



## **News Release**

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Someone is always watching.**

This is the time of year when most businesses start to get nervous. Why? Because it is the start of the Christmas party season and that's scary if the business' employees don't understand how an employee's etiquette can have a negative impact on that business.

"This is the time of year when I start getting calls on Business Etiquette workshops," says Lynda Kavanagh, an Alberta Marketing Consultant.

"I'll get a frantic call from a manager or boss who says, 'Oh, my gosh, you have no idea what some of my employees did in public last year'."

Kavanagh, owner of WOW Communications & Training with offices in Lethbridge and Calgary, Alberta says that each year she hears horror stories of what employees have done at a social function when they're representing the business.

"Just when I think I've heard all the stories about bad etiquette, they tell me a new one. I actually should clarify that last statement, perhaps it's not BAD etiquette, it's DON'T KNOW ANY BETTER etiquette."

Proper etiquette in business can help people gain respect from their customers, bosses, coworkers and anyone else who happens to be watching, and people do watch. You could be at a wedding, having a great time, dancing on a table, Kavanagh says, only to be surprised two weeks later when someone who saw you at the wedding walks in the door as a potential new customer for the business you work for. She adds that impression you made may cost the business a customer.

Etiquette is a hot topic in business, says Kavanagh. There is a trend for larger companies to invite potential employees to social events or out for dinner just to see how they behave. These businesses know the importance of impressions on the bottom line. Business Etiquette runs from which fork to use, to how to meet people, to how to return email and phone calls to wondering if a man should always open a door for a woman.

Since 'tis the season, Kavanagh offers the following top 10 most common social etiquette faux pas:

1. The fork starts in the left with the tines down and your index finger down.
2. When you are finished eating, you can indicate this to the waiter by putting your knife and fork in the 5:00 o'clock position on the plate.
3. Your bread plate is to your left and always rip your bread – don't cut it.
4. Your coffee cup is to the right, and, no matter how cold you are, you grip it by the handle, not with both hands around the cup.
5. Eat soup by starting in the middle and spooning away from you. Yes, it takes longer and that is the point. Oh, by the way... no slurping.
6. Always pass the salt and pepper at the same time.
7. Remember this is a business function, even if it has a social component to it. Watch the booze – two drinks should be your limit.
8. At a round table, always pass to the right.
9. If you bring a purse, it should be on the floor under your seat and napkin on our lap. If you leave the table but are still eating, place your napkin on the seat of your chair or to the side of your plate.
10. Do not... ever ... point with your knife or fork when speaking, and always chew with your mouth closed. Oh, by the way, no toothpicks please!

Since people are watching you, Kavanagh suggests watching someone whom you are impressed with. She says there's a good chance that person's etiquette is impressive.

- 30 -

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