

Seven tips that every host should know

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“A host is like a general: it takes a mishap to reveal his genius” – Horace.

For many of you, hosting a business lunch can bring on some serious anxiety. Have you ever entertained an important client or prospect for lunch? If so, don't panic, there are 7 simple tips to ensure you look polished and professional as a host.

1. **Know the restaurant you are using:** If you entertain on a regular basis, it pays to cultivate relationships with certain restaurants. Choose your restaurant in advance. Take the location of the guest and their tastes into consideration but you choose the place. The host leads the way.
2. **Pick your table:** When you expect to discuss business, select a table that gives you maximum privacy. Consider sitting around the perimeter of the room, not in the middle.
3. **Avoid the avoidable:** Avoid selecting a table facing a mirror, next to the restrooms or kitchen or a table in the blinding sun.
4. **Pay the bill in advance:** If you are able, arrange to pay the bill in advance. Arrive early and ask the maitre d' to take your credit card and hold the check at his station where you will sign the bill as the meal draws to a close. This ensures that your bill is never presented at the table. The host always pays.
5. **Seating your guest:** When seating your guest, she should always be offered the best seat at the table. When you walk in together, the guest is seated in the best seat, the one pulled out by the maitre d' that looks out in to the room. If you agree to meet your guest at the table, rise to greet her and remain standing until she is seated appropriately.
6. **Allow your guest to order first:** Before the guest orders, discuss the menu so that he has an idea of the limits of your hospitality. However, if your guest orders an appetizer or expensive dish, you should too. You want your guest to feel comfortable with his choice.
7. **Handle the smallest detail:** This mean handling the reservation, confirming and handling tips, including coatroom attendant and valet. Anticipate your guests every wish. It's your job as the host to smooth over all problems.

Maintain complete control when you are the host. There should never be any doubt by the restaurant staff that you are the host!