

# COMMENT

**B4** TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2007

## **Business etiquette is good business sense**

I applaud your decision to cover the topic of business etiquette Feb. 13. I teach this topic to multinational corporations, in MBA programs and to individuals and know that corporate America today needs this kind of education as never before.

Here is what I am seeing:

- Technical expertise alone doesn't determine individual success.
- Technologies that make us efficient corrode interpersonal skills.
- Lack of focus on business etiquette puts the U.S. work force at a global disadvantage.

Unfortunately, in today's culture, rudeness, ignorance and entitlement abound: the college graduate whose written skills consist of text messaging; the manager who shovels food in during a meeting; the executive who monopolizes the boss at the cocktail party while the spouse stands idly — or angrily — by.

These skills are within reach of anyone who wants to learn them.

Age is not a factor. I've witnessed inconsiderate behavior by very senior managers and know how it affects morale, performance and customers. And I've been pleasantly encouraged by savvy behavior from the likes of high school students.

Etiquette is not about political correctness or your total net worth. Our bling-bling culture celebrates money at the expense of others' feelings and long-term relationships. Learning and practicing business etiquette are just good business sense.

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