

## Business Dining Etiquette

Whether you are having a casual lunch with your boss or attending a formal business dinner with your clients, the way you conduct yourself over the meal can invite disgust or leave a good impression. Business meals are effective ways to develop and strengthen relationships with your business associates and hence making the experience comfortable and enjoyable for them is necessary for your professional success.

Let me share with you a few crucial tips which you can apply when hosting a business meal.

**a) Place the order**

If you are the host, it is polite to find out what the guest likes to eat and then place the order on behalf of the guest. When placing the order, give the guest's order first, and yours last. If you are hosting a big group of guests, it is more feasible to let the waiter take the order from each guest individually. Again, you should be the last to place the order.

**b) Encourage your guest to start eating if his/her food arrives first**

Although it is not necessary for the guest to wait for all meals to be served before one starts eating, your guest may not feel comfortable tucking in until your food is served if you do not say anything. For e.g., if hot food is served, encourage him/her by saying "Please start. Your meal will get cold if you wait."

**c) Manage disasters with grace**

Though you may have been very careful in making sure everything goes well by choosing a restaurant that serves good food and offers great service, things may still go wrong. For e.g. the waiter may forget your order or your food take a long time to be served. Whatever that may happen, excuse yourself to talk over the issues with the relevant personnel discreetly. Your guest will feel uncomfortable if you complain in front of them or worse, if you lose control and reprimand the staff loudly.

**d) Make discreet arrangements to have the bill brought to you**

Although you may have planned to pay for the meal, your guest may insist on picking up the tab when the check arrives. To avoid such awkward moments, make prior discreet arrangements with the server to have the bill brought to you at the end of the meal.



## Good Dining Etiquette is Necessary for Professional Success

Business meals should be taken very seriously as a business meal is still a business activity. It is an opportunity to showcase your social interaction skills, your level of sophistication and your ability to plan and organize. The way you conduct yourself at the dining table is also an outer expression of your character and plays a vital role in projecting the right image for your career. If you are able to project a professional presence during the business meal and at the same time ensure that your business associates have a pleasant dining experience, they will assume that you will handle their business the same way.

*Article by Alexis Wan, Chief Image Consultant/Trainer/Speaker from D' New Image Chapter*

D' New Image Chapter offers etiquette services designed to help you to enhance your business and social interaction skills, thereby empowering you to present yourself with confidence and authority that sets you apart from your competitors, develop and strengthen your relationships and help you to gain the competitive edge in today's social and business environments.

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