

Workplace Etiquette Worksheet – Scenarios

Etiquette is the rules for polite behaviour in society or in particular groups such as schools, associations, and workplaces. Knowing the formal, but not written rules of your workplace, can help you built healthy relationships with your co-workers and supervisors, and good manners can lead to an enjoyable work environment.

Your success in establishing good relationships with fellow workers can have a major influence on your career advancement. You can have outstanding knowledge of your job and excellent productivity, but if you don't fit in with the team and your co-workers find you difficult to work with, you will have a much tougher time keeping your job and getting promotions.

An average Canadian worker will spend more time at work than with his/her own family. So the use of appropriate etiquette becomes essential to create a pleasant and healthy work environment where you will feel motivated and content to spend most of your time.

Case Scenarios for Discussion

1. Jane works as a cashier at a small grocery store. Her shift finishes at 3pm, but she can't leave until her co-worker, Melissa, takes over from her. Melissa is really nice and has been working at the grocery store for about 3 years, and Jane has been working there for the last 5 months. Recently, Melissa is showing up late for work without any explanation and because of it, Jane is not able to leave until 3:10pm. This really upsets Jane and as she has to rush to get to her computer classes. Melissa has never explained or apologized for being late. Help Jane to solve this situation.

2. Mark is a young man who works as a mailroom clerk at an office downtown. He was hired last month as the result of a referral from a friend. Mark really likes the outdoors and bikes to work every day. He shares his office with 3 other co-workers, and since he has an expensive bike, he asked if it was okay to keep the bike in the office. His co-workers agreed to the arrangement. Every day Mark brings his bike in. Sometimes it is really wet and makes the floors dirty, and Mark leaves his bike gear lying around and it started to smell bad. His co-workers are talking behind his back saying that he smells bad and his hair looks funny after he takes his helmet off. What would be a good solution for this situation?

3. Rodrigo and Mitchell are co-workers at a drugstore. While they are working together stocking a shelf, they started talking about their work. They are not happy with their new supervisor and their new shifts. Rodrigo tells Mitchell that he already started applying for others jobs and suggests that Mitchell does the same. But Mitchell says that his strategy is to ignore his new supervisor. As they talk, customers are passing by and listening to their conversation. Let's help Rodrigo and Mitchell with their workplace etiquette.

4. Soraya is really happy with her new job as a sales associate at a shoe store. Although her new company's policy says that employees should not keep their cell phones with them during working hours, she notices that all the other sales associates do. They also check their messages and text while working. Soraya really likes her smartphone and is thinking of keeping it with her. She believes that it can't be a problem since her co-workers are doing it. You are a good friend, and Soraya has asked for your opinion about this situation.

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5. Glen passed his 3-month probation on his new job. He really enjoys his position as food counter attendant at a busy coffee shop. Since he was hired, he has noticed that the air conditioning system hasn't been working. He has heard some fellow workers complaining about it, but nobody has brought the situation to the supervisor's attention. Glen is thinking about talking to his supervisor, but he is not sure that it's a good idea, as he's only been working there for 3 months. Please help Glen decide whether or not he should complain.

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6. Sofia is a new immigrant to Canada and just landed a job as a housekeeper in a hotel. She doesn't speak English very well and has a strong accent, but she is able to communicate with her co-workers. Sofia doesn't make eye contact with men and has been trying to avoid her male co-workers. Her workmates have noticed and started talking about the situation behind her back. They are also talking about the strong smell of her food during lunch, as well as their hard time understanding her. In order to avoid conflict and misunderstandings, please advise them how to behave with the appropriate workplace etiquette.

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