

Содержание:

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Introduction

The world certainly became a smaller place when in 1876, Scottish Inventor Alexander Graham Bell patented his new device which produced a clearly intelligible replication of the human voice, in other words, the birth of the Telephone. This device for the first time in history allowed people to converse over many, many miles and before too long, even continents.

The telephone quickly became part of any reputable household and you would not be seen without one if you were 'someone of note', but they have come a long way since 1876, and today there is hardly a home or business that does not have one, or a person who does not have a mobile phone. One that you see glued to every person these days are phones.

Telephone is an important device with the help of which people separated by distance can easily interact and exchange their ideas. Got a brilliant idea and want to convey it to your friend staying out of the country, use the telephone. Telephone is one of the easiest and cheapest modes of communication.

Cell-phone etiquette is really just common courtesy. Most people today have a mobile phone. In fact, many people can't imagine how they ever got along without a portable phone. However, many people also complain about cell phone users. People complain about other people loudly discussing personal matters in public places. They complain when cell phones ring in movie theaters and concert halls. They complain about people driving too slow, and not paying attention to where they are going because they are talking on a cell phone. And they complain about people walking around talking to people who aren't there.

Whenever a new communications technology becomes popular, it changes the way society is organized. Society has to invent rules for the polite way to use the new devices. Our social etiquette, our rules of politeness for cell phones, is still evolving.

Always try to keep your phone ringer as low as possible or put your mobile phone on vibrate, so it does not distract the people around you. A good time to leave your phone at home, or at least in the car, would be at a funeral, wedding or some event along those lines.

Telephone etiquettes - An individual needs to follow a set of rules and regulations while interacting with the other person over the phone. These are often called as telephone etiquettes. It is important to follow the basic telephone etiquettes as our voice plays a very important role in creating an impression of our personality, education, family background as well as the nature of job we are engaged in. The person giving the information is called the sender and the second party is the recipient.

Common telephone etiquettes

Re-check the dialed number to avoid unwanted confusion and mistakes. Always carefully dial the numbers, never be in a rush or dial the numbers in dark as it would lead to a wrong call. If by mistake you have dialed a wrong number, don't just hang up, do say sorry and then keep the phone courteously. When you reach a wrong number, don't argue with the person who answered the call or keep them on the line. Say: "I'm sorry, I must have the wrong number. Please excuse the interruption." And then hang up.

After dialing, always reconfirm **whether the person on the other side is the desired person whom you want to interact with.** Always ask "Am I speaking to Mike?" or "Is this Jenny?" before starting the conversation.

Greeting. Just like a face to face conversation, the other party in the telephonic conversation expects you to open the conversation with a nice greeting. It is suggested that you begin the phone call with an appropriate greeting like *Good morning/Afternoon* depending on which time of the day you are calling. Do not use slang words or Poor Language. Respond clearly with "yes" or "no" when speaking.

In any official call, don't use words like " *Any guess who I am?* " as the person on the other side might be occupied with something and can get disturbed. Always say " *Is it Ted?* ", and do ask him, " *Is it the good time to talk to you?* " and then start communicating. If the person sounds busy always wait for the appropriate time.

Take permission and be polite. A polite word or two always helps in bringing warmth into the conversation. While it is very important to take permission to speak to the person you have intended to call, one should always remember to use a polite tone. Keep a pleasant voice pitch. Use warm wishes like “good morning, “how are you, good sir?” and such. First impressions are the last impressions. So make them last.

- Use phrase like "May I please speak with_____".

Remember to be sensitive to the tone of your voice. Do not sound overly aggressive or pushy. It is important your tone conveys authority and confidence.

Always speak each and every word clearly. The person on the other end can't see your expressions so remember your tone should be apt to express your feelings in the correct form.

Never call any person at odd hours like early morning or late nights as the person will definitely be sleeping and will not be interested in talking to you.

Don't take too long to pick up any call. If you miss the call, make sure you give a call back as the other person might have an important message to convey. Avoid giving missed calls at work places as it irritates the other person. Try to answer the phone within three rings. Answering a phone too fast can catch the caller off guard and waiting too long can make the caller angry.

Identify self and the organisation. The most common mistake that people make during a phone is call not identifying oneself. It is considered inappropriate and can also lead to miscommunication, always introduce yourself before getting into any conversation; telephonic or face to face - that's the thumb rule.

Purpose of the call. Before making a phone call, be sure of the purpose of the call. Think through exactly what you plan to say and practice before you place the call. Jotting down the items you want to discuss and questions you want answered can help in making a smooth conversation.

Know your timeline and keep it short. One of the important telephone etiquettes is to not take too long to pick up a call. In professional talks, never keep the conversation too long as the other person might be busy.

Always keep the content crisp and relevant and do come to the point after formal greetings. If you miss the call, make sure you give a call back as the other person might have an important message to convey. Avoid giving missed calls at workplaces as it

irritates the other person. Be professional and always approach first if you are the one in need. Do not leave your phone numbers on your emails for them to call you if you are the one approaching for work.

While speaking on phone, you are not in front of the other party; hence it is very important to ask if the receiver has enough time to speak to you. Respect the person's time and ensure that the conversation gets completed within the given timeline.

Avoid fillers and keep it interesting. Filler words -like um and uh - are never written into a speech, and add nothing when a speaker utters them. During a telephonic conversation, a filler word sends a signal to the other person which says "I'm still thinking, and I'm not willing to pass the conversation back to you just yet." This only conveys that you are confused and still thinking of what to say next.

Find some quiet place. Communicating over the telephone is much more effective when both parties can hear each other clearly without background noise. Plan to make your call, whether it's for work or just to catch up with an old friend, at a time in which you are not required to attend to any other business and ensure that there is no disturbance around.

Blaring noises, such as the television or road traffic can interfere with both your listening and communication skills, making it difficult for a conversation.

Do not eat or drink while you are on telephone duty. Only eat or drink during your coffee break or lunch break. First finish your food and then only dial the number. If you are reading, please leave the book aside, first concentrate what the other person wishes to convey and then continue with the book.

If you are not the correct person and the speaker needs to speak to your co-worker always politely say "one moment please - I will call him/her in a minute".

If the colleague is not in the office premises, always take a message on his/her behalf and don't forget to convey to him when he is back. Also, it is best if you do not discuss these messages with others as some information could be sensitive too.

Use the hold button when leaving a line so that the caller does not accidentally overhear conversations being held nearby.

Do not lean back on chair when speaking. According to psychological studies, this tends to divert your attention and impact your tone as leaning back is the posture of being relaxed. If the call is too important stand up and talk as it makes you much more

attentive.

Do not allow any interruptions to occur during the conversation. Do not have conversations with people around you. The person on the phone should take priority over the person who just came around you. If you need to interrupt the call, say to the person, "Please give me a moment, I will be right back." When you return say, "Thank you for holding."

Prepare before you call. Write down the items which you want to talk about. Plan your talk to be as direct and as specific as possible. This helps cut down the call saving both your time and avoid unnecessary follow ups if planned well.

Ask the caller for their name, even if their name is not necessary for the call. This shows you have taken an interest in them.

Listen to the Caller and what they have to say. The ability to listen is a problem in general but it is very important to listen to what the caller has to say. It is always a good habit to repeat the information back to the client when you are taking a message. Verify that you have heard and transcribed the message accurately.

If there is any disturbance in the network, don't just keep speaking for the sake of it; try to call after sometime with a better line.

Always ask if you can put the caller on hold. If you are responsible for answering multiple calls at once, always ask the caller politely if you may put them on hold. Remember that the caller could have already waited several minutes before getting connected to you and may not take lightly to being put on hold. Never leave the person on hold for more than a few seconds or they may become upset and hang up.

Taking a second call. Some telephone systems, in particular mobiles, allow you to make a second call while putting the first one on hold. This can be a very useful feature but can also be extremely frustrating, especially to the person who is being put on holds (and often left until they become bored and hang up). The relevant comments here are similar to those for taking interruptions, in this case the interruption caused by a second call. The message you are giving is that you would rather speak to the other caller than the person you are speaking to. If this is to bounce a colleague off a call to take a customer call, this may be acceptable, but it can still make the colleague feel a little uncomfortable. In general, it is better to let the second call go through to voicemail and avoid interrupting the first call.

Don't commit yourself to calling back if you have no intention of doing so.

Always, but always, call back when you have committed to do so. If you hang back from making it clear to someone that you do not want to speak to them, rather than making yourself clear at the outset, this will, in the longer term, waste time. It is much better to tell them, firmly but politely, the first time around that you are not interested in their products/services/job application or whatever.

If you told a person you would call at a certain time, call them as you promised.

If you need to delay the conversation, call to postpone it, but do not make the other person wait around for your call.

If you don't leave a number/message for someone to call you back, **don't become angry if they are not available when you call again.**

Who rings back when line goes dead? Unless agreed differently during the call, the originator of the call is the person who calls back. This etiquette avoids both sides ringing and finding each other constantly engaged.

Do not allow yourself to be distracted by other activities when speaking on telephone. Like, rustling papers, chewing and working on the computer, speaking with someone else. Use a headset or a speaker phone for when you are driving. Always treat every caller with utmost courtesy and respect by giving him/her your undivided attention.

After completing the conversation, **don't just hang up.** Reconfirm with the receiver whether he has downloaded the correct information or not and do end your conversation with pleasant words like *"Take care"*, *"nice speaking with you"* and a warm bye. Never say Goodbye.

Conclusion

As long as you are honest and polite with the other person, you shouldn't have any problems getting off the phone and onto something else. Voicemail Etiquette Voice mail has many benefits and advantages when used properly.

You can represent not only yourself, but often your department and the University. Remembering to use proper telephone etiquette, whether answering or making calls, leaves your respondents with a favorable impression of you, your department, and Lehigh in general. The following suggestions are helpful for making your phone conversations more effective.

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