

## Business etiquette - SMEs still unaware of its advantages

by [Madhusmita](#) on July 7th 2010 and filled under [Small and Medium Enterprise \(SME\)](#)

Notwithstanding the fact that many potentially worthwhile and profitable alliances are sometimes lost because of an unintentional breach of business etiquette, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) still continue to commit the same mistakes when they meet a client. Business etiquette is made up of significantly more important things...it's about presenting oneself with the kind of polish that shows one can be taken seriously. Business etiquette is also about being comfortable around people and making them comfortable around you, which is very important when you make a business call. Winning business won't be tough if you understand the term business etiquette. Today, nothing else can bring the success until and unless you have good etiquette, says Pria Warrick, President cum Executive Director of Delhi-based Pria Warrick Finishing School.

"Etiquette is nothing but manners that is essential to be followed in a business environment. It is the magic mantra which makes the young executives follow a code of behaviour, follow the rules of decorum, be aware of changing international culture and thus make the right impression on clients. Moreover, precisely defining etiquette we can say it is a blanket word which includes dress and address civility, formality propriety, protocol and the ability to consider the rights of other before your own feelings and to consider the feelings of others before your own rights," says Col. A.K Rajpal, head of Communication and Behavioral Sciences Department and Head of Students Welfare Department, Amity Business School. "Business etiquette facilitates to deal with customers confidently," Pria says. Now the question is: What is the difference between a good entrepreneur whose career is picking up speed and his counterpart who can't seem to get the engine to turn over? More often than once, a good entrepreneur has mastered the nuances of business etiquette &ndash; the subtle, but critical behaviours that can make or break an important meeting, influence a first impression or impress a potential client. In today's competitive world of business where there is very little difference between goods and services from one company to another, what sets one's business apart from the competitors is one's relationships and one's people skills. And the best way to improve people skills is to learn and use the rules of business etiquette. According to Pria "Business etiquette isn't meant to be stuffy or formal. It's really about being kind, considerate and respectful." "One may tend to agree that some of the SMEs are unaware of the advantages of business etiquette. They cannot and will not identify it as a key skill, the open sesame into the business world. The objective of garnering this skill is to enhance self awareness and understand that business has its own rules of conduct. A business executive must follow these rules and understand his responsibility to the customers, to the employees and of course to the nation," Rajpal says. "Mostly, the corporate people come to me for grooming because they urge to get the designated position in an organization. They desire to come up to the top management level for which they require proper business etiquette to deal with clients," says Pria. "In our institute (Pria Warrick Finishing School) we groom professionals with a degree in computers, business administration, law or any other field, where there require the art of carrying themselves in the society and in the business world," she adds. "In fact, SMEs are not that much keen to polish themselves. The reason might be they are small entrepreneurs who believe in just money making," she commented. According to Hilka Klinkenberg, director of Etiquette International, a business etiquette firm, the basics of professional etiquette are really quite simple. First, understand the difference between business etiquette and social etiquette. Business etiquette is genderless. For example, the traditional chivalrous etiquette of holding the

door open for a woman is not necessary in the workplace and can even have the unintended effect of offending her. In the work environment, men and women are peers. Second, your guiding principle should always be to treat people with consideration and respect. Although this may seem obvious, Klinkenberg cites this basic decency as a frequent casualty in today's workplace. "Business etiquette is not just a key one may use when required, or a dress to be donned on certain occasions. It has to become ingrained as part of the grooming of ones own value system," says Rajpal. "At Amity Business School (ABS) we start this process on Day 1. Etiquette is a must for any Amitian. The Amitian qualities which we endorse are spelled out. Etiquette with all its connotation is underlined. Our students are made to understand the needs of the Corporate - dress code, gestures of friendliness, enthusiasm, pleasant and warm attitude, handshakes and electronics etiquette, etc. All of these exude an aura of efficiency. We offer value addition course in Business Communication (which includes etiquette on the Net) &ndash; behavioural communication, which endorses the value of relationship management." "I'd like to conclude by saying at ABS we firmly believe that "the wind's waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators and we blend modernity with tradition in full measure," he adds at length.