

Business Phone Etiquette

Have you ever been waiting in line to pay for something and been held up by someone fumbling for their credit card and talking on their cell phone? How about when you are enjoying a quiet dinner only to be interrupted by some silly ringtone? How often have you been embarrassed to learn everyone is listening to your call (in the coffee shop, train, etc.)?

Unfortunately, this lack of etiquette is becoming more common as cell phone usage becomes widespread. Besides etiquette, people are also suffering from poor communication because of increase cell phone usage.

- 85% of American adults have cell phones¹.
- 38% of people believe it is OK to use a cell phone in a public bathroom².
- 40% of people believe passengers should be allowed to use cell phones on airplanes³.
- The average American adult makes 7 cell phone calls per day⁴.
- 52% of American adults believe their cell phone has made them TOO accessible⁵.

These statistics make it very clear that face-to-face communication is giving way to virtual communication. Our communication is based on physiology, language and tone. Few people focus on the impact that their posture or tone has on their communication. As the world continues to communicate virtually we must be even more aware of how we communicate effectively.

How can you better your ability to communicate virtually?

4 Steps to More Effective Business Phone Etiquette

1. Active Listening. Few people pay 100% attention to the person they are talking with, especially when they are using their headset/bluetooth. By actively listening, you can gather more information and respond in a genuine manner.

2. Tonality: The tone of your voice is very important. Be aware of the affect in your voice and make sure your tone is aligned with what you really mean. 38% of communication is the tone⁶.

3. Language: Use language that is appropriate. You wouldn't use slang in a phone interview. Likewise, it would be awkward to talk formally to your best friend. By using appropriate language, you increase the ability for the other party to understand and relate.

4. Situational Acuity: Recognize the time, place, and environment you are in. Also be aware of the other persons location an environment. When we are curious instead of critical, we avoid many of the awkward, uncomfortable, and/or annoying disturbances of poor communication.

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¹ 2007 HarrisInteractive Poll

² Let's Talk 2006

³ 2008 Bureau of Transportation Statistics Survey

⁴ 2007 HarrisInteractive Poll

⁵ 2007 HarrisInteractive Poll

⁶ <http://jyte.com/cl/only-7-percent-of-face-to-face-communication-is-actual-words>

