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Moving Day Etiquette

By dan the roommate man

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Moving day stinks. There's no two ways about it. You've spent hours packing up and preparing for the arrival of your movers. Then you hold your breath as they begin the arduous process of transporting all of your worldly possessions from one place to another. You hope your furniture survives the journey and that your new home survives the move-in process unscathed. Few of us are able to claim that our homes or furniture didn't suffer a single scratch, that a mirror didn't break or that at least one item wasn't mysteriously lost in transport.

Amidst all of the stress, we often overlook a few details of varying importance. You can't clone yourself or your family on moving day, but you can create a checklist of reminders. In fact, even if you're not a habitual list-maker, it's high time you started. Because a list is probably the only way you're going to get through your move without overlooking something you shouldn't. What could possibly require your attention, aside from guiding Manny the Mover down the hallway as he creeps backward with your priceless and extremely breakable possessions?

Take, for instance, the last impression you make upon your neighbors as you move out of your house. Blocking your neighbors' access to their own street and/or driveways, causing them to be tardy for work, is likely to cause some resentment – particularly if the movers aren't outside when the neighbors discover that they can't back out of their driveways and into the street.

By the same token, watch that your movers don't block your neighbors' driveways and the street with your furniture. If the move-out process is going to consume the better part of an afternoon – and it often does – keep an eye on the crew as they make their way into and out of your home. Some movers have been known to take a shortcut through the neighbors' front yards, or worse, their flower beds, which could very well cause World War III.

If you have a choice of what time of day to move, opt for between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. on a weekday, if possible. Your neighbors have already arrived at work by this time (unless they work at home), giving you the ability to move without cramping anyone's style. Avoid having the movers arrive too early or too late in the day, or on a weekend. Advise music-loving movers to cut the loud music blaring from

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their moving van radios; noise pollution won't win them – or you – any friends.

As you conclude the move-out process, remember to pick up any debris that has fallen outside your home and along the sidewalks, driveway and street. This rule is particularly critical in your new neighborhood. You're probably going to have a lot of trash during all stages of the move, but especially after you unpack your boxes. Don't pile it outside and wait for the next trash pick-up. Haul it to the dump yourself.

Don't neglect the inside of your old house. Vacated homes always look awful; that's inevitable. From furniture leg indentations to dust to scuffs and various debris, it won't be a pretty sight after the movers have finished their job. Now it's your job to vacuum, dust and leave your old home in presentable condition. You may even want to hire a local maid service to clean the house before its new owners

arrive. Sure, it's money out of your pocket, but it's a generous and extremely considerate act. With any luck, the previous owners of your new home have shown you the same regard.

Before moving day arrives, you should have asked yourself for whom you made duplicate copies of your house key. With any luck, the new owners will change the locks and have new keys made for safety reasons. But if they don't, and your teenage son gave his buddy a spare key that was never returned, the new owners could have a problem – particularly if the house is left vacant for any period before the new owners take possession.

A word to all pet owners: During your move, you'll need to keep Fido and Fluffy confined to a separate room away from the commotion. Better yet, find a trusted friend or family member with whom your beloved pet can bunk until you're ready to have him join you in your new residence. Even if your pets are typically well-behaved, they could easily escape during the move; or they could be easily frightened by the unusual level of activity and presence of strangers. Dogs who are usually friendly could turn on your movers.

And speaking of your movers, you'd be wise to have some basic refreshments ready for your trusty crew. We're not talking lobster and champagne (although if you went this route, you wouldn't be met with protest) – soda and ice water are very much appreciated, especially during this time of year, when movers have to withstand blistering summertime temperatures.

If you're moving during the winter months, keep a thermos of hot coffee and some paper cups on hand. I happen to know a very nice customer who picked up hamburgers for her moving crew, but that's going above and beyond. If your movers showed up on time and have done a terrific job, however, there's nothing wrong with showing a little gratitude beyond your standard tip, which averages about \$25 per crew member.

If you were lucky enough to convince your friends or family members to help you move without the aid of bribery, you should express your gratitude on moving day by treating them to a nice dinner, or at the very least, digging into your own pocket to spring for a pizza. Once again, a little benevolence goes a long way, and should you assist them in their own moves someday, you'll hope they'll do the same.

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Since 1989 dan the roommate man has helped 1000's of people find roommates. Need help? Contact him at 800-487-8050 or www.roommateexpress.com

Business Etiquette

By Neil Payne

Business etiquette is in essence about building relationships with people. In the business world, it is people that influence your success or failure. Etiquette, and in particular business etiquette, is simply a means of maximising your business potential.

If you feel comfortable around someone and vice versa, better communication and mutual trust will develop. This comfort zone is realised through presenting yourself effectively. Business etiquette helps you achieve this.

Business etiquette revolves around two things. Firstly, thoughtful consideration of the interests and feelings of others and secondly, minimising misunderstandings. Both are dependent upon self conduct. Business etiquette polishes this conduct.

Business etiquette varies from region to region and country to country. For the international business person, focusing too deeply on international business etiquette would leave no time for business. However, there are some key pillars upon which good business etiquette is built.

Behaviour

Your manners and attitude will speak volumes about you. They will point to your inner character. If you come across selfish, undisciplined or uncouth your relationship is unlikely to prosper. Appropriate business etiquette promotes positive traits.

Honesty

A reputation for delivering what you say will deliver goes a long way in the business world. Remember, a reputation for integrity is slowly gained but quickly lost. Understanding a particular country's business etiquette provides a framework in which you can work without fear of crossing boundaries in terms of agreements, promises and contracts.

Character

Your character refers to what you as an individual bring to the business table. Proper business etiquette allows you to exhibit your positive qualities. For example, knowing when to be passionate and not emotional or self-confident without being arrogant. Just through learning another's business etiquette you demonstrate an open-mindedness which will earn respect.

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Sensitivity

Sensitivity and consideration underlie all good business etiquette. Being prepared for foreign ways and methods and responding thoughtfully is achieved through experience and business etiquette know-how. By avoiding misunderstandings and misinterpretations through business etiquette you lay

foundations for a strong business relationship.

Diplomacy

Avoiding thoughtless words and actions protects you from negative consequences. Impulse often leads a business person astray. Business etiquette encourages the careful thought of the interests of others and choosing acceptable forms of expression.

Appearance

Dressing appropriately, standing and sitting in the right place at the right time, good posture and looking physically presentable are all elements in making a good impression. Business etiquette teaches you how to suitably present yourself and what to avoid.

Analysing, understanding and implementing the above will help you recognise what business etiquette is and how it should be employed within the business world.

For the international business person business, etiquette acts as a key. It locks the doors of poor communication and misunderstandings and opens doors to successful business relationships.

Neil Payne is Director of

Business Etiquette

Business Meeting Etiquette

Business Card Etiquette

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