

## Meeting Etiquette 101

By Shirley Fine Lee

Meetings still are the most popular method for group communication in any business. Keep in mind that everyone needs to understand how to best take advantage of the time spent in meetings as well as how to mind their manners while in the meeting room. Below are ten meeting etiquette items to keep in mind before, during, and after future meetings.

1. If planning the meeting, set a convenient time and place for the meeting and confirm this with attendees well in advance of the meeting date. This shows respect for their time and confirmation of their attendance better enables meetings where specific people are required for decision making or problem solving.
2. Whenever possible, arrange to attend the entire meeting time. Going in and out during meetings is disruptive and can throw off the flow of the meeting for others. If leaving early or going to arrive late, ask leaders permission to do so before the meeting begins so agenda can be rearranged if necessary.
3. Never start a meeting late or run over the communicated end time as this also indicates a lack of respect for other's time. All attendees should be punctual. It is ok to arrive early, but never to be late. Keeping people waiting is rude and it should not be expected that they will wait to begin once everyone arrives.
4. Make sure everyone understands the meeting purpose and agrees to the set agenda. Put this on meeting reminders and go over it with everyone at the beginning of the meeting to insure all agree. Once everyone is in agreement, it is easier to follow the agenda and stick to time limits.
5. Always assign a recorder to document decisions and actions. Having a recorder will not only insure completion of actions outside the meeting, their visible records in the meeting can help to keep group focused.
6. Where corporate culture permits, turn off cell phones or pagers. Some people will find this impossible. For those people, ask they at least set it to vibrate in their pockets. Ask anyone who keeps them on to leave the room if they feel they must respond to a call so the meeting is not interrupted by their conversation.
7. Active participate in all discussion, idea generation, and problem solving should be expected from every attendee. Respect the purpose for the meeting by making sure what you say is relevant to meeting and be brief.
8. Be polite and pay attention, as good listening skills are important to increase communication and understanding. Don't interrupt anyone who is speaking. Instead show respect by remembering only one person at a time talks, so take turns.
9. Make sure everyone understands that carrying on independent conversations during meeting discussion or presentations is not appropriate. Having multiple conversations is not only rude, but it can be both confusing and distracting to other meeting attendees.
10. At the end of the meeting, thank the group for their time, summarize what was accomplished, review and assign actions, and then plan any necessary follow-up.



**About the Author:** [Shirley Fine Lee](#) has been a member of Dallas ASTD since 2000. She is the author of [“R.A!R.A! A Meeting Wizard’s Approach”](#) and [“TAPP Steps in Time Management”](#)

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