

## Creating a Great First Impression by Phone - By Denise Moretti

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Phone etiquette helps encourage clear lines of communication, build rapport, and avoid misunderstanding. It is an important part of customer service and influences the first impression that people form of your business. Here's how to let callers know that they are dealing with a great company:

### **Great customer service begins BEFORE the phone even rings. Make sure that you:**

- œ Have an organized desk
- œ Pen and paper ready
- œ A list of phone extensions nearby
- œ Know the names, title, and responsibilities of everyone in your office
- œ Have an updated list as to who is in the office today, who is in a meeting, who is out to lunch, and when will they be back
- œ Have a list of who to refer calls to (general topic and person responsible)
- œ Know who has assistants and where calls should be directed if the assistant is out of the office
- œ If you are not comfortable greeting callers, practice in front of a mirror
- œ Learn the call transfer system thoroughly
- œ Familiarize yourself with the answers to general questions regarding your company
- œ Do not disclose confidential information

### **Some tips on answering the phone:**

- œ The best time to answer the phone is just after the second ring. You don't want to catch the caller off-guard by answering too quickly, nor do you want them to wait too long.
- œ Greet the customer; thank the customer for calling your company; identify yourself; ask how you can assist. For example: 'Good morning/Good afternoon. Thank you for calling \_\_\_\_\_. This is \_\_\_\_\_. How may I direct your call?'
- œ Answer in a warm, enthusiastic, friendly, and positive tone of voice. This makes callers understand that you are happy to assist.
- œ Smile! Believe it or not, it shows through the phone!
- œ LISTEN carefully to what the caller is saying or requesting
- œ Be patient. Stay cool, calm and collected.
- œ Ask callers for their names, even if it is not necessary, and use their names during the remainder the call.
- œ Speak clearly, slowly and in a low tone of voice (you don't want to seem like you're screaming)
- œ Never talk with anything in your mouth.

### **Putting a Caller on Hold:**

- œ When putting callers on hold, always ask permission.
- œ When taking callers off hold, always thank them for their patience.

### **Transferring a Caller:**

- œ All co-workers should know how to use the call transfer system. Everyone should know how to transfer callers directly to other co-worker's extensions; in this way callers will not have to repeat requests a second time and the number of transfers will be reduced.
- œ When transferring callers, tell them the name of the person to whom you are transferring them; announce callers' names to your co-workers.

**Taking Phone Messages:** Be sure to record the following information...

œ Caller's name and company (if applicable). Repeat this information out loud to ensure accuracy

œ Time and date of the call

œ Subject of the call

œ Ask if callers want their calls returned. If the answer is yes, get their phone number and ask what time would be convenient for them

**Creating a Great Last (until next time) Impression:**

œ Ask if you have answered all of the callers' questions

œ Thank them for calling

œ Always end with a pleasantry, such as: 'It was nice speaking with you!' 'Have a great day!'

œ Let the caller hang up first; this shows you are not in a hurry to get off the phone.

**DO:**

œ DO make the caller feel special.

œ DO develop a consistent greeting (hotels be sure to meet any brand standards) that is to be used by all staff. DO use a Unique Selling Proposition in your greeting.

œ DO put the phone down in a gentle manner if this is necessary during the call; it will be easier on the caller's ear.

œ DO speak directly into the receiver, without burying it on your shoulder or neck.

œ DO avoid background noise as much as possible.

œ DO put a small mirror next to the phone. Smile. Research shows that smiling can be 'felt' over the phone.

œ DO maintain a professional manner at all times!

**DON'T:**

œ DON'T type or shuffle papers. It suggests that you're not listening to the caller.

œ DON'T eat, chewing gum, or have anything in your mouth while talking on the phone.

œ DON'T sound rushed, as if you have more important things to be doing.

œ DON'T keep a caller on hold for more than 30 seconds. Speed sells!

For clarification or discussion, feel free to contact us: [news@hamistergroup.com](mailto:news@hamistergroup.com)

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