

Home / Staff / Advice / Lost art of business etiquette: Impact of social media

## Lost art of business etiquette: Impact of social media

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Social media may be the new communication paradigm but it is having an adverse impact on the way Australians conduct themselves professionally. It has, in fact, dulled our professional IQ.

The way people behave in a business context is a hot topic. Under scrutiny is how we talk to each other, the way we write and send emails, and the appropriateness of our actions.

Bosses are telling us they're actually losing clients because staff aren't engaging professionally with others.

Australian businesses are now scrambling to get staff up to speed and the demand for etiquette courses from PD Training ([pdtraining.com.au](http://pdtraining.com.au)) has tripled in the past two years.

The most telling area is the loss of articulate writing largely because social media has introduced a casual way of engaging and a shorter form of language.

While this informality may be fine in a social environment, it's not the language of business and not accepted in most workplaces. The 'write now worry later' approach does not cut it when business is trying to foster relationships and grow customer loyalty.

Many businesses want to return to a more formal footing to show the market they are trustworthy, credible, and to gain a competitive advantage.

Being professional is a signal to customers that you care and respect them and in today's social environment where you can be praised or slammed in a second for your service attitude, it's critical.

PD Training now runs about 45 national courses a year on business etiquette tailored to various organisations and while there are business rules that apply to all, it can be a situational challenge – what's an issue for one business may not be one for another.

It can simply be what we eat at work – no one wants to smell the fish you ate for lunch for the rest of the day. Or about the way we communicate. For example, there have been situations where schools have sent an inappropriate broadcast email to parents.

More common are the infamous 'cc all' incidents where a conversation between two people ends up in the inbox of thousands and where a business exacerbates a customer by responding badly to a complaint.

At PD Training we recommend businesses audit their own situational challenges to identify interactions with stakeholders and customers, see where they fall short, and train their people accordingly.

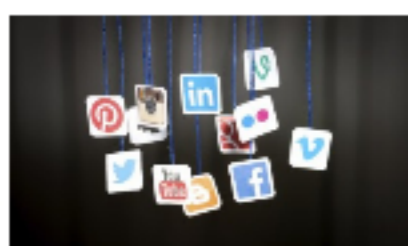
### About the author:

Paul Findlay is the Managing Director of PD Training, one of Australia's largest trainers of white collar professionals. [www.pdtraining.com.au](http://www.pdtraining.com.au)

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