

The Protocol School of Washington®

INFORMATION FOR THE CITIZEN DIPLOMAT

True Civility is in the Details

The civilian diplomat's first impression must always be a best impression. But, there are many other opportunities for the civilian diplomat to live up to the tradition of – well – civility. The following *Questions and Answers* will help you fine-tune your manners and improve your relationships with new friends from around the world.

Question: What should I do when I meet someone who doesn't remember me?

Answer: Never say something insensitive such as, "You don't remember who I am do you?" Instead, rescue your new friend. Extend your hand, smile and say your name. You might get a good conversation started by reminding the person of when and where you met for the first time or by recalling your most recent meeting.

Question: What if I remember a person's face, but can't recall his name?

Answer: Don't say, "I can't remember your name." It is permissible to say something such as, "Please tell me your name again." If you simply extend your hand and say your name, there is an excellent chance that your new friend will state his or her name in response.

Question: How can I improve my ability to remember people's names?

Answer: Stop telling yourself that you can't remember names. Start telling yourself, "I'm good at remembering names." Listen carefully when you are introduced. Focus on your new friend with respect and use his or her name often in conversation.

Question: How can I make a good impression on someone from another culture when we meet?

Answer: You should make good eye contact and extend your hand for a firm handshake. Be confident, but never overwhelming. Don't come across as a jolly back-slapping American. Tone down the U. S. glad-hand approach and greet your new friend with respect. Focus and smile.

Question: When I am introduced to somebody from another country, should I use his or her first name?

Answer: Err on the side of formality. Don't assume you can call a European or an Arab by their first name unless you are invited to do so. Don't ask somebody from another culture whom you've just met to call you by your first name. European executives may work together for years and only use last names.

Question: Is there ever a time when I should use an honorific when introducing myself, such as "Hello, I am Ms. Eyring?"

Answer: Never apply an honorific to yourself when meeting somebody. Simply say your first and last name and smile.



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Exchanging Business Cards

Think of your business card as a tiny billboard that advertises you to the world. Does it reflect the image you wish to convey? Is the print easy-to-read? Does it feel like something that *deserves* to be carefully kept for future use? If you can answer a resounding “YES!” to these questions, it is time to move on to the art and science of giving and receiving business cards.

Presenting Your Business Card

Keep your cards in a card case so they are pristine. When it is time to provide your contact details to a new friend, present the card with your right hand or with both hands. Never present a card with only your left hand. If you are traveling to another culture and have been savvy enough to have your card printed in the language of that culture, present the card host-language side up. The card exchange has traditionally been a formal ceremony in Japan, so present your card with two-hands and take further cues from your Japanese counterparts and hosts.

Receiving Another Person's Card

Receive a business card with respect and look at it carefully. In Asian countries, take the card you are offered with both hands and read it thoroughly. Don't stuff the card into your purse or pocket. Place it in an appropriate and respectful place. Fight off any impulse to write on a card you have just received.

If you are in a meeting and seated at a table, arrange newly-received business cards in front of you so that each card corresponds to the position of the person from whom you received the card. Of course, if the occasion is a social one, disregard this suggestion.



Practice Makes Perfect!

Question: I am concerned about my introduction skills and feel very awkward about greeting strangers. How can I become more comfortable with introductions?

Answer: Stand in front of a mirror and introduce two imaginary people, looking first at one as you say her name and then at the other as you say his name. You may also record yourself and listen for intonations, word usage, pace and flaws you wish to eliminate. Repeat this procedure until you are more comfortable. Practice does eventually make perfect!



The Protocol School of Washington®

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