

Get paid to give etiquette advice!

FabJob Guide to
**Become an
Etiquette
Consultant**



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1. Introduction

Congratulations! You have just taken the first step on the path to a dream career as an Etiquette Consultant. Your love for good manners and social graces can soon become the basis of an exciting and lucrative new career.

You will discover how to get started and succeed in this fabulous career in this guide, the *FabJob Guide to Become an Etiquette Consultant*. In this chapter, you will read about the importance of etiquette in people's lives, see why there is increasing demand for professional etiquette consultants, learn about the many benefits of this career, and discover the steps to take to get started.

1.1 Welcome to Etiquette Consulting

If you ask five people what etiquette means, you will likely get five different answers ranging from knowing which fork to use, to when to send a thank-you note. Many people consider etiquette to be something you use when you're at a fancy dinner or meeting dignitaries, but

etiquette is more than just knowing how to navigate a place setting or how to introduce your business partner.

According to Princeton University's Wordnet, etiquette can be defined as: "rules governing socially acceptable behavior." The online encyclopedia Wikipedia describes the norms and effects of etiquette as follows:

"Etiquette fundamentally prescribes and restricts the ways in which people interact with each other, and show their respect for other people by conforming to the norms of society. Modern Western etiquette instructs us to: greet friends and acquaintances with warmth and respect, refrain from insults and prying curiosity, offer hospitality equally and generously to our guests, wear clothing suited to the occasion, contribute to conversations without dominating them, offer a chair or a helping arm to those who need assistance, eat neatly and quietly, avoid disturbing others with loud music or unnecessary noise, follow the established rules of a club or legislature upon becoming a member, arrive promptly when expected, comfort the bereaved, and respond to invitations promptly."

"Etiquette is all about behavior," says Jodi R.R. Smith, president of Mannersmith Etiquette Consulting in Salem, Massachusetts, and a professional etiquette consultant with more than 22 years of experience. "It's about knowing the right behaviors so you are comfortable in all situations and you make other people comfortable."

1.1.1 The Importance of Etiquette

If you have ever sat across the table from someone with bad table manners, overheard someone speaking loudly on their cell phone, or had your questions to a customer service representative answered with "yeah," "I dunno," or "whatever," then you understand why etiquette matters.

As the online encyclopedia Wikipedia notes, "Violations of etiquette, if severe, can cause public disgrace, and in private hurt individual feelings, create misunderstandings or real grief and pain, and can even escalate into murderous rage."

People make quick judgments based on the way someone talks or behaves, and these impressions can be tough or even impossible to change later. However, people aren't always aware of the impressions

they are making, or they are not sure how to act in certain situations. That's when your services as an etiquette consultant can make a difference. With your help, the sloppy eater who offended those around him can be transformed into the charming gentleman who everyone wants to invite to dinner.

An understanding of etiquette can help people make the right impression the first time. As an etiquette consultant you will offer guidance to people who need to conduct themselves with poise. You will teach people manners and give them with the skills they need to be confident in themselves and their conduct.

You'll have the chance to work with a wide variety of people and impact their careers and their lives. You may teach business professionals everything from how to handle a soup spoon to how to run an international sales meeting. You'll share your love of good manners with children and their parents in seminars and workshops. You can teach international protocol to up-and-coming politicians and other people of power, so they can interact successfully in a multicultural setting.

As an etiquette consultant you will provide people with essential skills they need to succeed in business and in life. You will have the chance to work with a wide variety of people. You will help them win admirers, get contracts, and earn promotions, because they will be one of those people who always knows the right thing to say or do... courtesy of you!

1.1.2 The Etiquette Industry

Etiquette is sometimes believed to have arisen from ceremonies developed at the court of King Louis XIV of France in the 17th century. However, etiquette has been important in all civilized societies, from the time of ancient Egypt, through the days of ancient Greece and Rome. In ancient China, Confucius is reported to have included rules for speaking and eating with his philosophical teachings.

Today etiquette consulting is in demand from the corporate arena to the school classroom. As a professional etiquette consultant you will be joining a booming industry. A 2002 New York Times article reported that etiquette training programs are increasing in popularity and cited several reasons, including:

- The global economy's demands on executives to be sensitive to foreign cultures;
- The decline in human interaction in the high-tech workplace; and
- The social ineptitude of younger managers who grew up in households where proper manners were not encouraged.

As the economy tightens, businesses are seeking ways to be more competitive in the market, and many find training their employees in the basics of etiquette can pay off in the long run. When a business takes the time to train employees on the intricacies of foreign protocol, foreign clients notice and respond. When employees know how to handle themselves in any situation, clients notice and feel that their business will be handled with the same correctness.

Since The New York Times article was written, the etiquette industry has continued to grow. Jacqueline Whitmore, founder and director of The Protocol School of Palm Beach, reported in April 2005 that her business had actually tripled since September, 2001 — a period of about three-and-a-half years.

Millie Chastain, a certified etiquette consultant in Alabama, began her career after retiring from the Georgia school system. She opened the Protocol School of Alabama in Talladega, Alabama, and after only two years in business, the school was thriving. "I never realized there was such a huge need for this business," said Chastain.

Dorothea Johnson, founder and director of the Protocol School of Washington, has seen a huge increase in the demand for her services. There is a long waiting list to attend a training course at the Protocol School of Washington. Many of these potential trainees are employed by companies that are looking to add etiquette training to the list of services they offer to employees.

While some companies hire etiquette consultants on contract, other companies hire someone to handle the etiquette training for the company full time. As an etiquette consultant you can be self-employed or work in a variety of industries. For example, you could work for a recruiting firm, training job candidates about business etiquette and help-

ing them prepare for executive-level interviews. Or you could work with the hospitality industry, training staff on international protocol, etiquette basics, and communication skills.

In addition to working with businesses, you might be hired by parents to teach etiquette skills to children, work with colleges and universities to groom soon-to-be graduates, or oversee protocol for international events. You could even decide to use your skills in a governmental setting such as working with an embassy.

1.1.3 Etiquette Categories

Etiquette consultants provide services in a variety of areas which can be divided into different categories as described below.

TIP: Etiquette categories often overlap and you can combine categories to suit your clients' specific needs. For example, you may have a client who needs to know business dining etiquette or business communication etiquette.

Business Etiquette

Business etiquette, also known as corporate etiquette, covers how people behave in business settings. As an etiquette consultant you might offer specific training in one area of business such as telephone etiquette, or you might cover a variety of situations including: business meetings, introductions, business cards, handshakes, email, corporate gift giving, business dining, and doing business overseas.

Children's Etiquette

Also known as etiquette for young people, this category involves teaching etiquette to children ranging from pre-schoolers to high school seniors. Etiquette consultants will normally hold classes for specific age groups, such as age 3-5, 6-12, and 13-16.

Topics might include addressing adults, introducing friends, table manners, thank-you notes, talking on the telephone, and other aspects of social etiquette for children.

Communication Etiquette

Communication etiquette covers many of the areas listed above under business etiquette. However, it may encompass communication in social settings as well as in business. If you choose to specialize in this area, you may teach people about conversation skills, telephone etiquette, email etiquette, thank-you notes, making introductions, and other aspects of interpersonal communication.

Dining Etiquette

Which fork goes with the salad and why do I have so many spoons? Which glass is for water and which one is for wine? These are just a few of the questions that you'll hear from clients regarding dining etiquette. This type of training is often done "hands-on" in a dining environment, so clients can learn by doing. Private dining etiquette consultations are highly requested, according to many etiquette consultants.

International Protocol

International protocol, also known as international etiquette, covers how to interact with people from foreign countries. According to Wordnet, protocol means "forms of ceremony and etiquette observed by diplomats and heads of state." However, protocol is used by all kinds of people doing business overseas or hosting a guest from another country. If you decide to teach international protocol, you may cover status and forms of address, proper attire, making introductions, effective gift giving, dining customs, and other aspects of doing business or interacting with people from other cultures.

Social Etiquette

Social etiquette involves etiquette in social situations. Many etiquette consultants who offer social etiquette focus on social gatherings, such as dinners and parties. Topics may include being a good host, being a polite guest, making toasts, and invitations. It is often combined with dining etiquette.

Wedding Etiquette

While the rules of social etiquette apply to weddings as well as other social occasions, etiquette consultants are often asked for advice about issues specifically related to weddings. Examples include: who pays for what, who to invite, who sits where, whether it's okay to ask for cash gifts, who hosts the shower, etc.

1.1.4 Benefits of an Etiquette Consulting Career

There are many reasons why etiquette consulting is an excellent career choice. The benefits of a career as an etiquette consultant include:

Financial Success

As you will read later in this book, etiquette consultants can earn high hourly and daily fees for their services. As an etiquette consultant employed full-time by an organization, you can earn a salary comparable to other professionals. If you start your own etiquette consulting business you could earn \$100,000 or more per year. Business etiquette expert Phyllis Davis told us she charges \$500 per hour for one-on-one consultation, and \$10,000 per day for corporate training and workshops.

Rewarding Work

Of course being an etiquette consultant isn't just about the money, it's about sharing your love of good manners and social graces with adults and children, and it's about offering your services to help people succeed in business and in life. You'll be working with all types of people, at all stages of life. You might be coaching a shy teenager one day, and training a class of executives the next. You'll be able to go to bed at night feeling like you made a difference in people's lives that day. And if you keep in touch with your clients, you can follow their successes as they move through life, knowing you had a hand in making them who they are.

Opportunity to Learn

If you love to learn, etiquette consulting is an ideal career. Most etiquette consultants have a library full of reference books and enjoy

giving advice about a wide range of topics. While much of the advice remains constant, this field is constantly evolving.

A few decades ago, there was no such thing as “email etiquette” or “cell phone etiquette.” As an etiquette consultant, you can keep on top of new developments and be the expert people turn to when they aren’t sure what to do.

Freedom

If you start up your own etiquette consulting business as many of the experts quoted in this guide have, you will have the more obvious benefits of being self-employed: tax write-offs, setting your own hours, and spending less time commuting and more time with your family.

You Can Start Right Now

Unlike other occupations that can cost thousands of dollars and require years of education, you can become an etiquette consultant no matter what your current situation is. No degree is required to become an etiquette consultant, and you can start your own etiquette consulting business at home with few upfront expenses. If you have access to transportation, a computer, and a phone – you have what you need to get started.

1.2 Inside This Guide

The *FabJob Guide to Become an Etiquette Consultant* will take you step-by-step through getting started and succeeding as an etiquette consultant. These steps, and the chapters they appear in, are as follows:

Chapter 2 (“**Preparing for Your Career**”) describes the skills clients and employers are looking for in etiquette consultants. In this chapter you will discover how to learn etiquette consulting through educational programs, mentoring, volunteering, and self-study. This chapter lists a variety of programs you can take to become certified as a professional etiquette consultant. You will also learn about jobs that can prepare you for a career in etiquette consulting, and discover how to create your own full-time job as an etiquette consultant.

Chapter 3 (“**How to Do Etiquette Consulting**”) explains different types of consulting, including one-on-one coaching and presenting etiquette training for groups. You will learn how to offer these services, including how to meet with clients and evaluate their etiquette needs, how to develop a plan of action, and how to present training programs. This chapter includes many helpful samples you can use in your own etiquette consulting business, including client questionnaires, and an overview of key areas of etiquette that you can advise clients about.

Chapter 4 (“**Starting Your Own Business**”) gives practical information on what you need to do to start an etiquette consulting business, including how to set up your office, choose a business name, and set your fees. The chapter also covers small business basics and includes helpful forms such as a sample contract and sample invoice you can adapt for your own business.

Chapter 5 (“**Getting Clients**”) will teach you how to find clients for your business. This chapter explains how to market your business with a variety of techniques including advertising and publicity. You will also learn how to approach corporate clients and put together a proposal that wins you their business.

Chapter 6 (“**Success Stories**”) offers stories from people who have been where you are, have achieved success in their careers as etiquette consultants, and who offer personal advice and guidance. The guide concludes with a list of helpful Resources for learning more about etiquette.

Inside the *FabJob Guide to Become an Etiquette Consultant* you will find a wealth of information to help you on your way to becoming a professional etiquette consultant. In addition to the insight and expertise of the authors, this guide incorporates advice from some of the most respected and well-known etiquette consultants in North America. They have been where you are, and are extending a professional hand to help you become an etiquette consultant.

When you are finished with this guide you will know what steps to take next and where to go from there. By applying what you learn here, it’s just a matter of time before you’ll be where you want to be — in a rewarding career as an Etiquette Consultant.