# Etiquette for front office personnel

However, because they are in touch with clients more often than staff in other departments, professionalism demands that their conduct is above board, and they should behave in a way that guarantees long-term client trust and goodwill.

This is because their decisions and actions as employees who are in direct contact with clients have the greatest potential to endear or alienate clients from the business.

Front office employees’ training in public relations should strongly be embedded in business ethics training.

Through business ethics training, front office employees are equipped with skills to face the challenges that come with dealing with the public on a daily basis.

Ethics training helps front office employees to recognise ethical matters and be able to dialogue on ethical issues and engage in ethical decision-making.

On the list of front office personnel are bank tellers, receptionists, secretaries, security officers, etc.

Since front office employees are the faces of the company and the first business contact persons that a client meets on entering the premises of firms, they should always exude attributes that give due respect and honour to the customer.

They should have a well-groomed and immaculate in appearance, be attentive to detail, have the ability to deal with situations in a mature manner, should be dependable and always exhibiting a positive attitude.

Occupying the front desk entails having the ability to deal with different kinds of people with varying demands and personalities without compromising the integrity of the company.

Following is office etiquette the front office personnel should exhibit all the time.

Hospitality – Every person who approaches the front office desk should be treated as you would treat a guest in your home.

Front office staff should see themselves as the gatekeeper in a five-star hotel, or an airhostess in an international airline.

The hotel staff or air hostess should be charming and knowledgeable enough about the hotel or airline, and be able to handle any situation with compassion and good manners.

Front office staff should be able to hold a conversation with anyone for they are the mouthpieces of the firm and form the visitors’ first impression about the firm.

Manners – Front office staff should exhibit good mannerism. Good manners build respect for the company, and tell the client that the firm upholds responsible business conduct.

The fact that we expect excellent service in a restaurant means we should also expect the same in any other organisation.

Front office employees must develop good eye contact and listening skills. Even if they are busy, they should show that they really care for the visitor.

Confidentiality – Every front office employee should understand the meaning of confidentiality of company information and documents.

Front desk staff should represent the corporate culture of their firm, and impress upon the clients that when the word “confidential” is used, the strictest definition is what will always apply.

Integrity – Good character, honesty, sound judgment, and completeness are the hallmarks of integrity.

Front desk employees should know that the firm would be judged by its integrity and as members of that firm, they should know that they would contribute to that judgment.

Reliability – Front office staff should be reliable, and this entails being able to perform their duties dependably and accurately.

It includes doing it right the first time. While mistakes may occur, they should exhibit their ability to quickly recover from their mistakes.

Responsiveness – The front office staff should be willing to help customers and provide them with prompt service.

Employees’ ability to provide services in a timely manner is a critical component of responsible business behaviour.

Assurance – Front office staff should convey assurance, which refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence including competence, credibility and empathy.

Competence means possessing the required skills and knowledge, and courtesy involves politeness, and being considerate and friendly towards clients.

Credibility involves being trustworthy, believable, and having the customer’s best interests at heart.

Empathy refers to the provision of caring and individualised attention to customers.

Communication – Communication means keeping customers informed by use of the language they can understand easily.

It means listening to customers, adjusting your language for different customers and speaking simply and plainly.

Humour – Human interaction is positively stimulated by good humour.

Front office staff should allow it to flow between them and the clients.However, they should be wary of engaging in unnecessary or inappropriate humour, particularly sarcasm as it can hurt the customer.

Above all, front office personnel should have excellent telephone skills and manners, and a clear and pleasing voice.

They must be naturally tactful and diplomatic. They should have a good personality, and should be well dressed and neat.

Individuals who dress well suggest power and status, and proper dressing is part of creating a positive relationship between the firm and the customers.