



Universal Etiquette

Welcome to the workforce! Now that you're employed, it's time for a lesson in office etiquette. While every office environment is different, there are still some universal forms of etiquette that apply. These include:

Greeting Others. It's common courtesy to acknowledge an individual the first time you cross paths during the day. A simple hello, or good morning/afternoon/evening is fine. If someone doesn't respond, don't let it ruffle your feathers. Simply smile and don't take it personally.

Reacting to Polarizing Personalities. You're going to work with lots of different personalities. Some you'll get along with, and others you won't. And that's okay. The goal is to always remain polite and professional. However, if you find you're being sexually harassed, bullied, work sabotaged, etc. make sure you document all incidents and report them to your manager or HR.

Holding Open the Door. If you're entering (or leaving), hold open the door for the next person. The only caveat is if it's a secure door (e.g. one where you need to swipe an ID badge). Doors where you need to swipe to enter are there for a reason: to protect employees. If a person is permitted to be in that area, they can swipe for entry, too.

Calling Ahead If You're Going to Be Late. You should generally plan to arrive a few minutes prior to your scheduled start time. Life happens, and sometimes you can't help being late. Whether it's an accident holding up traffic, car issues, or other incidents, contact your boss immediately and let them know you're going to be late. (Same applies for taking sick days, too.) They'll appreciate the warning, so long as you don't make it a habit. Make sure you understand the company policy regarding doctor appointments, car repair, and home maintenance situations that may require you to be away from your office/place of employment.

Refraining From Taking Stuff That Isn't Yours. If something isn't yours, **don't take it.** This includes food in the fridge, items on desks, office equipment, and designated parking spots. If you do need to borrow something (for instance, another department's photocopier), always ask the appropriate person for permission.

Checking Your Smartphone. Unless you're in sales and expecting a phone call, do not use your phone during work hours. Answer texts, check social media, and perform other non-work related tasks during your approved breaks.

Staying on Top of Personal Grooming. Part of following the office dress code is proper hygiene. However, all personal grooming should be done at home and not on company time. This includes, but isn't limited to, showering, brushing teeth, using deodorant, putting on makeup, styling hair, filing nails, and applying nail polish.

Scents to Watch Out For:

Some co-workers suffer from severe allergies and/or migraines that are triggered by strong scents like cigarette smoke, strong perfume or cologne, and too much hairspray. Avoid these, but if you can't, be sure to tone them down.

Office Etiquette

Office etiquette will vary depending on the industry and company. We recommend during your onboarding to ask your Human Resources Department questions such as:

Is the Office Environment Formal or Informal? You should have already addressed this during the interview process, but if you didn't, now's the time to find out what type of environment you'll be working. It may be laid back where you can chat with co-workers while you work, and even share jokes. Or, it may be more formal where you only interact if it's work related.

Is There an Open Door Policy? Can you go to any office unannounced and talk to that person? If not, then your office doesn't have an open door policy. If that's the case, you'll need to make an appointment first. There's protocol when interacting with departments outside of yours, too. Check with your company to find out their policy.

Are Employees Allowed to Take Breaks? This should be outlined in the company's employee handbook. If you aren't given one, ask HR for a copy. Some companies may only permit you to go to the bathroom and take a 30-minute lunch break. Others may give you two 15-minute breaks to take at your discretion during the day, plus an hour for lunch. And depending on your industry or position (e.g. a nurse in the medical field), you might not get a "real" break at all.

Office Communication

Interacting With Colleagues and Clients. Always be professional and courteous. Don't talk over the other person, cut them off, or use slang or profanity. Keep in mind that your co-workers will be different from you, and you should be respectful. Avoid sensitive subjects like religion, politics, etc. Embrace differences, including race, ethnicity, age, etc. as diversity contributes to a more healthy work environment in which you can grow.

Participating in Meetings. Before the meeting, ask what the dynamic will be like so you are prepared. Is it lecture style where you'll be listening only? Or, is it a town hall-style where everyone is encouraged to participate? If it's town hall, find out the protocol for speaking. For instance, a moderator may go around the room allowing anyone who raises their hand to speak.

Sending and Replying to Emails. Keep emails professional and grammatically correct. Don't use emojis or emoticons, slang, or GIFs. Also keep them as brief as possible. If what you need to say is lengthy or you find that the topic results in a long email chain, then try to schedule an in-person meeting or pick up the phone to resolve the issue.

Some companies will monitor your email usage. Sending inappropriate content, such as profanity, can be cause for termination. Don't use company computers for personal emails.

BEFORE YOU HIT SEND:

Make sure you're replying only to the appropriate person or people. Don't hit reply all, or CC everyone. There's nothing more irritating to co-workers than being part of an unnecessary email chain. Plus, if it's sensitive information, you don't want to accidentally share it with everyone.

Business Dress Code Tips

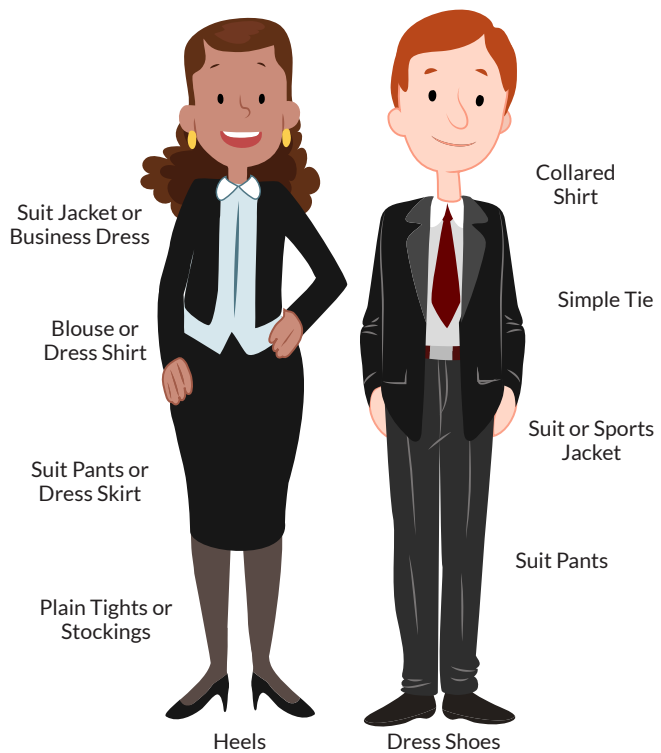
Don't judge a book by its cover. We've all heard that phrase before. But unfortunately, that advice doesn't really apply in the professional world. Potential employees almost always make assumptions about job candidates based on their appearance.

Whether you're getting ready for an interview, heading to a career fair, or starting your first day on the job, you need to know how to dress for success. After all, you won't get a second chance to make a first impression.

Business Casual



Business Professional



Tips for All Occasions

- You can't go wrong sticking to solid, neutral colors like black, white, gray, brown, and navy.
- Check your clothes for any stains, rips, or wrinkles.
- Skirt and dress hemlines should not be shorter than your fingertips or just above the knee.
- Wear a minimal amount of jewelry – the attention should be on you, not your bling.
- Make sure your hair is neatly groomed.
- Avoid heavy makeup and excessive perfume or cologne.
- Clean teeth and nails are a must!

Remember: when in doubt, it's better to be overdressed than underdressed!

Social Media & You

Social media plays an integral role in our lives. We use it as a tool for communication, education, and entertainment. And it's extremely accessible, but this accessibility can backfire if you're not careful. What you post on social media can come back to haunt you, even years later. Before you hit send, here's what you need to know.



The image shows a mobile app interface for 'Social Media Best Practices'. The top navigation bar is dark blue with a hamburger menu icon on the left, a search bar containing the text 'Social Media Best Practices', and icons for home, messages (with a red notification badge), notifications, and a user profile. Below the navigation bar are three content cards, each with a circular profile picture icon on the left and a title in red. The first card is titled 'Can Employers Check Your Social Media?' and contains text about profile privacy. The second card is titled 'Can You Get Fired Because of Social Media?' and contains text about social media actions reflecting on the company. The third card is titled '9 Social Media Mistakes' and contains a list of nine items, each preceded by a red 'X'.



Can Employers Check Your Social Media?

Absolutely! In fact, many employers check your profiles as part of their due diligence. Keep in mind that even if you set your social profiles to private, not everything remains private.

For instance, your Facebook news feed may be set to private, but that doesn't mean your profile pics are private. A good rule of thumb: don't use any pictures you wouldn't want your grandmother to see.



Can You Get Fired Because of Social Media?

Yes, **you can get fired** because of what you post (and share) on social media. As an employee, your actions are a reflection of the company. If you're posting or sharing inappropriate comments, images, videos, etc., people will associate your actions with the company. That's a chance the company can't afford to take.



9 Social Media Mistakes

- X** Don't broadcast that you're looking for a new job (unless you're unemployed).
- X** Don't diss your employer, colleagues, or clients.
- X** Don't share confidential company information.
- X** Don't make racist, sexist, or offensive comments.
- X** Don't post offensive comments about politics and religion.
- X** Don't post when you should be working.
- X** Don't post illegal stuff (e.g. underage drinking, doing drugs, speeding, etc.).
- X** Don't post pictures of you in compromising positions (e.g. scantily clothed).
- X** Don't post hate group affiliations.

Social Media Policies

Every company has a different social media tolerance level. So, it's important to always consult your company's Social Media Policy, too. Here's an example of a basic corporate policy:

Company XYZ Social Media Policy

Introduction

Social media is a powerful tool for communication. However, as social media engagement rises, so does the overlap between professional and personal usage. As these lines blur, problems can arise. Company XYZ's Social Media Policy was developed to provide guidance on appropriate social media usage within and outside of the workplace. The goal of this policy is to provide protection for both the company and its employees.

Definition of Social Media

Social media is any form of online communication such as text, images, memes, or videos used to communicate with individuals or large groups of people within an online forum, blog, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, YouTube, etc.

Discipline

Failure to observe the Social Media Policy will result in disciplinary actions. At the discretion of your manager, you may receive a verbal warning, one or more written notices, suspension, or termination.

3 Responsible Use

The use of social media during work hours is strictly limited to work-related duties. If an employee abuses this tool, actions will be taken. Any personal use of social media must be conducted outside of work hours, or on breaks. Company XYZ will not tolerate defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, discriminatory, or degrading towards religion, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual preference, posts on personal and company accounts. This includes making disparaging remarks about Company XYZ as a company, and/or its employees.

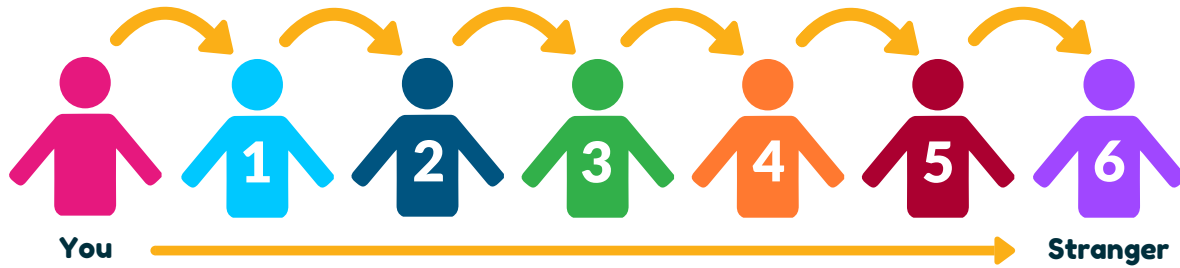
4 When using social media:

- **Do not share confidential or proprietary information.** Posts should not contain information that is confidential or proprietary to the company or any third party, including clients.
- **Adhere to copyright laws.** Do not claim ownership of any content that is not yours. Provide proper credit or attribution and get permission for use if necessary.
- **Do not engage with negative posts.** Whether you see a negative post or have one directed at you, alert management. Do not respond until you have been advised by a member of the management team.
- **Pass legal and media inquiries to management.** Do not respond to legal or media-related inquiries. Pass the information along to a manager.
- **Document client interactions.** Conversations on email, Skype, direct messages or an otherwise private channel should be documented and confirmed.

1. Company XYZ employees are subject to the social media policy rules both at work and at home.
2. Company XYZ employees could be fired (terminated) if they fail to follow the policy.
3. Some companies consider networking on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook as work-related tasks. Always review your company's social media policy to figure out what you should and shouldn't do on social media during your workday.
4. Here, Company XYZ lists several best practices for social media use. Employees can reference this list to see if what they're doing online follows the policy rules.

Six Degrees of Separation

Delaware is very much like ‘Six Degrees of Separation’ (e.g. the Kevin Bacon Principle). Walk into any local restaurant, and if someone doesn’t know your name, they definitely know someone who does. Being a part of such a close knit community can have its advantages and disadvantages.



How It Can Help

Interconnectedness can make it easy for networking. For instance, let’s say you’re looking to get an entry level position in banking. Here’s how those six degrees can help you get to that coveted interview.

Scenario: You’re out to dinner with your boyfriend, Jack (Degree 1), his sister, Amy (Degree 2), and his brother-in-law, Craig (Degree 3). You mention you want to get into banking. Craig reveals his dad, Bill (Degree 4), works with a guy named Steve (Degree 5). Steve’s wife, Jenna (Degree 6), works for Dover Federal Credit Union.

Craig says he’ll ask his dad Bill to ask Steve to ask Jenna about any openings and for direct contact information on your behalf. Boom. Six Degrees of Separation.

How It Can Hinder

On the flipside, interconnectedness may also backfire. While most employers are supposed to be unbiased in the hiring process, that doesn’t always happen, especially in small-town environments. What you say and do can trickle through the Six Degrees of Separation and harm your employment chances. Here’s how.

Scenario: In high school, you hung out with the wrong crowd. Now you want to get a job in banking. The Director of HR (Degree 1) hands your resume to the Branch Manager (Degree 2). The Branch Manager notices you went to the same high school as his cousin (Degree 3).

Later that night, the Branch Manager is with his cousin, his cousin’s wife (Degree 4), and his cousin’s old friends (Degrees 5 and 6). The Branch Manager mentions to his cousin that he has an applicant who went to the same high school. His cousin’s friends share that you were arrested for stealing. The Branch Manager isn’t thrilled. Since he already has dozens of other applicants lined up, into the trash your resume goes.