

Executive meeting etiquette: 7 tips to help you shine

Have an important meeting coming up? Need some **etiquette and protocol** tips to help you shine? Well, read on!

- 1. Respond:** If you've been invited to a meeting or a function, don't wait until the last minute to let organizers know if you're attending. If you have to cancel at the last minute, call and apologize.
- 2. Prepare:** Always have an agenda ready. Do your homework. Who will be there? What will be discussed? What items might you need for the meeting? Bring your own daily planner so you know your availability, if necessary. If this meeting is outside your office, pack plenty of business cards, arrive ahead of time and bring your client's phone number in case you're delayed.
- 3. Meet hand-to-hand and eye-to-eye:** Give a firm handshake regardless if you're being introduced to male or female colleagues. In addition, maintain eye contact now and during the meeting. When someone is speaking directly to you, looking away is considered rude. If writing notes, glance up often to show your interest and respect.
- 4. Get down:** Make sure you sit someplace where you'll be noticed and easily recognized. Now would be the time to present those extra business cards you packed. You can place them directly in front of you, or hand them out. If someone reciprocates, do not put his or her card immediately into your pocket. Give the person the courtesy of looking it over.
- 5. Get up:** If you're being introduced to a newcomer to the meeting, or someone who had been at the other end of the room, stand back up, shake the person's hand, smile and give him or her direct eye contact.
- 6. Zip up:** When someone else is speaking, keep your lips zipped until he or she finishes. You know this, but do you consistently play by this rule? If you simply can't control yourself, catch yourself and say, "Forgive me, please continue."
- 7. Write:** When you return to your office, write down the general gist of the meeting – who said or did what. Did you make any promises to anyone? Follow through to avoid looking like a flake! Even though you thanked the organizer in person before leaving, follow up by sending a thank-you note.

It really is all about how you present yourself. Self-promotion is key in moving up the business ladder, and manners never go out of style.