

Once in a while it is a good idea to get back to basics. This works in terms of financial planning, marketing, management, and of course, business etiquette. We all know business etiquette is important, but is like anything else, if we do not make a conscience effort to follow the following guidelines, we soon lose our touch.

Networking

- When you are introduced to someone new for the first time, it is important to remember to ask for and use their name, give them time to tell you what they do, and for you to show some actual interest. Unfortunately, most of us forget these basic ground rules. At many networking events that I have participated in, I have noticed the following take place:
 - **Joe Networker:** Hey you're new here aren't you?
 - **Jane Newcomer:** Why yes I am. My name is Jane and my.....
 - **Joe Networker:** Hey that's great my name is Joe and my company sells opportunity. Do you ever use blah, blah, blah, blah, blah?
 - **Jane Newcomer:** Uh, well no, we....
 - **Joe Networker:** You should certainly consider it, because it could change the way you do business. Here's my card. It was great to meet you Amy.
 - **Jane Newcomer:** Actually it's Jane. It was nice to meet.....
 - **Joe Networker:** (wanders off in mid-conversation to go and spew on someone else for a while)

Keep your introduction basic and ask the other person about what they do. Make sure to listen actively and don't just wait for your turn to talk. If you are serious about possibly doing business with this person, you will want to know as much about them as possible and if they are remotely interested in you they will return the favor.

Cell Phone/PDA

- Whenever you are in any kind of meeting or networking event you should always remember to put your cell phone on vibrate or silent. That does not mean that if you are expecting an important call that you cannot leave the room and take it. It does mean that if your phone's ringer is turned on it will take at least five or six seconds to fumble around and turn off your newly downloaded "Thriller" ringtone. Yes, we all miss Michael, but this can be very distracting to others, as well as embarrassing for you.
- While in meetings or attending any type of event, do not constantly check your phone for email, text messages, or your Facebook status. Again if you are expecting a very important message to

come through, by all means leave the room and take care of this urgent matter. However, having your head buried in your lap can be disrespectful to others and distracting for you, since you have probably attended this meeting or event for a good reason.

Email

There are an abundant number of rules for emailing, but I will just highlight the repeat offenders that I have noticed lately.

- While using the Read Receipt option (asking the person that is receiving the email, to verify that they read the email) has its merits, it is often overused. It's good to use the Read Receipt option if it is absolutely necessary that you find out if the other person has received this important message. It's not good to use each and every time you send an email, because it becomes annoying and makes you look like a micro-manager.
- Do not overuse the high priority option. If you overuse the high priority option, it will lose all meaning when something really is a high priority.
- Lastly, TURN OFF THE CAPS LOCK. It just looks like you are yelling at the person you are emailing.

It's always easy to point out when someone else has violated proper business etiquette, but like The Good Book says, pull the plank from your own eye, before worrying about someone else's splinter.