

Using the Telephone

- A. The nature of telephone activity in hotel industry.
- B. The need for developing telephone skills.
- C. Developing telephone skills.

How many times have you spoken with someone on the phone and thought to yourself how unprofessional they were? Make sure others are not saying the same about you.

As far as the nature of telephonic activity in hotel industry is concerned it has to be thoroughly professional or formal. There may be times when hotel staff may have to talk on the telephone with the guest, some staff may spend the majority of the day on phone booking rooms, taking order for services on reservation for dinner at a restaurant. The following flow chart describes the nature of telephone activity in the industry:

DOCUMENT CENTER

CALL FLOW

Opening	Great Name Organisation Offer Help
Listen	Active Verbal Nods What & How
Empathize	Emotion Understanding
Para phase	Summarizing Display Understanding
Questioning	Open & Close
Service/ No.	Apology + No / However + Option
Solution	Ownership
Closing	Problem taken care of Anything else I can do Thank You for calling

Hold	Seek Permission
	Reason
	Time
Off Hold	Thanks
	Apologize
	Appreciate Patience

These telephonic skills need to be developed because of some inevitable reasons:

1. They are essential in enabling the employee to develop a customer calling or 'customer first' attitude.
2. To develop the service effectively & consistently.
3. To learn telephonic etiquettes.
4. To handle customers on phone effectively.
5. To handle difficult customer (such as rude, aggressive or angry) over the phone.
6. To handle customer complete proficiently.
7. To retain customers by diffusing customer conflict quickly & efficiently.

The whole service industry is increasing its use of the telephone as it is the quickest & most convenient way of establishing customer contacts.

Therefore, it is essential that all employees represent their organisation in a professional & friendly way. Clear & effective communication is essential to ensure that the business is not lost. If the staff is not trained properly on telephone skills, they will lose the company business.

As it is a universally proven fact – “you will never get a second chance to make a first impression”. Any employee working in the hotel or any other organisation is the face of that organisation and needs to develop the following, effective telephone skills to be confident or totally proficient in their use of phone.

1. Use the 4 answering courtesies -

- a) Greet the caller.
- b) State your organisation
- c) Introduce yourself
- c) Offer your help.

i.e. "Good Afternoon, Accounts Peter Mulgrew speaking. How may I help you?"

2. Show enthusiasm when you answer

- a) Help make the caller feel welcomed
- b) A tired voice lacking in enthusiasm is very unappealing and reflects on the professionalism of your organisation.
- c) Use friendly phrases as part of your greeting
 - a. "Thanks for calling"

3. Remember the smile as you pick up the receivers as it can be heard over the phone too.

4. Closing the conversation at courteous closing includes:

- a) Thanking the caller for his call and time
- b) Let the caller know you appreciate his/ her business.
- c) Provide assurance that any promises made will be fulfilled.
- d) Leave the caller with a +ve feeling. Eg. –
Thank you for your order
"I am glad we were able to help"

"If you have any further questions in future please free to call."

[NOTE: Let the caller hang up first. This is a simple, courtesy and it gives the caller a final chance to add something]

Steps in putting the customer on hold:

1. Ask him if you can put him on hold.
2. Tell him/ her how long they will be on hold.
3. Assure him/ her that you will be working for him while he is on hold (specify what you will be doing away from the phone)
4. Wait for their response.
5. When you get back to him thank him for being on hold.

Transferring a call:

1. Tell the caller what you can do for him/ her. (Avoid laughing).
Help the caller by giving the name of the correct person on the dept. Make a positive statement like, “Mrs. Jones in our service are we can help you with that?”
2. Own the contact (or complaint), give the caller your name, dept. This is especially necessary for telephone transfers. In case the caller gets disconnected or transferred in the wrong dept. he/ she will have the necessary info to contact the appropriate person.
3. To save yourself from repeating the info, ask if he has a pen or a paper ready to note slower the info.
4. Inform the next employee about the tasks done and the upcoming tasks too.