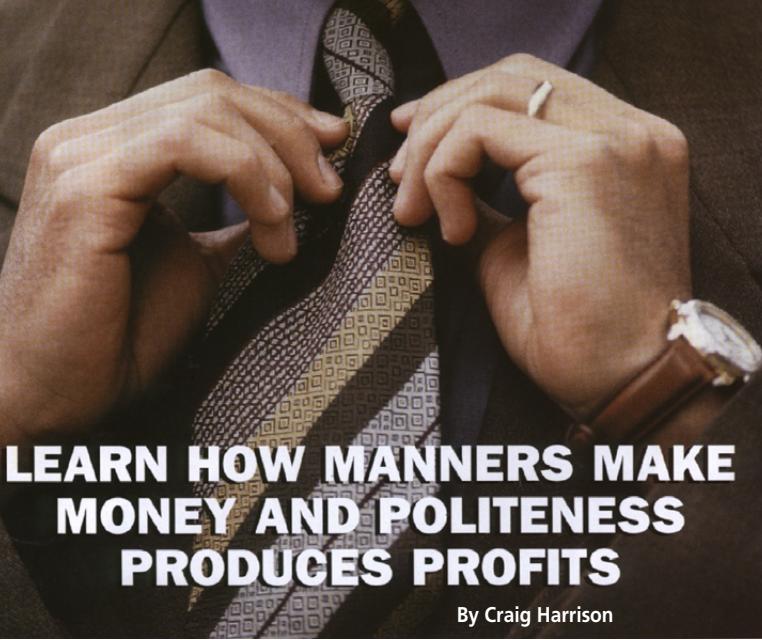


Business Communications



LEARN HOW MANNERS MAKE MONEY AND POLITENESS PRODUCES PROFITS

By Craig Harrison

In a manner of speaking, manners matter! Especially in this day and age of faceless transactions and impersonal contacts, manners and etiquette make a difference. How's your handle on business etiquette?

Customers have choices in who they do business with. All things being equal, they'd prefer to work with ISOs that treat them with dignity and respect. They also prefer to do business with people with whom they feel comfortable. Manners provide a degree of comfort and safety that is reassuring to customers. They are a common ground where strangers can meet. They also lend a touch of class, elevating the routine transactions of life into pleasurable, enjoyable interactions that bring smiles to our faces.

According to Carolyn Millet, of www.Politeness.com, employee indifference to customers often comes home to roost. Carolyn asks: "How many customers has your business lost because of indifference from employees?" She reminds us, "It costs far less to keep a current customer than to find a new one."

Seize the Etiquette Edge

Syndi Seid, Founder and Director of Advanced Etiquette in San Francisco (www.advancedetiquette.com), is another proponent of etiquette as a social lubricant for business. Her classes on protocol and etiquette training help business professionals. Syndi believes etiquette training "is the missing link to a complete professional education." Speaking of business transactions, Syndi states unequivocally: "The knowledge and proper display of etiquette is the most powerful skill a person can possess,

bar none!" The good news: you can experience a discernible edge when you employ etiquette as part of your repertoire of services you deploy.

Where to begin, Wear to Continue

Let's start with the basics:

- Are you well groomed?
- Are you well dressed?
- Are you well spoken?

Remember, you communicate non-verbally as well as verbally.

The basics of good manners include greeting and welcoming others, treating them with respect, showing common courtesy, and thanking them, whether in person or in writing.

In terms of your day-to-day behavior:

- Do you return phone calls promptly?
- Are you polite when answering the phone?
- Does your outgoing message convey a touch of class, some humanity, and a caring nature?

Conduct yourself as a caring professional and others will respond in kind.

In terms of interactions with clients and customers:

- Do you take and show a personal interest in them?
- Do you acknowledge them at birthdays and other significant times of theirs?
- Do you write hand-written thank you notes to express your appreciation of their patronage?

Don't be self-centered. Focus on others.

Socially, when you interact with customers, potential customers, or even colleagues:

- Are you polite and respectful?
- Are you positive and helpful?
- Are you a good listener?

The best "conversationalists" are great listeners. You can be too.

Manners truly are a form of communication, a language spoken by the well-behaved peoples of all countries. Let good taste, manners, and politeness be your bill of fare for success.

Shower your customers, colleagues, and employees with care. Employ etiquette to make doing business with you a pleasure and you'll receive the same kind as you reap the rewards of stellar service. ■

In his youth, professional speaker and corporate trainer Craig Harrison won a Tall Tales Contest. Now he helps professions communicate and serve for success. Reach him at 888-450-0664, send e-mail to solutions@craigsspeaks.com or visit his website: www.craigsspeaks.com.

