



- Goal:** Increase staff's awareness of proper telephone technique to help ensure good communication skills over the phone.
- Objective:**
1. To identify the components of professional telephone conversation.
 2. To learn the importance of an individual's vocal qualities in professional telephone conversation.
- Materials:** The *Art of Telephone Etiquette* handout
Create telephone reminder tents with your department's protocols for telephone etiquette
- Activity:**
1. Give handout to staff and provide them a few minutes to review it and discuss. (3 minutes)
 2. Does your department have a standard protocol for answering the phone? If so, please review at this time. If not, please have staff work as a group to determine your departmental telephone guidelines. Staff may want to script these standards. (5 minutes)
 3. Place the Telephone tents at each phone in your department for the next month.
 4. Post the *Art of Telephone Etiquette* poster on your department's communication board for the next month.

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COMMUNICATION: “*The Art of Telephone Etiquette*”

The Importance of Telephone Communication

Communicating by telephone requires special skills and techniques that are often different from communicating face to face. Sometimes, the first and only impression customers will have of us is over the phone. If our telephone service is efficient, considerate and friendly, it will maintain a positive image of our hospital. Effectively using the telephone requires sensitivity, patience and good listening skills if there is to be mutual understanding. Many complaints are handled over the phone, making it essential that everyone practice communication skills, courtesy and “LEARN” to handle dissatisfied or upset customers.

Telephone Techniques

Answer promptly. Allowing the phone to ring more than 3 times creates a negative impression and communicates indifference.

Smile as you offer a courteous greeting. A smile can be heard over the phone in your voice.

Identify yourself, your department and ask how you may help the caller.

Transfer calls effectively. Ask for and use the caller’s name. Ask permission when placing a caller on hold. Give the caller the number or extension they are being transferred to in case the call is lost. Use the hold button when acquiring information from the caller; don’t just lay the receiver down. Check back every 30-45 seconds to see if they want to continue to hold or if they’d prefer to leave their name and number for a return call.

Take a complete and accurate message.

Parts of a Good Message:

Name of person to receive message

Date and time of call

Name of caller

Caller’s company or organization

Caller’s phone number

Message and your name

Page 2: The Art of Telephone Etiquette

Voice Quality

Even with fiber optic cable, telephones distort the tones and shadings that give your voice “personality”. It’s easy to understand why becoming aware of and working to improve your telephone voice is so important.

Normal Volume: Not too loud, not too soft.

Speak Clearly: Don’t mumble. It makes you sound sullen, confused and unintelligent. Patiently repeat any information that is misunderstood.

Steady Pace: If you race through your conversation, callers feel unimportant and may become confused. If you speak too slowly, they may become impatient and again you may sound incompetent.

Pleasant Tone: Use a smile to help you on the phone. Your customers will have confidence in your ability to help them. You will sound skillful and ready to get the job done.

Energy: You will sound more efficient and create confidence in the entire staff if you maintain your energy on the phone! Be sure to thank the caller and don’t forget to say “You’re Welcome” or “My Pleasure”.

Remember, a telephone call to our hospital may be the most important thing the customer does all day. It may be the most important call of their life. Be sure to use active listening and excellent telephone skills to decrease the chances of misunderstanding!

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