

Telephone Etiquette

Unlock the Secrets to Telephone Etiquette

Telephone etiquette is a term referring to the proper way to receive and place calls. Callers will form an impression of you in the first thirty seconds of the conversation. Use this first thirty seconds to project a positive and professional image.

Secret Number One: YOUR VOICE CREATES AN IMAGE

- Callers who are treated rudely will remember the encounter. Next time they call, they will be quicker to express anger. Regardless of your mood, treat every caller with courtesy and respect.

Secret Number Two: ANSWER PROMPTLY

- Prompt answering helps to build a reputation of efficiency. Answer the telephone promptly, preferably on the first or second ring.
- Always use a warm greeting and state your name when answering the phone.
- Keep a notepad and pen close to every telephone to enable you to quickly jot down information.
- Concentrate on the caller. Being tuned-in is a must. Do not try to carry on a second conversation with someone else.

Secret Number Three: SPEAK DISTINCTLY

- Smile when you answer the telephone.
- Establish a proper environment for answering business calls. Keep background noise to a minimum.
- Your speech rate should be kept at a normal pace. Keep your voice calm and unhurried.
- Keep your head up. Your neck should not be scrunched down by the receiver; this can distort your speech.
- Do not chew gum.
- Use a caller's name during the conversation. Callers like to hear their own name being used, it demonstrates that you are paying attention and care about them.
- Use listening phrases such as "yes," "I see," and "I understand."
- Avoid slang such as "uh huh," "yeah," or "b'bye."
- If you need to check on something, use the hold feature on your telephone. You do not want the caller to hear casual conversation. Covering the transmitter with your hand will not stop the caller from hearing what is being said.
- A speakerphone should not be used without permission from the person on the other end. Often it is difficult to understand someone over a speakerphone, and can be perceived as unprofessional.

Secret Number Four: DO NOT KEEP THE CALLER HANGING

- Ask the caller's permission before putting them on hold.
- Give them an idea how long you will be away from the telephone.
- Offer to call back if you have to be away from the phone for a long time.
- Check back periodically to ask if they will continue to hold.
- Apologize for the delay when you return to the telephone. Callers will appreciate your courtesy.

Secret Number Five: FOLLOW A PLAN WHEN YOU ARE AWAY

When you are away from the office there are several important things you can teach your family to do to ensure that callers still receive the best service possible.

- If a caller wants to speak with you when you are not home, a husband or child should tell them you are away, give them an idea when you will return, and ask if they can take a message. They should verify all information given to them.
- A system should be set in place to ensure that the messages are promptly received to make sure the caller receives a timely return call.
- Return all messages promptly!

Secret Number Six: VOICE MAIL AND ANSWERING MACHINES

- If a call was important enough to make, it is important enough to leave a message. Be sure to identify yourself, the reason for your call, the times you can be reached and your telephone number. Repeat your name and telephone number to ensure that it was written down properly.
- Your own answering machine should have your voice with a warm greeting. Identify yourself, your family name (if home phone line is used), and your business. **DO NOT HAVE YOUR CHILDREN RECORD THE OUT-GOING MESSAGE!** This is perceived as unprofessional.

Secret Number Seven: HANDLING UNHAPPY CALLERS

There may be times when you will have to deal with complaints or unhappy callers and it is wise to remember that what you say and how you say it can either satisfy or alienate a caller.

- Approach matters calmly.
- Be compassionate. Put yourself in the caller's place.
- Do not be drawn into a battle of harsh words with an irate caller.
- Express your concern about any inconvenience and let them know what action will be taken to solve the problem.
- Follow through promptly.



Teach your children proper responses to leave the call with a professional image.

What They Mean:	What they should tell the Caller:
"She's not here."	"She is not in at the moment. Would you like to leave a message?"
"I don't know where she is."	"She has stepped out. Would you like to leave a message?"
"She is in the bathroom."	"She can't come to the phone. Would you like to leave a message?"
"She hasn't come home yet."	"We expect her shortly. Would you like to leave a message?"
"She took the day off."	"She is out of the office for the day. Would you like to leave a message?"
"She doesn't want to be disturbed."	"He is unavailable at the moment. Would you like to leave a message?"
"She is busy."	"She is unavailable at the moment. Would you like to leave a message?"