



10 Online Etiquette Tips

There are some basic rules for what and how to behave online.

A classic guideline is to test whatever you are about to post by asking how you would feel if you saw this as a headline in the New York Times.

Is what you post the best representation of you? This takes a bit of self-awareness and reflection which we don't always take the time to do.

Follow these 10 general guidelines on what to post, how to post and what to say to ensure you're being a good digital citizen.

There are no true rules about what to post or how to post online, however, there is online etiquette you should follow. From what you say, to how it's presented, everything you share online creates an impression of who you are.
Be Professional at All Times

Professionalism isn't always clearly defined. Furthermore, there are varying degrees of professionalism. What you should understand is that your conduct, behavior and attitude all impact how someone perceives your level of professionalism. Always take the high road and put your best foot forward. Everything you share, from your individual posts to the overall message of all your posts and comments, shows your integrity, ethics, values, work habits, communication style, level of emotional intelligence, resiliency and your ability to manage relationships. All of these are basic characteristics of professionalism.

Be Civil. Do Not Slander, Criticize or Insult Others Online

There's not enough kindness in the workplace or in the world. But you can do your part to be civil. Having an intellectual disagreement, debate, or differing opinion isn't necessarily bad. In fact, it can be a way to open your mind. However, slandering someone, criticizing them publicly or insulting someone is never appropriate. Even dismissive comments or thoughtless comments such as "didn't you read the article" do not contribute to a healthy dialog and are not civil.

Check Grammar, Punctuation, And Spelling

Before posting anything always check for errors. Using a tool like Grammarly can help. It is easy to let a careless typo slip by and if this happens regularly, it sends an unintended message that you are sloppy, lacking intelligence or generally unprofessional to those reading your posts.

Be Generous, Gracious and Polite

Besides using please and thank you, there are many ways to be polite. But those words alone are not enough. If you truly want to show your gratitude, do something meaningful for the person. That could mean sharing a testimonial of their business, commenting on a recent achievement or giving them a shoutout. Being generous can also happen when you offer help. If you know the answer to someone's question, share your knowledge or ask them to reach out for a conversation.

Don't Hijack Someone's Post

If you are leaving a comment, make sure it is relevant. Don't shift the topic to yourself or something important to you. Likewise, don't put a negative spin or opposing view without fully understanding the original intent of the post.



Don't Use ALL CAPS

Using all caps is the equivalent of shouting. Leaving your caps lock on is not an excuse. If you would like to emphasize a word, then the selective use of all caps to prove a point might be all right. However, a better way to call attention to the text might be to use an Asterix (*) before and after the word/s to give it importance.

Add Value by Sharing Your Thoughts on The Topic/Issue

When you share or comment on an article or post, explain why it is important to you. Did it make you think in new ways, did it explore a new angle to an issue, is it enlightening? If your comment says “thanks” or you reshare someone’s article without explaining why, you haven’t added value.

Keep It Relevant to Your Areas of Expertise

It’s easy to get distracted or lured into topics that aren’t directly related to your areas of expertise. An occasional comment or share of an unrelated topic is fine, however, whatever you share becomes part of the message you convey to others about what your interests are. Too many off topic posts or comments can distract your followers or water-down your branding message.

Don't Self-Promote, Unless You Have Earned the Right to Do So.

Too often people promote themselves without doing anything for others. Posts that say “hire me” or “read my thoughts on this” are being selfish. You can earn the right to post about yourself if you have shared other people’s successes, shared information that is helpful or educational or provided help or answers to others. When you’ve earned the right to self-promote, try either of these two methods. First, use recommendations or testimonials others have written about you to show your best assets. Second, sometimes people use the “humble-brag” to say, “I’m thrilled to have been interviewed by...where I share my thoughts on...” Be aware of your mix of online content and posts shared so they don’t shout “me, me, me.”

Final Reminders

Remember, whenever you post anything online, your name, picture and headline accompany you.

If you don’t think you can abide by all these guidelines from your phone or mobile device, then use the desktop version of LinkedIn or social media.