

Office Etiquette and Professionalism

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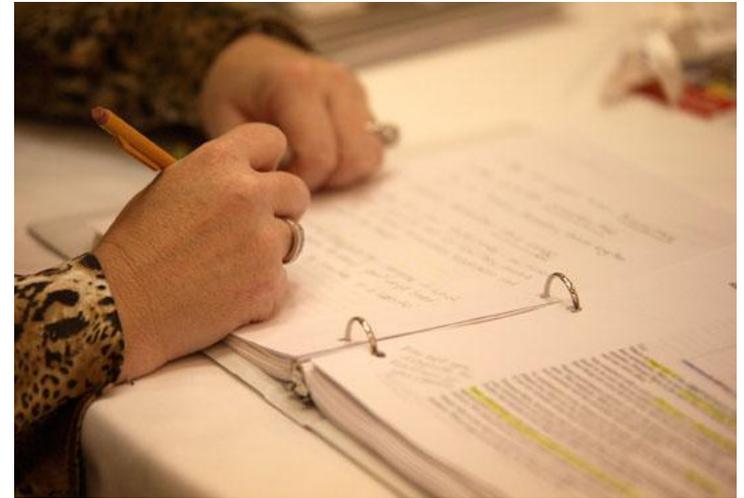
Published May 19, 2014

Workplace code of conduct

A **code of conduct** outlines the mission and values of the business or organization, how professionals are supposed to approach problems, the ethical principles based on the organization's core values, and the standards to which the professional will be held.

Some common components of a code of conduct are:

- Workplace etiquette and norms
- Harassment, abuse and violence standards
- Nondiscrimination policies
- Labor standards
- Working hours
- Compensation
- Environmental compliance



Workplace etiquette

While codes of conduct for each organization will be different, the following are some common themes for workplace etiquette:

Respect Everyone

Treat coworkers, superiors and those in lower-level positions with respect and courtesy at all times.

Workplace Policies

Know your workplace's policies. Take the time to read office guidelines on professional standards of behavior.

Rise Above Workplace Politics

Although your workplace might be filled with gossip and other inconsiderate behavior, you must learn to operate above the drama in order to act professionally.

Be Honest

Take responsibility for your actions, as well as your inactions. Admitting your mistakes may be embarrassing, but it demonstrates your honesty and your ability to bounce back.

Humor at Work

Jokes about someone's gender, race, cultural background, religion or other personal characteristics are very inappropriate.

Sexual Harassment

Remember that touching someone else's body or making comments that are sexual in any way are always inappropriate behaviors.

Office Romance

Dating among coworkers is usually inappropriate; however, the rules for dating coworkers often depends on the company.

Personal Issues

Keep your personal life and professional life separate — don't bring your personal issues to work.

Mobile phone etiquette

When you're on your own time, the choice to turn off your mobile phone is entirely yours. When at work, you should be mindful of your coworkers and your boss, and not to mention your own ability to get your job done. Keep the following guidelines in mind when using your mobile phone at work:

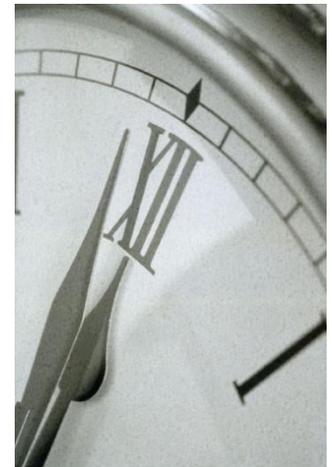
- **Turn your mobile phone ringer off.** If you have your mobile phone at work, it shouldn't ring. If you don't want to turn off your mobile phone completely, set it to vibrate or silent mode.
- **Use your mobile phone only for important calls.** If you have your mobile phone at work, you should only use it for important calls.
- **Let your mobile phone calls go to voicemail.** While you are at work, if you are in doubt about whether an incoming call is important, let your voicemail pick it up. It will take much less time to check your messages than it will to answer the call and then tell the caller you can't talk.
- **Find a private place to make mobile phone calls.** While it's okay to use your mobile phone at work for private calls during breaks, don't use your mobile phone while at your desk. You might be on a break, but your coworkers may still be working.
- **Don't bring your mobile phone to meetings.** Even if you have your mobile phone set to vibrate, if you receive a call, you will be tempted to see who called.



Timeliness

It is important to build a reputation as a timely person. It is also important to show that you are willing to put in the time to get the job done. To build this reputation, plan to:

- **Arrive to the office on time and do not make a habit of leaving early** — make sure you talk to your boss about work hour expectations.
- **Arrive to all meetings on time** — if you are hosting the meeting, plan to arrive early to make sure it can be kicked off on time.
- **Complete your work on time** — if you cannot complete your work on time, make sure you give your boss adequate notice of the issue and work through the resolution.
- **Plan for vacation in advance** — give your boss advanced notice before you plan vacation.
- **Notify supervisors of unexpected absences as soon as possible** — for example, attempt to quickly contact your supervisor about sickness and personal emergencies.



A professional in the workplace

It is important that you be accepted as a professional by those you work with everyday. You should understand what characterizes a professional and, subsequently, know the benefits of showing your team that you are a professional.

A Professional

- Takes his or her work seriously.
- Always thinks about what it takes to do a better job.
- Understands how he or she helps the company stay successful.
- Communicates effectively.
- Has goals to grow and improve.
- Helps his or her coworkers by sharing knowledge.

Benefits of Being a Professional

- You will feel confident.
- People will want to work with you.
- Customers will want you to take care of them.
- Your boss will want to give you tasks because you will get them done.
- Your job will become more meaningful to you.

How professionals perform their work

The following characteristics depict those who are viewed favorably in the workplace:

- Positive attitude
- Exceeds expectations
- Prepared
- Works well with others
- Responds to requests
- Contributes in meetings
- Flexible
- Dependable
- Polite
- Takes initiative
- Strives for improvement
- Follows through on commitments



Reflecting on which qualities you demonstrate and might be lacking can help you improve how your performance is perceived by others.

Being a professional

At the workplace, you should always look and act as a professional.

To look professional, you should:

- Dress for success.
- Interact with others.
- Portray a calm and pleasant demeanor.

To act professional, you should:

- Follow workplace rules/guidelines.
- Have a firm handshake.
- Have a commanding, yet inviting, presence.



For more information on how to look like a professional, please review the [Dress for Success Quick Reference Card](#). It provides specific information on appropriate attire for the workplace.

Professionalism tips to remember

When interacting with your coworkers and other personnel at the workplace, remember the following important do's and don'ts to maintain your professional image:

Things to Do

- ✓ Get a good night's sleep. When you arrive at work, be at the top of your game.
- ✓ Have a firm, steady handshake.
- ✓ Have good posture.
- ✓ Keep your head up.
- ✓ Maintain eye contact with the person to whom you are speaking.
- ✓ Speak politely.
- ✓ Dress appropriately for your role.
- ✓ Speak slower instead of faster.
- ✓ Use a calm tone of voice.
- ✓ Ask questions if you are unclear.

Things Not to Do

- ✗ Speak poorly of current and previous coworkers, supervisors, clients or customers.
- ✗ Display closed body language, such as crossing your arms.
- ✗ Laugh too loudly.
- ✗ Make inappropriate facial expressions.
- ✗ Use too many hand gestures.
- ✗ Have more than one alcoholic drink at a work-sponsored event.
- ✗ Order expensive meals at a business meeting. Follow the lead of the most senior person at the meeting for guidance on an appropriate choice.

Final tips

Each company/organization will have its own set of rules and acceptable behaviors, but by adhering to a few best practices, you can lay the groundwork for being seen in a positive light in your new career. Remember the following tips:

- Each company/organization will have its own set of rules and policies. You should carefully review these policies when joining a new company.
- You should always be honest, respectful and appropriate in the workplace.
- Manage your time effectively. Be sure to arrive on time and not leave early every day or before all of your work is done.
- Provide your supervisor or manager with as much notice as possible for vacation, illness or other time away from work.
- Strive to be seen as a professional in the workplace. A professional always has an eye to see how he or she can improve his or her performance and that of his or her team. Being seen as a professional will build your credibility and make you an integral part of the team.
- Dress for success. Perception is reality in many cases, so with this in mind, make sure you are presenting your best self in your dress and actions.

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