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How to Succeed in Business

Good manners are good business.

Respect for others means showing good manners. They make the office a more congenial, more productive environment.

Bad manners make for drama. Office drama distracts and confuses. If your mind is preoccupied with the drama you will have less focus for your job.

For reasons that are best not aired, many people who practice bad manners do not know that they are offending and irritating their co-workers.

At times, bringing the matter to their attention will solve the problem. At other times, a higher power is needed.

Lisa Quast offers some useful guidelines at Forbes:

- ⊗ *Stay at home when you're sick.*
- ⊗ *Always show up on time for meetings. If you're usually running late, try scheduling meetings in 45 minute increments to allow enough time to get to your next one.*
- ⊗ *Keep meetings to the scheduled amount of time. Don't force the next group to stand in the hallway outside the conference room waiting for you and your group to finish.*
- ⊗ *Put your cell phone on vibrate mode to prevent disturbing others.*
- ⊗ *Pay attention during meetings and avoid multi-tasking, such as scrolling through emails on your smart phone or computer.*
- ⊗ *Don't hold meetings in your cubicle and distract those sitting close nearby. For meetings with three or more people, go to a conference room or a break area.*
- ⊗ *Eat lunch in the cafeteria or break room. Avoid eating smelly food at your desk.*
- ⊗ *Be aware of how loud you speak on the telephone if you work in a cubicle environment.*
- ⊗ *Avoid wearing perfume or cologne at work.*
- ⊗ *Ladies – don't wear revealing clothing. Let others see your skills, not private body parts.*
- ⊗ *Respect your co-worker's property (and company property).*
- ⊗ *Don't take things from others without asking. Refrigerator lunch food stealers – that also means you!*
- ⊗ *Don't yell and scream at others. Compassion and empathy will serve you much better to earn respect.*



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But then, what do you do when someone in your office manifests bad manners. You know and I know that calling someone out on rudeness is risky.

Quast offers some guidelines:

- ⊗ *Don't reciprocate bad office behavior.*
- ⊗ *Stay calm and don't get emotional or angry. We all have bad days every now and then; sometimes a sympathetic comment is the best way to direct a coworker toward better behavior.*
- ⊗ *Meet with the person in a private location and explain how his or her bad manners are affecting you.*
- ⊗ *Make sure you understand your company's business ethics and procedures for reporting infractions.*
- ⊗ *If the bad behavior continues or worsens after you've spoken with the offender, seek help from your manager or a representative from HR.*

Many of these rules apply well to non-work situations. Don't fall into the trap of getting into someone else's drama. Don't get emotional; don't get angry; don't reciprocate bad manners with more bad manners.

Don't call the person out in public. Be polite, not confrontational, in communicating the nature of the offense. You are not attacking or denouncing; you are trying to help the other person to see how his behavior looks to others.

