



**YOUR VOICE IS YOUR LIVELIHOOD**

ISSUED BY THE AUSTRALIAN POST OFFICE

# THE VOICE WITH A SMILE

*Have you a pleasant telephone personality?*

A pleasant, well-modulated voice is always a great asset, but to a telephonist it is essential. Your aim should be to speak easily and naturally, without affectation, and yet with the right tone and inflection. There is charm in a pleasant, courteous voice. It creates goodwill and understanding with telephone users and makes your job easier.

In direct conversation, a smile can often redeem some unfortunate phrase or tone. On the telephone, a smile in your voice works wonders. Try to be as pleasant and alert over the telephone

as you would be in a face-to-face conversation.

Most callers will know you only by your voice. Their impressions of you — and of the telephone service you provide — will be influenced by the way you answer a call. Remember, first impressions are lasting.

A good telephone voice is not a gift restricted to a fortunate few. It can be achieved by almost anyone who is willing to make the effort.

This booklet is designed to help you.

# CULTIVATE A GOOD TELEPHONE STYLE

*"Be as courteous 'voice-to-voice' as you would be 'face-to-face' "*

These are the qualities of good telephone speech:

## **Audibility**

Not too soft, not too loud — just a happy medium.

## **Resonance**

This depends largely on correct breathing. Sit upright and breathe naturally.

## **Pitch**

A shrill or harsh voice is most unpleasant over the telephone. Try and control the pitch at an agreeable level.

## **Modulation**

The essence of good speech is to give words their right inflection. Avoid a monotonous voice. Give it life and expression.

## **Diction**

Sound each syllable clearly. Do not slur the final consonants.

## **Pronunciation**

Pronounce your words correctly. If you are in doubt regarding a word, check it in a dictionary.

## **How to Cultivate a Good Telephone Style**

The first essential is to speak directly into the mouthpiece of the telephone. The mouthpiece should be not more than half an inch from your lips and directly in front.

Speak naturally, clearly, and sincerely, do not raise your voice above its normal level. A medium tone at a fairly low pitch is best. Speak briskly, but not at the expense of tone and expression. Give the vowel sounds their full value, emphasise the consonants, and do not drop your voice at the end of a sentence.

**Above all, SOUND CHEERFUL!**

# NUMBERS

*Some numbers sound alike on the telephone. Avoid mistakes by saying them as follows:—*

<b>Numeral</b>	<b>Pronunciation</b>	<b>Formulation of Sounds</b>
0	OH	With a long O.
1	WUN	With a strong N.
2	TOO	With a strong T and long OO.
3	TH-R-EE	With a slightly rolling R and a long EE.
4	FORE	With a strong F and R.
5	FI-YIV	With a strong F, long I and well-sounded YIV.
6	SIKS	With a strong S and KS.
7	SEV-VEN	Two syllables with a well-sounded VEN.
8	ATE	With a long A and strong T.
9	NI-YEN	With a strong first N, long I and well sounded YEN.

*The following examples show how to say numbers:*

<b>Number Phrase</b>	<b>Number Phrase</b>
10—One oh.	1000—One oh double oh.
21—Two one.	1114—One double one four.
22—Double two.	3226—Three double two six.
100—One double oh.	3266—Three two double six.
136—One three six.	3333—Double three double three.
333—Three double three.	4111—Four one double one.
335—Double three five.	6677—Double six double seven.

# WORDS

The following guard words should be used in the transmission and reception of difficult names, isolated letters, secret language, unusual words or any words which might be confused with other words of similar sound, e.g., “train”, “plane”, “Sunday”, “Monday”, etc. First pronounce such words, then spell them using the guard words.

A Alfred	H Harry	O Oliver	U Uncle
B Benjamin	I Isaac	P Peter	V Victor
C Charles	J Jack	Q Queen	W William
D David	K King	R Robert	X X-ray
E Edward	L London	S Samuel	Y Yellow
F Frederick	M Mary	T Tommy	Z Zebra
G George	N Nellie		

This Phonetic Alphabet is recommended by the International Telecommunications Union for use throughout English speaking countries.

# HABITS TO AVOID

*"To know one's weakness is to know one's strength"*

## **A dreamy voice or a drawl . . .**

This makes a caller lose confidence in your ability to give prompt and efficient service.

## **A monotonous voice . . .**

This sounds as if you are not interested; it can irritate.

## **A hard metallic voice . . .**

It lacks sympathy and conveys a reluctance to comply with the caller's wishes.

## **An abrupt voice . . .**

Speak briskly but not abruptly or the caller may think that you are impatient and too busy to listen to him.

## **A leaping inflection . . .**

A rising inflection, discreetly used, sounds attractive but do not "leap" your voice at the end of a sentence.

## **A "chant" . . .**

Do not sing your operating expressions. You will sound bored — and boredom means bad service.

## **Exaggerated "Rs" . . .**

A slight rolling of the "R" is helpful but do not overdo it!

## **A Timely Warning:**

You will become most efficient in telephone operating but, every now and then, take the time to re-assess your telephone techniques.

The telephone system is a machine, and an air of "super" efficiency can convey an impression to callers that you are part of that machine — void of personality. This is a gradual process which is difficult to detect unless you specially look for it. So review your telephone techniques regularly and . . .  
**STAY HUMAN!!!**

## STANDARD OPERATING PHRASES

*"Practice makes perfect"*

Some steps in handling telephone calls occur again and again. For these occasions standard phrases have been developed which are designed to enable you to give service in the briefest possible time. For example: "Number, please."

Do not use standard answering or operating phrases mechanically. Try

to get into each one of them some life and expression. Inject a cheerful, alert tone when you are providing service, and an interested, sympathetic tone if callers are experiencing any difficulty. If the circumstances differ from the usual, or if there is no standard phrase, use words which convey your meaning clearly and courteously. Practise it.

## THE VOICE AND THE OCCASION

*"Supervise intelligently"*

A caller expects to hear your voice when he originates a call. But no matter how pleasant you are, he will not be happy if you break in on an important conversation without good reason. Obviously, telephonists should super-

vising the progress of telephone calls but it must be done intelligently. When supervising, listen briefly before you speak. Careful and repeated supervision is essential for a good telephone service.

# THE OTHER END OF THE LINE

*"Mankind is everywhere the same"*

Who is your caller?

Your neighbour, perhaps?

A friend or telephonist in your own or another organisation?

A complete stranger?

Your own relatives?

Your doctor or clergyman?

He is anyone who lives, eats, sleeps, pays rent or owns his own home. He is you and I and thousands of other people who, from time to time, use the telephone. He is a Human Being; angry or pleased; sad or happy; reason-

able or unreasonable; irritated or unruffled; educated or untaught; rich or poor . . . but a Human Being.

He is the reason for a telephone service. Without him there would be no need for a telephonist.

How then can we justify any rudeness, arguments, or lack of interest which would undermine our relations with him?

How can we give anything other than the most courteous and attentive telephone service it is possible to give?

## A FINAL THOUGHT

*"Courtesy has its own reward"*

You can win the gratitude and goodwill of all the callers to whom you

attend . . . or cause them to regret that they ever had to call you.

**WHICH IS IT TO BE?**



Additional copies of this booklet may be obtained by telephoning or writing to:

Assistant Director,  
Telecommunications Division  
(Service Advisory Section),  
G.P.O. (CAPITAL CITY).

or  
Your District  
Telephone Manager.