions:** Employees' questions can help you uncover flaws in your thinking and processes. Listening to employees also makes them feel like they're valued and respected members of the team.
- **Give regular feedback:** Make sure employees have a strong sense of their performance level, including areas in which they could improve. Give praise and compliments when they're deserved.
- **Always be polite:** Never belittle employees. Criticize when it's warranted, but never in public or in front of other employees. If you make people feel dumb or ashamed even once, they won't work hard for you.
- **Set a good example:** Abide by the rules you set for employees. If you don't, you'll look like a hypocrite.
- **Never make it personal:** Always focus on work performance. Don't comment on appearance, dress, or anything that might offend.
- **Avoid physical touch:** Some people may be uncomfortable with physical touch that you consider merely friendly, especially if you hold a position of authority over them.

Delivering Bad News

One of the most unpleasant parts of being a supervisor is firing or laying off coworkers. If you face this situation:

- **Plan:** Figure out ahead of time what you'd like to say.
- **Do it in person and in private:** Always deliver bad news face-to-face and never in public.
- **Be clear:** People deserve to know why they're losing their job. Explain why they're being laid off or fired.
- **Show empathy:** Imagine how you'd feel if you lost your job. Expect—and respect—raw emotions.

Dealing with Higher-Ups

It's easy to demonize a difficult boss, but it's better to think of him or her as a person rather than a monster. Like it or not, your boss is in charge, and your work situation will be better if you maintain a good relationship.

- **Observe and adapt:** Pay attention to how your boss works and adapt yourself to that style.
- **Don't go above your boss's head:** If you have an issue with your boss, discuss it directly with him or her. If the problem persists, seek advice from your human resources department.
- **Take the phrase "team player" seriously:** Never use phrases such as, "But that's not my job." It makes you seem whiny and uncooperative.
- **Do your homework:** Before you go to your boss with a new idea, prepare background materials for support.
- **Respect your boss's authority:** Once a decision is made, respect it regardless of whether you agree.
- **Stay loyal in public:** If you have differences with your boss, don't let the whole office know.
- **Compliment your boss:** When your boss has done something particularly well, offer a compliment. Do this only for significant achievements or milestones.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a type of sex discrimination that was made illegal in the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Sexual harassment is usually classified into two types:

- **Quid pro quo:** Meaning "something for something," quid pro quo harassment refers to requests for sexual favors in exchange for a job or promotion, or as a condition to avoid negative consequences, such as job loss or demotion.
- **Hostile work environment:** A hostile work environment is one in which an employee feels consistently uncomfortable and cannot perform his or her job. Courts have interpreted this as everything from unwanted touching and flirting to inappropriate comments about someone's appearance. To avoid creating a hostile work environment, never:

- Look at pornography while at work
- Touch a coworker, except to shake hands
- Flirt with or hit on a coworker
- Comment on someone's appearance
- Tell dirty jokes or allude to sex in any way
- Go into a coworker's hotel room

Dealing with Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can happen to anyone, not just women. If you're being harassed, try the following steps:

- Confront the harasser immediately and tell him or her that their behavior is unwelcome and must stop.
- Make a written record of instances of harassment and keep it at home.
- If the behavior doesn't stop, talk to your human resources department about what's happened.
- If these steps don't resolve the issue, consult a lawyer or contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) about your options.

Business Meeting Etiquette

Business meeting etiquette helps you and your colleagues exchange information and ideas openly. Mastering this etiquette will help you focus on contributing to the meeting rather than worrying about your behavior.

Planning a Meeting

To make your meetings as productive as possible, plan each meeting thoroughly in advance.

Logistics

- **Define the purpose:** Every meeting should have a distinct purpose that can be defined in a few sentences. If you can't define a meeting's purpose or objectives, then the meeting itself is likely to be chaotic and unproductive.
- **Consider the guest list:** Think carefully when deciding who should attend the meeting. Include only those people who must be present in order to accomplish the meeting's objectives.
- **Give plenty of notice:** Use an email or memo to alert the attendees about the time, location, and purpose of the meeting. Make sure you give everyone plenty of time to arrange their schedules around the meeting. Your email or memo should ask the attendees to respond by a certain time or date so you can continue to plan (or reschedule) the meeting.
- **Book a space:** Once you know how many people will attend the meeting, book a room that has enough seating to accommodate everyone.
- **Reserve equipment:** Arrange for required audiovisual equipment to be in place for the meeting. If you don't know how to operate it, request an assistant who does.
- **Provide food and drink:** If your meeting will occur during a normal mealtime, arrange to provide food. For long meetings that don't fall during a mealtime, provide beverages and light snacks.

- **Confirm:** The day before the meeting, send an email confirming the time and location of the meeting. Alternatively, it's a nice touch to give each attendee a personal call.

Meeting Agenda

If a meeting covers only a single, precise topic, you may not need an agenda. If it covers an especially broad topic or touches on several topics, provide an agenda in order to organize the meeting and focus the attention of the attendees. An agenda should include the:

- Topics for discussion (plus an indication of who will lead each topic that will be discussed)
- Amount of time to be spent on each topic
- Start and end time of the meeting

- Location of the meeting
- List of attendees
- Contact info of the person who called the meeting

It's a good idea to send a copy of the agenda to each attendee ahead of time, such as in the email or memo you send to confirm the meeting. Providing the agenda early gives attendees time to prepare, which fosters more productive discussions. Even if you do send the agenda out ahead of time, you should still print one copy for each attendee and distribute those copies at the meeting.

Running a Meeting

Once your meeting is underway, it's your responsibility to keep it moving and on schedule while also making sure everyone has an ample chance to participate.

- **Be punctual:** Arrive early to greet attendees. Begin the meeting within five minutes of the scheduled time. Being early and punctual tells attendees that the meeting will be focused and efficient.
- **Make introductions:** Be sure that everyone knows, or meets, everyone else at the meeting.
- **Keep the meeting focused:** If the meeting becomes sidetracked, refocus it by steering the conversation back toward one of the main discussion topics.
- **Encourage participation:** Since you should invite only those people who can contribute meaningfully to the meeting, make sure every attendee speaks. Pose questions directly to anyone who has yet to contribute.
- **Silence the upstarts:** People who interrupt other attendees or go off on long tangents can ruin meetings. Cut off this behavior politely but firmly. For instance, use phrases such as "That's a valid point. But it's not relevant to this meeting" or "Let's follow up on that at a later meeting."
- **End the meeting on time:** Your job as the organizer is to steer the meeting to a timely conclusion. Finish up by summarizing the meeting's conclusions and reviewing new assignments and deadlines.
- **Thank the attendees:** Thank everyone for their participation. If any special guests or speakers attended the meeting, be sure to write them thank-you notes within 24 hours.
- **Follow up:** Within a day or two of the meeting, send out a memo or email reviewing what the meeting accomplished and what will happen next.

Attending a Meeting

Even if you're simply attending a meeting and not running it yourself, you still have a set of responsibilities to fulfill:

- **Arrive on time:** Arriving late shows disrespect to the organizer, the other attendees, and the topic being discussed. If you're running late, get in touch beforehand with the person running the meeting to explain that you'll be late and when you'll arrive.
- **Come prepared:** Review the agenda ahead of time, prepare notes, and be ready to discuss the issues.
- **Be careful where you sit:** Look to the person running the meeting for guidance on where to sit.
- **Pay attention and participate:** Listen carefully to the other participants, ask questions, and volunteer ideas. Don't conduct side discussions, pass notes, or check your watch, if you disagree with someone's point of view, respond respectfully.
- **Don't hog the floor:** Let other people have a chance to speak, and don't interrupt someone who's talking.
- **Mingle:** Before and after the meeting, talk to the other participants, especially ones you don't know.
- **Say thank you:** When the meeting concludes, thank the organizer and any speakers.

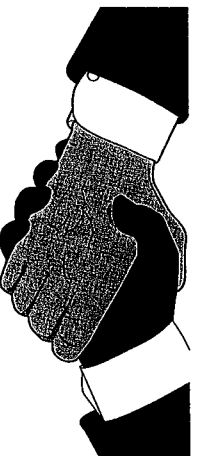
Business Introductions

Introductions often create lasting first impressions. Make sure to act with proper etiquette when you meet someone for the first time and whenever you introduce people.

When You're Introduced

During an introduction, follow these guidelines:

- **Stand up:** If you're seated, it's polite to get up when you're introduced.
- **Smile:** A smile shows that you're pleased to meet the person. Failing to smile can turn the other person off.
- **Make eye contact:** Making eye contact for the few seconds of the introduction shows the person you're meeting that you're focused on them.
- **Shake hands firmly:** A firm handshake conveys poise, confidence, and professionalism. The key to a good handshake is the grip. Take the other person's right hand in your right hand until the web between your thumb and forefinger touches the same area on the person you're meeting. Hold on firmly and pump up and down two or three times while looking the person in the eye. Don't offer—or take—just the fingers.



- **Make a point of remembering:** Unless you expressly take a mental pause to remember a name, it'll fly in one ear and right out the other.
- **Using first names:** Whether to use a title (Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.) or call someone by their first name is a matter of context. One good rule of thumb is to use the title until the other person invites you to do otherwise (or does otherwise themselves).
- **Business cards:** Give out business cards discreetly and only to people with whom you're fairly sure you'll be working in the future. Give business cards to someone who outranks you only if he or she specifically requests one.

Introducing Yourself

If you're at a meeting or event and no one introduces you, it's fine to introduce yourself. The key is not to be too bashful or too aggressive about it:

1. Walk up to the person or people you'd like to meet.
2. Say hello and give your name and position. If necessary, give your company name as well.

Making Introductions

When making introductions, provide enough context so the two people have some basis for interaction. Also keep in mind the respective ranks or seniority of the two people being introduced.

- Introduce the less powerful person to the more powerful person first, regardless of age or gender.
- Introduce coworkers to clients, not the other way around.
- When people are of equal or similar rank, introduce the one you don't know as well to the one you know better.
- When someone holds a formal title (doctor, professor, senator), use it when introducing him or her.

If You Forget a Name

Everyone forgets names once in a while. If you forget one, don't make a big deal—simply say, "I'm sorry, I've drawn a blank on your name," make a concerted effort to remember the name this time, and then move on.

Spoken Communication

Good verbal communication skills are vital for dealing with bosses, colleagues, employees, and clients. Speaking eloquently, clearly, concisely, and politely will set you apart from your colleagues.

Making Small Talk

Though it's called "small," the ability to make small talk is not trivial. From riding on an elevator with your boss's boss to having lunch with an important client, successful small talk can help cement business relationships.

- **Know when not to interrupt:** Don't try to make small talk if the other person is engaged in another task.
- **Don't dominate:** Don't talk just about yourself. It's easier to initiate and maintain small talk if you ask for the other person's opinion and show interest in his or her thoughts and ideas.
- **Stay informed:** Staying abreast of current events and paying attention to pop culture will make participating in small talk easier.
- **Avoid offending:** Stay away from personal topics, such as divorce, death, or religion. Don't curse or tell risqué jokes. Avoid stating your opinions in a derogatory way. Rather than say, "You're wrong," say something like, "I guess we just don't agree on that. But it's interesting to get your perspective."
- **Don't correct:** Small talk is for building connections, not showing superiority. Don't correct another person's grammar or make them feel embarrassed.
- **Avoid gossiping:** As tempting as it may be to discuss your coworker's ugly outfit or recent social misadventure, gossiping reflects badly on you.

Listening

Many businesspeople try to strut their stuff by dominating conversations, but listening closely can be a more powerful tool than speaking profusely.

- **Pay careful attention:** Concentrate on what the speaker says. Take notes if it helps you, but only if it's appropriate in the context of the situation.
- **Don't interrupt:** Wait until the other speaker has finished before asking a question.
- **Don't multitask:** Whether speaking in person or on the phone, don't do anything else at the same time.
- **Give positive feedback:** Use body language (nodding, leaning forward, smiling) to show that you're engaged.
- **Ask questions:** If you don't understand something, ask for clarification. Good questions help you learn more and let the speaker know that you're listening.

Talking on the Telephone

Much of your contact with clients, customers, and coworkers may occur on the phone, so it's important to maintain professionalism when you're on the line.

General Phone Etiquette

- Before switching a phone to speakerphone, always ask the person on the line whether he or she minds. If there's someone else in the room with you while the speakerphone is on, let the person on the other end of the phone know immediately.
- Don't pick up another call if you're already on one.
- If you must put someone on hold, do so only for a minute or so at most.
- Don't eat, drink, chew gum, or play music while on the phone.

When Making a Call

- Introduce yourself to whomever answers the phone and explain why you're calling.
- Before launching into the conversation, ask whether it's a convenient time to talk.

When Receiving a Call

- Pick up your ringing phone as quickly as possible.
- Answer your phone by identifying yourself.
- If you miss a call, return it as soon as possible.

Voicemail Etiquette

- Make your outgoing message brief. Give your name and the name of your company and request simply that the caller leave a message. Don't try to be clever.
- If you're out of the office for more than a day, create a message explaining that you're out and stating when you'll be back. Leave the number of a coworker who can be contacted for immediate attention.
- When leaving a message on someone else's voicemail, begin by stating your full name, company name, and phone number slowly and clearly. Be brief.
- Remember that voicemail messages can be stored and shared. Don't leave a voicemail message that you wouldn't want others (such as your boss) to hear.

Written Communication

Clear, concise, easy-to-understand writing is essential to success in business. Your writing also creates a permanent record of your work, which other people (such as future supervisors) could potentially review—so be careful about every word you put on paper or that might end up in an electronic database.

Top 10 Rules of Workplace Writing

No matter what sort of business writing you're engaged in, there are 10 rules that you should always follow:

1. Use good grammar.
2. Don't use a fancy word when a simple word will do.
3. Punctuate carefully.
4. Use fonts that are easy to read.
5. Be clear and concise.
6. Vary your sentence structure.
7. Use an appropriate tone.
8. Use spell-check.
9. Proofread your work.
10. Have someone else proofread your work.

Writing Business Letters

A business letter is used to communicate with people outside your company. Always follow the fairly strict conventions that govern business letters.

Business Letter Format

A business letter should be written on your company's letterhead. It should include all the following components:

- **Date:** In the United States, use month/day/year format (January 1, 2007). In Europe, use day/month/year format (1 January 2007).
- **Sender's address:** Include your full address, email, phone, and fax. If this information is contained in the letterhead, though, leave it out.
- **Inside address:** Write the recipient's full name (with title), company, and address.
- **Salutation:** Begin with "Dear" and then the name of the recipient (with title). Use a colon after the name rather than the comma used in personal letters. If the letter is not written to a specific person, your salutation can be "To whom it may concern."
- **Body text:** Explain the purpose of or reason for the letter in two or three paragraphs of text. Keep the body as brief as possible and the tone straightforward and formal. Insert spaces between paragraphs. Do not indent new paragraphs.
- **Closing:** In the final paragraph, include what the recipient needs to do to respond to the letter. This is known as the call to action. Also mention how you plan to follow up on the letter.

- **Signature block:** Sign in ink above a typed version of your name. Depending on the type of letter, you may also want to include your title or position in your company beneath your name.
- **Encl. (optional):** Indicate any other items that accompany the letter in the envelope.
- **cc (optional):** Include the initials of any other recipients of the letter.

date	August 29, 2007
sender's address	PHILLIPS & ASSOCIATES 199 W. 16th Street New York, NY 10011 jphillips@quamut.com www.quamut.com
inside address	Mr. Ben Florman GIGBOTS, LLC 1400 Linden Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11245
salutation	Dear Mr. Florman,
body text	A mutual acquaintance, Douglas Drand, has informed me that you're looking for a lawyer to assist you as you seek to expand your company through acquisitions. We recently helped Douglas to acquire his main business rival, and we would relish the opportunity to explain the services and expertise that we could offer to help you grow your company. If you visit our website, you will see that my firm has expertise in all areas of mergers and acquisitions, with a particular emphasis on small business. In addition to the legal counsel we provide, our experience with small business acquisitions means that we can provide you with the advice you need through the acquisition process to ensure that the transition goes smoothly. We look forward to discussing your specific needs and the services we can provide to address them. To set up an appointment, please contact me at 212-555-2828. I recognize how hectic the planning stages of an acquisition can be, so if I do not hear from you I will give you a call to follow up.
closing "call to action"	Kindest regards, <i>Lauren Phillips</i> Lauren Phillips
signature block	Enclosures
enclosures	cc:
carbon copy	

Writing Business Memos

A memo (short for memorandum) is a business document sent within a company.

Format of a Memo

Business memos are typically divided into a top and bottom portion by a straight horizontal line. The part above the line contains the following information:

- **To:** Recipient's name
- **From:** Your name
- **Date:** Today's date
- **Re:** The memo's subject
- **cc (optional):** The names of all the other people to whom the memo was sent

The portion of the memo below the line contains the body of the memo.

TO:	Angela Eakle
FROM:	Christina Haidos
DATE:	August 29, 2006
RE:	Report on proposed acquisition of Megabots, LLC

As you asked, my team and I have prepared the enclosed report on the proposed purchase of Megabots, LLC, by Ggabots, LLC.

The contents of the report summarize Megabots' current market and financial position and analyze the potential risks and benefits of purchasing the company. The report also contains our final conclusions on the proposed sale and our recommendations for moving forward.

I would like to thank my full team for their time and effort, and would be happy to answer any questions that you may have about the report.

Writing a Good Memo

A memo is an informal business correspondence, often sent from one employee in a company to another or others. Memos can be used to make announcements, introduce longer documents, discuss specific issues, or fulfill many other purposes. They can be more casual than business letters, but there are still a few specific guidelines:

- When sending a memo to multiple recipients, list the recipients in order of rank.
- When people are of the same rank, list them in alphabetical order.
- Do not include a salutation.
- Do not include a signature line. If you're sending the memo on paper rather than electronically, though, initial beside your name in the "From" field.

Faxes

When sending a fax, include a cover sheet with the following information:

- Your name, company name, phone number, and fax number
- The recipient's name, company name, phone number, and fax number
- The date on which the fax is being sent
- The number of pages being sent (specify whether the total includes the cover sheet)
- A brief message

Email

Email has become ubiquitous in the workplace because it's so quick and easy to write and send. Despite its convenience, email should be crafted as carefully—or even more carefully—than any other type of business writing. Since the contents of an email can easily be forwarded on to others, stored for the long term, or monitored by your company, never include sensitive or potentially embarrassing information in an email.

10 Emailing Dos and Don'ts

1. Don't send personal emails from your work account.
2. Do expect that your company will read every email you send.
3. Don't forward chain emails or jokes to coworkers, no matter how cute or funny.
4. Do be careful of the "Reply to All" option—double check the "to" line before sending to make sure you don't send something to the wrong person by accident.
5. Do use salutations and sign-offs, especially when writing to clients or higher-ups.
6. Don't use the "bcc" function—it's rude not to disclose who else is receiving an email.
7. Don't write anything negative about coworkers.
8. Do use spell-check before sending emails.
9. Do proofread after spell-checking emails.
10. Don't forget the rules of grammar and good writing just because the format is casual—write in complete sentences with proper punctuation.

Cell Phones and PDAs

No matter how cool your new phone or PDA might be, turn it off during meals, meetings, and conversations so the people you're with have your full attention.

The Social Side of Business

Work isn't restricted to the office: business takes place in a variety of social settings, from lunch meetings to baseball games. To thrive in business, it's essential to master the skills of professional socializing.

Meals

Knowing the rules of etiquette for business meals will let you concentrate on business, not on whether you're holding your fork the right way.

Basic Dining Etiquette

Dining rules can be complex, but these basic tips will help you get through any meal:

- **Napkin:** As soon as you sit down, unfold your napkin and put it on your lap.
- **Elbows:** You can put your elbows on the table between courses, but not while eating.
- **Utensils:** In general, the order of utensils mirrors the order of the courses from the outside in. So the first course involves the silverware farthest from your plate, while the last course involves the silverware that's closest to the plate. When you're finished with a course, place your knife and fork diagonally across your plate, with the tines of the fork in the ten o'clock position.
- **When to start:** Unless your host tells you otherwise, don't eat until everyone at your table has been served.
- **Chewing:** Don't chew with your mouth open, and don't talk with your mouth full.
- **Eating bread:** Cut one piece of food at a time and eat it before cutting the next piece.
- **Taking bread:** Take one piece of bread from the basket and put it on your bread plate, which is on your left. Pass the basket to the right. To eat the bread, break off one bite-size piece and butter it. Finish it before breaking off the next piece.
- **Eating soup:** When eating soup, scoop the soup away from you, not toward you.

Business Meal Logistics

Beyond dining etiquette, there are logistics considerations involved with business meals.

When You're the Host

- At breakfast or lunch meetings, you can discuss business anytime after the food has been ordered. At dinners, wait until after the main course to discuss business.
- Reserve a table in advance and call your guest the day before your meal to confirm.
- Try to arrive early, before your guests do.
- Give your guests the best seats. Seat clients before coworkers.
- Wait until everyone arrives before sitting. Then introduce all your guests to each other.

When You're the Guest

- Arrive on time, but don't sit until your host arrives. Let your host take you to your seat.
- Don't order alcohol unless your host does first.
- Don't order the most expensive item on the menu.
- Don't order anything unfamiliar or difficult to eat.
- Try not to order more courses than others at the table.
- Even if you don't like your food, never complain to your host.
- At the end of the meal, thank your host. You may want to write a follow-up thank-you note as well, though it's not required.

Business Social Occasions

Business conferences or social outings, such as sporting events or concerts, give you a chance to bond with clients or colleagues but can also lead to lapses of business etiquette. To prevent this, follow a few simple guidelines:

- No matter how jovial the atmosphere, you're still working. Remember that you're representing your company, and remain professional at all times.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol.
- Track all reimbursable expenses, but never take advantage of your expense account.
- Be careful of acting in any way that may even hint at sexual harassment.
- At sporting events, keep cheering positive—no booing.
- At the theater, arrive well in advance of curtain time, and don't talk during the show.
- Even if you hated the performance (or your team lost), thank the host.
- Don't bring up business—such outings are for building relationships, not making deals.

Dating Coworkers

Many a happy couple met at work—but many other couples met at work, dated for a while, and then had to face each other every day after breaking up. In addition, before embarking on an office relationship, make sure your company doesn't have any rules against dating coworkers—breaking these rules can lead to disciplinary action or even dismissal. If you're interested in a coworker or already dating one, be sure to:

- **Be careful:** If you and your love interest are at different ranks within the company, your relationship may raise suspicions. If you really want to pursue a relationship, one of you should consider finding another job or switching departments.
- **Follow the rules:** Adhere to your company's policies, if any, on intraoffice dating.
- **Be discreet:** Try to keep your relationship quiet and low-key. If people pry, tell them you'd like to keep your private life private.
- **Don't be physical:** Don't show physical affection at the office or at company events.

Giving Gifts

Gift-giving is an important part of business culture, especially around the holidays. A few basic rules of etiquette will help simplify the gifting process at your workplace.

Gifts for Customers and Clients

- **Check whether you're allowed:** Some companies don't allow employees to send gifts to customers or clients. Check your company's rules before sending any gifts.
- **Avoid expensive or personal gifts:** These may make the recipient uncomfortable.
- **Don't give gifts to potential clients:** These may give the impression you're trying to influence prospective clients' decisions.
- **Do research before sending gifts abroad:** Local gift-giving customs vary widely.

Receiving Gifts from Outside the Company

- **Check whether you're allowed:** If you receive a gift, find out whether your company will let you keep it. If a gift is inappropriate or not allowed, return it to the sender as soon as possible with a friendly and gracious note explaining why you can't accept it.
- **Give thanks:** If you are allowed to receive gifts, write a thank-you note as soon as you receive a gift.

Giving Gifts to Coworkers

- **Be careful about gifts to your boss:** Giving a gift to your supervisor can make it look like you're kissing up. Gather a group to give your boss a gift, or give none at all.
- **Give your assistant a gift:** Show your appreciation, but don't give anything too personal or extravagant. (If you have an assistant who's worked with you several years or more, though, it's acceptable to give a more expensive gift.)

International Business

With an increasingly global economy, international business is now commonplace. If you travel abroad, it's crucial to know the basic customs of the places where you do business.

Researching Your Host Country

Before visiting a foreign country on business, research the following areas:

- **Language:** Learn to say *please*, *thank you*, *excuse me*, *hello*, *goodbye*, and *cheers*.
- **Dress:** Find out the standard business dress for the area you're visiting. If everyone's wearing shorts and a T-shirt, you'll feel ridiculous in a suit.
- **Greetings:** The standard business greeting in North America is the handshake, but bowing, embracing, and other greetings are the norm in some regions.
- **Eating:** Not everyone uses a knife and fork—learn how the locals eat before you go.
- **Business cards:** Have bilingual business cards printed in English and the language of your host. In North America, if someone gives you a business card, you might stick it in your wallet without a second thought. But in many countries, doing so is deeply insulting. Research business card customs carefully.
- **Respect:** Research won't prepare you for every situation. If you make a mistake or don't know what to do, look to your host for guidance. An overall demonstration of respect for your host is more important than knowing every nuance of local custom.

Business Customs by Region

The following table contains general tips on business practices in different parts of the world. Be sure, though, to research specifics of the country you're visiting before you go.

Region	Business Basics	Socializing	Dress
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Europe is more formal than southern Europe. • Always use titles unless told otherwise. • Shake hands at the beginning and end of every meeting. Women should extend their hands to men. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant lunches and dinners are common. • Expect lots of drinking in eastern Europe. • In some areas, it's rude to put your hands on your lap during meals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business dress is very similar to that of North America. • Men typically wear suits with faces. • Women should dress particularly conservatively (skirts, not pants).
Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business cards are very important. Make sure to research business card etiquette in the region you're visiting. • Politeness and respect for elders are crucial. • Except in the Philippines, don't make eye contact when shaking hands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing meals is important. • Leave some food on your plate. • Let your host seat you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In cooler countries, conservative North American-style business attire is customary. • In warm areas, remove your jacket if your host does.
Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present your business card to every person you meet. • Use formal titles. • Expect long meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some countries, meals are eaten with the hands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightweight business suits or blouses/skirts are standard, but you might wear less in hotter countries. • In Islamic countries, dress very modestly. • Men should wear conservative suits and ties. • Women should dress very modestly and follow local customs (or laws). In Saudi Arabia, women must be entirely covered.
Middle East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings are often lengthy and begin with small talk. • Meetings revolve around daily prayer sessions. • The work week is from Sunday to Thursday. • Gender roles are very distinct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol generally is not drunk. • Your left hand is seen as unclean, so don't use it. • Business entertaining often takes place in the home. • Don't ask about your host's wife or daughters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress conservatively (suit and tie for men, suit with heels for women).
Latin America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be on time, but expect your host to be late. • Use formal titles when addressing people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect long business lunches. • Evening meals start late and are exclusively social (no business talk). 	