

Session Title: Leadership & Business Etiquette

Topic Discussion

This session examines common social practices and expectations in the workplace, such as in the conduct of email, business meetings, and colleague interaction, provides examples of cross-cultural variation in these expectations, and discusses how to identify, meet, and at times challenge these expectations to create a positive work environment.

Learning Outcomes

- Identify best practices in email, meeting, and informal communication.
- Consider how interactional styles and expectations vary by setting, level of power, generation, culture, and purpose.
- Describe how typical expectations regarding business etiquette may foster or hinder workplace civility, relationships, and performance.

Discussion Questions

- How narrow and pre-determined are the social expectations in the workplace, or how much flexibility is there?
- What are the most important social or business etiquette practices to adhere to and why?
- Why/how does adhering to etiquette standards foster a positive work environment and why/how might these standards foster inequality or act as a barrier to communication?
- Write a thank you note to a faculty member, staff member, colleague, friend and/or family member that has assisted you in the last three months in your professional career path.

Session Outline

Workshop Duration: 90 minutes

Handouts:

- "Best Practices in Communication" (Email, Meetings, Informal)
- "Cross-Cultural Etiquette Considerations"
- "Thank You Note Template"

Workshop Agenda:

(0-10 Minutes) Introduction & Icebreaker (Welcome & Setting the Stage)

- Welcome and introductions.
- Brief overview of the workshop objectives and learning outcomes.
- Icebreaker: "Etiquette Mishap" - Ask participants to share a brief, anonymous and light hearted story of a time they witnessed or experienced an etiquette faux pas (without naming names).

(10-30 Minutes) Core Concepts: Best Practices in Communication

- **Email Etiquette (10 minutes):**
 - Discussion of best practices: subject lines, tone, clarity, conciseness, appropriate use of "reply all," and professional signatures.
 - Highlight the importance of proofreading and considering the recipient's perspective.
 - Handout: "Best Practices in Communication" (Email section).
- **Meeting Etiquette (10 minutes):**
 - Discussion of punctuality, preparation, active listening, respectful participation, and following up with action items.
 - Addressing virtual meeting etiquette, and how it varies from in person meetings.
 - Handout: "Best Practices in Communication" (Meeting section).
- **Informal Communication (10 minutes):**

- Discussion of appropriate workplace conversations, boundaries, respectful language, and avoiding gossip.
- How to handle difficult conversations.
- Handout: "Best Practices in Communication" (Informal section).

(30-45 Minutes) The Nuances of Etiquette: Context & Culture

- **Variations in Expectations (15 minutes):**
 - Discussion of how interactional styles and expectations vary by:
 - Setting (formal vs. informal)
 - Level of power (supervisor vs. subordinate)
 - Generation (traditionalists, boomers, Gen X, millennials, Gen Z)
 - Culture (cross-cultural considerations)
 - Purpose (networking, problem solving etc.)
 - Handout: "Cross-Cultural Etiquette Considerations"
- **Discussion Questions (15 minutes):**
 - "How narrow and pre-determined are the social expectations in the workplace, or how much flexibility is there?"
 - "What are the most important social or business etiquette practices to adhere to and why?"

(45-60 Minutes) Etiquette's Impact: Civility, Relationships, & Inequality

- **Fostering a Positive Work Environment (15 minutes):**
 - Discussion of how adhering to etiquette standards builds trust, respect, and collaboration.
 - The role of etiquette in preventing misunderstandings and conflicts.
- **Potential for Inequality (15 minutes):**
 - Discussion of how rigid etiquette standards can create barriers for individuals from diverse backgrounds or those with different communication styles.

- "Why/how might these standards foster inequality or act as a barrier to communication?"
- How to challenge and adapt etiquette standards to promote inclusivity.

(60-85 Minutes) Practical Application: The Thank You Note & Open Discussion

- **The Power of Gratitude (10 minutes):**
 - Discussion of the importance of expressing appreciation and building relationships through thank you notes.
 - Review key elements of an effective thank you note: sincerity, specificity, and timeliness.
- **Thank You Note Activity (15 minutes):**
 - Participants write a thank you note to a faculty member, staff member, colleague, friend, or family member who has assisted them in the last three months in their professional career path.
 - Handout: "Thank You Note Template"
- **Open Discussion/Q&A (10 minutes):**
 - Open the floor for any remaining questions or discussion points.

(85-90 Minutes) Wrap-Up & Action Items

- Summarize key takeaways.
- Encourage participants to implement the learned etiquette practices in their daily interactions.
- Thank participants for their engagement.