

Business Language Etiquette

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Improper body language or an off-color comment can be detrimental to your business. Maintaining a professional image is important when dealing with clients, co-workers and potential customers. Whether you're communicating face-to-face, via email, or over the phone, always observe professional language and a tactful communication style.

While phone, email and face-to-face conversations have their own respective etiquette rules, in each scenario, a little courtesy can go a long way.

Introduce Yourself

When you make a call, dial into a phone conference, or are meeting new people, introduce yourself. State your name, your role and if the situation demands, your place of business. 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, employ 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 with your boss that you use with your associates.

Professional Tone

Don't insult management or your co-workers, berate your employees or use profanity in the workplace. The office is not the proper place to casually vent your work-related

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not appropriate for the workplace. Political
political ideologies are off limits. Stay a

Body Language

Be mindful of body language. Keep good eye contact when presenting yourself, look at the person you are speaking to and continually acknowledge the speaker. R

between yourself and the person you are talking to. Also, don't touch the person you are speaking with. Although you may not mind when someone touches your arm or shoulder when speaking, it may make others uncomfortable.

Email Subject Line

In emails, describe the subject of the email in the memo line. Readers appreciate the heads-up on what they are about to read and can better prioritize emails if they understand the contents. Having a clear and specific subject line will also help you and the recipient locate the email later on.

Using Speakerphone

Ask before using speakerphone. Most people will want to know if there are others, 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.