

## Business Language Etiquette



When in the workplace, maintaining a professional image with co-workers, clients or other business partners is very important. Whether communication takes place face to face, via email or by phone, we must maintain a professional language and a tactful communication style, by respecting certain etiquette rules.

### **Introduce Yourself**

When you make a call, join a phone conference, or participate in a meeting with new people, introduce yourself. State your name, your role and if the situation demands, your place of business (if contacting external partners). If you're meeting someone in person, give a firm handshake and reiterate the names of the people you are meeting in your head. Saying the names of the people you've just met will help you remember them later.

### **Using Titles**

Not everyone in the workplace needs to, or wants to, be addressed as Mr. or Mrs. How someone introduces himself or herself to you is how they expect to be addressed by you. As a general matter, if you are addressing someone who ranks highly in the company or a client, address him or her by the proper title.

### **Proper Grammar**

When writing and speaking, it is mandatory to follow all grammatical rules. Use complete sentences. In emails, use proper capitalization and spell check your work. Keep exclamation points to a minimum. Slang and emoticons do not belong in professional exchanges. Not every exchange needs to be formal, but don't use the same casual tone as you would with your friends.

### **Professional Tone**

Don't insult management or your co-workers, berate your employees or curse in the workplace. Private emails can be easily forwarded to unintended parties, and private conversations may be overheard, resulting in your embarrassment. Even if you are friends with the people you work with, limit your office chatter to work-related issues. Avoid slang and jargon. Also avoid sensitive subjects. Personal and intimate conversations are not appropriate for the workplace. Politics, someone's financial situation, religious beliefs and political ideologies are off limits.

### **Using the Speaker**

Ask before using speakerphone. Most people will want to know if there are others present, apart from yourself, on the line. If it's a one-on-one conversation, avoid using speakerphone. People may assume that you are multitasking and your full attention is not on the call if you are on speaker.