

Modern Mobile Madness

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Are your mobile manners up to scratch? asks Haydee Antezana

Everyone has a “can you believe it?” mobile phone story. Mine was the one when, at a conference, a delegate was asking me a question and his phone rang. He casually took it out of his pocket and answered the call while 87 people were waiting on him! We thought he was joking, but he wasn't. The worst part was, guess what I was presenting on?... Business Etiquette.

There are certain places a phone should never be answered. I called a VP recently, and I could clearly hear he was at the restroom urinal. Yikes!

Over the last few years, delegates in my courses—across all industries, from healthcare, to automobile to casinos—have provided me with their top cell phone no-noes. Can you relate to any of these?

Don't force others to listen to you

When people can't escape your conversation (in a car, elevator, or at the lunch table) you should spare them. Details about how a business meeting went, or intimate knowledge of what's in your refrigerator, are all things we can do without. Attempt to keep your personal conversations...personal. So, when you're at your desk, be mindful of your “neighbours”. The same goes for talking loudly as you walk through the office. If you are in a situation where your productivity is affected because of a loud talker next to you, first raise it with the person in a positive way. “Celeste, we work in such a close space that I am getting distracted by hearing you on personal calls. Are you able to speak more softly or maybe move to another area when you are on your mobile?” If that doesn't work, take it up with your supervisor.

Love the one you're with

It's rude to check your phone or take a call when you are speaking to someone in person,



unless it's of vital importance. Rather, let the call go to voicemail. This also applies when a waiter is taking your order or when the cashier at your supermarket is ringing up your groceries. Let the caller leave a message and call back later.

You are on a call and you see another very urgent call coming through. Unless you're on a social call, the first call takes priority. Don't put someone on hold and start a conversation. Remember two minutes of call waiting is equivalent to 10 minutes for the person on the other side.

Don't chew gum, eat, or download e-mails while talking on your mobile

Not only will you sound distracted, but it also indicates to the person on the end of the line that they are not important enough to command your full attention.

Don't leave your phone unattended

If you are in an open plan environment, don't leave your phone unattended to go to the restroom or on a break. Your colleagues will be distracted by the ringing or notification with someone else. Rather put it in a desk drawer and on silent.

Meetings

Call me old-fashioned, but I believe having a phone on the table and constantly looking at it is bad manners. I see many people sending and reading texts during meetings. It's not cool. Your phone must be put away and on silent. Of course, there are exceptions: the school may call you because your child is sick, or you're on a project deadline and your input maybe urgently needed. Should this be the case, let the meeting convener know you might need to take a call. Sit close to the door to avoid distracting the group, when that all important call comes through and you need to take the call.

Texting

Turn off the sound associated with striking the keys. This can be especially distracting when working in an open office.

Don't text while talking to someone.

Texting in front of others is like whispering behind someone's back. Even though it's a text message, it's like chatting to someone who isn't there. Have you ever had someone try to listen to you while text messaging someone else, as they clumsily insert "oh yeahs" and "un huhs" at all the wrong moments?

Never drive under the influence of a stimulating conversation – even if you are on a hands-free device. It's a distraction that has caused many accidents.

Visual cues about your brand

It's the little things that people notice that make up the overall impression. For instance, what does your phone cover look like? I went to lunch with the VP of a global investment firm. As we sat down, he placed his phone on the table. I couldn't help but notice it was "sleeping" in a knitted jersey. If anything, it was a great conversation starter.

Screening calls

If you are going to screen your incoming calls don't be blatant about it. For example, you shouldn't look at your phone and blurt, "Oh

no, that's Robert from HR. I definitely don't want to talk to him today." If you do this in the presence of others, they may assume that you also do the same when they call you and you avoid their calls.

Do the "ring" test

If you were standing next to the CEO of your company and your phone rang, would you be embarrassed by the phone ring?

Pay attention to the volume and sound of your ring tone. Many can be highly irritating as well as unprofessional e.g. the baby cry or the minion song, remember: A phone should "ring" not "sing." When sitting in an open-plan office, turn down the volume of your ring tone.

Have "selfie" control at work

Do you remember the best movie of the year catastrophe at the 2017 Oscars? The wrong best movie of the year winner was announced because the Oscar's auditor was so busy taking selfies and tweeting backstage that the wrong envelope was handed over to the presenters. There was a lot of scrambling to save the brand reputation of the prestigious global audit firm based on the mobile phone saga. When taking selfies and posting on social media, be aware your co-workers can see these. This has got people in hot water, especially when you are supposed to be at work as opposed to an extended lunch.

Wherever you may be, if you take photos with others, first ask if it's okay to post them on social media.

Make an impression with your voicemail greeting.

- Take time to set up a professional greeting. It's an extension of your brand.
- When recording your message, avoid the following:
 - Don't opt out and use the standard default message of your mobile provider. This doesn't show your personal touch.

- Avoid silly ones, such as, "You know what to do," or Lionel Richie's "Hello, is it me you're looking for?"

- When recording your voicemail greeting, limit background noise like traffic, crying kids, and music. Record it in a quiet space.

- Avoid negative words like sorry, unfortunately, and can't. Keep a positive tone right through.

- Don't sound like a robot. Stand up when you record your message. Your tone of voice needs to be natural and warm. Make the listener feel like she matters by letting her hear the sound of your smile.

- Don't sound rushed.

- Ensure your message is informative, professional, short—10 to 20 seconds—and memorable. Write out your message and rehearse it to sound natural when you record it. This will save you a lot of time.

Example:

"Hi, this is (your name) from (your company). I'm unable to take your call right now. Please leave a brief message and your name and number and I'll return your call as soon as possible."

Use the last sentence for the memorability factor around your business. You don't have to do this if it doesn't feel right for you. But in the least end it with an upbeat message such as:

"Have a fantastic day ahead."

Mobile Madness is a fast spreading illness in offices around the world. If you don't have any cell phone guidelines at work, it's time to create some social order out of cell phone chaos. If you and your colleagues feel that mobile etiquette is out of the window, talk to your manager about creating a one page "Mobile No-Noes" list to put up in the office. Some of your office colleagues may be completely unaware that their mobile manners are not up to scratch.

about the author



Haydee Antezana is a keynote speaker, corporate trainer, author, twin Mum and recovering perfectionist. Did you know you may be losing amazing opportunities through your accidental impressions? Haydee will empower you with the skills needed to command professional presence, so when you walk into a room, people pay attention, and when you speak, people listen. Her practical, cutting edge "Packaged for Success" program has provided powerful results for admin professionals and teams in companies around the world. If you're looking to increase your visibility, credibility and profitability connect with Haydee for a complimentary discovery consultation. haydee@haydeeanitezana.com | +1 (951) 970 4347 | www.haydeeanitezana.com

