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# Ten essentials of business introductions

**"L**ife is short, but there is always time for courtesy." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Introducing people is an essential aspect of business etiquette. When handled appropriately and with ease, being able to comfortably make introductions is the mark of a polished business professional. The most important point to remember about introductions is to make them. A person would rather have you tell him you forgot his name and ask for it than to stand in a group of people and not be introduced.

## The most important point to remember about introductions is to make them.

The following 10 essentials of business introductions should be helpful in guiding you through the process.

1. Always show deference to clients, senior executives, distinguished guests and high-ranking dignitaries by stating their name first. For example, "Mr. Davis (senior executive), I would like to introduce Ms. Elliot (junior executive)."

2. When introducing members of the opposite sex, use age and rank or degree of distinction as a guide. If the two people are approximately the same age, rank and prominence, the woman's name should be mentioned first. Otherwise, you should adhere to the first guideline unless, due to a

specific situation, you deem it necessary to be particularly discerning and sensitive.

3. On occasion, you may not be able to recollect the name of another person. In these situations, you can simply say in a sincere tone of voice, "I'm so sorry, but I can't recall your name. Could you please refresh my memory for me?" Or, "could you please tell me again?"

4. On the other hand, if someone has forgotten to introduce you, just take the initiative and introduce yourself. Smile, extend your hand and say, "I'm so and so, I don't believe we've met."

5. In general, refer to a person by his first name only after you have been given permission to do so. For example, "Please call me John." There are, of course, certain informal, casual settings where first names would be appropriate. Let your common sense and knowledge of business protocol be your guide.

6. Whenever possible, always add a little information to go with a name. That will give others a springboard for conversation. For example, "Ms. Jones, this is Dr. Facey, vice president of marketing. Ms. Jones is the president and CEO of ABC." If sitting, stand when being introduced. This shows consideration and respect.

7. To help you remember a person's name, repeat it as soon as you are introduced, and practice saying the name several times during the conversation.

8. Always shake hands when

being introduced. The handshake is important. It is the usual greeting for both men and women. Handshakes are your first way of connecting with a person. Remember, however, a limp, moist handshake or, on the other hand, a bonecrushing handshake, can slam the door on an enthusiastic response. A firm grasp is the key. Special note: When a man and woman are being introduced, ideally, their hands should come together simultaneously. Gentlemen, times have changed. You do not need to wait for the woman to offer her hand first. And, ladies, some men are unaware of this change in etiquette, so be ready to offer your hand.

9. In our ever-changing workplace, interestingly enough, the "hug and cheek kiss" seems to be becoming a trend. When meeting someone for the first time, please be cautious. Though this may be a growing influence in global circles, always consider the business and social setting in which you are interacting. Usually, you won't go wrong if you stick to the good old fashioned handshake.

10. Though many of us may have a bit of difficulty introducing people to one another, with practice, confidence and a sense of social interaction — you too can master the essentials of introductions.

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