Etiquette in a Telephone operator

1. Answer a call within three rings.

If your position entails always being available to callers, you should actually be available. That means staying focused and answering calls immediately. The last thing you want to do is keep a customer waiting after a string of endless ringing or send them to voicemail when you should've been able and ready to reply.

As long as you're alert and at your phone at all times — excluding breaks — this rule should be fairly simple to follow. However, we recommend responding within three rings in order give yourself enough time to get in the zone and prepare for the call. Picking up the phone right away might leave you flustered.

### **2. Immediately introduce yourself.**

Upon picking up the phone, you should confirm with the person whom they have called. In personal calls, it's sufficient to begin with a "Hello?" and let the caller introduce themselves first. However, you want to allow the caller to know if they've hit a wrong number, as well as whom they are speaking with.

### **3. Speak clearly.**

Phone calls, while a great option for those who detest in-person interaction, do require very strong communication skills. For one, the person on the other end of the line can only judge you based on your voice, since they don't get to identify your body language and — hopefully — kind smile.

You always want to speak as clearly as possible. Project your voice without shouting. You want to be heard and avoid having to repeat yourself. A strong, confident voice can make a customer trust you and your support more. In case of bad cell service or any inability to hear or be heard, immediately ask to hang up and call back.

### **4. Only use speakerphone when necessary.**

We all know the trials of speakerphone. It's easier for you because you can use your hands to multitask. However, for the other caller, it's like trying to hear one voice through a honking crowd of taxis in Manhattan — impossible and frustrating.

Give your customers your full attention, and avoid speakerphone. This will make it easier for both parties to be heard, and it will ensure that you're actually paying attention to them. You may need to use speakerphone at rare occasions, such as when it's a conference call or when you're trying to troubleshoot on the phone. While speakerphone may be appropriate at these times, it's always better to use a [**headset**](https://blog.hubspot.com/service/call-center-headsets) to remain hands-free.

### **5. Actively listen, and take notes.**

Speaking of paying attention to your customers, it's essential that you're actively listening to them throughout the conversation. Actively listening means hearing everything they have to say and basing your response off of their comments, rather than using a prescribed script. This proves to your customers that you're present and are empathetic to their inconveniences.

### **6. Use proper language.**

A key difference between professional and personal phone calls is obvious — the language. It might be acceptable to use slang and swears when talking on the phone with your friends, but this kind of language can cause you to lose a customer for life.

Always be mindful and respectful when on the phone. You never know what customers might be offended by something you say, so it's best to use formal language. It's okay to throw in humor if appropriate, but never crack a joke that could upset a customer.

### **7. Remain cheerful.**

You never know when a customer is having a bad day. When someone is rude to you on the phone, your immediate reaction may be to put them in your place. First, though, take a moment to step into their shoes and recognize why they're so upset.

The point is to always remain positive and friendly, especially in the face of negativity. Your optimistic outlook may be enough to turn a failing phone call right around. Remind yourself that the last thing your customer probably wanted was to spend their afternoon on the phone with customer support. So, make that call the best it can be, and it may create a loyal, lifetime customer.

### **8. Ask before putting someone on hold or transferring a call.**

There's often nothing more infuriating than being put on hold. After waiting on hold for ten or fifteen minutes to speak with a real-life human being, you finally get to explain your problem. Then, you're immediately put back on hold and then transferred to someone else to whom you must re-explain the whole problem. Talk about exhausting.

### **9. Be honest if you don't know the answer.**

You might need to put a customer on hold or transfer their call if the dreaded occurs — you don't know the solution. Perhaps you've tried everything you can or simply have no idea what they're talking about. Don't panic; customer support representatives are humans, too, and it's okay not to be the omniscient voice of reason.

It's best to admit when you don't know something, rather than making excuses or giving false solutions. However, tell them that you're going to do everything you can to find an answer and get back to them momentarily, or find a co-worker who does know the answer. Customers don't typically expect you to have all the solutions at hand, but they will expect you to be transparent.

### **10. Be mindful of your volume.**

You may be so focused on your phone call with a customer that you're barely paying attention to your present setting. When working in a call center, things can get pretty loud. You always want to be mindful of your volume and ensure that you're not disrupting the ability of your co-workers to speak to customers and get their work done.

If you are on a call that requires you to speak louder due to a bad connection or a hard-of-hearing customer, simply step out of the room and speak with them separately. Your customers are always your main concern, but you don't want to inhibit the work ethic of others in your workplace.

### **11. Check for and respond to voicemails.**

It's quite possible that a customer might reach out to you when you're on a break or after you've left work for the day. If it's possible for you to receive voicemails, make sure you're always checking for them. It's easy for a voicemail to slip under the radar, but the customer won't easily forget.