
Workplace Etiquette 101

Computer Etiquette:

- *In a shared computer environment:*
 - **Log off when you leave for prolonged periods during the day or when you're finished.**
 - **Keep a tidy work area.** File and store all papers and belongings out of sight.
 - **Respect privacy and be courteous.** Do not place confidential or inappropriate data (files, pictures, etc) in a shared file location like the local hard drive or a shared department folder.
 - *In a cubicle or open office environment:*
 - **Keep computer noise down.** If you are listening to music, watching a web demonstration, or participating in a WebEx not everyone will want to participate with you. Consider utilizing headphones.
 - **Watch what you place as your desktop background display.** Stick to non-offensive desktop pictures. Usually the default desktop images that come with Windows or OSX will be safe.
 - *Food and drink and computers:*
 - **Just say no.** Computer and food/drink just do not mix. Keep eating and computing separate. If you must have a drink, keep only spill-proof cups near your computer.
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Email Etiquette:

- **Do not use ALL CAPS for messages.** When ALL CAPS are used the email comes across as if you were yelling or screaming at the recipient. If you need to note emphasis for an item try italics, bold or changing the font color.
 - **Be very careful with humor.** What is funny to you may be offensive to others or simply not make sense.
 - **Be extra careful about spelling and grammar.** Spell check is great but it won't catch everything. Re-read your email messages before hitting send. Additionally, if it is an email you want to be extra sure looks professional, have another co-worker read it over and ask them to offer edits.
 - **Use polite and courteous language.** Please and thank you go a long way.
 - **Be courteous and conscious of the other person's time.** Although email is one of the fastest ways to communicate, people process email differently. Do not keep sending email at a quick pace simply because you haven't heard back in 15 minutes. Their system may be off; they may be working on a timely project, or in training.
 - **Make your messages short and clear.** Avoid rambling or side stories in email. We all get a lot of email and reading one that is short and clear will inspire a quick and effective response.
 - **Be aware of "emotes".** The most common "emote" is the classic smiley face ☺. In e-mail there are several others to choose from. Use these sparingly and understand that it adds a bit of whimsical and lightness to the e-mail... some may see this as unprofessional.
 - **Do not say something you wouldn't want your boss to see.** Never include anything you do not want recorded. Questionable content sent from your mailbox and delivered to another could cause problems for you both if there is any investigation.
 - **Keep your personal email personal.** Do not send or receive e-mail to your work account. Redirect these e-mails to your personal e-mail account. Work on your personal e-mail on your personal time.
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Telephone Etiquette:

- *General etiquette:*
 - **Call during business hours.** For on-campus calls to other offices it is best to call between 8:30am and 4:30pm. This gives most offices about a 30 minute timeframe on both ends of the work day to open and close. If you're on a phone conversation and it is approaching closing time or the lunch hour, end the conversation and pickup at the next convenient time.
 - **Have a current and clear greeting on your voicemail box.** The Unity Voicemail System allows you to have a few different greetings – closed greeting, standard greeting and an alternate greeting. Make sure each is recorded:
 - With current information -- no need to still have a recording about your vacation when you're back.
 - Clearly identify who you are, your department and what information you would like left in the message.
 - *Answering your phone:*
 - **Smile when you speak on the phone.** The smile creates a positive verbal tone.
 - **Have a script.** Check with your department to determine if they have a specific script that you should utilize for answering the phone. In most cases you will want to include a greeting and identify yourself when you answer your phone. EX: Good Morning; this is Jane Doe.
 - **Use the speakerphone sparingly.** Speakerphones are effective if you have several people in the room that need to participate in the conversation. Speakerphones, however, should not be used simply because of laziness or convenience. Whenever placing someone on speakerphone you should make sure they are aware and agree. Having someone on speakerphone without his or her knowledge is rude and violates privacy. Note: Also be aware of your speakerphone noise level. See *Keep computer noise down* above in the *Computer Etiquette* section.
 - **Conclude all calls.** Do not leave the person on the other line wondering if you're still there or if you have hung up. Always close your conversations; a simple "by" or "thank you" works just fine.
 - *When you talk on the phone remember:*
 - **Identify yourself.** If it is unclear who you are and what you're calling about make sure you clarify.
 - **Use the caller's name during the conversation.**
 - **Speak clearly and enunciate your words.** No need to shout but use a steady volume.
 - **Express yourself clearly and concisely.** Avoid chit-chat and get to the point of the phone call.
 - **Do not have something in your mouth.** Dispose of gum or hard candy before you start a conversation. Never eat while on the phone.
 - **Take complete messages and deliver them promptly.** Clearly repeat information to show you understand it. Note the date, time and caller's name.
 - *Cell Phone Etiquette:*
 - **Do not subject others to cell phone conversations.** When people cannot escape your conversation, such as on the bus, in a cab, or at the dinner table, you should spare them.
 - **Choose a ring tone that doesn't offend or highly irritate those around you.** Beethoven's Fifth, or the Bee Gees, or any other annoying melodies may not be the best choice.
 - **Turn your cell phone off during public performances and meetings.** There is nothing worse than diving for your cell phone when it interrupts a performance or meeting.
 - **Do not dial while driving.** If you must use the phone while driving utilize voice dialing and a Bluetooth "no-hands" device.
 - **Do not wear an earpiece when you are not on the phone.** This is comparable to being on the phone and carrying on another conversation with someone who is physically in your presence; it is rude and confusing.
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Cubicle Etiquette:

- *Respect privacy and ownership:*
 - Since there is no door to open or close, consider posting a sign or flag at the entrance to your cubicle to signal that you can be interrupted. Avoid making eye contact with people if you don't want to be interrupted.
 - When entering other cubicles, act as if there is a door to the cubicle. Announce yourself and ask permission before entering. This can be accomplished verbally or by making eye contact.
 - Rather than loiter outside someone's cubicle hoping they will complete a phone call return at another time.
 - When visiting other cubicles, refrain from reading computer screens or commenting on conversations you've overheard.
 - Avoid "borrowing" supplies, much less personal belongings, from a cubicle just because there's no door to stop you.
- *Cubicle phones have special rules:*
 - Answer your phone quickly; choose a pleasing ring tone and set the ringer volume low.
 - Remember that your neighbors can hear your end of all conversations.
 - Turn your phone ringer off when you leave your cubicle. Use your voicemail or forward your phone number to your new location.
 - Use a meeting room for conference calls, rather than a speakerphone.
 - All audio devices should be set at low volumes – radios, pcs, pagers, screensavers. Use a headset where possible. When you leave, turn all devices off.
- *Meetings, conversations and other noisy activities:*
 - Go to a conference room or break room for impromptu meetings, particularly with clients.
 - Speak quietly in deference to others who are concentrating on work or having conversations. Email and instant messaging reduces volume and preserves privacy.
 - Personal space can be enhanced if you arrange to take lunch breaks at different times.
 - Avoid noisy activities such as pen tapping.
- *Smells*
 - It is politer to eat hot food away from your desk. Food odors can either tantalize or nauseate your neighbors. If you must eat at your desk, eat quietly and avoid gum-popping, humming, and slurping.
 - Be aware of other odors – allergy inducing scents, body odor and foot odor. Consider keeping an air freshener handy.