


Salute



**Leadership
Albany**



Are your employees' phone skills attracting new customers or turning them off ?

CUSTOMERCENTRIC

create value+loyalty through customer service

Part II



CUSTOMERCENTRIC training
focuses on creating a culture that's
all about the customer,
helping build customer and brand
loyalty that boosts your bottom line.

What are Your Telephone



Pet Peeves?

GRRRRRR

**You young whipper-snappers
will never know**



**the joy of slamming a hang-up
on a rotary phone!**

**At least the flip phone
offered some kind of
user satisfaction!**



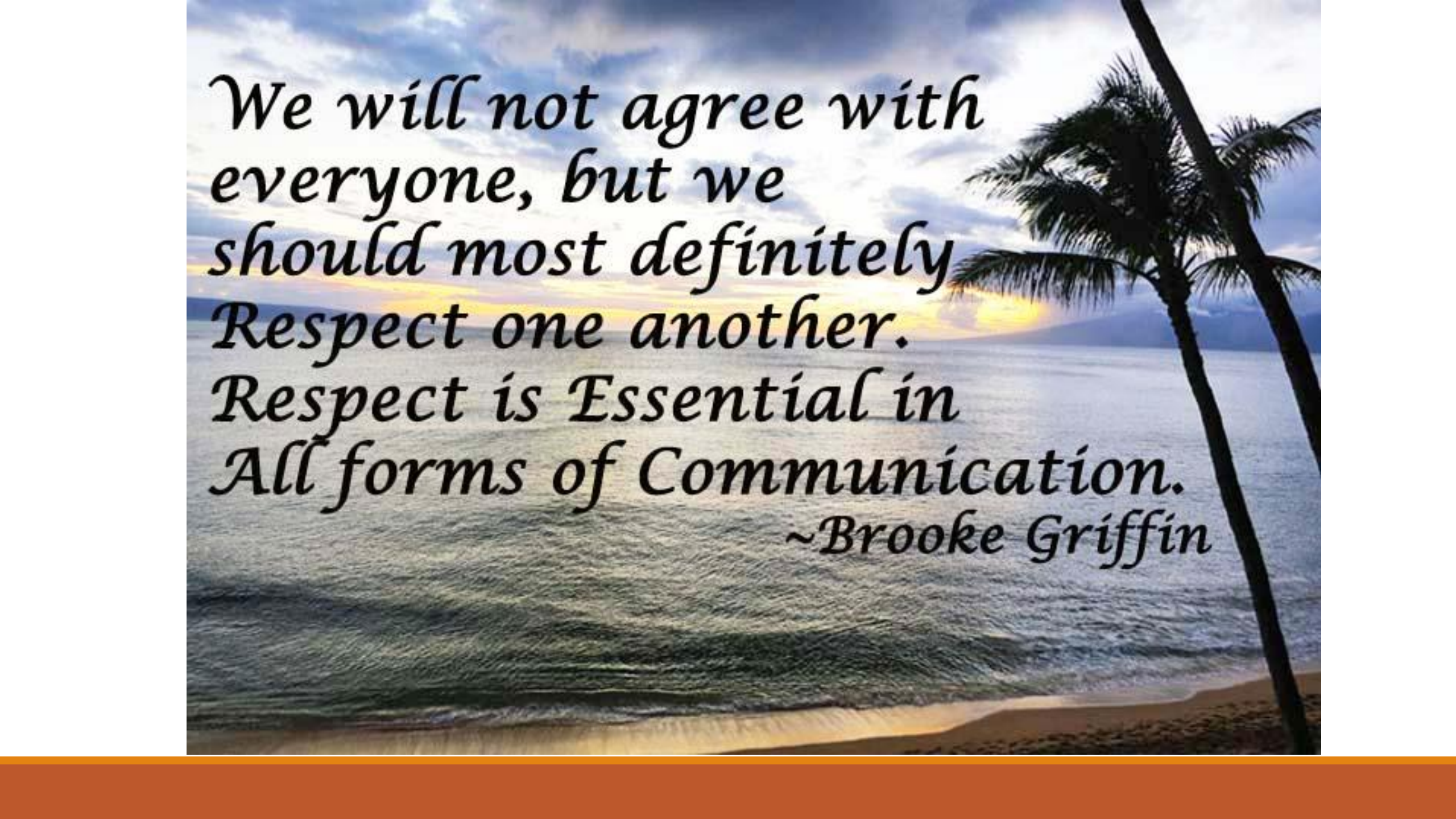
**Effective
communication
is 20% what you
know and
80% how you
feel about what
you know.**

Jim Rohn

How Do you Meet Customer Expectations with Your Telephone Talk?



1. Responsiveness
2. Reliability
3. Assurance
4. Empathy
5. Results

A tropical beach scene with a sunset, waves, and palm trees. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the water and sky. The waves are gentle and white-capped. Two palm trees are visible on the right side of the frame, their fronds silhouetted against the sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

*We will not agree with
everyone, but we
should most definitely
Respect one another.
Respect is Essential in
All forms of Communication.
~Brooke Griffin*

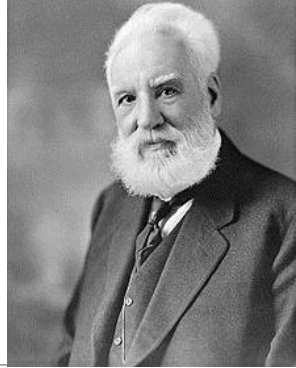
Mastering Telephone Basics

PART I



Alexander Graham Bell...1876

Scottish-Born Inventor



Offered Western Union his telephone technology for a rumored \$100,000.

The company dismissed it as an 'electrical toy.'

“Technically, we do not see that this device will ever be capable of sending recognizable speech. The idea is idiotic that Mr. Bell would want to install one of their ‘telephone devices’ in every city.

Furthermore, why would any person want to use this ungainly and impractical device when he can send a message to the telegraph office.”

Why is Telephone Etiquette Important?

First impressions

More than 80% of first-time customers call before coming in

Projects professionalism

Leaves caller with a favorable impression of you/your company



Why is Service Challenging over the Telephone?

- Unable to project positive gestures and body language
- Distractions/Interruptions
- Can become robotic
- Multi-tasking



Diverse Roles to Use with Over-the-Phone Customers

FRIEND ROLE

- Being a host/hostess...making caller feel comfortable and important
- Ensuring all promises made are maintained
- Address feelings
- Give reassurance

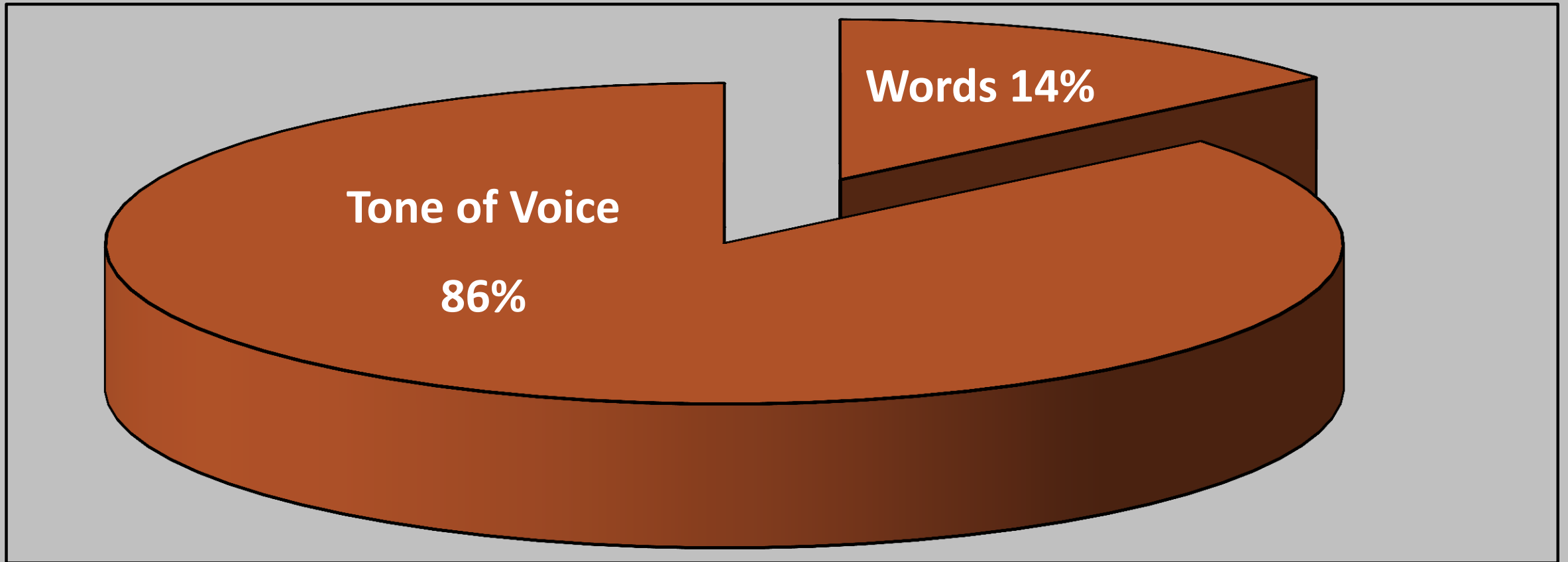
DETECTIVE ROLE

- Problem-solver
- Being persistent
- Obtaining specific facts
- Clear up misunderstandings
- Identify resources

TEACHER ROLE

- Appropriate when customer is unsure or misguided
- Educate positively
- Paraphrase and restate
- Recommend course of action

How Messages are Perceived



FIVESTAR FACTOID:

How you say what you say is...

5 times more important than the words that you use!

Phone Call Impression...a mental picture is formed

P –Pitch

I – Inflection

C –Courtesy

T –Tone

U –Understanding

R –Rate

E –Enunciation



Placing Calls



- Verify the number
- Know the name of the person and how to pronounce it
- Introduce yourself, your company and the name of the person you are calling
- Immediately ask: *“Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____, I need a few minutes of your time. Is this a good time for you?”*
- Be brief and pointed
- Use the person’s name
- Thank the person for their time

Free Pronunciation Resources:

- ✓ Dictionary Boss: www.dictionaryboss.com
- ✓ Pronounce Names: www.pronouncenames.com
- ✓ Hear Names: www.hearnames.com
- ✓ The Name Engine: www.thenameengine.com
- ✓ Inogolo: www.inogolo.com

Before the Telephone Rings...

- Discontinue all conversations or activities
- Tune distractions out - and the caller in
- Have pen/notepad ready
- Sit up straight
- Smile
- Answer promptly
- Speak clearly, distinctly and pleasantly
- Be courteous in all situations



The Greeting

- Project a bright, cheerful tone
 - Speak clearly at a conversational pace; soft yet audible
 - Don't mumble or race through the greeting
-

REMEMBER, THE “VERBAL HANDSHAKE”

- Personalize the call



4-Part Receptionist Greeting



Greeting: *"Good Morning or Afternoon"*

Identify your company:

Leadership Albany

Give your first name: *Mary speaking.*

Ask: *How may I direct your call?"*

Inside Call – 3 Parts:



1. Identify the name of your department
2. State your first name
3. Ask...how you can help

Answering for a Department Outside Call: 5-Parts

1. Greeting
“Good Morning or Afternoon”
2. Identify company
3. Identify department
4. State your first name
5. Ask...how you can help



Placing A Customer on Hold



Ask Permission:

“May I place you on hold, please?”

“Will you hold please?”

Give Options:

- Offer to take a message
- Offer to call them back
- Volunteer to be of assistance

Transferring A Call:

“How may I direct your call?”



Explain ‘why’ the caller is being transferred; ask permission.



Give the caller the name/number of the person you are transferring.



Thank the caller for allowing you to transfer the call.



If you can, stay on the line.

Answering Machines/Voice Mail Tips

- Keep your message current
- Don't use a clever/cute messages unless...
- Offer an alternate number
- Listen to your own message periodically



**Callers hang up when they
encounter automated
response systems.**

**–Andrew Lupton, CEO,
U.S. Message Corporation**

Taking a Message

1. Date – time
2. Caller's first name
3. Company name/
caller's department
4. Phone Number
5. Message
6. Your name



You are “The Face” of your Company

- Be prepared...know your phone system
- Anticipate every call will involve a message; use consistent phone pads
- First impressions being with YOU
- Answer professionally...every time
- Every call is the first call
- Be noise conscious
- Speed is not success



Tips for the Irrate/Abusive Caller

- It's not personal – you are the lightning rod...not the target
- Use the **AEAP** Technique
 - **A**cknowledge – **E**mpathize – **A**ccept Responsibility and **P**repare to help
- This caller is the exception...not the norm
- Interject immediately: *“Excuse me Mr./Ms.....I want to help you; however, I cannot accept your abusive language.”*



Names Can be Challenging

- Forgetting or mispronouncing the caller's name happens
- Immediately, jot down the caller's name
- Actively listen...(Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms., or First Name)
- When in doubt, use "Ms." vs. "Mrs."



MANIC MONDAYS



- If you are on one line, and the other line rings:

- Ask permission to place the 1st caller on hold
- Place caller on hold **without** excuses
- Answering the ringing line and capture the caller's phone number
- Place 2nd caller on hold
- Return to 1st caller and complete the call
- Return go the 2nd caller and say, *"Thank you for holding. How may I help you today?"* without excuses



BEST SCENARIO:

The 2nd Call rolls over to another line

Positive Phrases:



- I apologize.
- Thank you.
- Please.
- May I take a message?
- May I help you?
- Consider it done.
- I'm confident I can help you.
- It was nice talking with you.
- Would you like to leave your number?
- May I put you on hold?
- Thank you for your patience.
- I can appreciate your frustration.
- Solving your issue is important to me.
- Absolutely. Positively. It's a pleasure.
- Is there anything else I can help you with?
- We appreciate your business.

WHAT YOU MEAN

- He is out or I don't know where he is.
- She hasn't come in yet.
- He took the day off.

TELL THE CALLER

- He is not in the office at the moment; however, I do expect him.
- Presently, she isn't available.
- He is not in today.

-Always Give Options-

- ✓ Could I help you?
- ✓ May I take a message
- ✓ Would you like to leave a message on her/his voice mail?

Telephone Taboos

- Allowing your “foul mood” or your coworkers to carry over in conversations.
- Hanging up on your customers first
- Eating, drinking, chewing
- Laughing
- Typing on your keyboard
- Sidebar conversations
- Laying the phone down
- Putting callers on hold or speaker phone without permission
- Using jargon/slang
- Rushing callers
- Venting about personal issues
- Personal calls while on company time
- Not returning phone calls or voice mail messages



Listening...you can't learn anything with our mouth wide open.

- Good listening is a habit
 - You can build rapport and relationships
 - You can identify and eliminate poor habits
-

Common Poor Listening Habits

- Interruptions
- Fear factor
- Believing you know more
- Overreacting
- Lack of focus





This is a real cake and this really did happen.

This is for someone who was moving from an insurance claims office.

The following is how the conversation went:



Employee: “Hello, The Cake Place, what can I do for you?”

Customer: “I would like to order a cake for a going away party.”

Employee: “What do you want on the cake?”

Customer: “Best Wishes Suzanne” and underneath that please add, “We will miss you.”





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APATHY

IF WE DON'T TAKE CARE OF THE CUSTOMER,
MAYBE THEY'LL STOP BUGGING US.

Bureaucratic Bounce

Avoid Cliffhangers...curt replies



RUDENESS...is never in style!



1. What is your definition of rude customer service on the telephone?
2. What unprofessional behaviors irritate you the most when you are interacting by phone with another company?
3. If rudeness is not intentional, what could it be the result of?



Customer can be rude and get away with it.
Employees cannot – if they want to keep their job.

Can you Judge A Book By It's Cover?

We are judged by people through what we say, how we say it, our body language, facial expressions, our tone of voice, and the way we answer the phone.

Your company is judged by the way your telephone is answered.

You CANNOT...NOT make a first impression!

Telephone Trivia

What is the most powerful tool of your voice in telephone communications?

1

Pace

2

Posture

3

Listening

4

Tone

4. Tone

Your tone of voice is 86% of
your message
interpretation.

Next Question

Telephone Trivia

Is your posture important in projecting clarity and vitality in your voice?

- ☐ 1 Yes
- ☐ 2 Sometimes
- ☐ 3 No
- ☐ 4 It depends on whether I'm sitting or standing

1. YES

You have more energy and project more clarity and vitality when you have good posture.

Next Question

Email Etiquette

PART II



WHAT ARE YOUR EMAIL ISSUES?

If you are
checking for
new email
every 5
minutes...

**That's
24,000
times
a year**

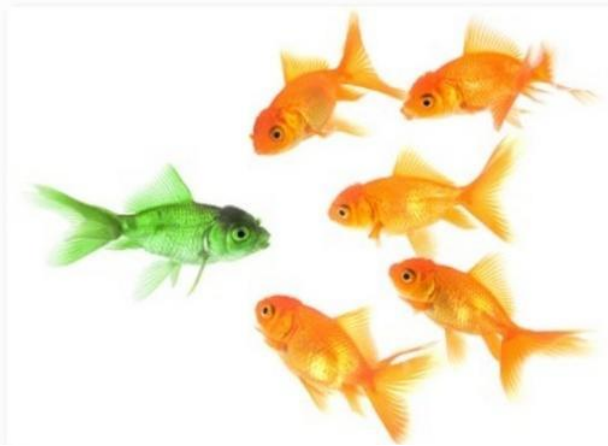
If you are trying to focus, don't
bling...that pesky little sound that informs
you a new message has been received.

RULE OF THUMB:

Check 4-7 times a work day
Doing so, will make a massive difference
in your productivity and work sanity.

Putting the Service Back in Your Emails

HOW DO YOU COME ACROSS?



ARE YOU STANDING OUT?

Give Each Customer a Personal Response

Why do customers choose email?


What kind of reply do they deserve?

- Each customer has a unique question...deserving of a unique answer
- Cutting/Pasting stock replies is okay...just personalize the opening and closing



Clarity and Sincerity = Impact

- Get to the point with sincerity
- Ask yourself, *“Would this response satisfy me if I were the customer?”*
- Take that extra moment to give full attention
- Speak from the viewpoint of the customer: *“This is what I can do for you.”*



CLEAR. CONCISE. IMPACTFUL.
Communication that gets results.

Basic Email Do's and Don'ts

- Use email for scheduling, routing updating, quick questions and other administrative efficiencies. Use the phone or face-to-face for everything else.
- Not a good tool for delegating, providing business updates, employee disciplining, coaching, providing feedback, communicating sensitive messages, delivering negative messages
- Live by the 24-hour rule...never respond in haste
- Be extra polite; use discretion
- You are judged by your grammar and spelling
- Write every email for your boss' eyes
- Stop senseless cc's
- Use free, online mailboxes for your personal emails, i.e. Gmail





Effective Email Tips

1. Use the subject line to inform...be specific; Don't overuse "urgent" or "priority"
2. Always acknowledge regardless
3. Be cautious about what you include and who you copy (if you are on the CC line – don't reply)
4. Be concise and punctual
5. Organize: Bullet points/numbers
6. Avoid sarcasm – jokes – opinions
7. Watch your tone
8. Remember the attachments
9. Answer all questions
10. Lose the emoticons
11. Adhere to company standards
12. Set up an auto-responder if away for more than a day

Formatting Emails

- Do not type in all caps
 - Do not bold your type
-
- No patterned backgrounds/clip art
 - Do not use small case fonts
 - Refrain from multiple colors

Forwarding Emails

- Use caution about forwarding emails that say to do so
- Honor a person's right to refrain from forwarding emails
- If forwarding, personalize it to the person
- Never forward without editing out other email addresses/headers/commentary



Email Signatures

Short – Condensed – Black – Company Standards

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Voice Mail Etiquette

PART III

Make Voicemail Customer Friendly



- Speak slowly, clearly and enunciate
- Keep message short and specific
- Inform callers when they can expect a return call...be specific
- Give callers another extension to contact
- State: To reach an operator, press zero
- Check messages at least every 2 hours; respond by the end of the business day if possible
- In leaving a VM message: Give your name – company name – phone number – reason for call – when and where the person can return your call
- Avoid phone tag

Your Voicemail Message Reality

It's the impression of who you are when you are not there.

It informs the caller how original you are – how creative you are – how friendly you are – how professional you are...or not.



"Hi, this is Rita Suiter with FiveStar Customer Service. Your call is very important to me. Please leave your name, number and message or feel free to call my cell number, 229.563.7482. I will do my best to return your call by the end of the business day.

Thanks for your call and I hope you have a FiveStar Day!"

Cell Phone

STEPS TO ETIQUETTE EXCELLENCE



WHAT ARE YOUR CELL PHONE
IRRITANTS?

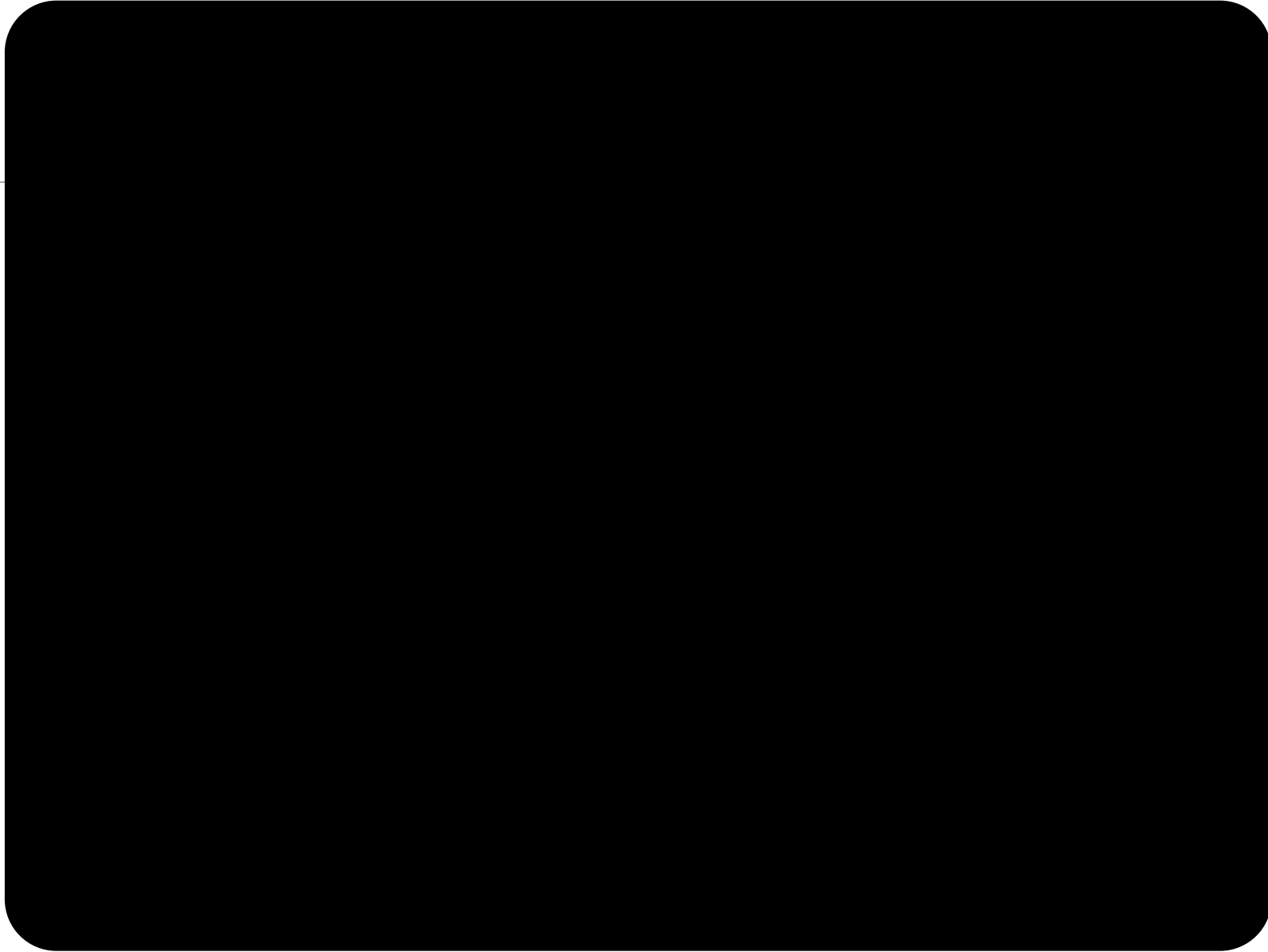


Respect Your Employer and Others

- Give 100% focus to the face-to-face customer
- Watch your voice level
- Keep private matters private
- Turn your phone off or silence it
- Never interrupt face-to-face conversations
- Carefully choose cell phone rings
- No reading under the table
- Let the caller know you are on your mobile
- Use voicemail feature
- Inform people you are expecting an important call



A closing reminder from Toby Keith



Rita... proud to be Leadership Albany's CUSTOMERCENTRIC COACH

FIVESTAR

★★★★★ *Customer Service Strategies, LLC*

**Rita Suiter...CREATING CUSTOMERCENTRICITY
SINCE 1999**

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