

TELEPHONE, VOICE MAIL, and CONFERENCE ETIQUETTE

Visiting on the telephone, using voice mail, or participating in a conference call all require oral communication skills and excellent etiquette.

Telephone Etiquette

Efficient, effective telephone etiquette begins with receiving calls in a professional manner.

Identify Yourself Immediately

Whether you are making the call or receiving the call, common courtesy requires that you identify yourself. You do not need to make a big speech, just your name will do: "Jane Doe speaking" or just "Jane Doe." If you are making the call, identify yourself right away as well—"Hello Jane, This is John Smith."

Be Responsive and Helpful

Answer the telephone with a pleasant voice and offer to take messages, but do not give out personal information unless you have been told to do so. Remember a smile, even over the telephone, projects a positive, friendly attitude. Take accurate messages and explain any actions you are taking such as transferring a call to another number. Always give the caller that number just in case the transfer does not go through.

Voice Mail

The two most important aspects of voice mail are the greeting and the message.

The Greeting

Make certain your greeting is professional just in case the call is business related. Prepare a pleasant, warm, professional greeting with any information the caller may need. If you are out of the office or away from home for an extended period of time, be certain to leave this information with your greeting so the caller will know you may not be available for some time.

Leaving a Message

1. Make certain you leave your name, telephone number for a call back, and times when you can be reached. Say your name and number **slowly and distinctly** as if you are writing them on a sheet of paper. Consider spelling your name.
2. Leave the reason for your call if possible so the respondent is ready with the information you need.
3. Give the time and day as well just in case the message is not accessed for several days.
4. Leave your phone number at the **beginning** of the message with your name and at the **end** of the message for listener convenience. Telephone numbers can be particularly problematic so be slow and distinct.

Conference Calls

Suggested tips for effective conference calls include:

- Have an agenda prepared ahead of time.
- Carefully select who should participate.
- Establish the objectives for the call.
- Greet participants as they check in.
- Encourage all participants.
- Poll members if a decision is needed or acknowledge that no decision will be made.
- Review conclusions at the end of the call.
- Prepare and send out a follow-up letter.
- Request feedback from the participants.

If you are the participant, be certain to:

- Focus on what is being said.
- Be certain to have all relevant information with you at the time of the call.
- Take the call in a quiet area so noises will not be distracting to other participants.
- Make an extra effort to participate in the call.