

SECTION G

TELEPHONE PROCEDURES

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Telephone Skills

Section G 1

G 1 INTRODUCTION

Few companies obtain the maximum use from a business telephone because they regard it as just another necessity of the business ... like electricity . . . you only miss it when you don't have it !

Often the telephone is the first point of verbal contact with a potential customer and how you use the telephone can be the difference between obtaining business or not.

How you use the telephone reflects the service that you offer, your reliability, your energy, your standards, your professionalism indeed, everything about you and your nicensripy business.



Telephone Skills Section G 2

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**THE
CORRECT
USE OF THE
TELEPHONE
WILL AFFECT
YOUR
*PROFITABILITY***

Telephone Skills

Section G 3

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**THE
TELEPHONE
IS *NOT* AN
INTERRUPTION
TO YOUR
WORK
BUT A
LIFELINE
TO YOUR
BUSINESS.**

Telephone Skills

Section G 4

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**IT IS NOT JUST A
COMMUNICATION
DEVICE
BUT ONE OF
THE
MOST COST
EFFECTIVE
MARKETING
TOOLS.**

Telephone Skills

Section G 5

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G 2 BASIC TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES

- ⇒ Answer the telephone at the second ring.
 - *Too fast* - and you will **surprise** the caller.
 - *Too slow* - and your caller **loses interest**
- ⇒ Before you pick up the receiver **SMILE**.

You can "*hear*" somebody *smiling* down the phone.
- ⇒ Answer the telephone correctly.
- ⇒ Change the pace of your voice.
- ⇒ Change the pitch of your voice.
- ⇒ Let the other person talk and **DO NOT** interrupt
- ⇒ Use the persons name 3 times each telephone call
- ⇒ **ASK QUESTIONS** to take control of the call
- ⇒ **Actively listen**

G 3 ANSWERING THE TELEPHONE CORRECTLY

There is only **one way** to answer a telephone **correctly**.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Politeness | -Good Morning/Afternoon |
| b) Name Your Company | - nicenstripy |
| c) Give Your Name | Amanda Speaking |
| d) Ask A Question | - How can I help you? |



Telephone Skills Section G 7

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G 4 WHY DO WE ANSWER THIS WAY?

G 4.1 GOOD MORNING / AFTERNOON

The caller does not hear the first HALF of the first word spoken on the telephone.

We use our memory banks of word association to add the first half of that word.

i.e. "OOD MORNING" is what we actually hear which we automatically know should be GOOD MORNING.

G 4.2 COMPANY NAME

Let people know they have dialled the correct number as quickly as possible. Until they know it is you they wanted to call they will not listen to anything else you tell them.

G 4.3 GIVE YOUR NAME

At nicenstripy we believe in providing our customers with a personal service.

Make a telephone call personal by giving the caller your name.

Not only does this serve to personalise the call but it also projects a warm and friendly image.

G 5 ASKING *THE* QUESTION

The most important part of answering a telephone is to ask the *correct* question.

Most sales people, receptionists, service people, etc., will ask: -

"Can I Help You?"

When you are next asked that question please answer it correctly: -

"I Don't Know Can You?"

The question is really saying: -

"I am not sure if I am able or capable of helping you but that's what I get paid for so I had better say something!"

There is one correct question to ask: -

"How Can I Help You?"

Here we are saying: -

*"I Know I **Can** Help You Just Tell Me **How!**"*

REMEMBER

Often the telephone will be the first point of contact between a potential customer and our company.

It is *vital* that we communicate correctly and create our professional image.

**YOU NEVER GET A
SECOND CHANCE TO
CREATE A *FIRST*
IMPRESSION!**

Telephone Skills

Section G10

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G 6 WHY DON'T ALL COMPANIES USE THIS TECHNIQUE?

The answer is very, very simple.

Just to get the telephone answered in many companies is an achievement in itself. (Try ringing the Service Department of your Garage and see how long it takes!)

The nicenstripy technique requires a great deal of practice to perfect and become natural.

Most individuals do not want to practice because it seems (to them) very long-winded and very unnatural.

It really does not take long if practised with every telephone call and will soon become natural.



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G 7 THE PACE OF YOUR VOICE

Generally when somebody is excited they speak faster. The pace of YOUR voice can generate enthusiasm with the caller.

There is, however, a need to vary the speed of your voice on the telephone to maintain interest and "put over" your message in a clear and concise manner.

Keep sentences short ... people cannot concentrate for long, particularly on the telephone. Let the other person do most of the talking whenever possible.



Telephone Skills Section G12

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G 8 THE PITCH OF YOUR VOICE

If you want to sound completely disinterested then speak in a monotone voice. Nothing sounds worse than speaking in such a way.

Vary your pitch as much as possible when speaking on the telephone to ensure the caller "hears" what you say, as he/she will maintain an interest.

Approximately 80% of what people will pick up on when you are on the telephone will be from the sound of your voice and only 20% on the words you use.

So work on your voice to make it sound interesting! Learn to 'sing' a normal conversation, pitching low in some parts and high in others. Then repeat the exercise in a monotone voice . . . you will never speak that way again!!



Telephone Skills Section G13

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G 9 LET THE OTHER PERSON TALK

Learn to listen and take notes. In a **good** call the potential customer will talk for 70% of the time and you for 30% of the time.

Pause frequently. Don't interrupt them and allow your potential customer to fill silence. Let people know that you are listening... use "yes", "I see", "I understand" etc. [particularly important if handling a complaint].

It doesn't take a lot of words to make a powerful point.

In conversation, often the most powerful moments are not when you are speaking but when you pause and make room for the other person.

Sometimes we rush to fill in those empty moments, perhaps out of fear that the silence will feel awkward. But it's better to let the silences be there: silences in a conversation have a wonderful way of coaxing deeper thoughts to the surface.

The most important words that will ever pass between you and your prospective customers are the words spoken by them—**not** by you!

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G 10 USE THE PERSONS NAME

During any telephone conversation try to use the other persons name a minimum of three times during the call.[but don't go over the top]

The telephone is not a 'personalised' tool because you cannot see the persons body language [and they cannot see yours] and we need to do everything we can to make our customer feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible.

Using a customers name injects a personal relationship to the conversation and helps in showing a caring relationship.



Telephone Skills Section G15

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G 11 ASK QUESTIONS

You take control of the telephone call the moment you answer the phone by asking . . . “How can I help you”.

When a potential customer rings you your **ONLY** objective is to make an appointment to inspect their lawn [hedge, shrubs, fencing etc], to enable you to provide a quotation.

At this stage you do not need to justify how good you are or how competitive your prices are. The potential customer has taken the time and trouble to contact **you** so you already have established some credibility via your local promotional campaigns [don't forget to ask which one **when** you get face to face].

Some people may be concerned that you will make a charge for providing a quotation [some competitors do charge for a quotation!] and might require some confirmation that quotations are provided free of charge.

There is in section 13 an indication of how to ask questions. Please understand this is **NOT** a script . . . it is to provide an example of what a potential customer **might** say and how you **might** respond.

Telephone Skills Section G16

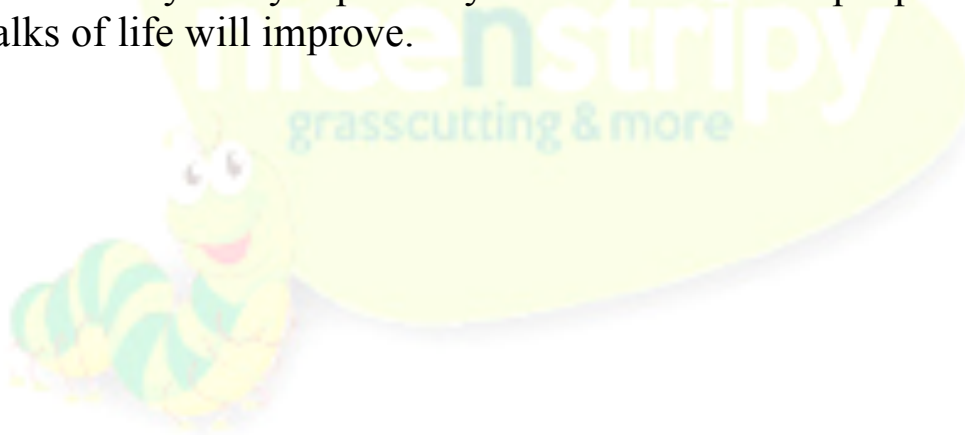
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G 12 ACTIVELY LISTEN

The majority of people do not listen to what the other is **really** saying as they are so busy in thinking of their answer!

To *listen actively* is a skill that is not natural to most of us. Remember when you were at school/university and you mind would wander off thinking of the big game, the girl you met in the pub, what you need to do when you get home?

As we all become older we tend to listen better [grandmas' are always great listeners] and the sooner you can train yourself (by attending a course or training yourself) to become an active listener not only will your telephone techniques improve but also virtually every aspect of your interaction with people in all walks of life will improve.



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G 13 THE STEPS TO A CALL

⇒ Telephone rings twice

⇒ Answered by you: -

*"Good Morning . . . nicenstripy,. . . Richard speaking, . . . **how** can I help you?"*

⇒ Potential Customer: -

"Can you tell me how much it's cost to cut my lawn"? [People don't always say what they mean!]

⇒ You: -

"Yes of course, where do you live"? [you ask this question to ensure they are in your area!]

⇒ Potential Customer

"I Live in Shrewsbury"

⇒ You: -

"To be able to give you a quotation we need to look at your lawn, when would it be convenient for me to call round?"

⇒ Potential Customer: -

"Well, I have an average rear garden, cannot give me an indication of price?"

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⇒ You: -

"Unfortunately, there are so many variables we have to rake into consideration and in our experience 'the average' back garden doesn't exist, are you home right now?"

⇒ Potential Customer: -

"Yes, but I have to go out at lunch time".

⇒ You: -

"Would it be convenient for me to call at 11.00 a.m. as I am just round the corner providing another quotation at 10.45 a.m.?" [Telling the customer how long a quotation takes is often a good way of persuading someone to let you carry out a quote! . . . Yes we know they often take longer than 15 minutes!!]

⇒ Potential Customer: -

"Yes, that would be fine"

⇒ You: -

"OK I look forward to seeing you at 11 o'clock"

Telephone Skills

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