

- LECTURE : 12**
- TOPIC : TELEPHONE - USE, MISUSE AND ABUSE OF THE TELEPHONE (INCLUDING HAND PHONES)**
- AIM : TO KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING AND RECEIVING TELEPHONE CALLS**
- LEARNING OUTCOME : THE PROPER METHODS OF MAKING AND RECEIVING CALLS THE USE OF HAND PHONES**

The Telephone

Ever since the invention of telephone by Alexander Graham Bell, the behaviour of western man has changed more than any other technology history (Baymond, 1974). The telephone is now probably the most widely use substitute for face to face communication (Clampitt, 1991). In communicating with the outside world. The telephone together with letters will be one of the most common forms of contact. As such the impression you make is very important, but it is very easy to make mistakes while using the telephone, and many people are not trained in its use.

Advantages of Telephone

1. We obtain instance feedback
2. In using the telephone for communication proximity is not needed

Disadvantages of Telephone

1. The telephone offers no visual cues.
2. Contact is in verbal form and both the sender and the receiver must be familiar with the language.
3. There is lack of control on the part of the recipient.
4. The telephone is a time waster. According to Clampitt many Chief Executive Officers spend almost a month on unproductive calls every year.
5. The telephone gives no permanent record of a conversation (unless it is taped).

As in everything else you do in the office, the five 5p's are important (Perfect Preparation Prevents Poor Performance) before making a call ask the essential questions.

- Who? - Know the name and designation of the person you want to speak to. Otherwise ask the secretary for the name of the person you want. Remember that it is sweet to hear ones name.

- What/Why? - Know exactly what you wish to speak about and what are your objectives so that there is no need for follow up calls. Review your notes so that you know what information you have and what you need to obtain. Plan what to say, what question to ask and refer to your notes during your conversation.
- When? - Call at effective time of the day. Know the work patterns of the organisation you are calling and cheaper calling or billing periods.

It is advisable to know the different time zones if you are making overseas calls.

- Where? - Choose an environment with the minimum noise.
- How? - Have a contingency plan for you may not get answers or the person you are calling may not be in or the person might not want to give you the answer. On the other hand you may get to speak with an answering machine or voice mail service and you may have to prepare a message in advance.

Telephone call Management

There are a number of elements required to ensure that the telephone call is conducted effectively.

1. Dialling the call
 - Dial carefully. Wrong calls, cost money for your company, they can also waste your time and irritate the receiver.
2. Opening the call
 - Open the call with an appropriate greeting identify yourself and your company. Do not mumble for this gives a bad impression of you and your company.
3. Conducting the call
 - According to Reid 90% of business calls take less than 20 minutes and 84% concern only 1 topic. This shows the main advantages and major disadvantages of the telephone. It is good for short and simple message only.

In planning identify if the telephone is the most suitable too for your purpose, if your answer is no try other media. If you have answered yes, remember the following guidelines.

- ❖ Keep it simple and brief - for there is no permanent record of the conversation. The shorter your message the easier it will be to remember.
- ❖ Stick to the point - Use a short greeting but be courteous in Malaysia also remember that there are cultural differences among the various people.
- ❖ Speak clearly - and you have to be more slow than usual. Remember the telephone is a mechanical device and it is not as rich as face to face communication.

- ❖ Spell out words, and you may have a system to expand on later.

Feedback

Leave enough room for feedback during the telephone conversation because there might be a 'bouncing' back of a message and the recipient might not have understood your message. You should ensure that your message gets the correct actions not corrective actions.

Leaving Message

- ❖ You may have to leave messages when the person you call is not there. Remember that the person who takes your message need not know the full details. On the other hand if you are a regular caller they may already know the details.
- ❖ When leaving messages include all relevant details and leave no room for misinterpretation or confusion as this leave a poor impression of you and your company.

Closing the Call

- ❖ The caller closes because he or she is paying. Make sure you have all information you need or you have left the suitable message.
- ❖ Be courteous, create a good impression and avoid abruptness.

Making Notes

- ❖ After calling ensure accuracy of your notes while they are fresh on your mind. Remember depending on memory might not work well or memory might let you down.

Interrogams

1. Discuss the advantages of the telephone as a means of communication.
2. Although the telephone is a useful part of modern day business communication, there can be an abuse if not controlled properly. Discuss.