



Business Etiquette

“I feel that luck is preparation meeting opportunity.”

—Oprah Winfrey,
American TV personality
and businesswoman

No matter what your career dreams—astronaut, CEO, neurobiologist, rock star, or author—basic business manners will come in handy. From whether you wear those sparkly purple flats to how you hold your shoulders when you’re asking for a raise to how you present your profile online, it all adds up to your business image. How will you showcase just what you’re capable of?

Steps

1. Communicate with style and confidence
2. Ace an interview
3. Try your hand at negotiating
4. Explore how to act on the job
5. Network with flair

Purpose

When I’ve earned this badge, I’ll know the kind of savvy I’ll need to be successful in the business world.

Every step has three choices. Do **ONE** choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

STEP 1 Communicate with style and confidence

Like any useful skill, good communication takes practice!

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Pitch a business idea.** Do you have an invention, like a new smartphone application, or a business idea, like a useful website? Have you dreamed up a strategy for how a local business can improve sales? Assemble a group and present your idea. Wear business attire, and ask for feedback. (Find information on what makes a good business presentation, and follow it.)

OR

- ☐ **Try a business lunch.** Host a lunch with a few friends. Dress as if you are all professionals in your dream jobs. Share your qualifications—or those you plan to gain in the future—and give feedback about each girl's image, including luncheon manners. For example, what's appropriate to order at a business lunch? How we look, how we act, and what we share are all part of the image we "communicate" at a business function.

FOR MORE FUN: Put on a business fashion show! Invite girls to dress for success in a runway show.

OR

- ☐ **Write with business flair.** Pick a job you'd love to have, and write a cover letter applying for it. Find examples of good cover letters in books or online to see what information to include and how to choose your words to present yourself with business style. Show your letter to a businessperson for feedback.

Oddball Interview Questions

Interview questions can catch you off guard—sometimes companies go for creativity to find the kinds of employees they think will thrive in their work environments. Here are some real-life oddball questions interviewees have been asked.

"If you were shrunk to the size of a pencil and put in a blender, how would you get out?"

—asked at Goldman Sachs

"What would you do if you just inherited a pizzeria from your uncle?"

—asked at Volkswagen

"How are M&M's made?"

—asked at US Bank

"What is the philosophy of martial arts?"

—asked at Aflac

"You have a birthday cake and have exactly three slices to cut it into eight equal pieces. How do you do it?"

—asked at Blackrock

"If you could be any superhero, who would it be?"

—asked at AT&T

"How many basketballs can you fit in this room?"

—asked at Google

"Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 how weird you are." —asked at Capital One

"If you had 5,623 participants in a tournament, how many games would need to be played to determine the winner?" —asked at Amazon

SOURCE: GLASSDOOR.COM

STEP 2 Ace an interview

Discover some surefire ways to make a great impression. Which job-interview questions stump you? Which seem simple? If you pick a role-play choice, find a local classified ad or a posting for a career position you'd eventually love, and use the listed job requirements and information about the company to prepare for your interview.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Conduct a mock first interview on the phone or in person.** You want to make a good enough impression for a second round. Ask someone to interview you for at least 10 minutes. Give them some common interview questions, and ask them to come up with at least one you're not expecting. Then ask for feedback. Did you land the job?

OR

- ☐ **Videotape an interview.** This can be a mock interview that a friend conducts with you while they are off-camera. Keep the camera trained on you. Afterward, study your results. How is your posture? Are you speaking clearly and confidently? Ask a businessperson to watch your video and give you some constructive criticism.

OR

- ☐ **Go on an actual interview.** Perhaps you're considering volunteering somewhere or applying for a summer internship. Set up an interview and go for it. Discuss with friends and family how you thought it went.

Common Interview Questions

What do you know about our company?

TIP: Research as much about the company as you can beforehand. Make the interviewer feel that their company is the only one you want to work for.

What would you consider your biggest weaknesses or failures?

TIP: Turn your negatives into positives—you might answer by

saying, "I tend to take on too many things at once, so I'm working on more efficient multitasking."

Why should our company hire you?

TIP: Be specific—talk about an accomplishment, perhaps citing a specific tactic you've used for selling cookies or a relevant award you've earned. How confident you seem can make a difference!

Interview 101

1. Beforehand, practice a mock interview with a friend or family member.
2. Arrive at least ten minutes early.
3. Turn off anything that might distract you.
4. Develop a friendly rapport with your interviewer, but don't talk too much.
5. Ask questions about the job and the company that expand on your background research.
6. Offer to explain the highlights of your résumé.
7. At the end, thank the interviewer, and express your strong interest in the job. Follow up with a thank-you e-mail or note.



"You'd think it was a joke, but employers tell us about candidates who check voice mail and e-mail, text, and even take phone calls during the interview," says Corinne Gregory, president of Social Smarts, a program that teaches social skills, primarily to young people. So before an interview, turn off your cell phone, and forget you even have it!

STEP 3 Try your hand at negotiating

Women can be less likely than men to ask for what they want. Sometimes compromise is called for, but many times you want your voice heard loud and clear—especially if you’re the boss (or you’d like to be someday!). Get some negotiation skills in your mental briefcase right now, and you’ll be on your way up the ladder.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Learn from a pro.** Ask a businessperson to share examples of situations in which they’ve had to negotiate. What happened, and what did they learn? What tips do they have? Put those tips into action during a mock or real negotiation—what you charge for babysitting, gardening, or another service; the salary you’d like for a dream job; or a situation you’ve encountered or might encounter in your cookie business!
- OR** -----
- ☐ **Take a negotiation workshop.** Learn the basics, and try some role-play activities to build your skills in a workshop at a community center, college, or online.
- OR** -----
- ☐ **Go international.** In a global economy, it’s important to understand how different cultures negotiate. Find information online about different tactics (for example, studies say Japanese businesspeople respond more positively to politeness than to commands). Then have a mock international business negotiation with friends. (You might find a great issue to negotiate in the international business section of a newspaper or magazine.)

More to Explore

Take your negotiation online. Many business negotiations today happen online—between people who may not understand each other’s roles in the company, demands on their time, or their tone, style, or other details that can help in a face-to-face negotiation. And just as with a personal text or e-mail, tone can be difficult to decipher. See what happens if you take one of the issues you negotiated in this step and hold it via e-mail, online video, or online chat—do you end up with the same solution? Why or why not?

Go Ahead—Ask!

Even now, women are often paid less for doing the same jobs as men. A female doctor’s salary starts about \$17,000 lower than the salary for a man with the same background. If a woman doesn’t receive a fair starting salary, she may lose half a million dollars over the course of her career. There are many factors that may affect these numbers, but experts agree that one of the most important is negotiation. Men are far more likely to ask for more money or promotions than women are. Often, women don’t get these things not because they lack qualifications—but because they never ask.



Negotiation 101

The goal of a negotiation is different from the goal of a competition. In a competition, one side wins and the other loses. In a negotiation, two people (or groups) try to find a solution to a problem that makes everyone happy. A negotiation may take place between two equal parties, an employer and employee, or a seller and customer. You may play any or all of these roles in a negotiation at some point during your career.

The first step is to decide whether a negotiation is the right course of action. Ask yourself these questions:

1
Are both parties interested in finding a win-win outcome?

2
Do you have a position that makes sense and can be easily defended?

3
Do both sides have options to consider?

If the answer to all of these questions is yes, you're ready to move forward. Before you begin negotiating:

- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of your position.
- For each discussion topic, imagine your best possible outcome, your minimum acceptable outcome (or bottom line), and a target outcome, which will probably fall somewhere between the two.
- Think about the position of the people on the other side. If you were in their shoes, how would you approach the negotiation? Consider which points are most important to you and how much you're willing to be flexible in order to reach an agreement.
- Assess your emotions. Imagine any upsetting situations that might arise during the discussion. How you will remain calm?

Ready to go? Keep these tips in mind:

- Listen carefully.
- Try to put yourself in the shoes of the other side when you're discussing the issues.
- Don't hold back important information to reveal later in the discussion—it can make you seem dishonest.
- Ask lots of questions.

How do you know when a negotiation is finished? If it's successful, a compromise between the two parties is reached. If not, the two parties agree to disagree—and either table the discussion for later or take their business elsewhere.

Workplace Culture

The workplace culture (its values, hierarchy, and how you're expected to act) is something that job hunters often overlook—and it can make the difference between loving your job and wishing you had a different one. Here are some things to think about while looking for a place to work.

- Is the atmosphere formal or informal?
- Do employees use each other's first names?
- What kinds of breaks are allowed?
- Would you like to be in the space every day?
- How often do people get promotions?
- Are there a lot of closed doors?

CAREERS TO EXPLORE

Executive in multinational company

Life coach

Event or meeting planner

Human resources recruiter

Administrative manager

Career consultant

Public-relations specialist

Training specialist

Sales manager

Occupational therapist

Labor or employment lawyer

Sociologist

STEP 4 Explore how to act on the job

Success at work involves more than your technical skills. Supervisors and fellow employees note how you interact and handle conflict and praise. Use this step to create a list of qualities that impress you (or that you'd like to practice) to keep for reference as you move into the working world.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Go to work!** You might spend time at a law firm, a diner, or with a park ranger—or take part in a job-shadowing program for a day. Note how employees and supervisors interact with each other and with clients. (If you have a job, ask a coworker or supervisor for opinions on your professional presentation. Then try to put their advice into action!)
- OR** -----
- ☐ **Interview a supervisor.** Find out what actions and traits they value in an employee. What's the best behavior they've seen on the job? What's the worst? How do they suggest handling difficult situations?
- OR** -----
- ☐ **Get an employee perspective.** Research businesses that have received rankings as great places to work—or find one in your community with a great reputation. Then speak to an employee about what it's like to work there and what's required to interact well on the job.

Network Like a Pro

It's never too early to practice networking, a skill that will help you establish connections throughout your lifetime. These steps can help you become a more effective networker.

BECOME INFORMED

Learn about the companies, organizations, and information groups in your area of interest. You might join a group online to receive updates about the industry and people in it.

EXPLORE ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING

Find one that specializes in business relationships where you can post your résumé and make connections.

TARGET YOUR ADVISERS

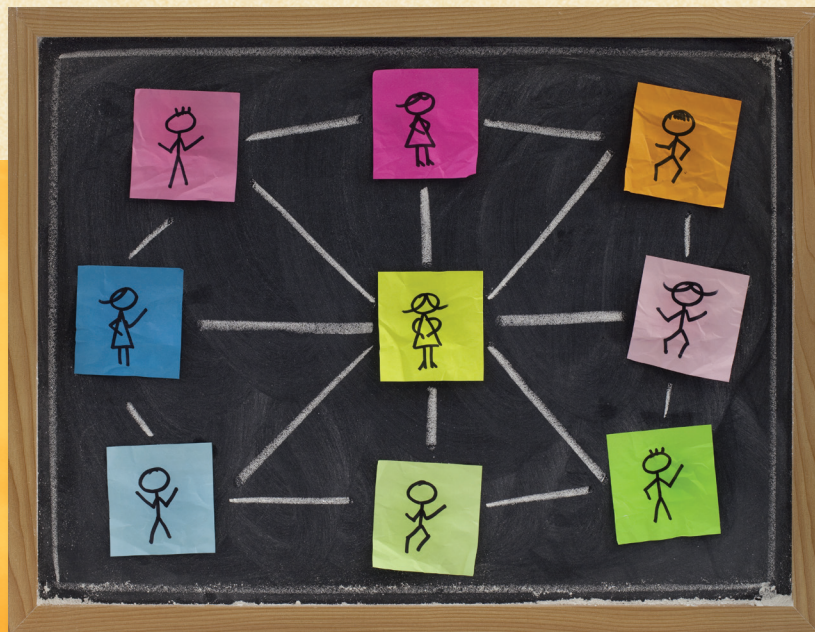
Think about your friends and family, teachers, mentors, bosses, and more. Identify the inner circle, perhaps five or six people, who will be your go-to network for advice.

STEP 5 Network with flair

Opportunity is more likely to come knocking if you've made sure others know you're looking for it. In fact, at least 60 percent of jobs are found through networking. Try one of these ideas for building relationship foundations that could literally pay off later.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Schedule an informational interview or informal meeting.** You can do this by phone or in person, at a company or workplace in your area of interest. Try to see more than one person who works there.
- OR
- ☐ **Attend a local job fair.** Introduce yourself to at least three professionals. Make sure to get their business contact information and to follow up with them.
- OR
- ☐ **Expand your circle.** Perhaps there's a new activity or club that interests you. Go to an event or a meeting and introduce yourself. Or is there someone on your block you'd like to meet—perhaps to babysit for them, walk their dog, or do gardening tasks? Now's your chance to make a business opportunity.



GET A HANDLE ON THE LINGO

Most areas of expertise have a shorthand or way of describing work terms, and to be a savvy networker, you need to be in the know. For instance, for a career in publishing, you would want to know the meaning of a print run (number of book copies printed), hard copy (printed manuscript), and royalty (money paid to the author for each book sale). Find out what the jargon or buzzwords are in a career that interests you.

More to Explore

Make your own cards. Giving a business card with your contact information when you're networking—or having a QR code with an easy vCard or link to your résumé available—is a great way to promote yourself and make it easy for potential employers to contact you. If you're making printed cards, design them using free templates online. Then print them at home on card stock or take them to a copy shop. Get creative—this is a lasting way to present yourself and share how you want others to perceive you.



ATTEND NETWORKING EVENTS AND JOB FAIRS

Face-to-face networking is the most effective way to build contacts and get information. Even if you are unsure of your career path, it's a great way to explore opportunities. When possible, sign up for speaker sessions or expert panels; for instance, you might hear a human resources specialist share tips about how to get a job.

COLLECT A DATABASE

This might be a guest speaker from your school, or a family member who works in your desired career. Compile contact information and build your networking group.



Add the Badge to Your Journey

Intrigued by the art of negotiation? Eager to help more girls explore new career paths in science, technology, or other fields? Thinking that more teen girls need networking opportunities as they think about their futures? As you choose a project for your Sisterhood award, consider turning an idea you got from this badge into a full Take Action project.

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Giving a role-play negotiation workshop for a friend who may be negotiating babysitting rates
- Helping my peers prepare for a career fair
- Sharing tips on looking and acting professional with friends going on interviews



I'm inspired to: