



**International Business Protocol, LLC**

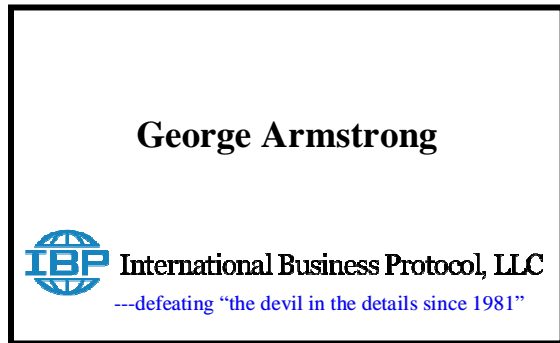
---defeating "the devil in the details"

## “Name badges – the good, the bad and the ugly”

by Robert W. Frye, CPP

There are two basic problems with name badges - poorly prepared and poorly worn. What is the purpose of a name badge? No secret here – it’s the NAME not a logo. You’ve seen them; the ones that have a huge logo and the name is printed in size 8 font. You would need a magnifying glass to read the name. That kind of badge is of no value.

So let’s fix the process. When preparing a professional name badge place the organization logo and company name at the bottom. Make it no more than ¼ the size of the badge area. Now take your name list and select the longest name, place the first name on top and the last name under it. Now size it to the largest font that will fit on the badge. In almost all cases you will have a font size that will work for all the badges.



**WRONG!**



**RIGHT!**

While this article sets some general guide lines for professional preparation of name badges you should always check with a reliable source like the “*PROTOCOL*” book by McCaffree and Innis or the companies listed at the end of this article. Don’t trust your memory. Also remember that the type, style and formality of an event will dictate the use or non-use of name badges and there are always exceptions. It’s a process requiring thought and input from well-respected professionals.

If the event is more formal and you wish to include titles then the two following illustrations may work better. The title can be reduced several font sizes but the last name stays as large as possible.



**RIGHT!**



**RIGHT!**

Honorifics on your guests name badges could also include these and more:

- Sheikh, Imam, Pastor, Dr., Professor, ...and others (always check – don't assume)

Name badges would not be worn by royalty. Everyone attending an event with a member of royalty will or should know them by sight and would refer to them with the appropriate “your majesty” or “your highness” The same applies to heads of state and heads of government referring to them in greeting or conversation as “Mr. President” or “Madam Prime Minister.”

Military rank has its variations from one branch of service to the other. You need to be careful in writing the rank abbreviation for meal or conference place cards. As an example Army colonel is COL while a Marine colonel is Col. For name badges, unless the attendees are very familiar with military rank abbreviations, it is always best to spell out the rank. Remember name badges DO NOT go on any uniformed military personnel – only when they are in civilian attire. Active duty (in civilian attire) and retired military personnel will have a name badge prepared as follows:



**Active Duty Civilian Attire**



**Formal**

The next issue is where to place the name badge so it is quickly and easily seen and read. The best place is on your upper right side near your right shoulder. In this elevated position it is closer to the eye level of any person approaching you. When you extend your right arm to shake hands your eyes move forward along your arm directly to the other person's badge for a quick read. Studies have shown that you are 85% more likely to remember someone's name when you don't have to cross their center body line to find it.

Name badges usually come with a clip or pin. For men their suit jackets or shirts can easily accommodate the badge in the proper position. A business woman should be careful to choose her attire so it can easily accommodate a name badge. She should choose something that will not be harmed by a pin and provide a way to clip the badge to her upper right side.

As you can see in the picture to the right the man approaching this woman can easily see the name badge and will be able to address her by name. If you place the name badge in any other position it defeats the purpose of the badge.



At some conferences the organizers will create a combination name badge and credentials that indicate to which events you have access. These are usually on a lanyard that hangs around the neck and places the badge at or near waist level. The name badge portion is now useless. I always suggest to my clients that they have several pre-printed name badges (formal and informal) with their company logo so they can use them when faced with this situation.

People greeting you will really appreciate your thoughtfulness and they'll wish they had done the same thing.



Formal



Informal

A poorly prepared name badge can be an annoying distraction interfering with professional networking at business events. Remember the definition of protocol.

*“Protocol is the art of **creating a distraction free environment** that permits the free and open exchange of information to resolve issues and build relationships in international business and global diplomacy.”*

Remove the distraction – create user-friendly name badges and make sure they are worn properly!

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Mr. Frye is an International business protocol and cross cultural consultant with more than 20 years of experience managing high level client marketing visits, events and ceremonies and managing international sales and marketing support departments for AT&T, Lucent Technologies, several mid-size technology companies as well as the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq, the National Museum of the United States Army and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. Frye has strong organizational, leadership, problem solving, internal and external communications and senior level public presentation skills. Mr. Frye is also a Certified Protocol Professional (CPP).

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