

**Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur**

**National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL)**

**Course Title  
Enhancing Soft Skills And Personality**

**Lecture - 37  
Business Etiquette**

**by...  
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Hello hi welcome back to my course on enhancing soft skills and personality this is week eight the last week second unit lesson number 37 in this unit and in this lesson let us focus on business etiquette.

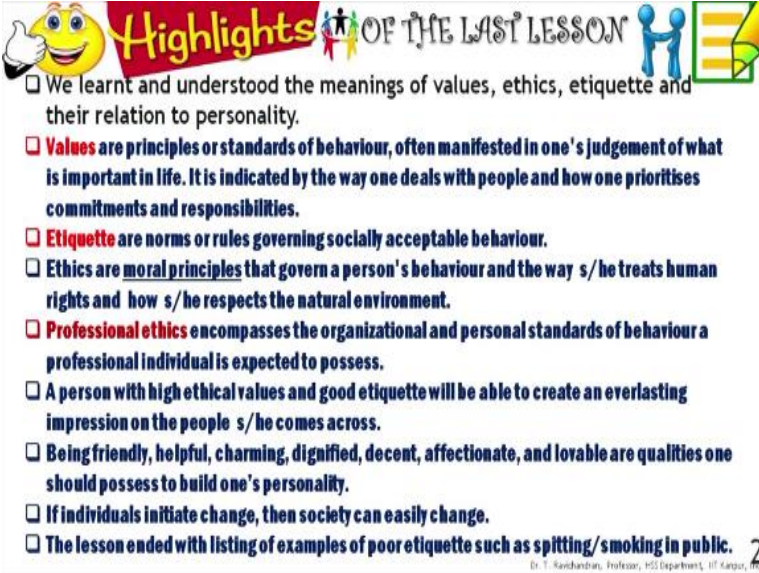
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And before I start as usual let us take a quick look at what I did in the last lesson highlights of the last lesson we learnt and understood the meanings of values ethics etiquette and the relation to

personality what are values, values or principles or standards of behavior often manifested in one is judgment of what is important in life.

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**Highlights OF THE LAST LESSON**

- We learnt and understood the meanings of values, ethics, etiquette and their relation to personality.
- Values** are principles or standards of behaviour, often manifested in one's judgement of what is important in life. It is indicated by the way one deals with people and how one prioritises commitments and responsibilities.
- Etiquette** are norms or rules governing socially acceptable behaviour.
- Ethics** are moral principles that govern a person's behaviour and the way s/he treats human rights and how s/he respects the natural environment.
- Professional ethics** encompasses the organizational and personal standards of behaviour a professional individual is expected to possess.
- A person with high ethical values and good etiquette will be able to create an everlasting impression on the people s/he comes across.
- Being friendly, helpful, charming, dignified, decent, affectionate, and lovable are qualities one should possess to build one's personality.
- If individuals initiate change, then society can easily change.
- The lesson ended with listing of examples of poor etiquette such as spitting/smoking in public.

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It is indicated by the way one deals with people and how one prioritizes commitments and responsibilities the way one takes care of his or her commitments will reveal the person's innermost values etiquette or norms or rules or governing principles which are socially acceptable behavior ethics or moral principles that govern a person is behavior under be he or she treats human rights how the person respects the rights of the other.

One not only with regard to human rights not only with regard to individual relationships but also how the person respects the natural environment professional ethics encompasses the organizational and personal standards of behavior a professional individual is expected to possess here I cautioned you by saying that it is rather tricky because there are in-house norms so when you go for something like medical profession there are written rules guided norm.

When you become a lawyer there are written rules but then the society has some expectations which are endured on the individual as a kind of moral responsibility and you are expected to

adhere to moral responsibilities so in that context I said a teacher cannot escape clearing doubt anytime when the student is asking the teacher not saying that it is beyond classroom hours so I will not be able to answer your doubt and same thing goes with the doctor.

If the doctor refuses to take care of the patient especially the doubt asking for payment in advance so then the society rather feels very unhappy with the doctor they feel that it is the responsibility of the doctor to treat the patient first and think about money or anything later so that is professional ethics there is if a business person refuses to give loan so people will not feel that bad and thinking that or that spot of his profession.

So professional ethics also one learns the in-house norms it is also important to know what are the moral responsibilities which are associated with that that if you are able to follow will make you a real professional and a person with high ethical values and good etiquette will be able to create an everlasting impression on the people he or she comes across such qualities like being friendly helpful charming dignified decent affectionate and lovable or the ones.

One should build develop in order to have a very good personality and then the question like why should I change the society is so bad and the people around me are so corrupt too that I said that individuals are the ones who are making the society and if an individual can change you will be able to make great change in society and I ended the lesson by listing some of the examples of poor etiquette such as speaking in the public smoking in the public not giving seats to those which are designated.

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**BUSINESS ETIQUETTE**

**Business etiquette refer to those mannerisms a professional is expected to follow in business and social situations.**

**Adhering to the following norms will help you develop a professional image in business and social circles:**

- **First, introduce your wife/husband, partner, friend in a social group or in a meeting. It's rude and uncouth to keep your partner unintroduced while you indulge in deep conversation. It's also unfair to your partner who will feel left out.**
- **Speak in the common/ official language that is known to all.**
- **In large groups, address all; do not indulge in small chat with the person sitting next to you.**



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Actually for ladies or disabled to people or elderly people so that also amounts to Civic sense one needs to develop in this lesson as I said we will focus particularly on business etiquette because today these are the norms which very govern and control the way you are performing your duties in any area of profession that you choose to be so business etiquette refer to those mannerisms a professional is expected to follow in business as well.

As social situations this means you expect for example a lawyer or a teacher or a doctor or an engineer to behave in a certain manner in the business area as well as even outside the social groups so you cannot expect that a teacher will behave in a different manner in a social function so one expects a level of decorum dignity which are associated with this professions business now adhering to some of the norms that I am going to discuss with you will help you to develop a professional image in business.

And social circles first either in a business group or in a social circle when you are going there with a partner a friend or your wife or a husband you need to introduce the person who is accompanying you first to the one whom you know already but the person who is with you doesn't know to exclude an uncouth uncouth is totally uncivilized to keep your partner un

introduced while you indulge in deep conversation you are enjoying good law skills with the other person but the person who accompanied you is not being introduced so it is also unfair to your partner who will feel left out and they will not be able to participate in the discussion wholeheartedly.

So it is important you should introduce first and in case you are introducing somebody of the opposite sex then you have to introduce the lady first okay so if there are two men and you are with one woman and it is important that you introduce the woman first to the men and then the one of the other but the two men will be introduced to the lady either by you or by the other person are complaining this group of men.

Then the next important thing which I hinted in the previous lecture about the language that you used you should use the lingua franca that is a common language that is used whether it is official or commonly accepted so in most cases it is English or in most of the other cases it is Hindi and depending on the area the region sometimes for local languages are accepted but speak in a language that is known to all the people who are in the group you cannot choose to speak in a language.


That is known only to two people or three people that is again impolite that is not part of good mannerism in large groups when you are sitting or when you are talking address all in the sense that when you say something so share it with the entire group do not indulge in small chat with the person sitting next to you this happens often because of introverted tendencies often because of your own unfamiliarity with other people but these occasions.

When you are in social group or the ones in which you need to become familiar with other people so instead of again and again catering to your introverted tendencies it is important you come out of your shell mingle with the people in the group not focusing on one or two individuals who are sitting next to you or identifying somebody who is as introverted as you and then focusing only on with this person the other thing is with regard to your facial expression particularly.

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**BUSINESS ETIQUETTE**

- Do not chew gum or eat something while everybody is involved in some serious discussion.
- Do not interrupt a speaker.
- If you need to interrupt, seek permission.
- Do not monopolise the discussion. Do not seek centre stage.
- Give chance to all. Motivate silent people to say something.
- If invited for a business meeting, and you choose not to attend it, inform in advance.
- Avoid taking sides in discussion on politics, religion, or any sensitive issue.



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I have been telling you that I contact is important you need to maintain that but apart from that you should not chew gum or eat something while everybody is involved in some serious discussion so again it is very rude and it is not part of the etiquette and when somebody is giving a talk when the speaker is just in a flow do not interrupt the speaker and if you need to interrupt maybe you really need to understand what the person is saying so then you seek permission you take permission before interrupting you can say may I interrupt you for a minute.

So can I seek this clarification at this stage if the person says no I will come back to this then although the person to continue you have no right to interrupt even if you are the boss or even if you are at a dominating position you should not do it and in discussion suppose it is a group discussion or a brain storming session do not monopolize the discussion do not try to seek the center stage.

That everybody should listen to you do not become egoistic and egotistical if you are a good leader you should be a facilitator so you should give chance to all especially you should motivate those silent people who are rather shy and introverted and then you should make them come out of their shell and make them say something so if you can say something like let us listen to our

friend who is keeping quiet throughout this discussion and maybe he or she has a wonderful idea why not we hear from her so that will actually make the person smile or feel motivated to share something and most of these times these silent people quite observers or the ones who have very interesting ideas.


If invited for a business meeting if an invitation is sent and you choose not to attend it you need to inform in advance so you have to thank them that you are attending it you should also say thank you for the invitation and say sorry that you could not attend it so ignoring it and not saying anything is unbecoming of a professional and in case in these discussions there are discussions on politics or religion or things related to gender or any sensitive issues avoid taking sides.

So do not try to take sides so this is becoming unprofessional and then you will immediately be grouped with some people with vested interest or bias so which is not required in a business environment the most important thing refused to do anything unethical even if your higher authorities persuade you to do so example if you are the teacher and the principal is telling you to give more marks and pass a candidate now you have every right to protect your integrity.

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### BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

- **Refuse to do anything unethical even if your higher authorities persuade you to do so. It's difficult to refuse initially, but once you do it, in the long run even your higher authorities will respect you for your integrity!**
- **Do not share any confidential matter with others (including your most trusted friend, wife/husband, boy/girl friend).**
- **Do not say bad things about your company/boss even when you are drunk, or, even when you have left the company!**
- **Share your personal details to the minimum required. Sharing intimate details can often cause embarrassment and humiliation. Intimate details can be used to emotionally blackmail you and make you reveal company's secrets.**



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And say no it is difficult to refuse initially but once you do it in the long run even your higher authorities will respect you for your integrity these things are set at the beginning when you join a profession and a test you your integrity and sometimes people fall very neatly to these traps and then they start giving more marks in the case of a teacher and pauses student and then it becomes an expected norm every time the principal will call and tell you to change the marks and do that.

But once you refuse despite any pressure or any kind of blackmailing if you say no with dignity with assertiveness and then they will realize that ok here is a person who is very integrated honest and it will not be possible to change this person and then next time their own research requires so it is important to set this integrity level as you join anew profession and the next important thing once you have joined and once you have gained some trust you will be in such a position where confidential matters will be discussed.

And you will be in confidential discussion do not share any confidential matter with others including your most trusted friend or most trusted wife beloved husband boy or girlfriend so thinking that you are sharing in advertently even if they say this or give him to someone your job is in jeopardy more than that your integrity is doubted and the credibility goes down and that is undesirable and this is part of developing your business etiquette the next important thing.

Do not say bad things about your company your boss even when you are drunk so people think that they can take liquor and they can always excuse by saying that I was under alcoholic drink so I forgot what I was saying and I abused my boss or the company the other excuses even when you have left the company so they have left and joined somewhere then also do not say bad things about that company that was good that you left and you think you are in a better place just be there and give your best.

Now saying bad things about the company about the boss is not going to make that boss or that company really bad but it will reveal a bad aspect of you to others people will know you have served there for 10 years 20 years and then now you can say very bad things about that company and the boss and any number of years you are going to serve in the present 1 what is the



guarantee that you will not abuse this organization later so that doubt in your integrity will start from the beginning.

So do not do that and the next important thing in terms of developing your business etiquette share your personal details to the minimum record especially if you are not married or married and like you are not in good relationship with your spouse it is a strained relationship now these are things like you can share to the minimum but not very intimate detail sharing intimate details can often cause embarrassment and humiliation because the person whom you arrested will keep those details will make it public.

We share it with everyone and everyone some embarrassing detail of yours can become the talk of the town and you can be lost behind you, you can see that sarcastic smile from people so you lose your dignity but more than that sometimes intimate details can be used to emotionally blackmail you and make you reveal company secrets or some confidential information that is known only to you so why risk this kind of going down in terms of your dignity.

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## BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

- **Don't beat around the bush while talking in official meetings. Talk to the point.**
- **Don't be ambiguous. Be clear, lucid and precise in communication.**
- **Be courteous, polite and respectful all the time. Keep smiling. Exhibit cheerfulness. Use frequently: "Sorry," "Please," and "Thank You."**
- **Always request even if you are in a superior position. Use "May I..."**
- **Greet people while meeting: "Good Morning Monica/Arjun" (if they are colleagues of same age group); "Good Morning Sir/Madam" (if they are seniors/higher officers in rank)**
- **However, avoid intimate relationships with anyone in the office; be it your boss or your subordinate.**



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So keep your personal details to the minimum while talking while giving a talk or giving your answer response do not beat around the bush that means do not try to come to a point in a very circular rambling manner talk to the point so time is money in business and they leave all you just as long as you can save their kind for the same reason do not be ambiguous when you are ambiguous you try to give more than one meaning so do not be ambiguous be clear lucid and precise in communication.

So it is what going to our initial discussions on communication skills in the previous course in case you want to know more about how you can become precise and use it so, so many tips have been given there so that is important in terms of communication not being ambiguous and but being very clear and transparent be courteous polite and respectful all the time it is not only inside the office will be like that outside when you meet someone.

You do not even recognize the person and behave like a stranger no keep smiling exhibit cheerfulness again all the time use frequently this lubricants this polite word sorry please and thank you these are the magical words that can fit you anything that you want always request even if you are in a demanding position so do not go and then demand something demand put pressure on somebody to do something always use polite phrases like me.

I request you to do this can you do this for me so that actually we make the people feel obliged to do rather than resisting your demand or command and when you see people especially while meeting in day to day walk somewhere in the corridor first meeting so just greet them so simple things like wishing them and if they are your colleagues and of same age group and if it is an informal setting you can say good morning by adding the name so good morning a tone whereas if it is senior and then it is a formal environment.

So then you should say good morning sir or good morning man and whenever you meet if it is afternoon good afternoon or evening good evening and then if the discussion is slightly prolonged and you can end by saying have a nice day okay and so on so that greeting also is making the conversation go smooth and it is also making the other person feel comfortable with you however avoid intimate relationships with anyone in the office this is something.

That insisted on the discussion with regard to managing love so I discussed enough about this there but just as a caution avoid this intimate relationships in anyone in the office be to your boss because it is easy to develop intimate relationship with the boss and gain lot of favors but then people behind you, you never know what they are talking about you and again in terms of integrity moral values ethics etiquette you go down and same thing.

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**BUSINESS ETIQUETTE**

- Do not barge in without an appointment.
- If you have an appointment, reach the place before time and report to the receptionist or the secretary.
- Do not keep the guests waiting if you have given an appointment.
- Remember to give your business card and do not insist on business card from others.
- Use win-win approach in conversations: "You are right; but, I am not wrong..." Always be assertive and never be aggressive!
- Praise your employees/colleagues in public; but criticize/reprimand them in private!



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If you are at a higher position in the maintained relationship intimate relationship with your subordinate so that is also not appreciated and rather people look down upon such relationships so it is important that you should avoid this ones then this is something that I hinted in the previous one do not barge in without an appointment you should not do such things and if you have an appointment reach the place before time and report to the receptionist or the secretary or the personal assistant instead of sitting and reading a newspaper.

Or assuming that the concerned person will know that you have reached it is important you should tell them if you are the person was given appointment and guests are waiting do not keep the guests waiting if you have given an appointment and in case you kept them waiting you have to appreciate their patience in terms of waiting you need to apologize and then if possible you

can send some cool drinks or coffee or something so that they do not feel the boredom of waiting and then they do not feel annoyed that you kept them waiting and keep them in waiting only if it is innovatively otherwise you should be there before time.

And you should keep your appointment in time and at the end of the meeting in certain cases at the beginning of the meeting remember to give your business card and when you give normally mutually the other person will also respond to the gesture and other person will also give you the card but in case the other person is hesitating to give especially a lady for example a new person she may be hesitating where her mobile number is there or somebody who is so busy.

And maybe a celebrity than you and hesitating do not insist on business God from those people okay so it is their right to decide to give or not to give but from your side whenever you are beginning or ending whenever there is an opportune time so just give the card share it with the others and keep the cards ready last but not the least two important tips which will make you the ultimate business person use ding, ding approach in conversations.

So in all debates do not seek to generate heat but through light so use this method you are right but I am not wrong how do you explain so you will slowly say you are right to the extent I agree with you to the extent where you discussed about this and to that extent maybe here I am slightly incorrect but I am not completely wrong in saying this so this makes the conversation reach this win/win level and then as has been discussed.

Before in terms of being assertive always be assertive and never be aggressive aggressiveness only indicates your inferior feeling your own inner insecurity assertiveness indicates your calmness of mind and your surety confidence so be assertive and the last step is prize your employees or colleagues in public before others and seek every moment to prize them whenever it is possible try to prize them in public and acknowledge their work make it known to all.

But if you have to criticize and you form some Fault in their jobs do not shout at them share it with others in public do not reprimand them in public if at all you have to reprimand call them privately in your office in some chamber some outside while having some Coffee okay where the

person is comfortable and the person is able to receive in the right frame of mind especially if you want the person to change a particular behavior you need to make the person know that it is a behavior that you want the person to change and you are not against the person as a human being as such so to make it clear so you should not represent the person before others.

When you criticize someone before others normally the other person will resist they become defensive because they do not want to feel humiliated before others and to the extent some people can even become up fancy and they can reveal your own faults and they can try to put you to shame so that this is equated it is a kind of tit-for-tat but on the other hand even if you are good even if you are integrated and even if they are completely at fault do not try to criticize them in public okay.

So that is not part of business etiquette and it is not going to serve any good purpose now towards conclusion you might be wondering is it possible for me to develop these rights in me and this is something that we've been discussing from the beginning of the course where I have been telling you that these are not something that is inborn right and these are characteristics qualities which can be developed and enhanced so let us look at two interesting quotes from two eminent people about acquiring good manners.

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Acquiring good manners. . .

**“Cleanliness and order are not matters of instinct;  
they are matters of education,  
and like most great things,  
you must cultivate a taste for them.”**

~ Benjamin Disraeli



**“There is no accomplishment  
so easy to acquire as politeness,  
and none more profitable.”**



~ George Bernard Shaw

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That is all about etiquette the first one from Benjamin Disraeli who says cleanliness and order or not matters of instinct it means things related to showing you as neat and orderly okay like a thorough professional in terms of medical assistance to detail following time or not matters of instinct he says it is not coming from bidding it is not coming by birth by hereditary there are matters of Education may be the parents taught you well may be the teachers taught you well maybe your size imbibed these qualities from good cultured people around you.

And like most great things you must cultivate a taste for them what Benjamin Disraeli says even in case you have not learned them you can learn through education that is not only from books but by observing others and not only that you should not top you must cultivate a taste for them you should look at those people who have already developed already have refined these refined qualities and try to learn from them try to emulate them there is no harm in imitating good qualities from others and appreciate good things from others that is good for you.

And the next famous quote is from George but not sharp famous playwright he says there is no accomplishment so easy to acquire as politeness and none more profitable so for him all the things in terms of it takes etiquette mannerisms he cooks in the single word politeness is this

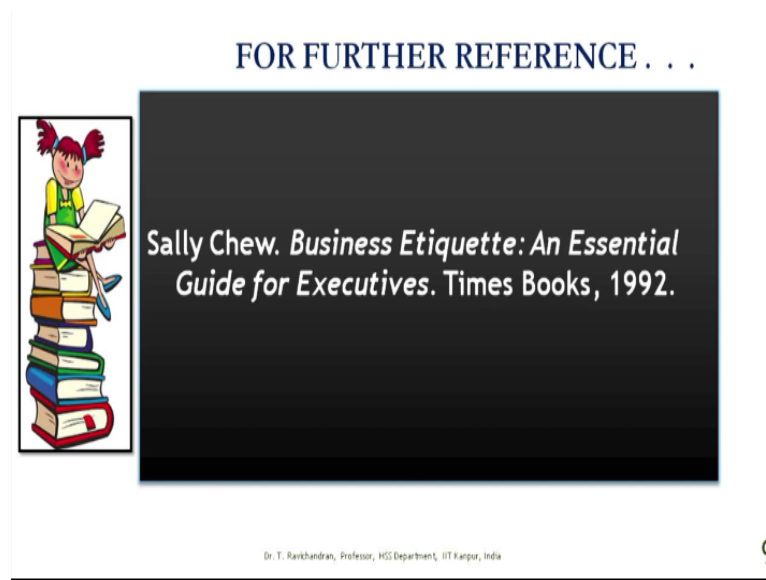
there is no accomplishment nothing you can achieve in this world so easy to acquire as politeness so acquiring this is not difficult being polite and none more profitable.

So it is easy but at the same time it is the most profitable one by being polite I always remember how politeness has helped me in various critical situations I remember during my student days and a very meticulous professor and deadlines are rigid and once he gives the assignment we have to submit on that day in particular so due to some inevitable circumstance I could not finalize the time that he has given but if I rush through I will be able to give but it will be a slightly substandard product.

As to my expectations so I took courage I went to him although everybody was afraid of asking him at the end of the class he was just arranging his teaching material so I interrupted sought permission to ask him something then he said fine go ahead then very politely I asked him whether there is a possibility of submitting this by taking one more day because it will help me to improve the quality of the assignment.

As such I can submit but I will not be able to submit one with high quality so the teacher immediately said that I should normally say no to this but the way you ask me is something that I want to appreciate so for that sake I am just giving you one more day it is not my intelligence that won the day but it was my politeness in which I approached him so that was the time. I realized that this inculcating soft skills and then implementing them at the right time can save us from many troubles.

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And can make us run life in a very smooth manner if you want to slightly know more details about this in terms of business etiquette one interesting book that I found this trolley tube business etiquette and essential guide for executives it is published by books and about the year 1992 so if you can get this and if you want to know more details about including body language how you should eat in dining tables how you should follow this table mannerisms and etiquette which already in terms of body language.

We have discussed before but in case you need to know more in details thank you again for watching this video we are almost nearing the completion of the course and these two units will help you to establish you as a thorough professional as a good gentleman and then develop your professional skills along with this etiquette wish you success in whatever profession that you have chosen whatever business that you will settle as well as success in social life so have a nice day thanks again.

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