

Business Etiquette Survey Results

October 2011

Pamela Fay

Survey Details



- o The business etiquette survey was conducted on the www.pamelafay.ie website between July and September 2011.
- o During that time there were 120 complete responses to the survey.
- o Please see the results enclosed with short commentary.
- o Please note if you would like to discuss the results in more detail, drop me an email to pamela@pamelafay.ie

Headlines



- o 94% of respondents value manners in their business dealings
- o 70% have been embarrassed by the behaviour of a work colleague
- o 47% believe that rudeness in business is increasing
- o Nearly half (47%) of respondents would move their business elsewhere if they were on the receiving end of bad manners
- o 79% believe that manners are more important in challenging economic times

Headlines



96% of people would take action if they were treated well by a business:

- o 45% of people would mention their positive experience to other people if they are treated well by a business
- o 32% would refer others to a business that has treated them well
- o 19% would go out of their way to do business with a company that has treated them well

The Trend



Are manners more or less important in challenging economic times?

- o **79% said more important**

Do you think rudeness in business is increasing, decreasing or staying the same?

- o **47% said increasing**
- o **14% said decreasing**
- o **39% said no change**

Commentary:

- o This result shows that manners and customer service should continue to be a focus area for each business manager in 2011.
- o All businesses should ensure that all their team members are at all times focusing on the needs of customers and clients and meeting those needs in a mannerly fashion at all times.

The Value of Manners



Participants were asked how they would respond to being treated well by a business. They were only able to choose one response.

- o **45% would mention their positive experience to other people**
- o **32% would refer others to the company**
- o **19% would go out of their way to do business with the company**
- o **4% would take no response.**

Commentary:

- o I often get asked whether manners make a difference to actual sales and referrals.
- o These responses show the real value of manners to a business.
- o Positive word of mouth is the most important sales tool that there is.
- o The main point here is that 96% of respondents would take action after a positive experience.

Dress Codes



What dress code are you required to wear at work?

- **18% of respondents wear a business suit (down from 26% in 2009)**
- **36% wear business casual (up from 26% in 2009)**
- **32% wear a combination of business suit and business casual.**
- **14% wear other.**

Do you think that a casual Friday policy is a good idea?

- **68% said yes**
- **32% said no**

Commentary:

- Business attire is becoming more casual.
- How you dress in work should be to a large extent determined by the expectations of your clients.
- If you are going to dress differently to the industry standard just ensure that you are consistent in your approach.
- Clients and customers want to know what to expect when they are meeting with you.

Alcohol Consumption



Is it acceptable to consume alcohol at a business event?

- o **41% of respondents said yes**
- o **32% of respondents said only when it is an in-company event with colleagues**
- o **27% of respondents said no**

Commentary:

- o Our guide on consuming alcohol is that no more than two alcoholic drinks should be consumed at a business event. No matter how social your business is, it is still business.
- o The trend in this answer is showing that alcohol is less acceptable at business dinners and lunches.
- o There is a perceived difference between client facing entertaining and in-company entertaining. Businesses should consider this when organising client events.

Bad Language



Is it acceptable to use bad language in work?

- o **13% said yes**
- o **87% said no**

Commentary:

- o Etiquette is based on three things, your appearance, your behaviour and how you communicate. If you do use bad language, the problem is that you don't know who you are offending and it affects your credibility as a business professional. Many people say that it is okay to use bad language with colleagues but not in front of clients but remember that walls have ears.

Table Manners and Punctuality BUSINESS PERFORMANCE PERSPECTIVES

Are good table manners important in Irish business?

- o **93% said yes**
- o **7% said no**

Is punctuality important in Irish business?

- o **94% said yes**
- o **6% said no**

Commentary:

- o Good table manners and punctuality are two fundamental qualities of a well mannered business person.
- o Both behaviours show respect for the person that you are meeting.
- o If you think that you are going to be late for an appointment, always call beforehand to let the person know.

The Manners of Others



Have the manners of a colleague ever made you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed in a working environment?

- o **70% said yes**
- o **30% said no**

Commentary:

- o The most common examples of bad behaviour given by respondents were: bad language, interrupting meetings by taking phone calls, taking too much alcohol leading to inappropriate behaviour, smelling of drink at work, bad table manners, the use of bad jokes, the use of racist or sexist jokes or comments, being too personal with colleagues or clients, yawning in meetings, personal hygiene issues, aggressive behaviour and arriving late to meetings.
- o Many respondents were embarrassed by a more senior person in their business and did not take action as a result.

Definition of Rudeness



Participants were given a number of options to define rudeness, they could choose more than one definition:

- **68% defined it as an abrupt voice tone or rude language.**
- **87% said rudeness was someone wasting time.**
- **64% said rudeness was someone being rude on the telephone.**
- **65% defined it as indifference or inattentiveness.**
- **60% said it was people not returning calls or emails.**
- **61% defined rudeness as a lack of follow up on commitments made**

Commentary:

- There was broad agreement on what rudeness is.
- At all times business people need to ensure that they are looking after clients and customers.
- We should always be trying to meet or exceed customer expectations.
- It does not take any more time to be nice that it does to be rude and it is one of the things in life that is still free.
- Time wasting was the number one definition of rudeness as identified by the respondents

The Cost of Bad Manners



What action would you take if you were on the receiving end of bad manners?

- o **6% would do nothing.**
- o **35% would give feedback to the individual themselves.**
- o **12% would report it to the individual's manager**
- o **47% would move their business elsewhere**

Commentary:

- o 47% of people would move their business elsewhere – this is nearly half of all people surveyed.
- o This shows us that customers are more action focused than previous years and will move their business if they are unhappy with service. This trend has been increasing since the first manners survey.

Summary



Overall the results show us that all things being equal, people will do business with people that they like. Manners are an integral part of life. They show respect for other people. As well as making life more pleasant, manners can make good business sense too.

Pamela Fay
October 2011