

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: PAGE FORMATTING KEY

CHAPTER 9. TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

Placing a Telephone Call. Unless you are making calls to good friends who automatically recognize your voice, ask, "Is Pat there?" and immediately identify yourself: "This is Ann Jones." This sets the tone for you as being polite. Never assume the person on the other end knows who you are.

Leaving Messages. Don't you just hate it when someone leaves you a telephone message and doesn't leave a callback number, or says his name so fast, you can't understand it? What are your thoughts about that person? In business it could mean a missed opportunity.

When you leave a telephone message, pause between your first and last name, especially if you have a complicated name. Spell your name to make it easier for the recipient to be clear about your name.

Say your telephone number slowly at the beginning and end of your message. Many people do not have a pen or pencil handy. By repeating your number, you do the recipient a favor by giving him an opportunity to write your number. Cell phones capture telephone numbers, so your recipient can just do a callback on your number, but what if you want your recipient to call you at another number? Make a habit to repeat your telephone number. When you give your telephone

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number, pause between the area code, prefix, and last four numbers. That way, your recipient won't have to replay your message to capture your telephone number.

Long-Winded Callers. Whoever places the call should be the one to offer to end the call. However, some people love to talk on the telephone and have plenty of time to do so. If you're caught in a conversation that seems unending, you'll have to take the initiative. *Amy Vanderbilt Complete Book of Etiquette* suggests you wait until the person pauses for a breath and say, "Oh, dear! I've just noticed the time. I'm late for an appointment." You don't have to be rude, but you may have to be emphatic.

Cell Phones and Pagers. Cell phones and pagers offer a tremendous amount of flexibility that people enjoy every day. With this technology come rules to ensure that you, as a user, should follow to avoid annoying others and appearing unprofessional.

- Shut off your cell phone and pager (or put them on vibrate) at the movies, the theater, and the opera. Paying customers are at these events to enjoy themselves and get extremely annoyed when a cell phone or pager goes off. This situation is even worse at a live performance. Unless there are exceptions, turn off your cell phone and pager in business meetings.
- Be considerate of others when using a cell phone in a public place. Don't cross the personal space boundary. Find an isolated spot so others don't need to hear your conversation.

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Be sensitive to those on the call. Remember, you are being judged even if people can't see you.

And for goodness sakes, make sure your speakerphone is on mute if you are talking to your co-workers and you say disparaging things about someone else on the call. Not cool. Better yet, don't say disparaging things at all!

Office Telephones. Avoid lengthy personal phone calls in the office. Sometimes you can't avoid a personal call, but long chatty conversations are not only out of place, but can get you in trouble. Your chatter annoys other people in the office or cubicles who cannot help overhearing and interrupts the routine of office procedure.

Electronic Answering Systems. Businesses have cut back administrative positions and installed computerized systems that answer calls electronically. Sometimes, the most annoying aspect of these systems is having to listen to a menu of options to reach a department or person, only to get yourself into a loop or lost trying to make your call. You can press "0" to reach a live person. Do not take out your annoyance on the person who answers. He has nothing to do with the installation of the system. Remember to be professional because if anyone overhears

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your conversation, you want to make sure you don't come off as a hothead.

Hill, Sharon A. *Wild Woman's Guide to Etiquette: Saving the World One Handshake at a Time*, 2005.

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