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MANNERS MAKETH MAN - THE IMPORTANCE OF ETIQUETTE

The proverb 'manners maketh man' derives from a shared understanding that courtesy and good manners are essential to the preservation of human interaction and relationships.

Good manners can be applied to several aspects of human life, including how we speak, the words we use, the tone of our voice, our gestures and our actions.

Good manners help to define you as a person, while etiquette is what makes you socially acceptable. Both help you to gain respect and create a good and lasting impression. When used in a professional capacity, good etiquette means that you act professionally and exercise proper manners when

engaging with clients and colleagues.

What is etiquette?

The Oxford dictionary defines the word etiquette as "the customary code of polite behaviour in society or among members of a particular profession or group".

Etiquette is the foundation of appropriate behaviour that is universally accepted as being gracious and polite in social, professional and family situations. Knowing and exhibiting proper etiquette ►



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is an essential component to every relationship and can mean the difference between success and failure in many facets of life. As a service industry, the display of good manners and etiquette are especially relevant to the private security industry.

Why is it important?

The way you behave and conduct yourself is a reflection of your personality. Your eye-contact, your smile, your handshake and the way you interact with others are usually the first things someone will notice about you. Your manners define your character and influence your attitude as well as the way you treat other people, be it your superiors, peers or subordinates.

These behavioural traits are often used by others as a judge of our character and are used to assess whether they feel comfortable in our presence. More importantly, they're usually a good indication of an individual's honesty and integrity; essential qualities of a good close protection officer.

Typically, the type of client who hires a close protection officer is an individual of considerable value. These individuals do not trust easily and are extremely cautious of who they allow into their lives. More often than not, the selection of a close protection operative is based on the operative's personality and whether the client actually likes them as opposed to what's written on their CV. In short, you could have the most kick-ass, impressive CV but if the client doesn't like you, you'll be gone quicker than you can blink.

Unfortunately, the importance of etiquette or the 'soft skills' is sometimes overlooked, underestimated or misunderstood by many close protection officers. In a competitive industry that is over-burdened with egotistical alpha male type characters, many close protection officers are let down by their highly-inflated egos. In some cases, over familiarity with the client can begin to creep in and professional boundaries may be crossed. Being consistently mindful that they are the boss

and you are the employee is one way of exercising good etiquette.

This is an environment where some clients are particularly demanding, they're used to getting exactly what they want and are not used to hearing the word 'no'. This can be somewhat unnerving for the close protection officer who may have to advise against a client's planned course of action. The client may get angry and behave rudely but it's an operative's manners and etiquette that will stop them from over-reacting and keeping a calm head.

Keeping a calm head in an uncomfortable situation is a skill that few can master. However, having the right manners and etiquette will govern the way you act and react to situations, instilling a sense of calm amongst those around you.

Furthermore, the environment amongst staff within some private households can be somewhat toxic. Household staff can be protective of their own interests and compete to remain in favour with the principle. Gripping and

bitching is not uncommon so it's important to always exhibit decorum and not get involved with the internal politics.

Maintaining calm and composed stature even in bad situations helps to earn respect. People will think more highly of you and this will make your relationships easier. Remember, communication is vital in every relationship and it's not what you say that matters, it's the way that you say it.

Throughout your professional life, it's important that you always make a good impression. Other peoples' impressions of you, especially in the workplace should be positive so that they want to continue to work with you. Good manners and etiquette benefits everyone, not only do they make life easier, they act as a magnet that draws people towards you. The relationships you build are critical, a client or colleague would want to spend time with someone who is respectful, pleasant and courteous and establishing good rapport is essential if you want to progress your professional future.

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