



For Permanent & Positive Change

The Exchange

FEATURED TOPIC: TELEPHONE AND ELECTRONIC ETIQUETTE

Email Guidelines for Organizations

Individuals within an organization can quickly become inundated with email overload. It can be helpful when each user within the system agrees to the following:

1. The best use of email is to request and deliver information, not emotion.
2. Send or request information to only those individuals or groups who have an active interest. Use the "CC" line to keep other people, who you do not expect to reply, informed.
3. Avoid using "Blind CC", as this can decrease trust.
4. Use the subject line to clearly state the topic and group to take action.
5. Use standard business form in the body of your message. This means appropriate greeting, paragraphs, punctuation, grammar, and closing.
6. Respond only to the sender, unless all people receiving the original email need the information.
7. Refrain from routinely using "Request for Receipt of Email" as this requires another action by the receiver and can overload your system with emails. Use this option only when it is imperative to know that the recipients have opened your email.
8. Only forward an email with the original sender's permission unless it is an accepted practice in your organizational culture.

9. Other forums, such as community boards and chat rooms, are more appropriate for multiple discussions. Remember to use email for information rather than for collecting opinions and feelings.
10. Never correct behavior via email. When such a correction is needed, pick up the phone and call the individual privately.
11. Choose your words with care. Remember that the receiver(s) cannot see your body language or hear your tone of voice to help them interpret your intended meaning.
12. Observe the "Postcard Rule". Avoid writing anything in an email that you would not want others to read. (Many internet service providers and employers archive email indefinitely. They can be retrieved for business use or even subpoenaed.)
13. Avoid using all caps or bold words as this may be interpreted as YELLING.
14. When you need to give lot of information, give an executive summary first and then follow with the details or an attachment.
15. Proof your emails for grammar and spelling.
16. After writing important emails, wait at least 30 minutes and then re-read, edit where necessary, have it read by a neutral party, then send. ❖

What Our Clients Are Saying

"I especially liked the breakdown of how you say what you need to get across. This will definitely help my phone interactions on the job."

Lisa Martin

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Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on Meetings.

Looking Back

You might also be interested in our May 2007 edition: [Leadership Styles](#) or read other [previous issues of The Exchange](#).

"It is a luxury to be understood."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Phone Tips for Dummies (and Really Smart People Too)

Vincent Ivan Phipps

A client, who made his/her living in phone sales, said, *"Being nice to people on the phone is just common sense, but unfortunately, sense for most people is not common."*

As the speed of technology advances, we can now pull out our Blackberries and have phone conferences with multiple people in different time zones all while checking email on our laps and surfing the web through a wristwatch.

Although the methods we use to have conversations may change, the etiquette behind the interpersonal aspects remains consistent: be professional, courteous, and efficient.

Remember these tips:

- A. Ask the person if you can put them on hold before doing so.
- B. Request the person's attention or ask if they have a moment to speak before jumping into what you have to say.
- C. Give specific times you will return their calls. For example, instead of saying, "I will call you later." Say, "I will call you in 10 minutes," or "I will call you after 2 p.m."
- D. Keep your volume low and speak slowly to show seriousness.
- E. Use neutral comments such as: uh-huh, all right, and o.k. to keep the other person talking.
- F. Pause 1-3 seconds before responding.
- G. Leave a message stating what you need rather than just a name. Here is an example: *"Hello, this is Alex. What is the due date for the proposal? I am in the office between 2-5 p.m. Thank you."*

Voice and tone make up about 38% of the total message. When you are on the phone, it is even more important to send the proper message because the listener is unable to see your face and body language.

The telephone is your friend. It can connect us from across the street and across the globe.

For more on telephone etiquette, call us at 423-622-8255. We look forward to demonstrating our phone etiquette skills with you!! ❖

In The News

CEO Receives Appointment

TLC's CEO, Beverly Inman-Ebel, has received a three-year appointment to serve on the National Women Business Council. The Council advises The President, Congress, and the Small Business Administration. The SBA and the White House Administration approved her appointment. The Council is comprised of 15 women and has been in effect since 1988 under HR5050. Her appointment runs through May 2010.

Her first official duty is to travel to Portland, Oregon for a Town Hall Meeting where Beverly will speak on a panel and listen to women business owners. Beverly is a former national president of NAWBO and current Vice President of NEWWW, an international organization in Paris, France.

Vincent Phipps Keynote Speaker in Phoenix, Arizona.

Vincent Ivan Phipps, TLC's Senior Communication Coach, was the keynote speaker for Rinker Materials in Phoenix, Arizona. Vincent was invited for the second consecutive year to deliver a motivational message to over 300 leaders within the 13,000-employee company. Rinker is one of the top 10 international construction companies in the world. Vincent delivered a customized message on the importance of listening, and how to reinforce positive behavior through effective communication.

Vincent Phipps is the guest presenter at Dalton/Whitfield Chamber Expo.

Vincent Ivan Phipps, TLC's Senior Communication Coach, will present at the Dalton/Whitfield Chamber of Commerce's Expo on July 19. He will deliver a 2-hour interactive workshop called Leaders Listen. Vincent's presentation philosophy is, "If I can make you laugh, I can help you listen. If I can help you listen, I can help you change." For more information about this workshop, contact www.talklisten.com or 423-622-TALK.. ❖

Helpful Hints

- ✓ Allow the voice mail to pick up another call instead of placing the current caller on hold.
- ✓ To prevent phone tag, leave times you are available to be reached.
- ✓ Leave brief and informative voice messages.

"We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge."

John Naisbitt

"E-Mail overload is one of the greatest destroyers of trust and hence effective communication in an organization. If you do not have time to read all your e-mail because of the sheer volume then, amongst other problems, you may miss deadlines, meetings and requests for action - all Trust destroyers; not to mention the time wasted ploughing through your messages."

David Gurteen

"The Net is a 10.5 on the Richter scale of economic change."

Nicholas Negroponte

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Mum's The Word

Have you ever been told, "*Mum's the word*"? When you heard it, you probably knew to remain quiet. So what does *mum's the word* have to do with being quiet? Mum's **NOT** the word at TLC, so we'll tell you!

This saying means to keep silent about something. For example, "*We are planning a surprise birthday party for our supervisor, so if asked about what the office is doing for lunch, mum's the word.*"

The word "mum" has its earliest origin in the 17th century. Mum is not really a word. It is actually a sound. The "mum" sound is what you make if you try to speak with your lips closed.

When you are on the telephone, remember that since they cannot see you, your voice will make the majority of the impression. Speak clearly and be selective about what you say. If what you have to say is negative, be as informative as possible or "mum's the word," and remember to either remain silent or find a positive way to say it. ❖

Dear TLC,

I hate leaving voice mails! I am comfortable with leaving email and text messages. I am even comfortable speaking with strangers in person. But when it comes to the telephone, I run. It is so bad, that after I leave a message, I NEVER choose the option of having it played back because I dislike how I sound.

My career is suffering because of this. Please reply to this in your next issue so I don't have to call you and talk on the phone.

Signed
- Phone Phobia

Dear Phone Phobia,

Most people have a similar reaction after hearing their own voice. Identify what you dislike about your voice: are you too loud, too nasal, too fast, or too monotone? After identifying what you dislike, practice saying it in the extreme opposite way until you find a medium that makes you comfortable. For example, if you feel your pitch is too high, deliberately lower your pitch and talk low. Do this privately so you don't feel too silly. Continue practicing until you are comfortable. Consider that you could be too critical of yourself. Once you are more at ease with how you sound, you will become more comfortable with phone conversations.

Some Very Funny Web Name Bloopers

When naming your business, stop and consider if the name, run together, will work on the internet. Below are some real web addresses that prove this point quite comically.

1. Who Represents is where you can find the name of the agent that represents any celebrity. Their Web site is www.whorepresents.com
2. Experts Exchange is a knowledge base where programmers can exchange advice and views at www.expertsexchange.com
3. Looking for a pen? Look no further than Pen Island at www.penisland.net
4. Need a therapist? Try Therapist Finder at www.therapistfinder.com
5. And don't forget the Mole Station Native Nursery in New South Wales www.molestationnursery.com
6. If you're looking for IP computer software, there's always www.ipanywhere.com

You can go to any of these addresses and find they represent legitimate businesses. Look carefully at the names that you choose. ❖

Happy Birthday!

TLC wishes a Happy Birthday to clients celebrating in June:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| » Karole A. Keith | » Donna Bartenfield |
| » Tom Clark | » Ravi Krishnaswami |
| » Brian Travers | » Gary Smith |
| » Gilbert Francis | » Beverly Clark |
| » Phil Sanford | » Erin Fuller |
| » Ronald McKinney | » Stephanie Withers |
| » Harold Kelley | » David Clarke |
| » Rhonda Russell | » Marj Flemming |
| » Jim Bevins | » Christian Cadwell |
| » Darlene Clott | » Julie Van Valkenburg |
| » Mary Duffy | |

Remember To

- ✓ Lower your volume and talk slower in order to sound more serious.
- ✓ Ask permission before placing someone on hold.
- ✓ Give a specific time for follow-up.

"Computers are useless. They can only give you answers."

Pablo Picasso

"To err is human, but to really foul up requires a computer."

Paul Ehrlich

"A well-informed employee is the best salesperson a company can have."

Edwin J. Thomas

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Featured Service

Therese Padgett

It's Not What You Say, It's How You Say It!

Punctuation, vocabulary, spelling, and grammar set the tone and become the voice of both written and verbal communication. Their use, as well as their misuse, reflects on our professionalism.

The human voice and our body language are the primary elements we use to convey knowledge and emotions through our face-to-face communications. They become our punctuation marks. They betray issues of trust and sincerity, seriousness and joviality, health and dis-ease. We have to look and listen for all sorts of nuances in order to tell the difference between satire and ridicule, for example. Likewise, we must be aware of the nuances we communicate to others and how certain communicator styles might interpret our nuances.

TLC can offer help with your writing, teaching you to consider first the purpose and the audience who will receive it, along with elements of grammar and word usage. We have a half-day seminar called, "Business Writing." We also have several clients that send their important written communication through TLC before submitting it to the intended recipient. For detailed help with grammar, we recommend that you consult a local community college or a self-study review of an English grammar and composition textbook. Also, make a new habit of learning and using at least one new word a day.

For training or retraining of the human voice and the use of body language, TLC is a treasure trove of help! Give us a call today at 423-622-TALK to discuss options of Executive Coaching or small group training, because it's not what you say, it's how you say it! ❖

CEO Corner

Beverly Inman-Ebel

Chief Executive Opinion

Since this is the editorial portion of the newsletter, I have decided to use it this month to give some biased opinions on the ways we communicate with one another. I welcome your comments.

If you are a decision-maker at a credit card or insurance company and your company answers the phones with a human being, please let me know. I will immediately become your customer. I have quite a

few friends who will join me.

If you are a decision-maker of a company who provides high-tech services and your company will give me someone to talk to in my country who speaks my language fluently, please let me know. I will even pay more for this service.

I am a fairly busy person, yet I enjoy an interesting email from time to time. If you will cut and paste it, rather than forwarding it for the twentieth time, I will read it. If, when I read it, it tells me that I must pass it on to ten people or be cursed with bad luck, I may never open an email from you again.

If you send an email, cc me only if I need to know. If you reply back to the sender of that email, please do not hit "reply all". I get a little cranky when my box fills with emails that don't need to be there.

When you leave a voice message, please slow down when you get to the phone number. At least pause after the area code and again after the second set of three numbers. You may get more returned calls that way.

When you leave a voice message, please be informative. Just asking me to call you back gives me less incentive than if you give me information or a specific request. I am all for exercise, but phone tag is not a game I enjoy.

When calling or sending an email, please use my name rather than a nickname. Only my family calls me Bev, and I respond merely because I cannot change their behavior. Shortening my name does not make us instant buddies. I bet a lot of Roberts, Davids, Rebeccas, and Susans feel the same way.

Okay, I feel better now. We are literally bombarded with communication today. My father recently told me that when he was a child, he had to walk five miles to the post office to mail or receive a letter. Now he communicates with his friends all over the country in a matter of seconds. More communication can be a very good thing, as long as we respect each other and maintain relationships.

If you have some communication complaints to get off your chest, just email me. Of course, when you do, call me Beverly, don't cc your entire database, or ask me to pass on your email to my database. We'll print your beefs in next month's Exchange. In the meantime, call, write, type, respect and live your dreams! ❖

"Man is still the most extraordinary computer of all."

John F. Kennedy

"Just because electronic mail is fast does not mean that it should be slipshod, yet the worst language-mashing I have ever seen has been done in e-mail messages. If your words are important enough to write, then they're also important enough to write properly."

David Harris

"When 'XX' and 'OO' are written at the end of a love note, they are merely a shorthand for affection; they could never take the place of the real thing. By the same token, cyberspace communication does not substitute for human interaction."

Ronna Archbold
