

Smartphone Etiquette

We've all been in a meeting where the person across the room is busy Tweeting or Facebooking under the table. Or out to lunch with the person who so tethered to their smartphone that they place it *on* the table, right next to their fork, for the entirety of the meal. Meanwhile, you are getting antsy, wondering when your conversation will be trumped by the latest Rihanna ring tone.

Almost everyone has a smartphone these days. I was one of the holdouts until about two weeks ago, when I broke down and got the Verizon iPhone 4. I love it. But as a PDA late bloomer, I've spent the last two years becoming keenly aware of the loss of social etiquette when it comes to these devices. They don't call them Crackberries for nothing.

So what are the 10 biggest smartphone etiquette blunders?

1. Multi-tasking

"Don't multi-task and send text messages or read e-mails while you are in conversation with someone," suggests Shelley Davis Mielock, chief image expert at [Mieshel Image Consulting](#) in Lansing, Michigan. "If you are sitting at a table with someone and you are sending a text message at the same time, it shows the person in front of you that they are not important to you. It also makes them feel rushed."

2. Typing quickly

"Make sure to always use spell check," advises Davis Mielock. "Every message you send is an extension of your personal and professional image. I know people type in 'please excuse misspellings,' but you should really be checking each and every time. Take that extra second and treat each correspondence as if you were sending a letter from your office."

3. Turning on vibrate

"The vibration is a distraction—everyone can hear that," says [Rachel Wagner](#), a certified corporate etiquette consultant, trainer, and speaker in Tulsa, Oklahoma. "Keep your device on silent and put it in your pocket while you are in a meeting. If you are expecting an urgent call, excuse yourself and take the call in a private place."

4. Participating in 'lap reading'

"Everyone can see when you head is lowered and you are focusing on your smartphone," Wagner says. "This causes you to look disengaged and prevents you from having eye contact. It is also really rude and gives a terrible impression."

5. Leaving long-winded messages

This one goes for all phone users. “Don’t leave long, complicated voice messages where you speak so fast that it sends the other person scrambling for a pen to write it all down,” says Alison Blackman Dunham, co-founder of Advicesisters.net, a life and advice site. “The best thing to do is to just say, ‘Hi, I need to talk to you about so-and-so. Please call me back.’ Then leave your number and hang up...simple as that.”

6. Putting someone on an extended hold

“When you say you are putting someone on hold for just a moment, it should be for just a moment,” says Blackman Dunham. “Business people are busy. If you can’t talk to someone, tell them you will call them back and give them an exact time; it is the courteous thing to do.”

7. Having a ringback tone

“Ringback tones are not for professionals...unless you are a pop star,” says Davis Mielock. “If I am calling a banker to inquire about a mortgage loan and he has a rapper ringback tone, I will call his credibility into question.”

8. Talking in front of others

“Excuse yourself,” Davis Mielock suggests. “Don’t have conversations in front of other people at all, especially professional conversations. It is incredibly inconsiderate to the people around you.”

9. Interrupting face-to-face conversation

“I’ve known people to be in the middle of an in-person conversation and just start typing away on their smartphone,” says Wagner. “They don’t realize how that comes across. That behavior sends the message that the text is more important than the person standing in front of them and causes feelings of disengagement from your conversation partner.”