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Student Opinion

Beating the Competition - with Etiquette

By Christine DiSpaltro

With the job market in its current diminished status, everyone needs an edge over the competition. Why not make your edge impeccable etiquette? Take this short quiz below and if you answer "no" to any of these questions, maybe you should consider taking an etiquette course to refine your skills and help you make the best first impression.

- Did you know that it is improper to take a drink when you are the subject of a toast?
- Do you know how to dress when an invitation says White tie? Black tie? Formal? Informal? Business Casual? Casual? Business Attire?
- Do you know that it is proper etiquette to introduce your business associate to the CEO, but improper (and possibly offensive) to introduce the CEO to your business associate?

Advanced Etiquette training by Ms. Syndi Seid taught par-

ticipants all this and much more. As Ms. Seid said, etiquette is a series of silent skills. Some people might not notice if you have good etiquette; but people will definitely notice if you have bad etiquette.

The Advanced Etiquette course was held on Saturday, September 14th from 8:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. During this time, Ms. Seid covered the following topics:

- Pre-meeting Strategy
- Business Card Savvy
- Business Introductions
- Networking Effectiveness
- Dressing for the Occasion
- Business Correspondence
- Email Etiquette
- Telephone Courtesies
- Successful Business Entertaining and Dining
- Table Manners
- Toasting Etiquette

Participants learned the Do's and Don'ts of the above topics in great detail. The class was interactive; students were able

to ask personal or situational questions. There was hands-on training in the dining course, allowing participants to practice what they had learned. Students were taught to eat "Continental style" which proved to be challenging for many. Everyone left with much more knowledge, and a 100-page workbook by which to remember it all.

I personally found this training to be effective and rewarding. Ms. Seid taught us some very valuable skills, which can be used in both social and business situations. The course was not repetitive of basic etiquette skills, but was a refinement of those skills. I feel confident now that I will be able to present myself in a professional manner at any occasion and make an outstanding first impression. I would highly recommend all business students take this course. You are putting so much hard work into earning your MBA, why chance missing an opportunity because of improper etiquette?

Here are some additional comments:

"The course covered many topics in which I was interested. I appreciated Ms. Seid offering such an informative seminar at such a reasonable cost to students. Ms. Seid knew her material perfectly, which gave her the expertise to address all my concerns, including how to drink from a glass without leaving a lipstick mark. The most interesting topic was learning how to maximize my networking effectiveness, especially in situations where I do not know anyone. The time and money invested were definitely cost-worthy."

-Sumiyo Nishizaki

"Etiquette is about awareness. In our increasingly multinational society, Syndi Seid's form of consciousness-raising is particularly timely. Ms. Seid's Advanced Etiquette seminar brings to light points of social form which can greatly influence both business and personal interactions."

-Emily Coon



Syndi Seid

This is a reprint from the student opinion section of the November 2002 issue of the University of San Francisco *Graduate Business Journal*. Ms. Syndi Seid held a class at USF which was attended by the student who wrote the article.