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## **UNIQUE OKEMOS BUSINESS OFFERS ETIQUETTE COACHING FOR ALL SETTINGS**

**FLINT---**Your mother would be proud... and so would your boss.

Etiquette isn't just for the dinner table anymore, says co-founder and East Lansing resident Donna L. Ullrich, of the new Protocol Consulting Group, L.L.C., (PCG). Based in Okemos and unique to mid-Michigan, the business provides expert coaching on the appropriate behavior for any business, social or dining situation.

As jobs become more technical and competitive, it is the soft skills [AKA manners] that give individuals the confidence and edge to secure the job as well as promotions, advises partner Julie Duke of Okemos.

Of course, there's nothing out of date about good manners in social or dining situations, she adds.

Protocol is defined as the rules for any situation and according to Ullrich, etiquette is one's ability to follow those rules.

Ullrich and Duke share an interest in promoting civility and respect in all walks of life. This goal, Duke says, has been gained after years as professional communicators in public relations, development, sales, and management positions.

Across the board, they believe etiquette is required to interact respectfully and successfully with co-workers, clients, guests, and benefactors.

PCG offers individual and group coaching for business, social and service organizations as well as youth programs. Topics range from business, social and dining etiquette to government and international protocol, media appearances, appropriate attire, special events, and high teas. One program is aimed at near college graduates and job seekers to polish their presentation skills as they seek their first professional positions.

There's no soft skill that goes unnoticed, they say. "It only takes five seconds to form an impression," Duke says. With that in mind, the three address the most taken for granted actions such as sitting, standing, smiling, and handshakes. The important responsibilities such successful introductions and initiating and holding conversations aren't forgotten either.

Duke says the PCG principals meet with clients and tailor programs to individual needs. “These programs are ideal for staff and team development. They also enhance customer service.”

In social and dining situations, sessions cover everything from proper use of utensils to protocol for memorable events such as weddings and social teas.

“It’s not about being an etiquette snob---rolling your eyes down your nose to judge other people’s actions, Ullrich says. “It is about being so gracious and accommodating so that your guests feel comfortable and understand their importance to you.”

She adds, “It isn’t about being perfect either. It is about trying. In the attempt, respect is extended and we hope that the respect will be returned and passed on to others.”

Duke and Ullrich are certified protocol and etiquette consultants. The two are certified by the two most prestigious programs in the country. Duke is certified through the Protocol School of Washington® and Ullrich by the Etiquette and Leadership Institute®.

Ullrich, a free-lance writer, lawyer and communications instructor at the University of Michigan-Flint, has worked in education and public relations for most of her career. Her public relations experience includes coordination of a presidential visit, co-authorship of congressional testimony, and numerous awards for marketing campaigns.

Duke’s experience with matters of protocol and etiquette was honed over the decade she worked in Washington, D.C. for the National Symphony Orchestra at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the Shakespeare Theatre. During those years she managed several events that included the president and vice president of the United States, members of Congress, cabinet members and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

“We are going to bring civility back one respectful action at a time,” they agree.

Information about PCG programs and services is available at [www.protocolconsultinggroup.com](http://www.protocolconsultinggroup.com), by email at [info@protocolconsultinggroup.com](mailto:info@protocolconsultinggroup.com) or by calling 517-347-7405.

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