

## Answering the Telephone

How a company answers the phone can tell the whole story of how they treat customers and employees. The correct phrase said in the right order in a positive tone leaves a good impression and starts the customer-client relationship off on the right foot.



1. **Pick up the phone in three rings.**

More than three rings signals chaos in your office or inattentiveness on the part of your company or organization.

2. **Greet the caller**, e.g. "hello", "good morning". Good manners show you respect the caller.

3. **Give your name**, e.g., "Hi, my name is Dara".

This is a courtesy that serves to personalize the customer service experience as well as allowing the customer to hold you accountable for your level of service. He/she now has a point of reference and someone to contact when he/she calls back.

4. **Ask the customer if or how you can help.**

Asking to help tells the customer you are there to serve his/her needs and to solve his/her problems. This also leaves the customer with a positive impression.

Put it altogether and you have a good example:



"Good morning, thank you for calling ...  
My name is Dara, how may I help you?"

The greeting is key; it sets the tone and style of the whole interaction.

## Troubleshooting

Some things which may upset a customer are simply unavoidable. Here are some tips on how to best handle these situations.

### “Putting a Customer on Hold”

- Ask the customer if you can put them on hold; wait for them to say “yes” or “no” and then explain it will only be for a short period of time.
- Explain to customers why you are putting them on hold.
- Thank customers for holding.

### “Transferring a Call”

Ask the customer if they mind being transferred; wait for them to say “yes” or “no” and explain why they are being transferred and to whom.

### “Taking a Message”

Explain your co-workers absence in a positive light but do not be too specific. Explain that your co-worker is in a meeting, conference, briefing, or training. Do not say he or she is gravely ill, never called in today, can't be found, that you do not know where he or she is, or that he or she “was just here”.



- Give a reasonable estimate of when the co-worker will return.
- Offer to help the caller, take a message or transfer to another staff member.

If a co-worker is on holiday and will not return to the office for some time, it is permissible to say that he or she is on holiday. However, avoid details such as, “Ravy is at the beach and I am sure she is having a great time.”

### “Ending the Call”

This is the final step in good telephone etiquette. A good customer service representative ends the call on a positive note, repeating any actions agreed to be taken and what is going to be done to help or serve the customer.