

III. Communication Points

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At the end of this segment, you will be able to:

- Use the techniques for better speech delivery
- List the components of a professional telephone voice
- List the essential of a professional communicator
- List the techniques for effective listening

A. Your Professional Image

Every time you talk to a prospect, a customer, or anyone for that matter, you transmit an image of yourself and your company. Your personality and competence come across as clearly over the telephone as they do in person. For this reason, you have to make sure that your telephone image is highly professional.

The name of the game in telephone professionalism is:

■ **Courtesy**

■ **Confidence**

Write down ways that you can recognize each characteristic by talking to someone over the telephone.

Courtesy: _____

Confidence: _____

Check List for Projecting a Professional Image

Courtesy

- Show respect for time — yours and theirs.
- Concentrate on what the called party is saying.
- Use concise, polite language.
- Speak clearly.
- Use questions often and listen carefully.
- Speak with a smile.
- Sound interested and concerned.

Confidence

- Have your material in front of you.
- Speak about the called party's needs.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be animated.
- Speak with a smile.

B. Professionally Speaking

For successful telephone communication, you need to be aware of your:

- Tone
- Inflection
- Audibility/Breathe Control
- Pitch
- Enunciation & Articulation
- Mechanics

Your voice is the only welcome mat that your Company has!



Tone!

Your tone reveals the emotions you're experiencing. Have you ever noticed how your voice changes as your emotions do? When you are happy and cheerful your voice reflects that. When you are down and blue, your voice lack color.

To demonstrate, say the word "Wow, it's you" conveying the following emotions:

SARCASM

ANGER

SURPRIZE

FRIGHT

DISGUST

APATHY

Depending on your tone of voice, these three words could convey many different meanings! Be aware of

The unspoken message your tone conveys!

The pet test! Write a script scolding your new pet puppy for missing the "mark."

Inflection!

Since you cannot rely on nonverbal communication while speaking on the telephone, you need to use inflection to add life and give meaning to what you are saying. Let your voice rise and fall naturally. Your voice naturally rises when you anticipate, question, or feel interest. Your voice naturally falls when you arrive at a decision or complete a statement.

A downward inflection carries an authoritative air. A sing-song inflection tends to make the speaker sound phony or flighty. A voice with no inflection is monotonous and boring, while a moderate amount of inflection presents a competent, decisive image to those with whom you speak. In selling, enthusiasm in your voice is very important. Practice using inflection when you are on the phone.

Emphasis Through Inflection

Read the following sentences aloud, emphasizing the underlined words. The various meanings determined by your vocal inflection are immediately following in parentheses.

I didn't tell Tom you were incompetent. (Sharon told him-)

I didn't tell Tom you were incompetent. (I'm keeping the fact to myself.)

I didn't tell Tom you were incompetent. (I only intimidated it.)

I didn't tell Tom you were incompetent. (I told everyone but Tom.)

I didn't tell Tom you were incompetent. (I said that someone we work with was incompetent He must have drawn his own conclusions.)

I didn't tell Tom you were incompetent. (I told him you are incompetent.)

The above is a demonstration of how the same sentence can convey seven different meanings simply by placing the emphasis. This is especially important when selling over the telephone.

Audibility/Breath Control

The volume at which you speak has a definite impact on the image you project. People who speak very soft are often thought of as shy, timid people. People who speak very loud may be assumed to be pushy or overly aggressive.

Your normal speaking voice carries best over the telephone. You must also take into account the environment in which you find yourself. The rule is to speak loudly enough to be easily heard.

Projection is also important. Projecting your voice enables you to sound more confident. In order to project your voice you must maintain good posture while making your telephone calls. Also breathing with your diaphragm will enhance your voice qualities.

Pitch

Your voice pitch level is largely determined by heredity and physical growth. However, each of us has an adequate range from which to raise or lower pitch. Projecting your voice naturally will be the best.

If your voice is naturally high, speak more slowly and deliberately. This will make your voice:

- 1) more pleasant,
- 2) easier to understand,
- 3) more credible.

Enunciation And Articulation

One of the most common speech faults is slurring or running words together such as:

Whachasa? - What did you say?

Whosit? - Who is it?

Another fault is chopping off letters from words, especially the "ing's" and "th's" such as "I'm tryen' to get em."

One of the ways you will know if you are not communicating clearly is to have others question you with "What did you say?" or "I beg you pardon? Would you repeat that, please?" Chances are it is not the listener's poor hearing but the speaker's poor enunciation.

Give some examples of poor enunciation.

Good enunciation requires that you **open** your mouth!

Picture-perfect Voice Control

Pitch

High or low? Speech experts say to use your natural pitch.

Inflection

Don't talk in a monotone. Use feeling to express an idea or mood. Rising inflection toward the end of a sentence is very helpful.

Courtesy

Common everyday courtesy applies the same as fact-to-fact courtesy. It may be more important because you can't see the person to whom you are speaking.

Tone

Many times, it isn't what you say, but how you say it. Your voice can reflect sincerity, pleasantness, confidence, and interest.

Understanding

Avoid talking with anything in your mouth.

Rate

The basic rate of speech is 140 words per minute. If you speak too rapidly, people start listening to how fast you are talking instead of what you are saying. If you speak too slowly, it can be an irritation also.

Enunciation

Watch similarities, **T&D**, **P&B**, **E&P** all sound alike. Clear enunciation will help avoid misunderstanding the need to repeat yourself.

Words To Watch!

Words That Probe

What is your idea?
What do you think?
Can you illustrate?
What was the situation?
How do you feel about?
What happened then?
Could you explain?
Why?

Words That Motivate

Will you help me?
I'm so sorry.
It was my fault.
Thank you.
Gee, I'm proud of you!
Congratulations!
Help me understand.
Please
You are very kind.
I beg your pardon.
It's been a real pleasure.

Words That Irritate

Understand?
Get the point?
See what I mean?
You don't say?
But honestly now!
Not really . . . ?
I, me, my, mine
I'll tell you what!
Old friend.
Old pal.
Buddy

Words That Invite Action

You, your
Money
Save
New
Results
Benefit
Easy
Serve

The Professional Communicator

Most of your duties involve extensive use of the telephone. Pleasantness and a constant concern for sales and customers are essential to effective telecommunications. All conversations must project professionalism and a sincere desire to meet the needs of the called party.

It is necessary to use correct grammar and a pleasant tone of voice when transacting business over the phone. The called party's perception of the quality of the products at your company depends to a large degree upon the quality of your communication skills with the customer. Every one you speak with is **YOUR** customer. Slang, profanity, and rudeness are never appropriate. All incoming calls to your department must be answered no later than the third ring. If you are busy on another call, ask the party to whom you are speaking to please hold for a moment and let the ringing party know you will get to them as soon as possible. Always apologize for putting someone on hold.

When speaking on the telephone, complete sentences must be used to clearly communicate the message. Partial or cut-off sentences are grammatically incorrect and **SOUND** abrupt, snappy, and sometimes demanding. Clearly enunciate each word. It is important to pronounce each syllable and not to slur words. It is important to speak directly into the telephone receiver but not so close that words are difficult to understand.

All telephone conversations should be in a pleasant tone of voice. While the caller cannot see you, a smile is reflected in your voice. When a person smiles, the muscles of the face relax and the tone is pleasant.

When a person is tense or frowning, words will be choppy and **SOUND** irritable. If you are in a bad mood for any reason, it will adversely affect the caller. You can choose to allow your moods to color your voice or not!

ATTITUDE IS A MATTER OF CHOICE'.

Every phone user must learn the correct voice volume for speaking on the phone. A caller who has to strain because the voice volume is too low will lose interest in the conversation and will confuse the information that is being given in response to his/her questions. A tone of voice that is too loud is irritating and the caller will rush to complete the call without completing the necessary details. Extremes in voice volume interfere with maximizing the purpose of the call and closing the sale. The professional communicator must be able to focus on each call.

The call being handled must always be the most important thing you have to do at the moment. Each caller will appreciate the undivided attention to his/her needs and requests. It is important not to become involved in the other activities going on around you and not to be distracted by the noise or commotion

Each call must be started with a fresh tone and attitude. The problems encountered in meeting the needs of the previous caller must not be permitted to carry over and interfere with the present conversation. Each call must be treated with a fresh tone and attitude.

Rate of Speaking:

To get the “feel” of your speaking speed, read the following exercise to a partner. This piece should be read in one minute.

Your Company Personality

Your company has a public personality just like you have an individual personality. The company image strives to reflect:

CUSTOMERS are our most important people. We depend on customers.

CUSTOMERS are not an interruption of our work - they are the purpose of it.

CUSTOMERS do us a favor when they call - we are not doing them a favor by serving them.

CUSTOMERS are not numbers - they are human beings with feelings like our own.

CUSTOMERS are people who bring us their wants - it is our job to fill those wants.

CUSTOMERS are not people to argue or match wits with.

CUSTOMERS are deserving of the most courteous treatment we can give them.

CUSTOMERS are the people who make it possible to pay your salary.

CUSTOMERS are the lifeblood of our organization.

C. Communication Tips

Good Communication Requires:

The Oscar Awards!

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D. Listening Skills

Here is a quiz to identify your own irritating listening habits. It will also enable you to measure your own listening ability. Circle the answer that is most appropriate and then turn to the next page to determine your score.

1. I don't give callers a chance to explain what the problem is. (Often Seldom Never)
2. I never let callers complete more than a few sentences before interrupting. I act as if it is hard to wait for them to finish. (Often Seldom Never)
3. I find myself finishing sentences for callers. (Often Seldom Never)
4. I question what callers have just said indicating I wasn't listening. (Often Seldom Never)
5. I give callers the feeling I'm wasting time by listening. (Often Seldom Never)
6. I have a knack for steering callers off the subject with questions and comments. (Often Seldom Never)
7. Whenever others make a suggestion or propose an idea, my immediate reaction is "No."
(Often Seldom Never)
8. I always jump ahead of the caller and tell him or her what I think they had in mind. (Often Seldom Never)
9. I rephrase what is said in such a way that the meaning is distorted. (Often Seldom Never)
10. I argue with almost everything that is said to me. (Often Seldom Never)
11. I try to be flip when others have something serious to discuss. (Often Seldom Never)
12. I stare at this speaker as if disbelieving everything I hear. (Often Seldom Never)
13. I have a way of putting others on the defensive when I am listening. (Often Seldom Never)
14. I look at the speaker in a critical way so they wonder whether something is wrong. (Often Seldom Never)
15. I never stop doing what I am doing when approached with a question. (Often Seldom Never)

Quiz Score

To compute the score, circle and add up the values assigned to each item.

	Often	Seldom	Never
1.	3	1	0
2.	5	2	0
3.	3	0	0
4.	4	1	0
5.	5	1	0
6.	3	0	0
7.	3	0	0
8.	4	1	0
9.	3	0	0
10.	3	1	0
11.	6	2	0
12.	4	1	0
13.	4	1	0
14.	4	1	0
15.	5	2	0

Total

If your total score is: _____
Then your listening habits are:

60-80 Extremely poor

40-59 Very poor

20-39 Could stand improvement

0-19 Good!

Listening Points

“ A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something.”
Wilson Mixner.

“No man would listen to you talk if he didn’t know it was his turn next.” Edgar W. Howe

You have ONE mouth and TWO ears for a purpose!

“One of the best ways to persuade others is with your ears by listening.” Dean Rusk


“A bore: A person who talks when you wish him or her to listen.”
Ambrose Bierce

Listening Fun

1. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate that many times we just hear what is being said instead of listening.

- a. _____ b. _____
c. _____ d. _____
e. _____ f. _____
g. _____ h. _____

2. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate the different interpretations that can be received from verbal instructions.

<p>PAPA BULL</p> <p>MAMA BULL</p> <p>BABY BULL</p>	<p>_____</p>
	<p>DRUM</p> <p>SEX</p> <p>RUG</p>

E. Listening to Customers

Most salespeople earn

50%

of their salaries by listening!

6 Reasons for being a good listener:

- We learn a great deal by listening.
- It helps us solve problems.
- It gives us time to think.
- It increases our self-confidence.
- It helps us sell ideas.
- It generates ideas.

When someone speaks to you, he or she has a mental image or idea of what is being communicated. You listen. You hear the words, and in your own mind you conjure up an image. Is your mental image the same as the speaker's? If it is, then your response to the words will also be a response to the speaker's mental image.

Grade yourself on how well you listened and reproduced the mental image of your partner.

Worth Remembering!

Increase your listening span.

Deliberately try not to interrupt. Make sure the speaker has had the opportunity to convey the point of the message before you speak. Usually you have heard the message a hundred times before, but keep quiet and show the speaker you are genuinely interested.

Take time to listen.

Don't show that you are in a hurry. Many people need time to express themselves. Initial statements are frequently vague and do not represent what the speaker really wants to communicate. Don't rationalize that you are too busy to listen.

Give full attention.

You act like a good listener when you are alert. Such sounds as "uh huh, mmmm, " etc. demonstrate your attention and desire to build rapport.

Restate the message.

When the speaker is finished, restate the main points in your own words and ask if that is what is meant. This clears possible misunderstandings.

Avoid hasty evaluation.

One of the easiest things to do is to judge the other person's statement too hastily. Strive to see the point from the speaker's frame of reference.

Don't overreact to content.

Often poor listening can be attributed to getting overly excited or stimulated by what the speaker says. This often occurs when one of the listener's convictions, pet peeves, or prejudices is challenged. If you are attacked by a customer or your supervisor, for example, emotional filters keep you busy thinking up arguments which either self-defend or negate the challenges of the speaker. The rest of what is said is largely unheard.

Don't fake attention.

When we make up our minds that what the speaker has to say is dry, boring, or useless, we frequently fake attention. Once our disinterest is noticed, the speaker's thinking can become confused and the delivery may deteriorate. Good listeners avoid distractions by concentrating on what the speaker says.

Controllers and Socializers must work hard at paying sincere attention.

Listen between the lines.

Listen to what is said and strive to understand the attitudes, needs and motives behind the words. Remember that the speaker's words may not always contain the entire message. The changing tones and volume of the speaker's voice may have important meaning.

Listen for ideas, not facts.

The importance of facts has been drilled into us since childhood; hence, when we listen we tend to focus on them. But this can obscure the ideas behind those facts. A good listener makes an effort to understand what the facts add up to, weighing them and relating them to each other to see the key ideas that bind them together.

Don't monopolize.

Controllers and Socializers have a strong need to dominate every social situation and believe they know everything about a subject. They often shut their minds so tightly that they literally do not hear new ideas.

Adapt your thought speed.

We speak at 100 to 150 words per minute. We hear at 400 to 500 words per minute. Since the brain is not idle while we listen, it is difficult to slow down our thinking speed. Poor listeners become impatient with the speaker's progress.

WHEN YOU ARE THE LISTENER:

- Show interest by your actions.
- Take the time to listen.
- Try to learn something.
- Get the whole message.
- Do not interrupt the speaker.
- Concentrate on listening.
- Practice listening.

WHEN YOU ARE THE SPEAKER:

- Show the listener by your tone of voice that you want attention.
- Be sure the listener has the time and is ready to listen.
- Be succinct. Value the listener's time.
- Give the listener the whole message.
- Repeat and clarify.
- Evaluate the listener's interpretation of your message.