

Script for **Unit 3 – Phone Etiquette**

s/n		Script
1		<p>Welcome to the online learning of “Phone Etiquette”.</p> <p>This is the third e-learning unit of "Represent Yourself & Your Organisation Well With Voice Call Phone Etiquette“.</p> <p>You will acquire an understanding of the elements of phone etiquette, that is tone of voice, choice of words, listening skills, and probing skills and actively practise it to demonstrate your outcome-first attitude that is to be display the quality of Responsiveness, Accuracy, Appropriateness and Accountability; from the start to the end of your phone conversation with your customer.</p> <p>“Represent Yourself & Your Organisation Well With Voice Call Phone Etiquette” is a multi-part e-learning programme.</p> <p>It comprises of 4 learning units. You can choose to only take this e-learning unit, or to also take the remaining 3 e-learning units in no particular order.</p> <p>You may view the synopsis for each of the e-learning units.</p> <p>Click on the next button to proceed.</p>
2		<p>If you had taken Unit 2 Phone Conversations Go Wrong. You may recall the need for the staff to practise outcome-first attitude and your words and actions will demonstrate responsiveness, accuracy, appropriateness and accountability.</p> <p>The staff needs to show responsiveness, that is – Be sensitive to what was asked, and prompt to take actions. The staff needs to ensure accuracy and appropriateness, that is – Recommend or take actions that are correct, feasible and suitable, and will resolve the need or request.</p> <p>The staff needs to exhibit accountability, that is – Be responsible to follow through from start to end, and if the customer’s request needs to be re-direct for someone else to follow-up, ensure that there is closure at the end of the day.</p> <p>This positive attitude is to be evident throughout the phone conversation.</p>
3		Let us start with a simple activity to drag and sequence the concepts correctly. Give it a try!
	Correct response	Yes! You have gotten it correct.
	Incorrect response	Not to worry that you have not gotten it correct. You will be learning more about these concepts and deepen your understanding.
4		<p>You practise outcome-first attitude and your words and actions must demonstrate responsiveness, accuracy, appropriateness and accountability.</p> <p>Your outcome-first attitude shows in – your tone of voice, your choice of words, your listening skills, and your probing skills.</p> <p>It means throughout the phone conversation from the point of picking up the phone, greeting the customer, getting more information about the help required to the point of thanking the customer and ending the call.</p>

		You practice outcome-first attitude by practising excellent phone etiquette.
5		<p>At the point of picking up incoming calls, it is important for you to demonstrate responsiveness so as to assure the customers that you and your organisation are taking prompt actions, to attend to their needs.</p> <p>These are few common practices. Some organisations set up automated receptionist to manage high call volumes. It means the customer will be given options, to either continue to hold, or request for a call back.</p>
6		<p>At the point of greeting, it is important for you to demonstrate responsiveness And assure the customers that they have reached the right party, to get the help they need. As the saying goes, "People are quick to judge".</p> <p>A 2018 Forbes articles shared that it takes 7 seconds to make a first impression and even faster if it is over the phone.</p> <p>If you had taken Unit 1 Phone Conversations Impact Customer Experience, recall that a moment of truth happens when a touchpoint becomes critical. Greeting your customer is an important interaction, because first impression is a deal breaker meaning, a poor first impression acts as a brick wall obstructing the customer to start a business relationship with your organization.</p> <p>It is therefore critical to make a good first impression to positively impact the customer's first touchpoint, to start off the conversation on the right foot.</p> <p>The common greeting is to; Welcome the customer in a friendly and enthusiastic manner, then state your organisation name, then introduce yourself then offer your help</p> <p>An example of greeting is; "Good morning. This is XYZ company, and I am Mary. How may I help you?"</p> <p>Your speed of talking must be paced, so you do not sound like you are rushing. Your voice projection must be clear, so the customer does not strain to hear you. This means you must be mindful of any environmental and physical noise and adjust your mouthpiece if there is a need to do so.</p> <p>Your diction, that is pronunciation must also be clear. No slurring or murmuring, so the customer does not strain to understand what you are saying. Your energy level should convey enthusiasm, so the customer does not feel that you are tired or not willing to help.</p> <p>Your smile should be heard and this is with your body language as your facial expressions and posture impacts how you sound, or appear over the phone.</p>

7		<p>Let us look at “Ending” now and cover “Exchanging information” later because there is a lot more to share.</p> <p>At the point of ending, it is important for you to demonstrate accountability Meaning to probe and confirm with the customer that they have received the help they require it is also important to close with efforts to build rapport.</p> <p>So, a personalised thank you is good touch and to ask if there may be more areas you can assist with to give the customer the reassurance that they are valued and supported and that they can count on you and your organisation down the road.</p> <p>As they consumer more of your products and services. An example of ending or closing statement is; “Thank you, Mr John Tan for calling. Have I fully addressed your enquiry and if there is more I can help you with?”</p> <p>At times, you may feel the need to summarise what was accomplished with the phone conversation in instances when it was a lengthy or complex situation.</p> <p>There may also be a need for you to end with a reminder of follow-up actions to be taken by the customer or yourself and the expected timeline.</p> <p>This is again a demonstration of accountability to ensure that there will be full closure for the customer’s need or request.</p>
8		<p>Exchanging information is the main part of the phone conversation. Whereby the customer and staff engage in listening and talking.</p> <p>If you had taken Unit 1 Phone Conversations Impact Customer Experience Recall about encoding and decoding messages?</p> <p>The practice of tone of voice, choice of words, listening skills and probing skills Is critical to establish shared understanding between what is said and what is heard And work towards closure or resolution of the customer’s need, issue or situation. You may also make use of corporate resources such as; Cheatsheets, standard operating procedures, manuals, knowledge management database, to help with the customer’s need or enquiry.</p> <p>As there is rich exchange of information, you may need to pen it down to ensure that nothing is missed as the phone conversation progresses.</p> <p>Let us look at each component in more details.</p>
9		Let us start with an activity to drag and match the concepts of tone of voice correctly. Give it a try!
	Correct response	<p>Yes!!! You have gotten it correct.</p> <p>You will be learning more about these concepts and deepen your understanding</p>
	Incorrect response	<p>Not to worry that you have not gotten it correct.</p> <p>You will be learning more about these concepts and deepen your understanding.</p>
10		<p>Getting your tone of voice right is a skills practice.</p> <p>Read the script and record your delivery</p>

		<p>To play it back and catch the areas to be improved.</p> <p>It may also be good to get help from fellow colleagues, family members or friends</p> <p>To help eyeball the areas of improvement.</p>
11		<p>Generally, when we converse with another person, our speed of talking is about 125 words per minute. If we were to read a podcast, or do a commentary, it tends to be faster.</p> <p>To give assurance that you are giving the attention the customer needs, the way you speak should not feel rushed nor too laid back.</p> <p>Your voice projection must be clear, so the customer does not strain to hear you. But it must not be too loud that it becomes uncomfortable. Check with your customer if you sound just right.</p> <p>Re-adjust your mouthpiece when necessary, especially if there is noise around you</p> <p>Your diction, that is pronunciation must also be clear. No slurring or murmuring of words as it would be a strain for your customer to understand what you are saying. If there are difficult words, practise it repeatedly to get the right pronunciation</p> <p>Pitch is the highs and lows of your voice.</p> <p>Intonation is the series of highs and lows of your voice when you speak. Together, your pitch and intonation give the sentences and words you say rhythm and emphasis to convey meaning and feelings and sustain interest.</p> <p>Do not talk with a monotone voice. It means your pitch is unchanged throughout the conversation and if there is little intonation, you would sound robotic and would be difficult for the customer to engage with you in the conversation.</p> <p>However, it is also not good to be overly animated or exaggerated. You may appear unnatural or excessively expressive which may be a turn off to your customer.</p> <p>Do view the freely available video about pitch and intonation. Though it uses American English, it is helpful and relevant to help you understanding and practise varying pitch and intonation, to convey meaning and feelings.</p> <p>We need to pause because we need to breathe as we speak. And when the message is long, having pauses chunks it up into smaller parts so it helps the listener to understand it fully. To take a pause also gives time for thoughts.</p> <p>Your customer may need a moment to think through what you have said and practising pauses also helps you to stop using filler words during a phone conversation, like; um, uh, er, ah, like, okay, right, and you know.</p> <p>These meaningless word, phrase, or sound can irritate at times.</p> <p>Overall, you should exude positively and willingness to help.</p> <p>Your energy level should convey warmth and enthusiasm</p> <p>You definitely should not sound tired or uninterested.</p> <p>There is calmness and control to remain composed and unflustered and be confident</p>

		<p>So you command attention and remain in control as the phone conversation progresses.</p> <p>Your smile should be heard. And yes, your customer can visualize it while on the phone with you. Your facial expression, your posture will impact how you sound over over the phone.</p> <p>Record yourself speak while sitting up straight and putting on a smile Contrast it when you speak while slumping over the desk or with a hand under your chin. Which do you sound more energised and welcoming?</p> <p>You may wish to print this cheatsheet for quick reference to remind yourself to practise good tone of voice during phone conversations.</p>
12		<p>You would have recorded yourself and did a self assessment Or gotten comments from your colleague, family member or friend. How did you do?</p>
	Correct response	It is great that you have done well. Please keep it up and do better.
	Incorrect response	It is great that you have identified areas which you can improve. Continue to put in efforts and take the time to improve and to do better.
		<p>Give it more thoughts on how you will be doing better. And share the steps you will be taking to improve.</p>
13		<p>Saying the right words and saying it in an active voice is also a skills practice. It takes practice and getting into the habit of using good choice of words and saying it in active voice so you exercise sensitivity while dealing with your customers and also demonstrate accountability.</p> <p>Especially when phone conversations are difficult and challenging. You may instinctively get into the matter-of-fact mode and inform your customer plainly about the situation or even your position. Either you are unaware of the effect your words may have on your customer or did not realise that your words may elicit or trigger a negative response from your customer.</p> <p>Take the perspective of your customer and put yourself in his or her shoes How do you feel when you hear phrases like; “I don’t know”, “There’s nothing I can do.”, “That isn’t my job “.</p> <p>Does it sound like the person is unsure, making an excuse, or defensive coming across as unwilling or uninterested to help and presenting a dead-end situation which you will be stuck in, without help and support</p> <p>Would you then be triggered to become frustrated or angry with the situation or even with the person who is supposed to be helping you? Therefore, using positive phrases and avoiding trigger word is important to keep phone conversation on track, to keep negative emotions in check, so these do not escalate and negatively impact what you can do to help your customer.</p> <p>Active voice tells what you, someone or something will do. Passive voice tells what is done to someone or something.</p>

		<p>Always speak in an active voice, that is – begin by saying “I”, “You” & “We” or the subject.</p> <p>It makes the meaning clear, as well as accountability to demonstrate that responsibility is assigned and taken on to see through your customer’s concerns It conveys professionalism and gives assurance to your customer that you are confident, and your organisation is responsive and can be counted on.</p> <p>Phone etiquette also means to adhere to some common rules of thumb And these slip ups or mistakes may creep in, especially if you are talking to a long-standing customer whom you are very familiar with putting down others, complaining, over-promising, crossing the line to share personal details, erodes your professionalism as well as the image of your organisation.</p>
14		Let us try an activity to drag and match the concepts of listening.
		Yes!!! You have gotten it correct. You will be learning more about these concepts and deepen your understanding
		Not to worry that you have not gotten it correct. You will be learning more about these concepts and deepen your understanding.
15		<p>Dr. Stephen R. Covey once said, “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”</p> <p>The ability to listen is as important as the ability to speak because a knee-jerk response is far from a full closure that comes only from complete understanding of the situation and concerns.</p> <p>Poor listening takes a narrow focus. If you had taken Unit 2 Phone Conversations Go Wrong, you may recall me-first attitude which focuses only on your personal needs. You pay attention to the information that is useful to you, so that you can close the case quickly, or avoid spending a long time with an unhappy customer.</p> <p>Empathetic listening takes a broader approach. There is mindfulness and empathy because you consider what it is like to be the person you are listening to. It changes your frame of reference to see and address the situation the way your customer sees it.</p> <p>Active listening is to listen for what is spoken and what is not spoken. Earlier, we covered choice of words and tone of voice. Sense make and take note of what is going around and about your customer his or her pitch and intonation, softness of voice, pauses, energy level.</p> <p>Turning on all your senses and intuition when listening, means you are also giving your full attention, to his or her feelings and emotions behind the words used.</p> <p>Crying in the background, anxious breathing, stuffed nasal voice, these may be tell-tale signs about your customer’s circumstances and situation. So practise eempathetic and active listening, particularly when phone conversations are difficult or challenging.</p> <p>It makes a difference in examining and uncovering complexities as well as impact the quality of your actions and help to your customer.</p>

16		Let us try an activity to drag and match the concepts of probing or asking questions
	Correct response	Yes!!! You have gotten it correct. Let us learn more.
	Incorrect response	Not to worry that you have not gotten it correct. Let us learn more.
17		<p>As the saying goes, “Before you assume, learn the facts. Before you judge, understand why.” When you are assisting your customer with their issues and challenges.</p> <p>It is important to find out what and why happened, with as much relevant information, so you can explore plausible options to assist them. Paraphrasing, asking open-ended question, and asking leading questions.</p> <p>Are ways to elicit relevant and useful information from your customer while they are talking and sharing more, you will also have a good sense of his or her emotions and feelings about the issue or situation.</p> <p>Please practise paraphrasing, particularly if your customer has shared a lot of information with you.</p> <p>You need to ask and confirm on your correct understanding of what was said. You need to also clarify doubts on parts which are unclear.</p> <p>Please ask open-ended questions and you will be encouraging your customer to share about the How, Why, What, Who, When, Where.</p> <p>As they describe in more details to you, you will learn more about the issue or situation, and has more relevant data or information to work with</p> <p>Avoid closed-ended questions because your customer’s answers will be short. They reply with a Yes, No, Agree, Disagree, or a choice out of several options and these gives you no insights about the issue or situation.</p> <p>Please ask leading questions. It means your questions are suggestive, either to make a recommendation, pitch an idea, or imply a view to your customer The purpose is for you to put across your message and get your customer to consider it and give it more thoughts. When your customer respond to share his or her opinion, assessment, or receptiveness towards the recommendation or suggestion. You will be able to sense make, negotiate, and work towards best solutioning.</p> <p>Asking leading questions is a good practice, especially when phone conversations are difficult or challenging because you are unsure of how your customer thinks or feels.</p>
18		<p>Recall that there may be a need for you to transfer call or take down messages. In this case, exchanging information would mean you taking down relevant details so these may be passed on to your fellow co-worker to assist the customer. You would be asking for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of the customer • His or her contact details • The purpose of his or her call • When would be a good time to do a call-back

		<p>Exchanging information would also mean you committing to some actions, such as: Informing the customer whom or which department would be attending to him or her when the customer can expect the call-back</p> <p>You should end the conversation by assuring the customer that he or she can call again, before the day of call-back, if the need arises.</p> <p>Finally, you will need to take steps ensuring that this customer's call is promptly followed up by fellow co-worker.</p>
19		<p>If you had taken Unit 2 Phone Conversations Go Wrong You may recall the sender's and receiver's expectations during the phone conversation and that phone conversations get tough when these expectations are not met.</p> <p>If you commit to practise Outcome-first Attitude and excellent phone etiquette, do you believe that these expectations would likely be met?</p> <p>And if so, it would ease your phone conversation with your customer Because your words and actions will demonstrate responsiveness, accuracy, appropriateness and accountability, to follow through and resolve your customer's needs and requests.</p> <p>Do indicate your views.</p>
20		<p>You may wish to print this cheatsheet for quick reference to remind yourself to practise outcome-first attitude and excellent phone etiquette from start to end of a phone conversation.</p>
21		<p>Congratulations!</p> <p>You have successfully completed Unit 3 - Phone Etiquette,</p> <p>If you wish to save a copy of the e-Learning script, please click on the link.</p> <p>We end with a reflection activity, so you can give more thoughts to your practice of Outcome-first Attitude and Phone Etiquette for a difficult and challenging phone conversation with a customer.</p> <p>Please click on the link to submit your reflection.</p> <p>We thank you and we wish you success in learning and applying the skills and know-how!</p>