



Even if you're good at what you do, you may not be perceived that way if you don't have good manners. *Forbes*, *Time*, and the National Education Foundation all state that good manners have an impact on your long-term career path. But apparently, some people haven't gotten the memo. While good manners may seem like a no-brainer in the business world, I'm often taken aback by the way some people behave during business meetings or working lunches. Every time a colleague or client displays bad manners, they lose a bit of my respect. If you want to be viewed as a **WOW**, manners matter!

According to a *Forbes* article by Lisa Quast, there is a real cost to poor manners in the workplace. "Allowing bad manners to continue can negatively impact employee engagement and productivity," she states. We aren't simply talking about table manners at a fancy dinner, though. Proper workplace etiquette involves behaving with respect and courtesy in a variety of ways. Quast says good manners include staying at home when you're sick; being punctual and respectful of others' time; keeping your cell phone on vibrate; and maintaining good hygiene and appearance, to name a few.

Holly Beth Moncher takes it a step further, suggesting that manners means *kindness of the heart*. "Whether opening a door for someone or not contributing to office gossip, demonstrating good manners simply shows respect for others. Anyone can learn the rules, but the true business professional knows proper respect and kindness."

Bad manners speak volumes, because they demonstrate a lack of respect and value for other people's feelings. When you use poor manners, you make others uncomfortable. So instead of being recognized for your positive business qualities, you may be viewed as heartless, uncaring, self-absorbed, or downright rude.

"There is a reason for manners and courtesy and it is not just to be nice," says *Inc.* Magazine's Tim Askew. "The purpose of manners is to give us a practical structure to deal with each other. It is not bullshit. It is the glue of civilization and a utilitarian road map for dealing in everyday business. Manners and polite address are not superficial. They are essential."

Phil Nast of the National Education Association puts it this way, "Manners are rules for common behavior for moments when good sense deserts us."

How you behave in the workplace (and in life in general) is a reflection of who you are. What you say, what you do, and what you *don't* do all have an impact on others. If your behavior makes others feel insignificant, irrelevant, or undermined, you'll never be seen as a WOW. When someone can't be bothered to be courteous and respectful, I think to myself: *What else can't they be bothered with? What other corners do they cut?* In other words, I question their competence and their fundamental motivations. Manners matter—perhaps even more than you realize. In business, good manners aren't optional, they're the *only* option.

