

How to Practice Proper Workplace and Office Etiquette

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When working in an office all day, it's important to showcase good manners and proper etiquette. The way you work or talk on a phone at home is one thing, but when you share an office with others, you need to be conscientious and respectful.

Use these basic office etiquette and manners tips to help you act appropriately in the workplace.

1. **Monitor the volume of your conversations.**

Be sensitive to how loudly you may be speaking. Do you notice that people down the hall comment on your conversations? That might indicate your voice is too loud. Telephone etiquette at the office is very important because if your voice is too loud or the conversation is something private, it can be disruptive to those around you. Consider closing your office door and lowering your voice whenever speaking in person or on the telephone.

2. **Keep personal telephone conversations-and emails-brief and at a minimum.**

Be ever mindful that others are nearby and that this is a place of business. Do not use the company telephone, fax, or email, for any inappropriate and personal matters.

3. **Avoid the urge to be "helpful" in areas best left to the other person to handle on their own.**

In some workplaces, privacy is difficult to find. If you overhear a private conversation, practice selective hearing. Your best bet for being treated as a professional at work is to keep all workplace conversations professional.

4. **Sharing professional information is wonderful, gossiping is not.**

Only discuss personnel matters directly with specific individuals, superiors, and management. And always keep in mind business etiquette concerning confidentiality.

5. **Be sensitive to scents and smells surrounding you.**

This rule does not only apply to workplace etiquette, but social etiquette in general. Save cologne and perfume for social occasions, and ask if fresh flowers and potpourri bother co-workers before installing them in your space.

6. **Avoid foods with strong smells and aromas that will travel throughout the office.**

When eating at your desk or in shared areas, as great as French fries, Chinese food, and Indian food are, smelling them together in the same room and office can become unpleasant. Office etiquette rules suggest that you dispose of empty food containers and other items where they won't contribute negatively to the office atmosphere.

7. **Keep your personal workspace clean and neat at all times.**

Generally, less is better when it comes to office and cubicle decor. Use discretion when displaying personal items such as family photos and mementos so as not to overdo, clutter, and obstruct your work area.

8. **Use shared areas with respect and courtesy.**

Workplace kitchens can be the biggest source of co-worker tension. If you expect everyone you work with to clean up after themselves, model that behavior yourself. Some basic business etiquette tips is to wash and return all kitchen items to their proper place, clean spills, and wipe countertops and tables as needed. Help maintain supplies as needed. When leaving food items in a shared refrigerator; mark all

items with your name and date. Remove all items at the end of your work week and toss or recycle empty containers.

9. **Restrooms run a close second to kitchens as annoyance spots.**

After use, wipe the countertop and sink of any spilled water or soap. Be sure the toilet is clean for the next user. Notify the proper attendant if supplies are low or out, and of any plumbing problems.

10. **Maintain all shared items in "like new" condition and return borrowed supplies.**

Leave the photocopier in working condition and be sure to take back that borrowed stapler with at least a few staples left inside. If a machine stalls or jams, take time to undo the jam or to alert the proper person to attend to it. We all expect and want to be able to use items and equipment when needed.

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