

Telephone Calls in the Business World¹

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This publication about telephone etiquette in the business world is the second of a four-part series on developing effective business communication practices. This series also covers business communication writing as well as resume, application letter, and personal statement writing.

You will be called on in the business world not only to write well, but also to speak well. Every time you make or receive a telephone call, you represent your organization. The person on the other end of the phone cannot see you, so that person's first impression of you or your organization may well be determined by your voice and telephone manners. Following are some other pointers to keep in mind when you answer the telephone:

- **Immediately identify yourself and your organization in a few words.**
- **Try as quickly as possible to learn with whom you are speaking.**
- **Maintain a cheerful and considerate attitude toward each caller.** A caller usually can recognize if you seem bored. This is discourteous and paints a poor image of you and the organization. To help maintain a cheerful attitude, smile when you talk.
- **Use the telephone properly.** Keep your lips about ½ inch to 1 inch from the mouthpiece. Pronounce letters, numbers, and names clearly. Spell out names if they could be misunderstood.

- **Return calls.** If you must leave the telephone during a conversation and will not be able to return immediately, say that you will call back and then follow through.
- **Say “good-bye” pleasantly.** The person making the call should end the conversation.
- **If you leave a message on someone's voicemail, identify yourself and give your phone number first.** Then, briefly explain why you are calling. End the message by repeating your name and phone number.
- **Be sure to speak slowly, especially when saying a telephone number.**

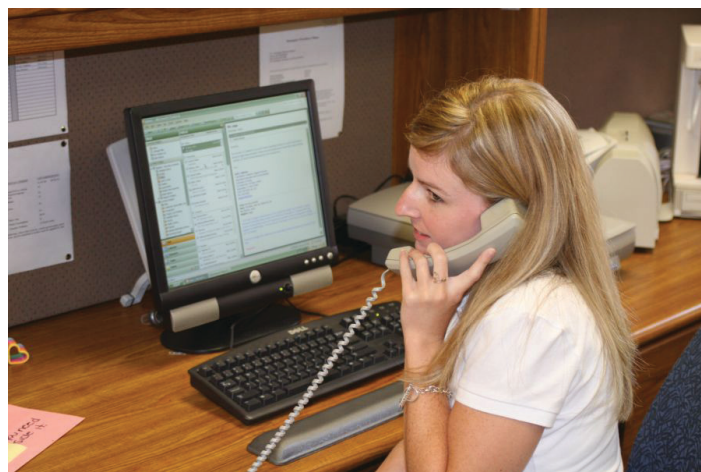


Figure 1. Knowing how to communicate well on the telephone is an important skill in today's business world. Take the time to learn proper telephone etiquette.
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