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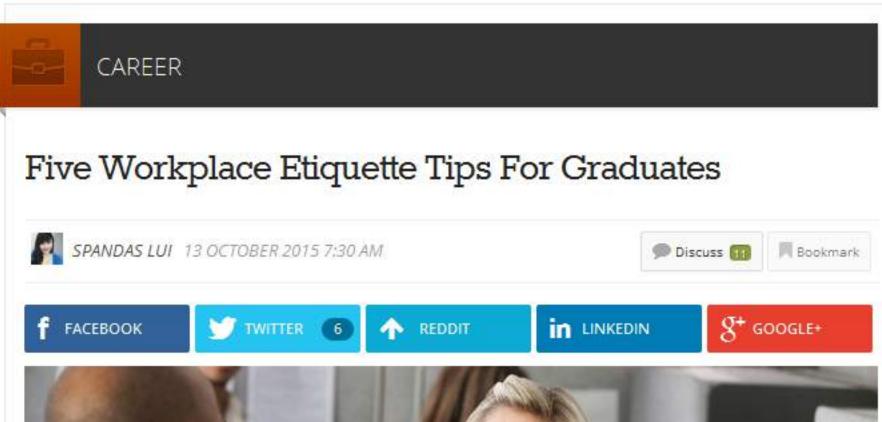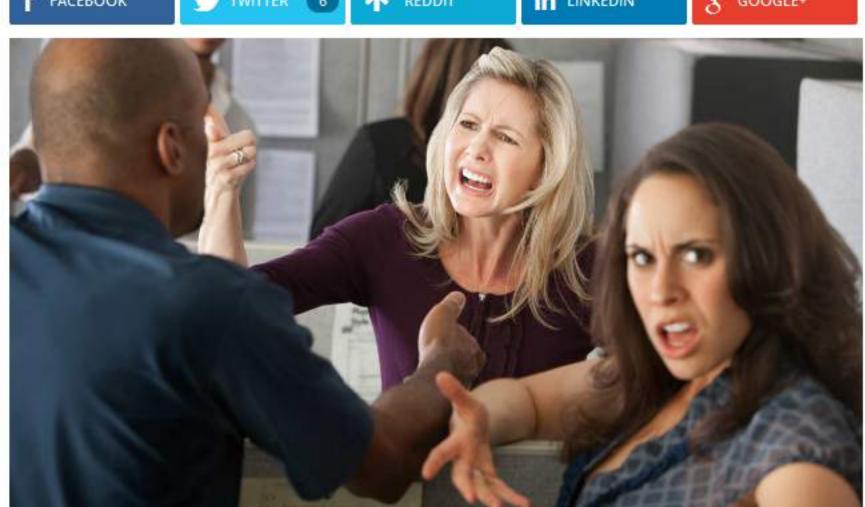
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Five Workplace Etiquette Tips For Graduates

SPANDAS LUI *13 OCTOBER 2015 7:30 AM*

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They teach you a lot of things at university, but your lecturers and tutors probably never covered the topic of how to behave when you actually land a job after graduating. Just because your qualifications look good on paper doesn't mean that you'd cut it in your dream job. Because how you interact with your co-workers and clients are crucial to a successful career in just about any industry. We have some etiquette advice for newly-minted graduates.

Fighting co-workers image on Shutterstock

Even if you're self-employed, chances are you'll have to communicate with people as part of your work. It could be your clients, business partners or suppliers. That is why having good people skills is extremely beneficial for career progression. If you do work with others in a team environment, these skills become even more valuable.

Unfortunately, workplace communication and etiquette are rarely addressed when you go through the education system. When you graduate from either high school or university, you leave with a piece of paper that is meant to quantify your qualifications. Yet, you'll enter the workforce without much formal training on how to communicate with others while you're on the job. Graduates find themselves in this awkward predicament quite often. And bosses do take notice of these things, which can be detrimental to the career progression of these newcomers, according to professional development company, PD Training.

"[Often] organisations get graduates in and they find that graduate treats the workplace like they treat their school or university environment and it's not professional," PD Training CEO Paul Findlay told Business Insider. He has over 10 years experience as an etiquette training coach under his belt.

He has five pieces of etiquette advice for graduates who don't want to be *that* person in the office that nobody likes:

- **Use your inside voice**
  Don't talk loudly when you're on the phone or when you're having a casual chat in the office. You have no idea how disruptive that could be in an office environment and the rest of the office probably doesn't care about how you got really wasted on the weekend.

- **Be present and not off with the fairies during meetings**
  Just because you don't have to present anything at a meeting doesn't mean you can just have an out-of-body experience and not pay attention. If you're scrolling through your social media feed while sitting in on a meeting then you're doing it wrong.

  Turn your phone on silent, put it away and actually pay attention during a meeting, no matter how boring or irrelevant you think it is. If you really do need to take a call, excuse yourself and give a brief reason as to why the call is important and exit the room before answering.

- **For sensitive topics, talk in person**
  Young people these days are used to communicating via texts but if it's a sensitive topic that has to be addressed at work with one of your colleagues, talk about them to the relevant person face-to-face.

  "Often younger people say one thing online, and another thing in person. And for people that know you well, they know that what you say is for effect online and that's not what you actually think or mean... that's a part of your online persona," Findlay said. "The problem with this is that they are then bringing that persona into the workplace and 'stirring the pot'".

- **Lay off on the LOLs but emoticons are okay**
  If you do need to send emails or text messages, avoid using abbreviations. However, emoticons are kind of acceptable as they can help set the tone and avoid miscommunication. Just don't go overboard. It's fine to use emoticons in causal work emails but try not to use them when talking to a new client about a serious work issue.

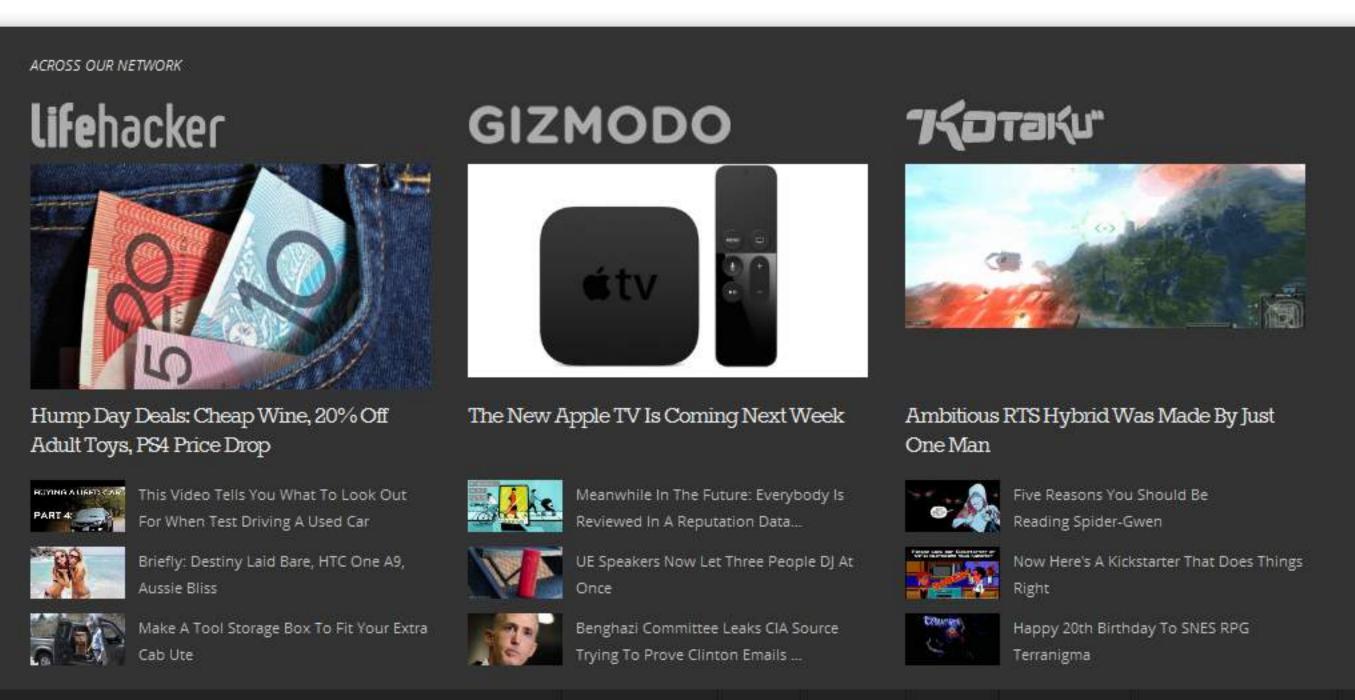 "Avoid emoticons unless your business relationship is already built," Findlay said.

- **Be courteous and aware**
  Overall, jut be mindful of others when you enter a new workplace and be courteous. Being overly cautious about the way you behave with others in your work environment is better than being careless and making enemies on within your first week.

[Via Business Insider Australia]

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