



Telecom Australia



obtain the greatest
value from
business telephones

Are you getting the most from your
business telephones?

Telecom Australia is anxious to help
you improve your telecommunications
service.

a message to management

Modern business practices demand that firms and organisations plan their outward appearance with the aim of creating a favourable impression on the customer or client. To achieve this you no doubt insist on —

Letters being composed with care and typed with scrupulous attention to detail,

Letterheads being attractively designed in accord with the style of business in which a firm is engaged.

Reception rooms being neat, clean and efficient.

Staff required to meet customers being meticulous in dress, and personal appearance.

. . . but what is the impression offered to the telephone caller?

Today, more than ever, the **telephone** is a front door of the business world, and the company image will suffer if callers do not receive courteous, efficient telephone service. On the other hand, polished telephone techniques add to company prestige.

Unfortunately, it is not always

appreciated that good telephone service is a product of efficient management, just as much as the handling of correspondence. The big difference is that efficient telephone service depends on **all** users of the company's telephone — be they top executives, switchboard operators or junior clerks.

The acknowledged advantages of telephone calls are instant communication and convenience. But good telephone techniques can also:

Add clarity and exactness.

Increase prestige and goodwill.

Make communication quicker and easier, and — in the case of long distance calls — cheaper.

Save frayed tempers.

Remember . . .

Business goes where it is welcome and stays where it is well treated.

First, we will consider the management of a telephone switchboard, and then pass on to aspects concerning everyone on your staff who uses the telephone.

management of a switchboard

The Switchboard Operator

The first point of contact between a caller and your firm is often the switchboard operator. First impressions are lasting, so the way she deals with the call is of real importance. Her manner should be courteous, alert, interested and cheerful. She should convey the impression that she knows her job and that she enjoys doing it.

Very rarely will a girl be naturally endowed with all these qualities. Most operators need to be **trained**. Not

simply in the mechanics of handling the switchboard, but in their telephone manner. It is anomalous that commercial training covers typing, shorthand, and letter-writing, but rarely covers the correct use of the telephone or its facilities.

Telecom Australia can provide you with expert advice on training methods and switchboard management. We will also be pleased to supply copies of booklet called "You are the Voice of Your Company" which is specifically designed to help switchboard operators.



Operating Conditions

No matter how well trained your operator is, she cannot be efficient if the conditions in which she works are poor.

Ideally, an operator should have no duties other than the telephone.

Where it is unavoidable that she have additional duties, they should be of a simple nature that will not distract attention from the switchboard, and can be dropped in an instant.

It may seem obvious that operators work better in good light, but all too often switchboards are tucked away in badly lit corners. Misoperation due to bad light can cost more than the price of adequate lighting. Switchboard operating under bad light is literally a headache to your operator.

Avoid placing the switchboard in a noisy position. This makes it difficult for both the operator and the caller to hear. Complications quickly follow.

Staffing

Have sufficient operators to ensure a swift **speed of answer** to incoming calls. From the customer's viewpoint, one of the most telling aspects of telephone service is the speed with which he is attended. Just think — how long do **you** like to be kept

waiting for an answer?

Make sure that other staff members are trained so that they can provide relief on the switchboard. Too often, service slumps during a regular operator's luncheon break.

Operating Aids

Provide your operator with a comprehensive list of extensions and personnel in your firm. If possible, include alternative numbers for use when the normal extensions are busy. It is a good idea to mark on this list the persons within your firm who are authorised to make long distance calls and to accept Reverse Charge calls.

Arrange for your operator to meet as many telephone users in the firm as possible. This is good staff relations and helps foster the attitude that the operator is part of your team, and not left in splendid isolation on the switchboard.

Provide also a list of frequently called numbers such as regular customers and suppliers.

Your operator should not be tied up answering "Enquiries". If these are plentiful, special extensions should be provided to handle "Enquiries" and so leave the operator free to attend to other calls.

Looking up Telephone Numbers

An operator should not be expected to look for telephone numbers.

If she is looking for a number, she may be neglecting a waiting caller. Are you prepared to let a prospective customer wait?

Telecom Australia provides telephone directories in your premises. So encourage your staff to look for numbers themselves and keep their own frequently-called-number lists.

Messages

Calls cannot be attended to promptly and efficiently if your operator is occupied in taking messages or — even worse — is used by your staff to transmit messages.

However, if the practice cannot be avoided entirely, see that she has facilities for handling the messages without leaving her position.

Your Correspondence

How can this help your switchboard operator? It's simple — arrange for the telephone extension number of the person who is dealing with any particular matter within your firm to be indicated on outgoing letters.

Telephone calls relating to the matter can then be directed quickly to the correct extension.

The Telephone Directory

See that your entries in the telephone directory adequately identify the activities of your organisation.

Special block entries can be arranged, at small cost, so that it is easy to find your company's telephone number. Telecom Australia will be pleased to advise you on all directory matters.

Have you enough Telephone Lines or Extensions?

It may not be a good sign if your firm's switchboard is extremely busy. Certainly, it is gratifying to know that your firm is in demand, but think of the caller who may be kept waiting in a state of frustration while your number or an extension is busy. Inevitably, it is the potential customer who does not bother to wait.

Make a periodic check on the incidence of telephone calls received and the adequacy of your extensions. You will find it well worthwhile.

This concludes the section relating to management aspects of your telephone switchboard, but **please read on.**

The remaining sections relate to all telephone users in your firm, but acceptance of the principles outlined is . . . **A Management Project**

some suggestions to all telephone users

Speaking on the Telephone

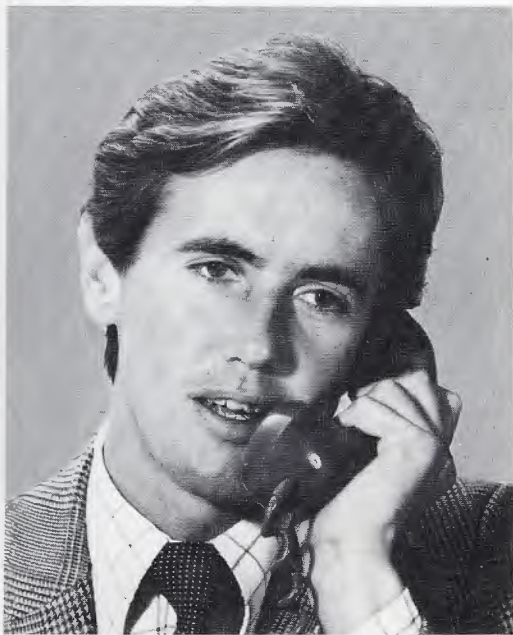
Take as much trouble over the way you telephone as over the way you dress, or compose your letters, for the simple reason that you — and your firm — will be judged as much by your telephone manner as by your dress, your letters, or your behaviour over a desk, a lunch table, or a conference table.

A simple rule: Speak directly into the mouthpiece of the telephone. The instrument is so designed that best

results are obtained when the mouthpiece is not more than two centimetres from your lips and directly in front.

Speak naturally, clearly, and sincerely, and do not raise your voice above its normal level. A medium tone at a fairly low pitch is best. Let your voice indicate a spirit of interest and helpfulness.

You may consider that you already do just this, but be warned! It is fairly easy to sound vague, bored, or even rude on the telephone.



making telephone calls

Originate Your Own Calls

A basic principle.

TELEPHONE AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TELEPHONED TO.

Experience has shown that one of the most frequent causes of poor telephone service in business organisations is the loading of

switchboard operators with the responsibility of originating and announcing calls when this service is not really necessary. Both of these extension user habits prevent the operator from being able to answer incoming calls promptly. If it is necessary to have calls originated and announced, it is preferable to have a secretary or an assistant perform these functions.



As a general rule, originate your own calls. It is obviously bad business for your secretary to contact a customer or business acquaintance and then keep him waiting until you are ready.

Your sense of good manners and good business policy will dictate your behaviour in this matter but it all comes back to: **TELEPHONE AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TELEPHONED TO.**

Long Distance (STD) Calls

Not only should people make their own local calls, they should also originate their own long distance (STD) calls. As you are charged on the amount of time used, it is important that the caller is on the line when the called number answers.

If the long distance (STD) call is originated by a secretary or a switchboard operator, delays in connection can result in increased costs to the company.

Dial Correctly

Careless dialling results in wrong numbers.

The telephone dialling system is a mechanism which cannot be hurried by the temperament of its user.

Careful dialling is essential for a high grade of service. The important points are:

- Listen and wait for dial tone.
- Complete dialling without interruption
- After dialling, wait a few seconds for a tone to indicate the progress of your call.
- If you hear busy tone at any time, replace the receiver and try again.

Be Ready to Speak

When you make a call, be ready to speak. The other person's time is probably just as valuable as yours and you may be asking him to do something for you.

Identify Yourself

When making a call, announce your own name immediately you get an answer, and then state your business.

For example —

“Jackson speaking, of XYZ Limited, I wish to . . .”

It is extremely frustrating to answer a telephone and, while listening to the caller's opening remarks, have to try and guess whom he might be. Don't you agree?

answering telephone calls

Answer Promptly and Identify Yourself

It's annoying to be kept waiting. Answer calls promptly and state politely your number, name, or firm.

For example —

“Commerce Department, Jackson speaking . . .”
“80 4319, Jackson speaking . . .”
“XYZ Limited, Miss Brown speaking . . .”

Avoid the habit of answering with a “Hello” — this is unnecessary, time-wasting and obsolete.

Correct telephone answering phrases assure the caller that he is connected to the right place and, from the outset, create a favourable impression of business efficiency.

Be Ready

Be ready to provide attention when you answer the telephone. Pad and pencil should be nearby — memory can betray you.

Let the caller know that you understand him. This will save his time and yours, otherwise, he will have no confidence that his call has been worthwhile.

If you have to leave the caller, keep him fully informed on what you are doing. Minutes of silent waiting on the telephone seem like hours and, in any case, the caller may prefer to ring back

later, particularly if he is on a long distance (STD) call where time costs money. The meter will be ticking over while you keep him waiting!

Who's Calling?

Perhaps it is necessary to enquire about the names of callers requiring executive officers. But do not ask “Who's calling, please?”

This can offend a caller by implying that he may not be important enough to gain attention from your executive officer. This may well be so but be diplomatic and ask —

“May I tell Mr . . . who is calling, please?”

The end result will be the same, but courtesy has prevailed.

Called in Error

This does happen sometimes, but remember that it isn't done on purpose. A remark along the lines of — “I'm sorry, but you have the wrong number. . .” is far better than a blunt — “Wrong number” and helps keep blood pressures down.

Of course, if your caller has been connected to the wrong extension, be as helpful as possible in seeing that the caller is reconnected to the right extension.

some points for all types of calls

Observe the common courtesies. A "please" or "thank you" in the appropriate place is a reflection of your own personality in the company image.

Never try to match rudeness with rudeness.

The close of a telephone conversation is as important as its beginning. Abrupt endings leave wrong impressions.

Close with a happy ending.

Let the caller hang up first.

Replace your receiver gently, otherwise it's like slamming the door after the interview is over.

A Final Reminder

Whatever position you occupy you are, through your telephone contacts, a direct representative of your firm. Your telephone manners reflect not only your own personality but your firm's standard of courtesy, efficiency and service.

Need we say more?



Telecom services can help you get the best out of your business communications

Becoming efficient in the business of communication is of vital importance — and today, most firms are deciding on an effective policy on telephone usage which can be communicated to operator and staff generally.

Telecom Australia has experts ready and willing to help you get the maximum efficiency from your telephone service.

Service Advisers

Service Advisers are available to assist you, free of charge, in any matter affecting the operation of your telecommunications services.

Briefly, Service Advisers can:

- Analyse and discuss the telephone service of your company.
- Train existing and new switchboard operators.
- Demonstrate to extension users the correct method of handling calls.
- Advise on operating difficulties.
- Discuss with management how to get the best use from their communications systems.



- Advise how best to use STD and ISD.
- Train your telex operators and advise of facilities.

Telex Training

Telex training is provided free of charge in either a classroom or on your premises.

Skilled Service Advisers are always available to visit customers' premises to discuss Telex Communication problems with both management and the operators.

STD Subscriber Trunk Dialling

Dialling your own long distance calls is known as Subscriber Trunk Dialling or STD.

It is a convenient and more personal alternative to operator connected calls, and saves time and money.

You'll save time because there's no delay for an operator to connect your call, and you'll save money because you only pay for the time you actually use the line. In addition there is no call surcharge or particular person fee as with operator connected calls.

ISD International Subscriber Dialling

International Subscriber Dialling is available in many areas throughout Australia. This service allows direct connection to many overseas countries, simply by dialling the appropriate codes and wanted number.

By using ISD you'll save time and money. As you make your calls direct there is no operator involved and you are only charged for the time used.

Talks & Films

Experienced speakers will be provided, on request, to talk to groups in business organisations on various aspects of the telephone service.

An appropriate film can also be shown in conjunction with the talk.

For further information about these Telecom Services, or to obtain additional copies of this booklet, contact your local Telecom Business Office. (Telephone numbers are listed in your Telephone Directory.)

an STD reminder

STD calls are cheaper than you think and are great value for **your** business. This is the most it costs for a 3 minute STD call:*

	Day Rate	Sunday Rate	Evening Rate	Economy Rate
Not exceeding 50 km	0.18c	0.18c	0.09c	0.09c*
Exceeding 50 km but not 85 km	0.36c	0.27c	0.18c	0.18c
Exceeding 85 km but not 165 km	0.81c	0.72c	0.36c	0.36c
Exceeding 165 km but not 325 km	\$1.35	\$1.08	0.72c	0.54c
Exceeding 325 km but not 485 km	\$1.80	\$1.35	0.90c	0.72c
Exceeding 485 km but not 645 km	\$2.07	\$1.62	\$1.08	0.81c
Exceeding 645 km	\$2.70	\$2.16	\$1.35	\$1.08

*Charges rounded to nearest 9c meter registration

Day rate — 8 am to 6 pm Mon to Sat.

Sunday rate — 8 am to 6 pm Sunday

Evening rate — 6 pm to 9 pm

Economy rate — 9 pm to 8 am

We will be pleased to provide further copies of this booklet and additional information about Telecom services.

Please telephone or call in to your local Telecom Business Office. (Locations and telephone numbers are listed in your Telephone Directory.)