

Advance Praise for
The Nurse's Etiquette Advantage

“With her background as a nurse, educator, consultant, and professional speaker, Kathleen D. Pagana provides practical advice that will take you from your first nursing position to the boardroom. This straightforward, easy-to-read guide is interesting, informative, and helpful in both business and social settings. *The Nurse's Etiquette Advantage* addresses modern realities such as smoking, technology, and body piercings and provides fresh guidelines on etiquette from a nursing perspective. You can feel reassured that you are behaving the correct way when you arm yourself with the wisdom and knowledge found in *The Nurse's Etiquette Advantage*.”

—Peg Gray-Vickrey, DNS, RN, Interim Provost,
Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Professor of Nursing
Florida Gulf Coast University

“This book takes what could be a dull subject and makes it fun! Readers will be amazed at how much they didn't know and how this book, which specifically targets nurses, provides many useful lessons that will be the secret ingredient for future career successes.”

—Karlene Kerfoot, PhD, RN, CNNA, FAAN
Vice President/Chief Clinical Officer
Aurora Health Care
Milwaukee, WI

“*The Nurse’s Etiquette Advantage* is a must-read for nursing students who want to advance their career with finesse and grace. It is a good reminder that ‘you never get a second chance to make a first impression!’”

—Diane J. Mancino, EdD, RN, CAE
Executive Director
National Student Nurses’ Association and the
Foundation of the NSNA

“*The Nurse’s Etiquette Advantage* is a must-read for all nurses who want to boost their confidence and credibility and avoid embarrassment in their personal and professional life. The advice offered is the perfect complement to clinical education and experience. It will assist any nurse in developing into a well-rounded, socially adept professional.”

—Donna Cardillo, MA, RN
Nursing Career Guru
Dear Donna columnist for *Nursing Spectrum/NurseWeek*

*E** *The Nurse's* *Etiquette* *Advantage*

How Professional Etiquette Can Advance
Your Nursing Career

By Kathleen D. Pagana, PhD, RN



Sigma Theta Tau International

Honor Society of Nursing

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Introduction

Nursing education focuses on leadership, management, and professional issues, while etiquette is the “missing link” for success in the workplace.

This book describes how to get a job, keep a job, and move ahead in a job. It will prepare you to handle awkward and challenging situations that could diminish your confidence, tarnish your reputation, and derail your career aspirations. After reading this enjoyable book, you will be able to interact more effectively in clinical, business, and social settings. You will be amazed at how often you will think, “I didn’t know how much I needed to know.”

The premise is that anyone can become an expert in etiquette. Further, the more skilled you become, the more you will be offered opportunities and positions. In these pages, you will find a “reality check” for those playing (or about to play) the toughest sport of all—survival in a business world that is often unforgiving and highly critical.

Why is etiquette important for nurses? Etiquette is about relationships. Nursing is a career characterized by professional relationships with all kinds of people in all kinds of settings. By using the guiding principles of kindness, consideration, and common sense, professional etiquette can help you initiate new relationships and enhance established relationships. It can guide you in unfamiliar situations and help you know what to expect from others. For example, this book can help you in the following situations:

- * Interviewing successfully for a new job or position
- * Introducing yourself and others with confidence
- * Demonstrating proper handshake and business-card etiquette
- * Networking effectively on the job and at conferences

- * Dressing to mirror your professional image and responsibilities
- * Sending a positive impression with thank-you notes and letters
- * Using e-mail, phone, and fax in a courteous and professional manner
- * Dining with confidence in any business or social setting
- * Increasing your comfort and self-confidence during business travel
- * Appreciating and respecting cultural difference in global interactions

There are no other etiquette books targeted and customized to nurses. This book contains key business-etiquette content with an application to professional nursing. It will help you “level the playing field” in your interactions with others.

Key Features

Each chapter challenges the reader with *Do you know ...* questions.

1

Do you:

- Know what to do when you meet a colleague whose name you have forgotten?
- Know how to introduce your spouse to your boss?
- Know what to do if your client ignores your attempt to shake hands?
- Have trouble remembering names?
- Wonder when it is appropriate to give out your business card?



A unique feature of this book is its organization in a “question and answer” format. This allows you to target what you need or want to learn or review.

2

Is there anything that can be done about sweaty hands?

Yes, spray them with an antiperspirant once a day. This usually takes about 24 hours to become effective. If that does not work, see your physician.

What is a two-handed handshake?

In this situation, the right hand shakes your right hand, but the person’s left hand is placed on your body. The most common left-handed positions are on the wrist, forearm, biceps, shoulder, or neck.

3

Tips highlight important points for you to remember.

TIP
Never approach someone and say, “Do you remember me?” Be considerate. Put out your hand and state your name.

4

Faux Pas and *Good Idea!* boxes provide stories that model embarrassing and positive actions.

X *Faux Pas*

✓ *Good Idea!*

Tables and figures help itemize and illustrate concrete information.

5

1.1

Pecking Order for Introductions

Higher Ranking

VP of nursing

10-year employee

Father

Your boss

Peer in another office

Client

Lower Ranking

New nurse

2-year employee

Daughter's boyfriend

Your spouse

Peer in your office

Colleague



6

Cultural items are marked with a globe.



Helpful frequently asked questions (FAQs) are included in each chapter.

7

Frequently Asked Questions



What if I am introducing my boss to my new staff member and I mention the staff member's name first?

Just continue with the introduction and try to remember the proper pecking order the next time. The most important thing about introductions is to make them.

8

Each chapter ends with
“Take-Away Tips.”

TAKE-AWAY TIPS

- ✓ **Make an effort to remember names when meeting people.**
- ✓ **People are judged by the quality of their handshake.**

Finally . . .

“I never knew etiquette could be so much fun,” is the most common response to people encountering professional etiquette presentations for the first time. The goal of this book is for you to learn (or recall) some career-enhancing material and to have fun at the same time.

Basically, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain by reading this book. The skills you learn can be put into practice immediately for career advancement and lifelong value.

Professional etiquette is not optional for personal or professional success—it is a necessity. You can benefit every day in clinical, business, and social settings by using *The Nurse’s Etiquette Advantage* to come across as polished, confident, and professional.

Business Etiquette

Test Your Knowledge

1. Where would you find your salad plate?

To the right of the entrée plate. To the left of the entrée plate.

2. You can demonstrate professional use of e-mail by including a greeting and a close.

True

False

3. It is more professional for a woman to wear a suit with a skirt than a suit with pants.

True

False

4. It doesn't matter how much jewelry a woman wears to a job interview.

True

False

5. Sending a thank-you note by e-mail is perfectly acceptable.

True

False

6. If you don't have a business card, it's OK to ask for someone's card and write your contact information on the back.

True

False

7. A business meal is a time to relax and "let loose."

True

False

8. Whose name do you say first when introducing your new nurse manager to your VP of nursing?

Nurse manager

VP of nursing

9. People sitting on the train next to you think you are important if you are talking on your cell phone.

True

False

10. When making a phone call, always be prepared to leave a voice-mail message.

True

False

11. What do you do if your name is mispronounced when you are introduced?

Repeat your name correctly

Ignore the error

12. It is appropriate to tell an associate that she has spinach in her teeth.

True

False

13. A man should wait for a woman in business to extend her hand for a handshake.

True

False

14. It doesn't matter how you dress for your position, because "people don't judge a book by its cover."

True

False

15. If you need to excuse yourself during a meal, where do you place your napkin?

True

False

16. When holding a drink at a cocktail party, hold it in your left hand.

17. When traveling abroad for business, you should be prepared with a working knowledge of appropriate global etiquette.

True

False

18. While checking in at a conference, you are given a name badge holder. You should insert your business card into the holder.

True

False

19. Name two topics to avoid discussing at a business cocktail party.

20. It is OK to smoke before an interview.

True

False

1

Making Your Acquaintance

Introductions

Do you:

Know what to do when you meet a colleague whose name you have forgotten?

Know how to introduce your spouse to your boss?

Know what to do if your client ignores your attempt to shake hands?

Have trouble remembering names?

Wonder when it is appropriate to give out your business card?

These are concerns that can add to the stress of any situation where you are meeting and greeting new people. Who hasn't felt awkward during some introductions? You will feel and act more confident if you understand the basic guidelines, and you can improve your interactions with others by practicing these tips for making introductions and creating a positive first impression.

“Civility costs nothing and buys everything.”

—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Introductions

Does it really matter who is introduced to whom in an introduction?

Yes, it does. There is a pecking order to introductions. The person of honor is mentioned first, and the other person is introduced to him or her. The person of honor is the higher-ranking person in the organization. For example, suppose a new graduate is being introduced to the vice president of nursing. The vice president of nursing is mentioned first, and the new nurse is presented or introduced to him or her.

What are the key steps of an introduction?

Introductions should have three steps.

1. Mention the name of the person of honor first.
2. Say the name of the person being introduced and mention something about him or her.
3. Come back to the person of honor and say something about him or her.

Here is an example of a proper introduction following the three steps above.

“Theresa, I would like to present Walt Deska. Walt is our new staff nurse with 3 years’ experience in orthopedics. Theresa Williams has been our VP of nursing for the past 5 years.”

Here is a way to facilitate conversation after an introduction, using the example above.

“Theresa, I would like to present Walt Deska. Walt is our new staff nurse with 3 years’ experience in orthopedics. He is also a marathon runner. Theresa has been our VP of nursing for the past 5 years. She is training for her first marathon.”

1.1

Pecking Order for Introductions

Higher Ranking

- VP of nursing
- 10-year employee
- Father
- Your boss
- Peer in another office
- Client

Lower Ranking

- New nurse
- 2-year employee
- Daughter’s boyfriend
- Your spouse
- Peer in your office
- Colleague

When should I introduce myself?

Always be ready to introduce yourself. None of us is a famous movie star with face and name recognition. Don’t stand next to someone, waiting to be introduced. The person you are expecting to introduce you may have forgotten your name. So, to prevent embarrassing him or her, just introduce yourself. Put out your hand and say your name. For example, “I don’t believe we’ve met. I’m Denise Miller.” Or, “Hello, I’m Denise Miller, and I am a nurse in Same Day Surgery.” The other person should return your greeting and introduce himself or herself. If he or she does not give a name, say, “And your name is _____?”

TIP

Never approach someone and say, “Do you remember me?” Be considerate. Put out your hand and state your name.

What should I do if I go blank and cannot remember someone's name when making an introduction?

This happens. Be honest about it. You can say, “I'm sorry, but I've forgotten your name.” Or, “Excuse me, but I'm blanking on your name.”

Handshaking

Are you judged by the quality of your handshake?

Yes, you are. You want to present a confident and firm handshake. Those few seconds you “shake” can weaken or empower a relationship. The handshake is part of creating a first impression and sending a parting message. Follow these three steps for a proper handshake.

1. Extend your right hand horizontally with your thumb up. (Do not cup your hand.)
2. Engage a person's hand web-to-web with a firm grip. (The web between your thumb and index finger should be touching the other person's thumb web.)
3. Shake two or three times and drop your hand.

