

Six Basic Rules of Business Etiquette by KJ Henderson



Adapted for [Angol Intézet](#) by Dominic Butler

Children learn that the golden rules of life such as saying “please” and “thank you,” are common courtesies that will allow them to excel socially. The same is true within business environments. An individual who exhibits politeness and decorum is often rewarded with success in his chosen field. There are, however, additional formalities he must learn to assure that he is viewed by superiors, **peers** and customers as a pleasant and cultivated professional.

Promptness

Perhaps the easiest way to exhibit professionalism is to consistently be punctual. On a daily basis, one must arrive at the office on time, ready to work. This action alone speaks volumes to both managers and peers, demonstrating the individual’s seriousness regarding her work. She must also be **prompt** when meeting with others: supervisors, clients and prospective employers. Excessive **tardiness** means that the nonoffending parties must wait, often at the expense of their own promptness to their next appointment.

Preparation

In addition to arriving on time, business etiquette means that an individual must be prepared to conduct **the business at hand**. She must have all resources such as reports, sales brochures and other documents ready for use. If interviewing a potential new employee, she must have all questions for the candidate prepared. Failure to do so makes her appear **sloppy** and unprofessional.

Appearance

An individual who wishes to be taken seriously in the work place must dress appropriately for his environment. If his office culture is to dress in formal business clothes, he must wear a jacket and tie at all times. On the other hand, if his industry dictates a t-shirt and jeans, he would look pretty silly dressed in a tuxedo. By wearing appropriate clothes for his line of business, he **ensures** that everyone he comes in contact with will take him seriously.

Decorum

An individual’s attitude and behaviour exhibit just as much about his seriousness as his wardrobe does. Excessive use of **slang**, profanity and other offensive language is an immediate sign of unprofessionalism. Additionally, the spreading of gossip and communication of private or confidential information does not win him any points with colleagues and customers.

Email Formatting

When communicating with colleagues and customers via email, a professional should use the same greetings and salutations she would use in standard correspondence. “Dear,” “sincerely,” “please” and “thank you” go a long way in ingratiating herself in the receiver’s good graces. Additionally, she must never type emails in all capital letters, as this is similar to **yelling** at someone.

Communication Appropriateness

A professional must **be mindful of** the subject matter of all spoken and written conversations. Telling rude jokes and sending profanity in correspondence is not only offensive to some, but is often against **corporate policies**.

Task 1

Match the vocabulary from the article with their synonymous meanings.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Peers | a. Makes sure |
| 2. Prompt | b. Informal and colloquial language |
| 3. Tardiness | c. Shouting |
| 4. The business at hand | d. People who are equal to you |
| 5. Sloppy | e. Lateness |
| 6. Ensures | f. The current task or project |
| 7. Slang | g. The rules of a company |
| 8. Yelling | h. To be punctual and on time |
| 9. Be Mindful of | i. To be messy or untidy |
| 10. Corporate policies | j. To think about |

Task 2

Use the highlighted words from the text to complete the sentences below.

1. Emma is an excellent worker, but she is always late. We must talk to her about her _____.
2. _____ is not appropriate in the workplace, please speak to your colleagues in a softer tone of voice.
3. When you are at work it is important to _____ other people's opinions and feelings.
4. Using formal language in your emails _____ that the client knows you are a professional person.
5. I do not think that jeans and a t-shirt are formal enough for the meeting. They make you look too _____ and informal.
6. _____ are very important as they let allow employees know what is and is not acceptable in the workplace.
7. Okay, thank you very much for attending this meeting, now let's talk about _____.
8. Often, your _____ are the best people to talk about any problems you may have in the work place.
9. Thank you very much for your _____ reply to my email. I appreciate how quickly you were able to send me the information.
10. I don't think it's appropriate to end an email with "cheers", because to me that expression is _____.

Task 3

Match the sentence halves.

1. The people who understand you the most
 2. I think that being prompt, prepared
 3. Do you think that too many late nights
 4. The business at hand
 5. Not only is your handwriting sloppy,
 6. Being polite and courteous ensures that
 7. "What's up?" and "How's it going?" are
 8. Football games and busy nightclubs are where
 9. I always try to be mindful of
 10. Wearing casual clothes on a Friday
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- a. is a popular corporate policy in some companies.
 - b. examples of common slang.
 - c. yelling is sometimes appropriate.
 - d. could be the reason for his tardiness?
 - e. other people's beliefs and religions.
 - f. you also make a lot of spelling mistakes.
 - g. and tidy are three very important business rules.
 - h. you don't offend your colleagues.
 - i. is more important than next year's project.
 - j. are often your peers.

EXTRA TASK

Write ten sentences using the phrases in bold. Try to make the sentences relevant to your daily life or your work situation.

ANSWERS

TASK 1.

1.d 2.h 3.e 4.f 5.i 6.a 7.b 8.c 9.j 10.g

TASK 2.

1. Tardiness 2. Yelling 3. Be mindful of 4. Endures 5. Sloppy 6. Corporate policies 7. The business at hand 8. Peers 9. Prompt 10. Sloppy

TASK 3.

1.j 2.g 3.d 4.i 5.f 6.h 7.b 8.c 9.e 10.a