Practicing proper etiquette is essential for success in any field. It can be difficult to build relationships if they are being strained by a lack of common courtesy. Hiring managers are watching to see if you understand the rules of etiquette.

This section contains guidelines that will help you to leave a professional and courteous impression on those around you.

General Etiquette

Telephone Etiquette:

- Identify yourself immediately.
- Do not use cellular phones at job interviews, whether in the office or at a dinner interview.
- Do not call a residence after 9 p.m. unless the person has specifically told you otherwise.
- If you are calling to invite someone to something, let them know that up front rather than asking if they are available on a particular night.
General Etiquette (cont.)

Introductions:

- Never address someone by their first name until given permission to do so.
- Always introduce to the senior ranking person first. In situations where rank is unimportant you first defer to gender (women first) and second to age (older to younger).
- Remember: introduce bosses, royalty and women over men, seniors over juniors, adults over children, strangers and non-relatives over members of the family.

Invitations:

- Answer RSVPs in a timely manner.
- Use printed cards or letters for formal invitations.
- Make casual invitations by telephone or by handwritten request.

Guest Etiquette:

- Call ahead to explain any tardiness.
- Arrive on time or a few minutes early.
- Respect your host’s/hostess’ property.
- Pick up after yourself during and after the event.
- Send a Thank You letter or card promptly after the event.
- Make sure that your shoes are clean before entering a home.
General Etiquette (cont.)

Thank You Letters/Cards:

- A *Thank You* letter/card needs to be on a professional looking card or stationery.
- A *Thank You* letter/card needs to be sent no later than 48 hours after an interview.
- A *Thank You* letter needs to include:
  - Your appreciation for the interview.
  - A statement reiterating your interest in the position and the company.
  - Important information about yourself that you forgot to explain in the interview.
  - Corrections for any misunderstanding the interviewer may have had from the interview.
  - A statement saying that you are looking forward to hearing from the interviewer.
  - A statement that shows your understanding of the position’s requirements and your qualifications that match them.

It is appropriate to make a follow-up call five to seven days after mailing your *Thank You* letter/card. Tell the interviewer that you wanted to make sure that he/she received your letter/card.

Dining Etiquette

Before the Meal:

- Dress appropriately.
- Turn off your cell phone and leave it out of sight during the meal.
- Inform the other guests before the meal begins if you are going to have to take a call during the meal.
- Do NOT bring your children to a dinner with your prospective future employer. (They may sometimes request for your spouse to attend, but that does not mean your children should attend unless invited specifically.)
Dining Etiquette (cont.)

The Napkin:

- Put the napkin on your lap as soon as the host does.
- Place your napkin on your chair if you leave the table during the meal.
- Leave the napkin on your lap throughout the meal except when using it to blot your mouth.
- Open the napkin all the way and lay it across your lap if it is a small luncheon napkin. Leave it folded in half and lay it across your lap if it is a large dinner napkin.
- Place your napkin neatly (not wadded up or refolded) on the table to the right of your dinner plate once the meal is over. The meal is over when the host puts his or her napkin on the table.

Ordering:

- Ask the server any questions you have about menu items.
- Do not order the most expensive nor the cheapest item unless the host suggests it.

Silverware:

- Spoon away from yourself when getting food out of a bowl.
- Never place a used piece of silverware back on the table.
- If a piece of silverware falls onto the floor, pick it up if you can reach it and let the server know you need another one. If you cannot reach it easily, tell the server and ask for a clean one.
- Always start with the knife, fork or spoon that is farthest from your plate. Work your way in, using one utensil for each course. Usually the salad fork and knife are the outermost utensils. The dessert spoon and fork are above the plate or are brought with dessert.
- Set your fork and knife diagonally across your plate when you have finished eating. Place the knife and fork side by side with the sharp side of the knife blade facing inward and the fork tines down to the left of the knife. The knife and fork should be placed as if pointing to 10 and 4 on a clock.
Dining Etiquette (cont.)

Table Manners:

- Sit up straight in your chair.
- Cut one bite of food at a time.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor.
- Do not talk with your mouth full of food.
- Pass food around the table to the right.
- Pass the butter with the knife on the butter dish.
- Never salt or pepper your food before you taste it.
- Ask questions throughout dinner to encourage conversation.
- Excuse yourself to the people to either side of you if you have to leave the table.
- Eat at a moderate speed; do not make others wait for a long time while you finish your meal.
- If food falls off your plate, pick it up with a piece of silverware and place it on the edge of your plate.
- If you have to refuse anything, a simple “No, thank you” will be enough. An explanation is not necessary.
- Keep your hands on your lap when you are not eating. While eating, remember the rule: elbows never, forearms sometimes, wrists always on the table.
- Never spit a piece of bad food into your napkin. Remove it from your mouth with the silverware you put it in with. Place it on the edge of your plate and cover it with another piece of food if you can.