

Business Greetings and Introductions

Remember the first 10 words count! Do you want to get someone's attention? In a positive sense, of course. Then use his or her name. Next don't forget to use a form of thanks in the first 10 or so words.

The 5 commandments

While you won't see these commandments carved in stone, they are of vital importance in greetings and introductions.

- **Stand up.** When you are seated and someone approaches you to say "hello" with a handshake, stand up, whether you are a man or woman. By doing so, you show the person you are greeting that you are giving him or her your full attention.
- **Make eye contact.** The importance of this rule can't be overemphasized. Looking directly into someone's eyes will accomplish 3 things: You will project an image of self-confidence and a healthy self-esteem, you will be perceived as a good listener, and you will probably receive the same courtesy when you speak.
- **Smile.** It sends others a message of acceptance. When one smiles it sends a message that that person has the self-assurance to greet others and accept others with finesse and poise.
- **Say your name.** If meeting someone for the first time, introduce yourself by saying your first and last name. If you have met the person before but suspect he/she may not remember your name, eliminate potential embarrassment by reintroducing yourself. You might say something like "I'm John Powell. We met at last year's conference. It is nice to see you again." It provides an opportunity for that person if they do remember your name to fudge a little by saying "Certainly, John I remember you. I'm glad to see you."
- **Shake hands.** Firm handshake that lasts only as long as it takes to greet the person.

Basic pointer for meetings and greetings

Men:

- Don't wait for a woman to initiate a handshake.
- Always offer the woman your full hand in a handshake.
- Offer a confident handshake to men and women alike.
- Avoid the "my hand over your hand" handshake, as this can be interpreted as a subtle form of one-upmanship.

Women:

- Always offer a complete and firm handshake.
- Stand when shaking hands.
- Shake hands with customers and clients, even when you meet them outside the work place.
- Never stand behind the desk when meeting or greeting someone. When shaking hands, the only thing that should be between the two of you is space.
- Shake hands at both the beginning and the end of a meeting.
- Give a handshake indicative of the confident, self-assured person you are.
- Avoid wearing oversized rings on the right hand.

Be an easy person to meet and greet.

- Keep your right hand free.
- If you're asked to prepare your own name tag, be sure to print your name in large, legible letters.
- When wearing a name tag, place it on your right side.

Common Questions about Greetings and Introductions

Q: When I am introducing my female supervisor to a male customer, whose name should I say first?

A: Man or woman, the customer's name should always be said first. Business introductions should be based on rank rather than gender.

Q: How can you tell whether someone wants to be called by his or her first, rather than last name?

A: Here's how to gauge your decision. If the person is a few layers above you from an organizational structure standpoint, or closer to your parents' age than yours, using the last name may be the best choice. If the person rank is closer to your level or closer to you in age, his or her first name may be used. If you have any doubt, use the last name. You can't get into trouble being too formal.

Q: When addressing a woman by her last name, should I use "Ms.," "Miss", or "Mrs."?

A: "Ms." is most accepted.

Q: When addressing a group of business women, is it appropriate to refer to them as "ladies," "women" or "female"?

A: When business women were asked this question in a recent study, most preferred the term "women."

Q: What's the best way to handle that embarrassing situation of being approached by someone whose name slips your mind?

A: Initiate a handshake and reintroduce yourself. In most cases the person will do likewise.

Q: What should I do when someone calls me by the wrong name?

A: It depends. If you are going to be with that person for a brief moment let it go. If you are going to be with that person for a while, reintroduce yourself. Or simply say "I'm sorry it Rob".

Q: Is there a time when introductions are not necessary?

A: Introductions may not be necessary when you're talking with someone and another person approaches to say hello. By not introducing the 2 people, you're giving a subtle cue that the newcomer should move on.