

## 6 ways you should mind your manners at work

Common courtesy is increasingly uncommon. That's a shame. Politeness is smart in your business dealings, and it's simply the right way to go about things.

By Dianna Booher | Posted: December 29, 2014

Print E-mail

79

137

178

4

10

Twee

Like

Share

g+



*(Editor's note: This was one of the top viewed stories of 2014. We're rerunning it as part of a look back at the articles that captivated our readers the most.)*

In a culture where many seemingly have no time for courtesy, minding your manners when others have forgotten theirs can get you a job, a promotion, or a date.

Manners make the man—or the woman—distinctive, memorable. Yet I encounter and hear complaints about these workplace *faux pas* weekly:

- **Failure to respond** on RSVPs;
- **Improper introductions**;
- **Late arrivals** to conference calls and meetings;
- **Late thank-you calls** or notes;
- **Unreturned calls** or emails;
- **Inattention** when people speak to you.

So here are a few reminders:

### 1. Accept or decline all invitations promptly

When you wait longer than a week to reply when a response is requested, the host may wonder whether you're waiting for a better offer to come along.

Hosts must plan the menu, pay for the food for each attendee, and in some cases rent serving dishes and furniture for a specific number of guests. If the host has to contact you to ask whether you're attending, you have committed a major *faux pas*.

### 2. Be prompt to meetings or conference calls

Arriving late communicates one of two messages: "My time is more valuable than yours," or, "I'm a poor time manager."

Neither is a positive message.

The longer I've dealt with senior executives, the more importance they place on punctuality.

### 3. Be present when you show up

#### Related Articles By Category

Internal  
News Feed Breaking News  
Workplace Issues

When you attend an event, turn off all the gadgets and get in the spirit of the thing.

What host wants to have guests who stand in the corner and hang on their cell phone all evening?  
Or who wants guests who pop in for 15 minutes, only to announce that they were late and are leaving early because they have more important places to be and people to see?

If you're going to show up, join in. Don't make your attendance seem obligatory.

#### 4. Introduce and include people

If you're involved in a conversation and someone joins you, introduce the newcomer to the group and toss out a line to rope them into the conversation.

If you're the person about to join the group, read the body language to make sure the other two people aren't involved in a private discussion.

#### 5. Be prompt with a thank-you note or call


A note that arrives three weeks after the event or situation looks like "my mom made me write this."

[RELATED: [Ragan's new distance-learning site houses the most comprehensive video training library for corporate communicators.](#)]

#### 6. Turn off your background noise makers

Callers do not want to hear your music makers in the background (radio, iPod, or your iTunes selection) coming through while they're trying to carry on a conversation with you.

A version of this article first appeared on Dianna Booher's [Booher Banter blog](#).

 Print
  E-mail
  Tweet 79
  Share 178
  Like 137
  +1 4






Popularity: This record has been viewed 17581 times.

Ragan.com moderates comments and reserves the right to remove posts that are abusive or otherwise inappropriate.

## Comments (15)

Login

Sort by: [Date](#) [Rating](#) [Last Activity](#)

-  Bob Elmer · 50 weeks ago +21  
 My pet peeve: When someone shakes your hand while scanning over your shoulder or across the room for other (presumably more important) contacts. How ruce it that!  
[Reply](#) [Report](#)
-  kaylaanderson1080 36p · 50 weeks ago +4  
 My boss crunches on ice and another one leaves the toilet seat up. There are ladies in this office!  
[Reply](#) [1 reply](#) · active 49 weeks ago [Report](#)
-  Sid\_Vicious · 49 weeks ago +2  
 Toilet seats are bi-directional. If it's up, feel free to put it down.  
[Reply](#) [Report](#)
-  Maria Russell · 50 weeks ago +13  
 would love to get your opinion –and others' – about people texting, reading email, etc. during meetings, even during one-on-one meetings! No one is that indispensable!  
[Reply](#) [Report](#)
-  marcom vet · 50 weeks ago +17  
 How about tone in emails? No "please" or "thank you"? As in "Send an email to our customers" as opposed to "Please send an email ..." or "Can you please send ..."  
[Reply](#) [Report](#)