

The **Business** 2.0

OFFICE ETIQUETTE

The first thing to remember about office etiquette is that the office is a shared space. Whatever your role in the team you are one of a group, working closely together.

Every team needs different qualities and characteristics. Good office etiquette allows for these similarities and differences to combine and work positively for the company.

To start with it's helpful to observe and understand the office culture. Be professional, so be **punctual** and presentable, and look like you're ready for the day's work. Be friendly, as colleagues will want to chat, but be sensitive as well. They don't want to listen to a catalogue of your personal difficulties when they have a difficult report to write!

Sometimes we need to deal with urgent **domestic** or personal matters in work time. If it happens, try and be as **brief** and efficient as you can. Your boss and colleagues are unlikely to **appreciate** you spending time on your phone to your friend or on social networking sites while they are working...

The office is a physical space and colleagues will be sensitive to things like strong perfumes, poor **hygiene**, or food smells. Smelling of smoke or alcohol might cause offence for personal and business reasons. And don't chew gum - it doesn't look professional.

Simple rules of etiquette help create a more **harmonious** workplace for all. Treat everybody with **courtesy** and respect, co-workers, cleaners, maintenance people, just as you would your boss. The truth is, you never know who's important. Always knock before entering a room, even if the door is already open. Keep interruptions to a minimum and apologise for any **intrusions** caused.

If there is an office kitchen help keep it clean and tidy, if there is an office tea/coffee club, make sure you make your contribution.

There are many tasks in an office team that need to be shared but can cause friction. So whether it's a tidy kitchen, or leaving clear clean workspaces, be one of the people who does do something - this is always hugely appreciated in a team. If something in the office is not working like a printer or coffee machine, share in the problem and be part of the solution. For a colleague who is having a difficult day these small acts of kindness and empathy can have a big positive impact.

Continue this respect in meetings. It's great to have opinions, but you won't gain respect by **belittling** colleagues or not allowing anyone else to speak. And turn your phone to silent as the focus should be on the meeting itself.

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Use humour diplomatically and where appropriate. Understand when colleagues may be under pressure and support them, as you would wish to be supported by them on a challenging day.

Be mindful about the volume of your voice when speaking near colleagues – and this includes the volume of laughter, which even if what's happening is hilarious to you, can sometimes irritate others engaged in more serious activities.

Spot the opportunities to compliment colleagues, on an idea they've had, or on their helpfulness, to show it has been noticed and appreciated.

And when things aren't going so well, be patient and listen. It's easy to find annoying characteristics in others if you are having a bad day at work. But consider your own actions and how they might be perceived by others; consider what your part might be in difficult situations.

Treat people as you want them to treat you and you'll all have a better day.