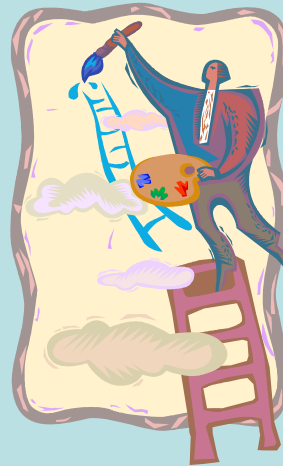# Elevating Your Professional Image

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What is your definition of Office Etiquette?

Office Etiquette – the set of written and unwritten rules that make an office run smoothly. The rules of office etiquette apply to interactions with one's co-workers.

Workshop Objectives

1. Describe the impact of personal appearance on the work environment.
2. Demonstrate how to choose the appropriate behavior in day-to-day activities.
3. Recognize how your behavior in a close work environment affects co-workers.
4. Discuss the business consequences of making a choice that is outside the prescribed etiquette guidelines.

Guiding Principles of Etiquette

1. Create a favorable first and lasting impression.
2. Demonstrate that you are capable and consistent.
3. Make others feel important and respected.
4. Take pride in the work you do.

Workplace Attire

What's appropriate?

What's not?

What are the consequences?

General Workplace Etiquette

Common Courtesies

Meeting Etiquette

Cell Phone/Pager Etiquette

Eating at Your Workspace

Cubicle Etiquette

E-Mail Etiquette

An example e-mail:

Date: 6/10/05   **Subject: Telephone System**

Good Friday Morning, everyone.

Just to notify or REMIND as the case may be. The new telephone system is being installed around the building. Training is available Monday – Thursday from 9 – 11 or 2 – 4. This training is MANDATORY. It is an opportunnity for you to use the phone and understand how to use the news functions.

Please let your department know and call Christy to schedule your training.

Thanks and enjoy your weekend!

E-Mail Etiquette

- Subject line could have been more descriptive.
- Grammatical and spelling errors throughout.
- All caps is like shouting or can be demeaning.
- Training dates weren't clear.
- Christy's telephone and/or e-mail could have been included.

E-Mail Etiquette

- How often should I check my e-mail?
- In what timeframe should I respond to someone's e-mail?
- Should I sign my e-mails?
- Do typos matter?
- Is it appropriate to send invitations or thank you's via e-mail?

Insights & Conclusion

- Share one or two insights you will take away from this workshop and apply to your daily work life.

- Complete Evaluations

- Thank You!!!

10 Grammar Mistakes That Make You Look Stupid
By Jodi Gilbert

These days, we tend to communicate via the keyboard as much as we do verbally. Often, we're in a hurry, quickly dashing off e-mails with typos, grammatical shortcuts (I'm being kind here), and that breezy, e.e. cummings, no-caps look. It's expected. It's no big deal. But other times, we try to invest a little care, avoiding mistakes so that there's no confusion about what we're saying and so that we look professional and reasonably bright.

In general, we can slip up in a verbal conversation and get away with it. A colleague may be thinking, Did she just say "irregardless"?, but the words flow on, and our worst transgressions are carried away and with luck, forgotten. That's not the case with written communications. When we commit a grammatical crime in e-mails, discussion posts, reports, memos, and other professional documents, there's no going back. We've just officially gone on record as being careless or clueless. And here's the worst thing. It's not necessary to be an editor or a language whiz or a spelling bee triathlete to spot such mistakes. They have a way of doing a little wiggle dance on the screen and then reaching out to grab the reader by the throat.

So here we are in the era of Word's red-underline "wrong spelling, dumb ass" feature and Outlook's Always Check Spelling Before Sending option, and still the mistakes proliferate. Catching typos is easy (although not everyone does it). It's the other stuff -- correctly spelled but incorrectly wielded -- that sneaks through and makes us look stupid. Here's a quick review of some of the big ones.

1. Loose for lose
No: I always loose the product key.
Yes: I always lose the product key.

2. It's for its (or god forbid, its')
No: Download the HTA, along with it's readme file.
Yes: Download the HTA, along with its readme file.
No: The laptop is overheating and its making that funny noise again.
Yes: The laptop is overheating and it's making that funny noise again.

3. They're for their for there
No: The managers are in they're weekly planning meeting.
Yes: The managers are in their weekly planning meeting.
No: The techs have to check there cell phones at the door, and their not happy about it.
Yes: The techs have to check their cell phones at the door, and they're not happy about it.

4. i.e. for e.g.
No: Use an anti-spyware program (i.e., AdAware).
Yes: Use an anti-spyware program (e.g., AdAware).

Note: The term i.e. means "that is"; e.g. means "for example." And a comma follows both of them.

5. Effect for affect
No: The outage shouldn't effect any users during work hours.
Yes: The outage shouldn't affect any users during work hours.
Yes: The outage shouldn't have any effect on users.
Yes: We will effect several changes during the downtime.

Note: Impact is not a verb. Purists, at least, beg you to use affect instead:

No: The outage shouldn't impact any users during work hours.
Yes: The outage shouldn't affect any users during work hours.
Yes: The outage should have no impact on users during work hours.

6. You're for your
No: Remember to defrag you're machine on a regular basis.
Yes: Remember to defrag your machine on a regular basis.
No: Your right about the changes.
Yes: You're right about the changes.

7. Different than for different from
No: This setup is different than the one at the main office.
Yes: This setup is different from the one at the main office.
Yes: This setup is better than the one at the main office.

8. Lay for lie
No: I got dizzy and had to lay down.
Yes: I got dizzy and had to lie down.
Yes: Just lay those books over there.

9. Then for than
No: The accounting department had more problems then we did.
Yes: The accounting department had more problems than we did.

Note: Here's a sub-peeve. When a sentence construction begins with If, you don't need a then. Then is implicit, so it's superfluous and wordy:

No: If you can't get Windows to boot, then you'll need to call Ted.
Yes: If you can't get Windows to boot, you'll need to call Ted.

10. Could of, would of for could have, would have
No: I could of installed that app by mistake.
Yes: I could have installed that app by mistake.
No: I would of sent you a meeting notice, but you were out of town.
Yes: I would have sent you a meeting notice, but you were out of town.

Bonus peeve:
I'll just throw one more thing out here: My current burning pet peeve. At some point, who knows when, it became common practice to say that something is "hit and miss." Nuh-UH. It can't be both, right? It either hits or it misses... "Hit OR miss." Granted, it's a small thing, a Boolean-obsessive sort of thing. But it's nonetheless vexing because it's so illogical. Okay, that's mine. If you've got a peeve of your own, share it in the discussion (or post a comment and tell me to get over it).

Pointers to Keep Your Writing Sharp and Professional

Writing is an important business skill for professionals today, yet the rules of good writing are often elusive. This list can help you avoid common errors when writing anything from a lengthy business report to a memo, letter, or e-mail. Just follow this checklist, and your final copy will shine.

1. Plan your writing

A large amount of time is actually spent planning and researching. First, determine your purpose and your primary audience. Decide what information you need to give your audience and what information you don't. Figure out the best way to convey your message. Focus on being objective and convincing so that your message appeals to both the receptive and resistant members of your audience.

2. Do your homework

Research, so that you are not relying only on opinion. Collect and analyze data. Use visual aids (charts, graphs, tables, photos, etc.) when appropriate.

3. Write drafts

Don't expect perfection in the beginning. Concentrate on the content of the writing, and be sure—above all—that it is accurate.

4. Revise for style, correct grammar, and spelling

Writers who fail at this step lose credibility with their readers. Buy a good grammar handbook and dictionary and use them whenever you have doubts about punctuation and spelling. When in doubt, call on a trusted colleague to look over your work.

5. Choose effective wording

Use language that is concise and familiar rather than verbose and academic. Examples:
Use, not utilize; shortage, not paucity. Avoid clichés, slang, and buzzwords.

6. Watch out for commonly confused words and phrases

Many words are easily mixed up, such as accept/except, advice/advise, affect/effect, its/it's, lay/lie, passed/past, personal/personnel, moral/morale, sit/set, real/really, your/you're, and their/they're/theirs/there. Learn to use these words correctly.

7. Be precise

Use specific, concrete words.
Examples:
Three, not several; boat or car, not vehicle. Watch out for words such as recently, substantial, a few, and a lot. Try to be more exact. Give your reader a specific mental picture of what you mean.

8. Write concisely

Businesspeople are too busy for wordy writing. Keep your reports, memos, and other business documents as brief and clear as possible.

9. Avoid redundancy

Many repetitive phrases can be tightened into one word.
Examples:
History, not past history; plan, not plan ahead; sum or total, not sum total.

10. Vary your sentence structure

Mix up simple, compound, and complex sentences. Use both short and long sentences to keep your writing interesting.

11. Use active voice

Active voice makes your writing more powerful and direct. In an active voice construction, the subject of a sentence acts or does something rather than being acted upon or done to.
Example:
Sam Grey audited the books last month.
Not:
The books were audited by Sam Grey last month.

Exception:
Passive voice may be permissible if the receiver of the action is more important than the doer of the action.
Example:
Transportation to the other buildings on campus will be provided.

12. Avoid sentence fragments

A sentence fragment can be the result of poor grammar or a careless mixture of sentences and phrases.
Example:
Couple of things. First, make sure you disconnect the power supply.

Exception:
What should you expect if you bring in the project under budget? A promotion. As long as you know what you're doing, and the meaning is clearly understood, this is permissible.

13. Avoid run-on sentences

A run-on sentence contains two independent clauses that are incorrectly separated by only a comma. Instead, they should be connected by a semicolon, or a period, or by both a comma and a conjunction. This does not relate to the length of a sentence, just the improper connection between the clauses.
Examples:
The network is down; call the administrator.
Or:
The network is down, so call the administrator.
Not:
The network is down, call the administrator.

14. Do not overuse commas

A pause in reading is not always a good reason to use a comma. You should use less punctuation if you can reasonably do so; however, there are many times when a comma is required. For example, you must use a comma when using conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, yet, or, so) to connect two independent clauses. And you must use a comma to separate a series of adjectives. Also use a comma with a date and a year.
Example:
On July 4, 1776, Congress signed the Declaration of Independence.
Without the specific date, don't use a comma:
July 1776 was one of the most eventful months in our history.
Check your grammar handbook for the correct use of commas and other punctuation.

15. Write unified and coherent paragraphs

A paragraph has unity if all its parts work together to explain a single idea logically. It is coherent if each sentence links smoothly to the ones before and after it. Transitional words can help, such as first, next, then, and finally. Another way to achieve coherence is to use pronouns that are standing in for nouns or names that were used earlier in the paragraph.

16. Make company names singular
Example:
Ernst & Young ordered some computers for its new office.

17. Be sure subjects and verbs agree
Use a singular verb or pronoun with a singular subject, and a plural verb or pronoun with a plural subject. Examples:
The four workers have copies of their assignments.
Or:
The CEO was late for her appointment.

18. Use parallel words or phrases in lists and series
If you have a list or a series, be sure each item in the series starts with the same kind of word—with a noun, a verb, or an -ing word.
Examples:
The first example uses nouns, the second uses -ing words.
The training program will cover:
• Novell suites
• Customer retention (not Retaining customers)
• Workspace management (not How to plan Workspaces)
The new manager is responsible for:
• Planning for new projects
• Attending meetings
• Conducting staff meetings

19. Use bullets
As illustrated in the examples above, bullets are the easiest way to separate items in a series. Bullets make a series much easier to read, so use them if you have three or more items to list. Don't use punctuation with bulleted items unless each bulleted item is a sentence, and then place a period after each one.

20. Use plural nouns and pronouns
Examples:
All managers must evaluate their subordinates annually.
Not:
Each manager must evaluate his or her subordinates annually.

21. Capitalize correctly
In general, you should only capitalize at the beginning of sentences and with proper nouns. Don't capitalize to emphasize words or show their importance. Instead, use italics and bold lettering for emphasis. Job titles are not necessarily capitalized.
Examples:
Our president, John Rodriguez
Or:

President John Rodriguez
Or:
John Rodriguez, president

22. Write numbers correctly
Spell out numbers from zero through nine; however, if you must begin a sentence with a number greater than nine, spell it out. Write figures for numbers 10 and over.
Examples:
The first three pages are blank.
We received 10 complaints.
Ten people attended the meeting.
She has 120 employees.

23. Use a courteous and sincere tone
Avoid being trite, condescending, or offensive.
Examples:
By paying your bill before May 15, you will maintain your excellent credit history with us.
Not:
Companies like ours can't survive unless you pay your bill.

I forwarded your complaint to the shipping department, and you should hear from them within the week.
Not:
You sent your complaint to the wrong department.

24. Write with confidence
Your message should have a confident attitude, so avoid phrases such as I hope, If you agree, If you'd like to, or I know you are busy, but....

25. Use nondiscriminatory language
Make no assumptions about any group of people and treat everyone equally. In general this means:
Don't use first names (unless everyone's name is used that way).
Don't make references to females as ladies or girls.
Don't use -man occupational titles (such as foreman, chairman) if you can avoid them.
Don't use derogatory words (such as gyp, derived from gypsy).
Don't use job titles that imply that only men or only women hold certain jobs.
E.g., use "personnel" rather than "manpower."
Don't use demeaning or stereotypical terms.

26. Avoid abbreviations in a narrative

Spell out the names of states.
Example:
The company has offices in Illinois, Missouri, and Kentucky.
Not:
The company has offices in IL, MO, and KY.
In a narrative, spell out all common nouns that you might be tempted to abbreviate.
Examples:
Accountant, not acct; association, not assoc.; building, not bldg.; company, not co.

27. Proofread and use spell checker

The more you reread and spell-check your writing, the more mistakes you will find—and correct. If you lack confidence in your editing abilities, do it anyway (it's good practice for you), but have someone else you trust proofread it as well.

28. Turn in your report or mail your letter

If you have followed this list, you should feel confident that your document is correct, accurate, and effective.

Office Etiquette 101

Not long ago, offices were places where legions of similarly dressed people arrived at the same time, sat in neat rows of desks and performed nearly identical tasks. At noon, everybody vacated the office, then returned in exactly one hour, refreshed and ready for an afternoon of highly predictable behavior. It *was* boring, but at least you knew what to expect and how to act.

That was then, this is now:

- Casually dressed people come and go at different times.
- Many organizations have reduced office sizes and moved them closer together
- Some people share offices
- Some people have no assigned office – they find a workspace when they arrive each day
- Often there is a kitchen on-site where employees make their own meals anytime
- There are more snacks available – soda, coffee, candy, bagels etc.
- There are more meeting spaces mixed in with cubicles, creating "teamspace"
- There are more open, collaborative spaces for impromptu meetings
- More people are working part time, flex time, as temps or on contract
- Fewer people are trying to do more work as a result of downsizing and a tight labor market

Although a relaxed work environment has many advantages for worker recruitment, retention and productivity, new work conditions can create confusion, frustration and stress when noise and other distractions are common. As casual workspaces and meeting

spaces are mixed with more traditional offices, workers have a greater number of distractions to deal with, while at the same time common behavior rules become blurred. Which behaviors are OK in which spaces?

Developing and communicating a set of shared expectations can create a more positive office atmosphere. Such "rules" reintroduce a sense of predictability, lower stress and allow people to focus more on the tasks at hand. Some suggestions follow:

Appearances Count

With people working various schedules, it's becomes difficult to simply track down the people you need to see at any given time. For example, if one person drives to the office to collaborate with others who are working at home that day, the effort is wasted. To save coordination time, it is helpful to set core hours or core days when each member of a work group will be on-site, or otherwise available.

Regardless of how your organization decides to handle flexible work arrangements, there are several group behaviors that can smooth the way:

Etiquette tips:
- Always use sign-out boards (electronic if possible). This allows coworkers to quickly and easily locate each other
- Have a predetermined method of notifying other group members if a person decides to work at home; how to notify, who to notify, when to notify, contact information
- If you find out that coworkers are inheriting your calls and crises when you work away from the main office, take on extra tasks that help them, or cut back voluntarily on time away until a fair way to manage this overflow can be worked out
- Coordinate set work times for your administrative support person to be available to the work group. For example, if the group routinely needs secretarial help preparing for early-morning meetings, flexibility for the secretary to show up later will cause frequent disappointments. Take the time to work this out before trouble starts.
- Dressing for success no longer means formality. But if you are meeting with customers or others who expect more formality, dress appropriately. If your organization has a dress code, find out what it is.
- If you have the option to set your own hours, don't abuse the system or become unavailable. If this way of working does not get results or causes workgroup problems, everybody suffers and formality has a way of returning.

Let's Meet

Meetings are frequently named as the biggest office time wasters. They don't need to be. With people working different hours, meetings are more important than ever as a way to set project directions and get to know coworkers. Consistent meeting behavior helps make this time count.

Etiquette tips:

- Be on time. Busy people don't want to wait and will bail out if others don't show up.
- If meetings routinely don't start when scheduled, people will stop taking meeting notices seriously and nobody will show up
- Plan ahead when it's your meeting. Check the space before the meeting starts to be sure needed equipment is there and working. Are markers, flip charts or other needed supplies in the space? Do you have enough copies of handouts?
- Start and end meetings as scheduled. People have other places to be and other things to do.
- If you don't need a full hour, just schedule 30 minutes and end even sooner if you can.
- Get to the point. First announce the purpose and the desired outcome of the meeting. When you've reached your desired outcome, end the meeting.
- Turn off your phone during meetings. Your conversation about the taking the dog to the vet is not pertinent to the other people at the table. If something truly urgent does come up, leave the meeting and attend to it privately.
- If the meeting space is tucked into an area of cubicles, be aware that people are trying to concentrate. If the meeting cannot be conducted at conversational volume levels, move the meeting to a space where the noise will not disrupt others.
- If you rearrange a meeting space, put it back into usable order before leaving. Erase marker boards, take down charts and clear up all papers etc. If you borrow items from other meeting spaces, return them promptly.

Let's Eat

In many offices, people often work through lunch and dinner; eating snacks, even elaborate desktop dinners at their workstation. Food is often catered in, and snack machines are everywhere. The result is an all-day cacophony of soda HISSES, microwave BEEPS, CRUNCHING, MUNCHING and the BANG-SCRAPE-BANG of silverware on dishes. Add a variety of strong food aromas, and you have a recipe for workgroup distraction.

Etiquette tips:
- Don't use china and silverware within 50 feet of anyone who's trying to concentrate. If you want formal dining, go out.
- Use office areas outside of workstations for lunch. It's better ergonomically to take a break, and routinely eating quickly is not healthy. If there is no café, break space or cafeteria, find a spot outside or by a window. Or take the opportunity to interact with others over lunch in a casual space.
- If you have to eat at your desk, choose "quiet" foods. Cut back on the crunchy stuff. Stirring ice tea with a vengeance is also hard on group peace. Also think twice about foods that have strong odors – remember that other people will have to live with those odors all afternoon.
- Get a grip. Coworkers may be trying to cut back on fat, salt and calories. If you are choosing food for a meeting, offer healthy options and/or agree as a group on whether the meeting needs to include food.

- Be respectful to the next group to use a teaming space. Always clean up unless you know there is a cleaning crew on the way.

Cube Life

58% of American offices use some type of open plan layout. Commonly called cubicles, these workstations offer some privacy, but typically do not have doors or ceilings. Although open plan layouts increase collaboration, they also require basic consideration of others.

Etiquette tips:
- Respect others' privacy. Don't borrow items from other peoples' workstations or hover over their shoulder while they finish a phone call. Never open drawers or cabinets in other peoples' stations without permission
- Never use a computer without permission. "PC" stands for "Personal Computer," surprise visitors are rarely welcome.
- If you do have permission to use someone's PC, remember that settings should not be changed without the owner's knowledge. E-mail and files should be considered confidential and off limits.
- Your organization may have some rules about decorating. Check with your facilities person or coworkers to determine what the corporate culture accommodates. Even if there is no written policy, pictures or other items that could offend coworkers are never a good idea.
- Music should be played on headphones, not speakers—tastes in music vary too much for anyone to choose for a whole group.
- If you share a cubicle, remember to clean up after yourself each time you leave and store shared materials where the coworker will be able to find them.
- When using a shared printer, reload paper when it's your turn and save huge print jobs for times when your work group will not be in a hurry for printed documents.
- Just because you have some visual privacy, don't assume your annoying habits are a secret. Chewing ice and clipping nails are not ways to make friends in open plans.
- Respect your coworkers' concentration. If you see someone deeply involved in typing, reading or thinking, come back later or send an email if possible.
- Using speakerphones keeps your hands free, but ties up both ears of every coworker in your immediate area. Not a good tradeoff—pick up the receiver, or get a headset.
- Group cultures vary. In some organizations it's OK to carry on a discussion with someone ten-feet away. In others, that would cause distraction. Pay attention to the conduct in your office and if there's a problem, talk it over with your work group.

Virtual and Part-time Life

Some workers are on the road four days a week or more. They do not need to maintain personal space at the office, but do need to stop in occasionally for meetings or administrative tasks. Others work may work part time schedules.

Etiquette tips for virtual workers:

- If there is a concierge or reservation system, make your plans known before your arrival
- Vacate spaces when you said you would, unless nobody is waiting for the space
- Clean up your belongings when you leave and return borrowed items
- Leave contact information for people to reach you while you are out

Etiquette tips for part-time or variable-schedule workers:
- Remember to view your involvement from the group's perspective. Don't just rush in and announce what you need from them while explaining that you don't have time to help them. Show some give and take.
- Let coworkers know your work schedule. Block out all non-work times on electronic calendar systems and/or post a work schedule in your work station
- Clean up after yourself before leaving and delegate things that could need attention while you are out. Leave tracks. For example, if you have the key to a supply cabinet and will be out for three days, who takes the key during that time?

The more our work styles change, the more new issues will come up.   Flexible work styles often communicate that the individual is the center of a universe and that group norms are no longer important. With some patience and consideration of others however, the workplace can remain a comfortable and productive place for everyone.