

RECEPTIONIST TRAINING: HOW TO BE THE BEST RECEPTIONIST EVER!

TRANSCRIPT: Listen, if you answer phones and/or greet guests for your company, you are the one person who will be making a first impression on almost everyone your company ever does business with.

- You are the public face of your company!
- This makes you the most important person your company employs... and if you drop the ball, your company may never get another chance to earn that customer's business...
- This session was designed to help you become the best receptionist ever!
- So, let's start with the top 4 rules for receptionists:

RULE 1 – LOVE THE RINGING PHONE!

Start by understanding: When that phone rings, it's a good thing. If the phone quit ringing, we wouldn't need you! Understand that when someone steps up to your counter or desk, it's a good thing. If people quit visiting your desk, we wouldn't need you!

RULE 2 – LOVE YOUR JOB!

If I'm ever sick of being a receptionist and want to do something different with my life, I have to act as if I LOVE this job! Nobody in the private sector ever got promoted for being crappy at their job or openly hating it. Learn to love it, and you just might find yourself moving up quickly.

RULE 3 – LEAVE THE ATTITUDE AT HOME!

Leave your issues (and attitude) at home. Your interactions are generally too brief to gain empathy or sympathy from those you encounter, so drop the attitude, keep your problems to yourself and do everything you can to deliver an exceptional customer experience!

RULE 4 – THE CUSTOMER SHOULD BECOME YOUR PASSION!

The customer is not always right, but they are always the customer! – Your job is not to scold or correct them or even teach them a lesson – especially when they're at fault – your job is to cheerfully help them speak to or see whomever it is they need.

As I said, you have the most important job in the company; though just like every great leader I know, every great receptionist I've ever worked with was humble. While you are indeed the most important person in the company, you diminish your importance if you become self-righteous. Keep your perspective and you'll do great!

By the way, the worst receptionists I ever worked with could tell you all the reasons the company was not going to succeed. Their negative attitude about their company all but assured they wouldn't last in their job, but not before spreading that negativity to others.

Hint: Great people don't want to be around negative coworkers. You may think you're developing bonds with those who tolerate your banter, but inside their heads all they can think about is "how in the world can I shut him or her up?"

- So, ready to be the best receptionist ever? Let's tackle the basics:
- Your goal should be to answer the phone by the second ring. Time is perceived differently by the caller, and 3 or 4 or 5 rings can seem like an eternity to someone needing assistance.
- Smile – and if you've got the room for it, use a mirror! This is phone training 101
- Remember the Three Es of The Perfect Receptionist:
- Enunciate! With Enthusiasm! So you can be Effective!

Let's try this:

Thank you for calling Bob's Donut Shop, This is Steve, How may I direct your call?

Direct the call enthusiastically with a standard phrase such as:

It would be my pleasure to transfer your call to Mr. Johnson – hold please.

If the requested individual is unavailable – either on the phone or away, be honest with the caller and cheerfully offer the assistance that best fits the situation:

My apologies, Mr. Johnson is on the other line. Would you like to wait on hold or would you prefer to leave him a voicemail?

Give the caller a polite thank you when they answer your question and direct them accordingly:

Thank you. I'll place you back on hold and transfer you the minute Mr. Johnson is free.

That's handling a call with all three E's in place: Enunciate! With Enthusiasm! So you can be Effective!

Why all three E's?

Well, what if you answered like this:

Bob's donuts; hold please.

The callers have no idea that you're "totally swamped" today and frankly, they don't care. Though coming back with an abrupt:

How may I direct your call?

Is not going make that perfect first impression your company is counting on.

By the way, speeding through your greetings and transfers does not make you more efficient. Speeding through your greetings and questions usually means you'll be repeating yourself more often than you'd like. Just remember to always Enunciate! With Enthusiasm! So you can be Effective!

Screen calls and visitors appropriately. For example, if someone on your team doesn't care who is on the phone, then don't ask callers "can I tell him who's calling?"

This can infuriate a potential customer. They especially hate having calls screened when they are returning someone's call. If you're a manager watching this, give some serious consideration to stopping all call screening on calls that are potentially from a customer or prospect.

So, we know the three E's of being a perfect receptionist, right? Enunciate! With Enthusiasm! So you can be Effective!

Well, there are two more E's that are important to remember: "Every time" and "Everything"

As in DO THIS EVERY TIME YOU ANSWER THE PHONE. Consistency is the key to being a great receptionist.

As in WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN! Listen carefully to the name of the person the caller is asking for. Repeat it back to the caller if necessary. Write it down!

Why? Because when, not if, the call bounces back to you, you make the company sound incompetent when you ask "Who were you holding for?"

If they provided their name or any other fact, write it down!

Why? Because when, not if, your manager wants to know about the caller, you need to be certain of their name and any other facts they provided.

If the number is visible, write it down!

Why? Because when, not if, they get disconnected and call back, you can add your apologies about the disconnection when they ask for the same person a second time.

Stay on top of all transfers... Write down the time of the call – this is critical in case you're asked later about "who called and when did they call?"

Keep your hold times under a minute – again, time is perceived differently by the caller; and a minute can often seem too long when you're stuck on hold.

Do you also manage a reception desk? One that greets visitors to your business?

If so, here are some quick tips:

- The person in front of you is slightly more important than the ringing phone... but, balance these correctly.
- Acknowledge the in-person visit as soon as possible
- This might just be a nod or a smile at first...
- Don't underestimate the amount of time the person on the phone will need help – ask them to hold if necessary
- The three E's are just as critical here: Enunciate! With Enthusiasm! So you can be Effective! However, enthusiasm really shows now...
- Greet delivery drivers, postal workers, vendors and repairmen with the same professionalism and enthusiasm as any other visitor.
- And finally, remember that words matter, so get in the habit of using the following phrases constantly (where appropriate obviously), as these words can help you break down barriers and diffuse bad situations quickly.

Words and phrases such as:

- Thank you
- Please
- You're welcome
- My pleasure
- Good morning
- Good afternoon
- Have a great day
- Have a great weekend

If you say these with a smile and a feeling of genuineness, you make your visitors and callers feel good, and you make yourself feel good, as well.

It was certainly my pleasure to provide you with this short and sweet video lesson. I'm hopeful you'll take this lesson to heart and become the best receptionist ever! Now... Have a great day and thank you!

<http://stevestauning.com/receptionist-training-how-to-be-the-best-receptionist-ever/#.WruUq9RublW>