

***A Note from Professor Soroko***  
***Manners in the Workplace***

It's hard to project a confident corporate persona when one is unsure about how one is suppose to behave in a contemporary, business environment. Does a man help a woman with her chair? Who gets introduced to whom?

A basic tenet of business etiquette is that the corporate world is structured according to rank and power. Therefore, your safest course of action is to defer to others, especially in situations where you are uncertain about what to do.

What this means is:

- You let a senior officer enter a room ahead of you
- You don't begin eating until your host or guest of honor has begun
- You introduce your guests to your boss
- You hold doors open for others
- You ask, when you phone others, if it is a good time for them to talk
- You take the less important or most uncomfortable seat in the room, restaurant, plane or car
- You walk on the left (curb-side) of guests or colleagues
- You stand up to greet or say "goodbye" to the visitor who enters your office
- You wait until senior officers are seated, and ask where you should sit, before you sit down yourself

In social situations, it is appropriate for a man to help the woman on his right to be seated. However, the American business environment is gender neutral. Thus it would be inappropriate for a man to help a woman unless she requests assistance. In social situations, it is appropriate for a man to wait for a woman to initiate a handshake—but not so in the business environment!

Everyone likes to feel important—so deferring to others has an added benefit. People will like you more--and be willing to lend a hand when you are in need.