

How markets performed last week				
	Index on Nov 1, '19	*One-week	% chg over Dec 31, '18	
			Local currency	in US \$
Sensex	40,165	2.8	11.4	9.7
Nifty	11,891	2.6	9.5	7.9
Dow Jones	27,347	1.4	17.2	17.2
Nasdaq	8,386	1.7	26.4	26.4
Hang Seng	27,101	1.6	4.9	4.8
Nikkei	22,851	0.2	14.2	15.8
FTSE	7,302	-0.3	8.5	10.1
DAX	12,961	0.5	22.7	19.5
*Change (%) over previous week			Source: Bloomberg	



BUSINESS LAW P12
**PEGASUS SPYING ROW:
COUNTERING BIG BROTHER**

COMPANIES P2
**BURGER KING TO FILE FOR
₹1K-CRORE IPO THIS WEEK**



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If urbanity is not your strong suit

Finishing schools and image consultants are helping executives gain *savoir faire*

NAMRATA KOHLI

What’s the big deal about getting your manners right? In modern times, certain norms govern just about everything you do – the way you walk, talk, drink and dine, and even how you use email or make voice calls. Many finishing schools today offer training in image, etiquette and communication to add finesse and class to one’s personality. For corporate executives, knowing etiquette has become essential with businesses turning multi-national.

The target audience

From enhancing the credibility of prospective heirs taking over family businesses from fathers and grandfathers to guiding top-notch company executives up the corporate ladder, grooming classes are reaching out to a broad audience today. “People and diamonds only acquire real market value once polished,” says Delhi-based Pria Warrick, who runs the Pria Warrick Finishing School at New Friends Colony. Adds Mumbai-based Konkana Bakshi, founder of Savoir Faire Academie: “An image makeover not only transforms your visual appeal but also gives you a social and emotional overhaul.” Bakshi conducts one-on-one sessions with complete confiden-



ETIQUETTE LESSONS: NOTHING CHEAP ABOUT THEM

Nature of Consultation	Course name	Fee (₹)
Group Batch	Business communication	20,000
Group Batch	English enhancement	25,000
Group Batch	Presentation skills, Art of Networking	15,000–35,000
Group Batch	Business etiquette, telephone and electronic etiquette, Netiquette–Email, laptop, social media, instant messaging and chat manners	40,000–60,000
Group Batch	International business etiquette and executive presence, fine dining and table etiquette, power dressing–business attire and style management	75,000–1,50,000
Private Consultation	Public speaking, voice modulation, communication and image transformation	4,00,000–6,50,000

Source: Image and grooming consultants

tiality for promoters of listed companies. Many clients approach her for grooming in public speaking, voice modulation, communication and image transformation. Her private consultation fee varies from ₹4-6.5 lakh. She also gets invited to train professionals on subjects like international business protocol and dining etiquette. The charge for a group workshop starts at ₹1.2 lakh a day. “I have seen IT engineers who are technically sound but have no social skills, suffer from low self-esteem and almost depressive behaviour, and have zero corporate finesse,” says Warrick. They virtually hide behind either their cell phones or the brands they own, as they have no self-confidence. “Today, very few have telephone manners. Sudden calls disrupt meetings.

You can’t answer the phone or make calls from your mobile whenever you want. You need to take permission,” she says. Another huge problem area, Warrick says, is corporate dressing, with the approach becoming too casual.

What’s on offer

How to network with your business associates after work or at business socials is one of the best-selling programmes at Pria Warrick Finishing School, which teaches cross-cultural protocol in dining, drinking, toasting, the art of formal seating on the dinner table, laying out cutlery, and so on. “Indians drink and then eat, whereas the world eats and then drinks. Cutlery is a problem area as Indians eat with the right,

whereas the world eats with the left,” she points out. Warrick also trains many expats who have questions about how to behave in business social gatherings. Many of them ask whether they should shake hands with the spouses of their business associates or simply do a *namaste*. One tip etiquette experts want to give to corporate India is to remain even-tempered. According to Maya Daswani, founder, Persona Power Asia, “The higher you rise in terms of status, position, wealth and leadership, the higher must be your command over diplomacy, overcoming irritation and anger, and speaking positively and constructively. Never raising your voice is the cardinal rule.” The tone often conveys more than the words.

The earlier you begin, the better

Many schools have started to offer training in soft skills to their students. “If schools set up a curriculum that offers the finishing touches like we do, students would leave schools with their best foot forward and with great confidence,” says Saloni who runs one-on-one programmes for students at the Florina finishing school and charges anywhere between ₹35,000 and ₹50,000. According to Hyderabad-based grooming expert Kavita Golechha, who runs the Panache Finishing School, “Not only grooming but many other aspects of soft skills, communication and personality development should be a part of the school curriculum as those years are the most impressionable.” For those who missed out, one way to pick up soft skills is to do a capsule course from a reputed consultant or attend specialised workshops. Many corporate workshops are sponsored by the Human Resource Departments of companies. Corporate trainer Suneeta Sodhi Kanga holds training sessions at the client’s office, in a hotel, or a banquet hall. She prefers hotels for sessions on fine dining, wine and whisky appreciation. For a group of 10-25 participants, she charges ₹25,000 for a half-day workshop, ₹40,000 for a full-day module, and ₹75,000 for a two-day programme. With many people willing to invest in these programmes because they help them gain confidence and expand their horizons, these image consultants clearly remain immune to the current slowdown.