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Ms. Manners

Etiquette expert

Joy Weaver, president of Protocol Enterprises, says in today's tech-crazy world, workplace courtesy is being redefined.

TWO MINUTES WITH
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TWO MINUTES WITH Joy Weaver Protocol Enterprises

Weaver is president of Dallas-based Protocol Enterprises, which teaches workplace and business etiquette. Whether it's travel, home office, or even cubicle etiquette, today's employees fare better when they can navigate the nuances of business situations, says Weaver, the author of "Just ask Joy ... How to be Socially Savvy in all Situations." She was interviewed by Staff Writer Cynthia D. Webb.

Q: Is there a difference between what a larger company expects of its employees and what a smaller company expects in terms of good manners?

A: All companies basically have the same expectations: They want employees with experience, education and also, manners. People still buy from people they like, and people who are more socially savvy are going to be better salespeople.

Q: Why does a company need your service?

A: Companies understand there are new ways to conduct business, and they come to me to protect the integrity of their company in every possible way. Technology in our society runs rampant. We've all experienced rudeness with PDA's, text messages and e-mail. With the world changing, the lines of etiquette are being re-established.

Q: What's one of the worst etiquette gaffes you've witnessed?

A: A construction worker, attending a class at the behest of his company, walked in with a toothpick in the corner of his mouth and said, "I don't need this eti-quit class." A year later, a woman called who wanted to take classes after her son-in-law had coached the family during formal dinners on a cruise. It was the construction guy's mother-in-law.

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