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Students Dine With a Touch of Class

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There once was a prospective IBM employee who failed to get hired because he liked his food salty. The interview was conducted over lunch, and as the two of them were served, the person being interviewed made the fatal mistake of salting his food before tasting it. Not a big deal, right? Wrong, his rush to salt his food before even tasting it was perceived by the CEO as a very hasty decision.

Therefore, because the interviewee didn't assess the situation before acting upon it, the CEO did not feel this person would be effective in the position being offered.

On Sept. 7, Syndi Seid, founder and director of Advanced Etiquette, hosted a three hour etiquette dinner to teach students the essentials of negotiating business in the social atmosphere. The Career Services Center in association with Delta Sigma Pi and Undergraduate Business Association, sponsored the dinner in Lone Mountain from 5:30- 8:30 p.m. Seid, a graduate of The Protocol School of Washington is certified in various areas of etiquette consulting. She holds the highest certifications available as an Independent Certified Corporate Etiquette Consultant; International Protocol Consultant; and a Children's and Teen Etiquette Consultant. "This is the reason I am in the etiquette business," said Seid. "I want to be of service to anyone interested in learning a skill so they can outlast the competition."

Seid also insisted her seminars include the word fun. "My seminars are about learning to feel more confident at social events," she said. "But they are also a place where people can have a lot of fun."

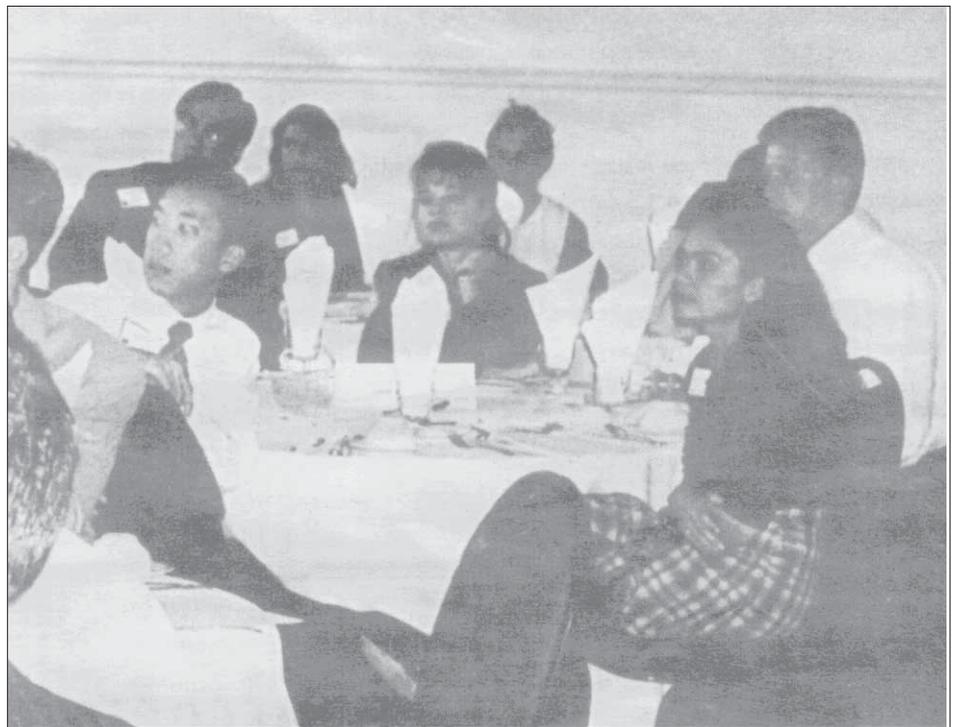
"What etiquette is all about is not to be self-conscious at a social event, but to be self-confident," said Seid. "Learning etiquette is good for one's personal enhancement, for weddings and

even dating. You learn how not to be a clod at the dinner table."

The seminar showed students how to brush up on their business dining techniques, com-

skills of refined dining, and were an eclectic mix of McClaren School of Business students and the men's basketball team.

Seid welcomed everyone with much appreci-



Students closely pay attention to tips on how to be distinguished diners.

munication skills and to maximize networking effectiveness. "As a Chinese-American, born and raised in Chinatown, I worked for Hyatt Hotels for 20 years and then transferred to Washington, D.C." explained Seid. "I started with a new company and realized how much I did not know." Through her experiences, Seid believes the subtleties of our manners are what CEOs pick up on, that non-verbal communication can make a difference.

The evening began after a few late comers finally found their seats, already breaking the first rule of business etiquette, punctuality.

The diners were anxious to learn the elegant

ation, and congratulated all for making an effort to part with their hard earned money (tickets were \$15) to invest in her program, which she put as, "an investment into their brains."

"Tonight we are going to learn what I call the 'Platinum Rules of Etiquette,'" stated Seid. "Do unto others as they would like to be treated."

Before the lecture, guests were asked to fold their arms and hands in their usual manner. Next they folded their arms and hands in the reverse way to which they were unaccustomed. Some described the new way as "a little different" and "uncomfortable."

"That is how I would like to sum up eti-

quette, it is different," said Seid. "Manners must become habit before they are truly useful."

Before dinner was served two slide shows were shown. The first one, "How to Succeed in the International Arena," emphasized business communication skills, in other countries.

This segment enlightened students, on pre-meeting strategies, such as doing a profile on the person being met, so one is not totally in the dark on the first meeting.

Business card savvy was also demonstrated.

The audience was instructed on the proper way to hand out and receive business cards.

Another important topic was the most effective way to make business introductions. Several scenarios were enacted to prove how simply saying one or two words in the incorrect order can have a deeper effect than might have been intended.

Seid also explained the importance of eye contact. In the business world it is essential that the eyes of the person to whom you are

speaking are met directly.

Handshaking customs were also discussed. Seid stressed the importance of handshaking and gave several different exercises to help perfect this vital technique.

"It is always appropriate to shake a person's hand whenever and wherever you see them, at the beginning and end of a meeting," explained Seid. "You will become aware of how others and how you judge by your handshake."

The second slide show of the evening, "Dining like a Diplomat," instructed students on the appropriate ways to entertain as a host and as a guest.

Guests were lead down the path of dining success, from their entrance, to their seating, through the utensil essentials and finally to their departure.

The second film was more humorous as it gave extreme examples of diners caught in the most serious etiquette crimes. During the dinner, Seid told the story about an IBM interview between a prospective employee and the Chief Executive Officer.

Throughout the whole evening one theme was clear, people will notice your non-verbal gestures, perhaps even more than your verbal signals.

Strategic

Syndi Seid, President of Advanced Etiquette offers some

Do's and Don'ts

For the International, Social Arena

- Do not wait to be introduced.
- Offer your hand when meeting someone.
- Do not cross the legs. NOTE: In other cultures everyday gestures may be considered offensive. Northern European countries consider it a sign of bad breeding, and along with Asian countries it suggests premature familiarity. In Arab countries, bottoms of soles are considered offensive.
- Don't use your hands to excess. Refrain from the nervous gestures such as fingering a ring, pen or shoe strings
- Be aware of the words you use. Never use the word anxious when you mean eager.
- Never walk away when you terminate a conversation. Say excuse me, it's been nice talking with you. I see someone I need to speak with.
- When greeting a customer in your office, you should direct the guest where to sit.
- Be aware of your voice level. Don't be abrupt, direct, loud or boisterous.
- Do not refer to an Asian as Oriental; an Inuit as an Eskimo; a French-speaking Canadian as a French-Canadian; the British or Britons as Britishers or Brits.
- Don't correct someone's grammar in front of others.
- Do accept hospitality when it is offered. Refusal of tea or coffee can be interpreted as an insult in many countries.
- Do not smoke, even if your client is smoking.
- It is a first class faux pas to treat anyone like a second class citizen.

Strategic Do's and Don'ts - Dining Savvy

- Do try a little of everything served to you unless you know you're allergic to a certain food. Do leave dropped silver on the floor. Quietly signal the waitron to bring you another.
- Do remember your posture at the table. Sit up straight and keep your arms, including elbows off the table.
- Continental style both wrists rest on the table. Don't tip up the glass or cup too much when drinking, but keep it at a slight angle.
- Do place the napkin in the chair when excusing yourself from the table.
- If you are the person being honored by a toast you do not drink to yourself.
- Don't do any kind of personal grooming at the table.
- Don't leave the premises until you find your hosts, then thank them and say goodbye.
- Do write a thank-you note the next day. Outside of the U.S. Have it delivered by messenger rather than by mail. You may also send flowers.