

The Mentor Minute

Canada's leading consultants share their favourite tips and techniques.

Linda Allan is a seasoned business consultant, trainer, speaker and coach. Her wealth of corporate experience, deep expertise, and credentials has set her apart in the field of etiquette and image.

Linda Allan helps organizations set new standards in behaviour and dress so they can refine their approach to business and win in the marketplace.

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Make a Great First (and Lasting) Impression

with Linda Allan, Consultant, Coach & Speaker

Our conduct and dress are constantly being observed by others. People quickly form opinions about us and make judgments about our character and capabilities that can greatly affect our success in business. And their first impression of us could be their lasting impression of us.

If we always had a lot of time to make a great first impression, most of us would score well. But life is loaded with instances that demand what I call "one minute magic" – when, in a minute or less, you must come across as smart, sensible and sophisticated. What can you do to guarantee your success every time?

Know these Business Etiquette Basics

Don't take etiquette basics for granted... you don't know what you don't know and that could cost you dearly. Learn the protocols then practice and perfect them.

Here are a few elements of etiquette you should execute perfectly:

- A poised entrance – don't confuse confident with cocky.
- Appropriate eye contact – no less than 40%, no more than 60%.
- A perfect handshake – always stand; never extend across a table.
- Correct introductions – the name of the most important person is spoken first.
- Flawless exchange of business cards – hold in one hand with print facing recipient.
- Respectful body language – be acutely aware of yourself and others

How do your behaviours measure up as a leader?

Actions speak louder than words. Our demeanour, especially when we think no one is watching, speaks volumes about us.

1. 40% of business executives have a poor handshake.
2. In North America, we are far too informal when exchanging business cards.
3. Most introductions are made incorrectly, without regard to seniority.
4. May leaders who say their behaviours are above reproach, are often thought of otherwise.
5. Most leaders talk too much and listen too little.
6. Impeccable dress is never a substitute for business smarts.

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