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Centre for Enterprise Development Inc.

BUSINESS GUIDE NO. 20

Using the Telephone

*“Developing the local economy, one
business at a time”*





Most businesses have a telephone that is used for communicating with customers and business partners. If used properly, the telephone can become a very effective business tool.

You can use the Telephone:-

- As a first point of contact with your customers.
- As part of your business' marketing strategy to increase sales.
- To give customers additional information about your goods and services.
- To invite customers to visit your store or place of business.
- To show your appreciation to customers calling your business.
- To make customers gain confidence in your business,
- To improve your business' image.
- To add a personal element to your customer service.
- To reach the exact person you want, save time and prevent your message from being distorted.
- To emphasize the importance and urgency of your message.

Customers are frustrated when:-

- Your telephone rings for a long time before someone answers.
- They are placed on hold for long periods.
- Your telephone line is busy for long periods.
- They are speaking with you and you are not paying attention to them.
- An answering machine comes on instead of a person.
- They are sent to Voicemail.
- You or your staff make them feel that their call is an interruption to your work.
- Their calls are poorly screened.
- They are hang up on or disconnected.
- They detect that you are eating, drinking, or chewing gum.
- Your Call Waiting comes on.
- They are allowed to talk on and on and then to be told that you are unable to help.
- They are transferred to the wrong department or person.
- You interrupt their conversation or jump to conclusions.
- Messages are not delivered.
- You don't return their calls.

Some Basics for All:-

- Answer your phone promptly and in an upbeat voice.
- Be courteous to the person on the other end.
- Hold the handset so that you speak directly into the receiver.
- Avoid loud noises in the background.
- Never eat, drink, or chew gum while speaking on the phone.
- Stop what you are doing and listen to the caller.
- Do not shout and repeat one word over and over when speaking with someone whose accent you cannot understand.
- Ask permission before placing the caller on hold, and explain why you need to do so.
- Always use the Call Holding feature or cover the handset when holding a call. Avoid making nasty comments about the caller.
- Do not leave the caller on hold without checking back with him/her.
- Never use speaker phones before getting the caller's permission.
- Always end your conversation with a pleasantry and by thanking the caller.
- Allow the caller to hang up or end the call first.