



# MAKING THE MOST OF THE TELEPHONE

APPENDIX



**DREAMTEAM**  
COACHING

## MAKE THE MOST OF THE TELEPHONE

First impressions count, and as the telephone is the number one form of contact with client's the following will provide tips for you and your support staff to 'wow' all whom you talk to.

Did you know that when you smile while answering the telephone your voice sounds more pleasant and congenial to the client? Smiling is the quickest way to communicate a positive attitude to the client. It is also as though they can see your smile, and that is great news for the company. It's also good client service.

With such bad service from large businesses, and poor call centres here and abroad, it does not take much to set yourself apart.

Use your voice effectively:

### **Dos**

- Smile: it provides positive energy.
- Speak to be heard and use expression.
- Speak clearly and pace yourself.
- Use simple and easily understood language and do not speak in jargon.
- Always make sure that your voice conveys that you are professional, polite, helpful, respectful and understanding.

### **Don'ts**

- frown, sigh or grumble;
- talk in monotone or mumble;
- speak too fast, or you will end up repeating yourself.

Remember how frustrating it can be when you are the customer; we all experience poor telephone communication. Look at the following list of what really frustrates you, so that you can improve your own service and ensure it does not happen to the people whom you call.

- being put on hold and thinking that you have been forgotten;
- being disconnected;
- feeling that your call is not important;
- waiting, but no one returns your call;
- background noise;
- feeling that you are talking to the wrong person;
- being lied to, and misled or given incorrect information.

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### BE PREPARED

Being effective on the telephone is all about being prepared.

- know how the telephone works and how to transfer calls.
- keep pens, pencils and paper close at hand.
- make sure that background noise is kept to a minimum.

### HANDLING AN IRATE CLIENT

We all have things that go wrong and sometimes that irate client becomes aggressive, rude or abrupt, so remember to be professional and polite; but you will need to demonstrate the following:

- Calmness: Do not raise your voice; it only makes things worse.
- Tactfulness: Be diplomatic and do not lecture the caller.
- Honesty: Do not over-promise and under-deliver, as it will only result in another call.
- Understanding and good listening show concern: Do what you can to resolve the problem.

### TELEPHONE TIPS FOR THE OFFICE

Answering incoming calls

- Answer incoming calls by the second or third ring
- Smile and give them a friendly greeting like good morning my name is..... how can I help you?
- Be courteous and answer the callers questions to the best of your ability and address concerns

### TRANSFERRING CALLS

- Tell the caller who you are transferring the call to and why.
- Ask their permission.
- Wait on the line until someone answers.

### TAKING A MESSAGE

- Be accurate; take down caller's name, telephone number and a suitable time to return the call.
- Record date and time of the call.
- Do not promise a call time back.

### PLACING THE CALLER ON HOLD

- Always ask their permission before putting them on hold.
- Check hold every 15 to 20 seconds, so that the person on the other end does not feel forgotten.
- Arrange to call back if the client is on hold more than a couple of minutes and always say thank you for holding.

### LEAVING A MESSAGE

- Be brief and to the point.
- Leave your name and contact details.
- Give a brief message and reason for the call.
- If you expect a call back, give a suitable time.



## RETURNING THE CALLS

- Always do so within 24 hours.
- Be prepared with all necessary information at hand.
- Ask the person if it is convenient to talk; if not set up a suitable time.

## SAY IT RIGHT

### Rather than saying ...

Who is this?

What is your name?

What do you want?

He/she is at lunch

### Try saying ...

May I ask who is calling?

Please can I take your name, sir/  
madam?

How can I help you?

He/she is not at his/her desk right  
now; can I take a message?

Would you like to leave your name  
and telephone number and I will  
ask him/her to return your call?