Workplace etiquette

By The N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions

For the Journal

Etiquette is more than practicing good manners and remembering your “please” and “thank-you’s.” Professional workplace etiquette can improve a work environment, whether written in formal policies or as unspoken rules of conduct. If you are currently working, practicing good etiquette will help you be recognized as a professional employee, and if you are looking for a job, understanding etiquette will help you be prepared for future employment.

Etiquette expectations are unique in every workplace because of the industry, size of the company, and overall business atmosphere. Research the company or organization’s current policies and procedures. Also, observe the workplace dynamics to pick up on the office atmosphere and behavior expectations of all employees. Even with differences from company to company, there are some common workplace etiquette guidelines and helpful tips.

How you present yourself at work is part of your professional etiquette, and your attire affects the impression you make. Inquire about the company’s dress code, and look at how those around you are dressed. Even for casual dress days, keep your attire professional.

Workplace manners are critical. Monitor the volume and content of your conversations. Smile and greet coworkers in passing and share in the recognition for collaborative projects. Use full names in introductions to both internal staff and customers. Make eye contact when someone is speaking or presenting, do not interrupt during meetings, and address people appropriately by their names and not by nicknames or slang.

In many offices, cubicle issues are critical to the work environment. Keep your cubicle neat and clean in respect to your cubicle neighbors. Do not have loud conversations that may disrupt the concentration of those around you. If you need to speak to a coworker, walk around the cubicle rather than yell over cubicle walls.

Anytime you are interacting with fellow employees, management, and customers, be respectful. If you do not agree or have a different perspective on matters, acknowledge the differences and respect different opinions. Maintain a calm demeanor that is also reflected in your body language.

With email etiquette, take time to prepare concise, careful, and correct messages that do not frustrate receivers. Make the subject line clear and direct to the issue at hand. Send copies only to concerned individuals, and double check the email if the message has previously been forwarded or includes replies from other individuals. Assume that all company emails are monitored and recorded. Address and sign your emails professionally. Typing in all caps can appear too intense or even sloppy, and always spell check before sending.

Have excellent telephone manners. Return phone calls in a timely manner. Speak slowly and distinctly. Provide an informational introduction, including who you are, who you would like to speak to, and what you would like to speak about. Conclude with professional statements such as, “I appreciate speaking to you today,” or “thank you for your time and information.”

Be sure to turn off or put cell phones on vibrate for meetings, conference calls, and in cubicles or in areas where you could disturb coworkers. If you need to take a call, remember to be courteous to those around you by speaking in a low, conversational tone. Only take personal calls when allowed at work, at breaks, or at lunch.

No one is perfect, but keeping some of the workplace etiquette tips in mind can help you become a more conscientious employee and a valuable asset to a company or organization.

This is a regular column written by the N.M. Department of Workforce Solutions. For more information, go to www.dws.state.nm.us.

Published April 15, 2018.

The NMDWS column can be found in the Albuquerque Journal’s Classifieds section featuring Real Estate, Automotive, and Careers every Sunday.