Quick Business Etiquette Tips!

Employer Receptions/Cocktail Parties

1. Do your research on the company/organization before attending. Know who will be in attendance and be prepared to meet new people.
2. Plan to arrive on time or couple minutes after the event as started. There is no such thing as “fashionably late” in the business world.
3. Prepare a 30 second ‘elevator speech’ to introduce yourself to employers.
4. Think about some topics you may bring up or discuss when meeting someone. Some safe examples are: Travel, weather, sports, current events (NOT politics), art, movies, books, foods, things of personal interest (languages, hobbies, crafts/skills, etc.).
5. Place your nametag on the right side and always keep your right hand free.
6. Glassware and plates should be balanced in the left hand. Make sure plate is not full of food. Cocktail receptions are to network and mingle. Not the time to eat a full dinner.
7. Approach people standing alone or gradually ease into a larger group (avoid breaking into groups of two as these are usually more personal or intense discussions).
8. Make sure you can speak intelligently about topics you may mention. Do not pretend to know more than you really do. It is acceptable to admit that you are not aware of certain things, situations or events...but are interested in learning more about them.
9. Bring business cards and keep them readily accessible. When someone presents you with their card- take the time to look at there card and remember their title.
10. Take your pick: Leave your cell phone at home, turn it off or keep it on silent. Vibrate does not count. The vibrations can be distracting.

Introductions

1. When introducing yourself to employers, use your prepared self-introduction. Example: “My name is Mike Smith. I am the Account Manager in the Advertising department”.
2. Extend your right hand, make and maintain good eye contact and smile! Try to match the firmness of the other person’s handshake. If you feel as if the other person’s handshake is NOT firm- do not modify yours. A strong clasp is much better then a weak one.
3. Be aware of your body language and posture. Make sure your head is always up and level with everyone else’s. Keep hands out of pockets and arms uncrossed. Be conscience of maintaining an OPEN posture.
4. When introducing others, use the most important person’s name first.
5. If you forget someone’s name, be honest and ask them to repeat it.
6. Allow 18 - 24 inches of comfort space around you when conversing with others. If someone is to close, step back slightly while being discreet.

Food and Drink

1. Hold drinks in left hand; keep your right hand free to shake hands with those you greet.
2. Eat something before you go. Don’t overeat at the reception: it is not to be used as your meal!
3. Avoid alcohol, or limit to one drink. You need to be in top form!
4. Eat only non-messy, easy-to-eat hors d’oeuvres.
DINING ETIQUETTE

Napkin

1. Place your napkin on your lap as soon as you sit down.
2. Know that there are different napkins. A napkin at lunch will typically be smaller since the meal is usually smaller. A dinner napkin is larger in size since more courses and food are normally associated with dinners.
3. If you have to leave the table during the meal, leave your napkin on the seat of your chair.
4. Never tuck your napkin into your collar. Napkin is to remain on your lap.
5. Do not use your napkin to wipe your face or nose. Use it only to gently dab at your mouth.
6. Do not re-fold your used napkin when you are finished your meal. The napkin should be neatly placed to the right of place setting once you are finished and preparing to depart.

Ordering

1. Wait for the host to order, unless he/she directs you to go first.
2. Don't order the most expensive item on the menu, and avoid messy, difficult foods such as spaghetti or shellfish.
3. Don't order alcohol unless your host does and he/she insists that you join them. Be mindful of the company you are keeping as well. In certain cultures, it is considered rude to let a person drink alone. Know the type of situation you are in. Never order an alcoholic beverage during an initial interview or first business meeting. The privilege of ordering a beverage will come once you have had a chance to learn more about the company's environment. When you do order, never order more than one.

Utensils

1. Use utensils from the outside-in.
2. Use ALL utensils. If a restaurant provides a salad knife, use it. And place on plate when finished.
3. The "resting" position for your utensils is crossed on your plate, with the fork tines pointing down and the knife blade facing you. This tells the server that you are NOT finished.
4. The "finished" position for your utensils is side by side, pointing towards 10 o'clock.
5. Make sure the knife blade is always facing you. A blade facing outward and towards another individual can be perceived as threatening.
6. Never leave the spoon in the cup or soup bowl after using it. Put it on the saucer.
7. Used utensils should never touch the table once they have been handled.

Passing Food Items

1. Always pass the salt and pepper together, even if only one is requested.
2. When salt and pepper are passed, make sure you place the shakers on the table and not directly into the person's hand.
3. If you are asked to pass something, (e.g. salt and pepper, bread, butter, sugar), don't use it/take some first before passing - unless the person requesting it invites you to.
4. Pass items to the right. Bread is the only item you may offer to your left but then continue to pass to your right.
Eating and Place Setting

1. Remember BMW: Bread, Meal, and Water. Your place setting reads from left to right. Your bread/butter plate is always on your left. Your meal/entrée is always directly in front of you. Your water and other beverage glasses are always on your right. Your coffee mug will always be on your right, as well.
2. Spoon your soup away from you. Quietly sip from the side of the spoon. Tilt the bowl or cup of soup away from you as you eat.
3. If soup is too hot, wait for it to cool before eating. Do not blow on it.
4. Never crumble crackers into your soup. Finer establishments will NOT serve crackers with soup. If you must enjoy a cracker- break off a piece and eat it, then continue with the soup.
5. Break off small pieces of bread or roll and butter and eat a piece at a time. Do NOT make sandwiches or cut the bread. Bread should only be torn when you are ready to eat that piece.
6. When eating meat, cut and eat one piece at a time. Cutting meat into small pieces leaves an unappealing plate and quickly reduces the temperature of the meat.
7. Paper from a straw, sugar packet or wrappers from crackers should not be placed on the table. Use the edge of your butter plate, or the ashtray, if nobody is smoking.
8. Chew quietly, mouth closed, and do not talk with your mouth full.
9. Keep your elbows off the table at all times. You may rest your arms up to the forearms on the table.
10. Bring food to mouth, not mouth to food. Maintain strong, straight posture while dining.

Other Table Tips

1. Don't push your plate to the center of the table when finished.
2. Don't apply makeup at the table or use a toothpick to clean your teeth. If you feel something is amiss- excuse yourself without explanation and use the restroom.
3. Don't blow your nose at the table. Quietly excuse yourself and use the restroom.
4. Turn your head away from the table and cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough.
5. Don't leave your personal belongings on the table. Handbags, briefcases should be kept underneath the chair.
6. Turn your cell phone off or keep it on silent!! Vibrate does not count!