



Effective Telephone Communication

The telephone is a good way to talk to people without having to offer them a drink.

—Fran Lebowitz

Effective communication skills are an essential key to success in the corporate world, and the telephone is a service tool that impacts your bottom line. When doing business over the phone, your voice not only represents you, it also represents your company, your team and your message. By utilizing proper business telephone etiquette, you help to create a positive first impression with your client or customer.

Telephone communication takes various forms; it can be a casual conversation between friends or a more formal part of a business presentation. It is important to remember that effective telephone communication begins before you even pick up the phone. Thinking about what message you want to convey, what intentions you will employ, and how you propose to get your information across are all part of effective telephone communication.

POSITIVE aspects of telephone communication

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NEGATIVE aspects of telephone communication

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



According to the U.N. Telecom Agency, there are approximately _____ mobile phone subscribers in the world.



In the corporate environment, the telephone can be used to:

- Sell a product or service
- Place orders
- Pay bills
- Share ideas
- Handle complaints
- Clarify situations
- Promote ideas or programs
- Provide customer support
- Make travel arrangements
- Discuss issues

Conference Calls

Conference calls are an increasingly popular form of business communication as they conveniently and economically connect remote parties, both internally and outside of a given company. Teleconferencing brings people together at a fraction of the cost of travel and meeting facilities. Conference calls are often used in conjunction with web conferences, where presentations or documents are shared online.

Preparing for effective conference calls:

1. **Establish an agenda.** Establish a clear agenda for the meeting ahead of time. Make sure that all points you want to discuss are included and the appropriate amount of time has been allotted to accomplish that.
2. **Decide on meeting duration.** Determine how long it will take to cover the various points in the agenda, also leaving time for questions and discussion as well.
3. **Identify who should attend.** Make sure you only invite people that absolutely need to attend. This will help you avoid making people feel their time is being wasted. Keep the participant count as small as possible. Remember, the larger the group, the harder it will be to manage.
4. **Give all participants instructions to access the meeting.** This means sending out such things as dial in numbers and pass-codes ahead of time to avoid technical glitches.
5. **Distribute the agenda.** Send out a clear agenda and all pertinent supporting material to meeting participants prior to your virtual meeting. Also, it is helpful to send out reminders as the meeting date gets closer.
6. **Test your equipment.** Acquaint yourself with the tools that you will be using to help you control and enhance your meeting. The more tools you will be using, the more time you need to spend practicing with them.
7. **Set goals for the meeting.** Make sure you have clearly identified and communicated the purpose of the meeting as well as the goals and objectives you hope to achieve.



8. **Assign a note taker and a timekeeper.** Choose a person to watch the clock for you to ensure that your meeting stays on time and on track. Also, have someone take notes to capture information and document all decisions that are being made.
9. **Take into account time zones when scheduling your meeting.** Be conscious of the various locations and time zones of each person attending the meeting and choose the start and stop times for your meeting accordingly.
10. **Make arrangements to videotape or audiotape the meeting.** By recording the meeting, you can easily make it available to any team members who could not attend in real time.



According to a recent study, the average person spends _____ on hold during a given year.

Five main barriers to effective telephone communication:

1. Multi-tasking during the call
2. Poor preparation
3. No clear objective or agenda
4. Lack of engagement
5. Technical obstacles or limitations

Preparing for effective conference calls:

1. **Prepare carefully.** Begin by organizing your thoughts. Why are you making the call and what objective do you hope to accomplish? Think through what you want to say before making the call. It is often helpful to write some clear notes or bullet points of the main points you want to cover to serve as a guide for you. In addition, write down the names of the people you will be speaking to, lest you forget them mid-call.



2. **Monitor your body language.** Even though the caller cannot see you, your posture and body language still influence your communication. Sit upright to avoid constricting your voice and smile even though you are not seen. Also, feel free to move about the room to provide some energy to your vocal delivery. If possible, try to create a positive image in the listener's mind of you looking interested.
3. **Speak clearly.** It is easy for your listeners to miss what you have said if they can't understand you. Try to take your time and speak in a measured, friendly tone of voice. Avoid monotone so as not to bore your audience or communicate disinterest and be careful to articulate clearly to avoid mumbling. Keep volume at a conversational level, as much as possible.
4. **Listen actively.** Put your focus on what the other person is saying. Concentrate on the speaker; it will allow you to answer questions more effectively. Try not to interrupt others and take your time before answering. Doing so will allow you to better gauge what the listener is asking and better formulate your response.
5. **Define your objective and intention.** Stay focused on your agenda and the business at hand. This may mean limiting social conversation and small talk to stay on track. Keep your objective in mind and adjust your delivery and intention cues to accomplish this.
6. **Pace yourself.** Take a deep breath before picking up your telephone to make a call. Slow down your speaking rate so you can be understood clearly. This will make you appear more relaxed and at ease during the conversation. Speaking too fast automatically creates barriers and confusion for those on the other end of the call.
7. **Choose your words carefully.** Utilize a Master Introduction to clearly state who you are and the purpose of your call. Be precise with your words; make your points short, polite and to the point; whenever possible, say less.
8. **Confirm understanding.** Because telephone communication limits your ability to read the body language of the other participants, it is essential that you frequently use checkbacks with those on the call to ensure your message is getting through and there are no questions.
9. **Give full attention to the call.** Avoid the temptation to multi-task during the call. Focus on the telephone conversation itself. Because your sense of sight is not being fully utilized, your attention can wander. Combat this by removing distractions from your desk. Ask others not to interrupt you while you are on the call.
10. **Manage your time.** It is both possible and essential to utilize the phone in a time-efficient way. Assign someone on the call to keep you on track by making you aware of how much time remains. Always end the call on time. Doing so provides an example to others about how an effective conference call should be run.