

Tackling Table Manners

Tips for Your Team



If business meals were like football, would your team be ready for *The Big Game*? This year, improve your company's image and strengthen sales by tackling table manners.

Here are ten errors to avoid:

1. **Delay of Game:** Arrive early for your business meal, whether you are the host or guest. Do not order alcohol while you are waiting.
2. **False Start:** Wait for the host to tell you where to sit. Place your napkin on your lap when your host does and begin eating after your host. Order first, then talk business.
3. **Illegal Procedure:** Napkins are not for blowing your nose or spitting out unwanted objects. Blot your lips with your napkin between food and drink. Remove unwanted objects with thumb and index finger, cupped fingers or discreetly moving the object from your mouth to the fork or spoon.
4. **Pass Interference:** When someone asks for the salt or pepper, you may not intercept and use it for yourself. The same goes for shared dishes, which are passed to the right (counterclockwise). Salt and pepper are passed together, one in each hand.
5. **Illegal Use of Hands:** Do not reach for items beyond your grasp. Say "please pass the..." and "thank you" when it arrives.
6. **Illegal Motion:** Keep your elbows in. No elbows on the table except between courses when there is no food on the table.
7. **Unnecessary Roughness:** Be kind to the cook, especially when dining in someone's home. Do not say you do not like something. Let the host/hostess know when you do. (*This is delicious!*)
8. **Technical Foul:** Do not lose patience with the wait staff – kill them with kindness. Try not to send anything back, unless it is so undercooked it is crawling off the plate.
9. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Do not talk or take a drink with food in your mouth. Do not use a toothpick or chew ice. No grooming at the table – do not use a comb, nail clippers or apply lipstick.
10. **Fumble:** If you spill something on another person, such as a glass of wine, apologize and offer to reimburse him or her for the cleaning expenses.

When the meal is over, do not stack the dishes or push them away. Leave your napkin slightly crumpled to the left of your place setting.

Touchdown!

Have a winning season with etiquette training from the **Culture and Manners Institute**.

Callista Gould, a certified etiquette instructor with the Culture and Manners Institute, gives dining tutorials and other etiquette seminars. Visit: www.cultureandmanners.com or contact Callista at: cgould@cultureandmanners.com Phone: (515)225-9683

Ask about the **Free Etiquette Tip of the Week** email.

