

# Interview – Business Etiquette

## Description

Social skills are needed along with academic knowledge and skills in order to be successful in the workplace. Good professional etiquette indicates to potential employers that you are a mature, responsible adult who can aptly represent their company. Not knowing good etiquette could prevent you from getting a job and cause problems in business relationships. Good social skills include body language such as smiling, making eye contact and a firm handshake.

## Dining Etiquette

Remember that an interview is always an interview and your demeanor is being observed at all times. **Table manners** play an important part in making a favorable impression. They are visible signals of the state of your manners and therefore are essential to professional success. When a meal is scheduled arrive on time and wait to be seated until the host/hostess indicates the seating arrangement and sit up straight with your arms close to your body.

The meal begins when the host unfolds his or her **napkin** and that is your cue to do the same. Place the napkin in your lap and leave it there throughout the meal. Use gently to blot your mouth. If necessary to leave the table, place the napkin in your chair. When the host signals the end of the meal, place the napkin neatly to the right of your dinner plate.

Take hints from your host/hostess. Generally the host will suggest that the guest **order** first. Do not order the most expensive item on the menu unless the host indicates that it is all right.

In the **table setting** the plate is placed in the middle with “liquids” (glassware, cup and saucer, knives, spoons and seafood fork) placed to your right. To the left are the “solids” (bread and butter plate, butter knife, salad plate, napkin and forks).

Choose the **silverware** that is farthest from your plate, work your way in, using one utensil for each course. The salad fork is the outermost left and the soup spoon is on the outermost right, followed by

### Introductions

- Rise when introducing or being introduced
- Offer a firm handshake to indicate you are confident and assertive
- Repeat the person’s name when introduced so you can recall it later.
- Provide information that will inspire conversation
- Address someone by his or her title and last name
- Present a younger person to an older person
- Present a nonofficial person to an official person
- Present a junior executive to a senior executive
- Present a colleague to a customer of client
- Present a peer in your organization to a peer in another organization

the beverage spoon, salad knife and dinner knife. The dessert spoon and fork are placed above the plate or brought with the dessert.

### General Guidelines

- Order something that is easy to eat and not messy
- Do not hold up others while you are making a decision
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served
- Season food only after you have tasted it
- Salt and pepper shakers are passed together to the right
- Food is passed to the left
- Tear a small piece of bread, butter and eat.
- Dip soup away from you and do not slurp
- Cut a few bites of salad at a time.
- Don't chew with your mouth open or blow on your food
- Keep your elbows relaxed at your sides while you cut and eat.
- Enjoy the conversation as well as the food.
- When speaking utensils should be resting on the plate
- Do not put a used piece of silverware back on the table.
- Place coffee spoon on saucer.
- Leave a soup spoon in a soup plate.
- Leave unused silverware on the table.
- Push chair under table when excusing yourself
- Never smoke during an interview or a meal

### Two ways to cut and eat food

- **American style** – Cut the food by holding the knife in your right hand and the fork in the left with the fork holding the food. Cut a bite size, lay the knife across the top edge of the plate with knife blade facing in and change fork to right hand with fork tines facing up to eat.
- **European style** – Cut the food by holding the knife in your right hand and the fork in the left with the fork holding the food. The fork remains in the left hand, tines facing down and the knife in the right hand. Eat the cut pieces of food by picking them up with your fork still in your left hand.

### End of Meal

Leave your dinner plate where it is in the place setting. Lay your fork and knife on the plate diagonally, side by side, with the sharp edge of the knife facing inward, and with the fork tines down to the left of the knife.

### Career Center Resources

**Business Etiquette, 101 Ways to Conduct Business**, by Ann Marie Sabath, 2002

**Business Etiquette in Brief, the Competitive Edge**, by Anne M.Sabath, 1993

**International Business Etiquette: Asia & the Pacific Rim**, by Anne M. Sabath, 2000

**International Business Etiquette: Latin America**, by Anne M. Sabath, 2000

**International Business Etiquette: Europe**, by Anne M. Sabath, 2004

**Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands**, by Terri Morrison, 2006

**Power Etiquette, What You Don't Know can Kill Your Career**, by Dana M. Casperson, 1999

**Successful Interview and Beyond**, by Lois Pigford, 2001

## Website Repository

For even more information, please search through our hand-picked list of websites on [The Career Center's Website Repository](#).