 <p>INNARCHIVE.COM - BACK TO BASICS TELEPHONE ANSWERING <b>TRAINING SESSION PLAN</b></p>	TITLE	Telephone
	TARGET GROUP	All new employees
	DURATION	2 hours
	VENUE	Training Room
	GROUP SIZE	Flexible
	TRAINED BY	Training Director, Training Officer

## PURPOSE

To develop the values of communication, excellence and performance by experiencing the importance of first impressions and practicing telephone etiquette. The successful implementation of the standards handled in this training session is an opportunity to outperform the competition.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

All new team members

## OUTCOMES

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Answer the telephone using Company standards.
2. Explain why we answer the telephone this way.
3. Take a message according to Company standard.
4. Apply guidelines for handling difficult callers.

## RESOURCES

AV Equipment: Data projector, CD player, video/DVD, Laptop	Workbook	Music: “Ring, Ring” by ABBA; “Call Me” by Blondie
Notebooks	Table Toys	Message Pad
Pens	Give-aways, sweets, prizes	Flipcharts/Whiteboard
Markers (Mixed Colours)	Role Play Cards	

## BREAKS




10 min Stretch Break in middle.



## ROOM SET-UP


- U-shape
- Cabaret


## SESSION OVERVIEW


Setting the scene	Pre-session set up Welcome & introduction Icebreaker Objectives
Content	Our Unique Culture Active Listening Company Telephone Standards Group Work Standard Greeting Why we are doing this
Break	10 min break
Content	Role Play Taking Messages Phonetic Alphabet Etiquette Difficult Callers Rude/Angry Callers Talkative Callers Hard to Understand Callers Re-cap Ending the call Role Play
Wrap-up	Wrap up



Time	Topic	Learning Activity	Resources
20 min prior to start	<b>Pre-session set up</b>	Pre-reading: Blog comment: The only venue that answered their phone ( <i>see attached</i> ) <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_phonetic_alphabet">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_phonetic_alphabet</a> <a href="http://www.fullerton.edu/it/services/Telecomm/FAQ/etiquetteguide.asp">http://www.fullerton.edu/it/services/Telecomm/FAQ/etiquetteguide.asp</a> <a href="http://www.salisbury.edu/careerservices/facstaff/OfficeEtiquette/telephoneetiquette.html">http://www.salisbury.edu/careerservices/facstaff/OfficeEtiquette/telephoneetiquette.html</a> Music playing Flipcharts prepared AV equipment set up F/C 1 on wall (Objectives) Opening presentation slide on screen	
3 min	<b>Welcome &amp; introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ WELCOME!! &amp; self introduction from trainer if necessary</li> <li>✿ Please sign attendance list</li> <li>✿ Q: – To stimulate interest in the topic</li> <li>✿ <b>WHAT</b> we'll cover today – review Flip Chart (F/C) 1 which should have the agenda</li> <li>✿ <b>HOW</b> we'll work – participation, lots of questions and activities, use your workbook, stretch &amp; smoke breaks, drink lots of water to stay focused, Evacuation – nearest exit, Note paper &amp; pens – take notes (but not the pens!) Focus on participation, good learning &amp; fun</li> <li>✿ <b>WHEN</b> does the session finish &amp; have breaks</li> </ul>	
10 min	<b>Icebreaker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ <b>WHO</b> is in the room with us today? Lets meet each other through a quick activity – Icebreaker - “What do you see”</li> </ul> <p><i>Trainer's note: Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves and say what they see on the picture (old lady or young lady). If a participant says they see both the old and young lady ask them to come to the front to show the rest of the group.</i></p>	

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		<p>Even if you are now able to see both pictures your brain will always first see the picture you saw first since it was your first impression. It is the same with images others have of our hotel, our service, ourselves. The first impression always remains.</p> <p><b>Q: How can we benefit from this knowledge?</b>  <b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Understand what makes a good impression</li> <li>✿ Getting into the habit of using these activities</li> <li>✿ Service will be easier for all if the guest’s first impression is positive (guest is more “forgiving”)</li> <li>✿ Compliments</li> <li>✿ Guest loyalty</li> <li>✿ Easier contact and good impression in private life</li> <li>✿ Better understanding and less errors</li> </ul>	
3 min	<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Knowing that taking a telephone call is often the first point of contact with a guest, we will today speak about it in more detail.</p> <p>By the end of this session you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Answer the telephone using Company standard</li> <li>✿ Explain the reason why we answer the phone this way</li> <li>✿ Take a message according to Company standard</li> <li>✿ Apply guidelines for handling difficult callers</li> </ul>	
10 min	<b>Our Unique Culture</b>	<p>Here you see a model with which you are all familiar with: Our unique Company DNA together with our external brand promise. Our DNA comprehends the values that make us unique and differentiate us from other companies and you from others. These values influence the way that we behave naturally. This behaviour is in turn, what our guests see and how they experience Company (our brand). Let’s find out what it means for us.</p>	



Time	Topic	Learning Activity	Resources
		<p><b>Q: How does our DNA influence the way we answer the telephone?</b>  <b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ <u>People Oriented</u>: really listen; respect peoples time (when they call you, don't ask them to call you back if you do not have time); care about people</li> <li>✿ <u>Straightforward</u>: being honest; communicate clearly and straightforward to avoid misunderstandings</li> <li>✿ <u>Entrepreneurial Performance</u>: take the initiative (do not just pass the call on, but think first)</li> <li>✿ <u>Creating traditions</u>: create an emotion or connection (e.g. Guests used to call the switchboard at the Furama Hotel Hong Kong because the staff was so friendly and it was nice to talk to them. One guest even called whenever she felt bad to get in a better mood.)</li> <li>✿ <u>Passion for European Luxury</u>: being polite; adhere to the etiquette</li> </ul>	
10 min	<b>Active listening</b>	<p>Let's talk about the first point, really listen, a little bit more.</p> <p><b>Q: What is our main activity when we are on the telephone?</b>  <b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Listening!</li> </ul> <p><b>Q: Which types of listening exist?</b>  <b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Passive listening</li> <li>✿ Active listening</li> </ul> <p><b>Q: What are the behaviours that accompany active listening?</b>  <b>A:</b></p>	 <p>The screenshot shows a presentation slide from InnaArchive. The title is 'Active Listening'. Below the title is a list of five points: 1. Listen, 2. Not use activities, 3. Address, 4. Repeat and ask questions, 5. Do not interrupt. To the left of the list is a small image of a dog with its ears flapping.</p>



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Listen</li> <li>✿ No side activities</li> <li>✿ Affirming</li> <li>✿ Repeating and asking questions</li> <li>✿ Do not interrupt</li> <li>✿ Take notes</li> <li>✿ No discrimination</li> </ul> <p>Most of the above points are not possible when we are away from our place of work. Please avoid taking work related telephone calls on your mobile while you are walking through the hotel!</p> <p>Surely you have certain friends you consider to be very good listeners and to whom you turn when you have problems or questions. Observe them the next time you meet and you will notice that they portray these behaviours. Some people possess this talent naturally, it is called empathy, and others need to actively practice applying these behaviours.</p>	
5 min	<b>Company telephone standards</b>	<p>Now that we have spoken about telephone behaviours, let's take a look at telephone standards.</p> <p><b>Q: Which are the Company telephone standards?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Answer within 3 rings</li> <li>✿ Standard greeting</li> <li>✿ Use caller's name</li> <li>✿ Inform before transferring*</li> <li>✿ Ask permission before putting on hold</li> <li>✿ Get back to caller on hold within 20 seconds</li> </ul> <p><i>Trainer's note: Discuss why these are standards:</i></p>	 <p>The screenshot shows a slide with the following text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Telephone must be answered within 3 rings</li> <li>✿ Always use the standard greeting</li> <li>✿ Ask the caller to wait during the conversation</li> <li>✿ Inform the caller before transferring them (The phrase: "I will transfer you to the sales Dept.")</li> <li>✿ Ask the caller to permission before putting them on hold (The phrase: "I will put you on hold for a moment")</li> <li>✿ Do not leave the caller on hold for more than 20 seconds (Thank you for your patience)</li> </ul>




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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ 3 rings because caller may hang up and call the competition next/ringing noise is disturbing in public places (restaurant, FO etc.).</li> <li>✿ Inform before transferring because caller may be confused because they do not know where they have been transferred to etc.</li> </ul> <p>You can upgrade this standard by staying on the line and briefing your colleague on the caller:</p> <p>“Karen, I have Mr. Miller on the line for you and he would like some information regarding xyz.”</p> <p>“Good afternoon, Mr. Miller, this is Karen from the Sales department. Which information regarding xyz may I help you with?”</p>	
5 min	<b>Group Work</b>	<p>Now, I would like to take some time to look at our standard greeting. There is reasoning behind these standard greetings which hopefully will encourage you to always apply them.</p> <p>By the way, good telephone etiquette and etiquette in general is a skill that is appreciated in all companies and across all industries. 😊</p> <p><i>Trainer’s note: Split participants into two groups. You can split the groups by year of birth (even/uneven); using playing cards (red/black); by counting “one, two”; By mobile phone (Nokia, other) etc.</i></p> <p><i>Using the flipchart, group one should decide on the external greeting for the telephone operator and the external greeting within a department.</i></p> <p><i>Using the flipchart, group two should decide on the internal greeting and the external greeting within a department.</i></p>	 <p>F/C</p>




Time	Topic	Learning Activity	Resources
5 min	<b>Standard Greeting</b>	<p><i>Trainer's note: After 5 minutes compare and with the group agree on the "correct" standards:</i></p> <p><b>External Operator:</b>  "Good morning/afternoon/evening, Company Hotel, how may I assist you?"</p> <p><b>External Department:</b>  "Good morning/afternoon/evening, Company Hotel, the reception, this is Nathalie, how may I assist you?"</p> <p><b>Internal:</b>  "Good morning/afternoon/evening, the reception, this is Nathalie, how may I assist you?"</p>	 <p>The slide is titled 'Standard Greeting' and features a red rotary telephone. It lists three scenarios: External Operator, External Department, and Internal, each with a sample greeting and a 'Trainer's note'.</p>
10 min	<b>Why we are doing this</b>	<p><b>Q: Why do we start with the greeting?</b>  <b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Polite</li> <li>✿ Time of day (time differences)</li> <li>✿ Brain needs a moment to go into "listening mode"</li> <li>✿ Speaker phone</li> <li>✿ Delay when calling long distance</li> </ul> <p><b>Q: Why is the hotel/department name important</b>  <b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ To know where one is – which information should one share</li> <li>✿ Speed dial often leads to wrong number</li> <li>✿ Caller will know which department to ask for next time</li> </ul> <p><b>Q: Why is your name important?</b>  <b>A:</b></p>	 <p>The slide is titled 'Why we are doing this' and features a person in a red uniform. It lists three reasons: 'The start with the greeting', 'The department name is important', and 'Your name is important'.</p>




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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Polite</li> <li>✿ Contact person/reference</li> <li>✿ May indicate which languages caller can speak with you</li> <li>✿ Small talk/more personal</li> </ul> <p>By the way, did you know that the probability of the guest saying their name is 80% higher if you mention yours? This saves you the effort of asking.</p> <p><b>Q: Why is it important that we use the standard greeting internally as well?</b>  <b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Polite</li> <li>✿ Keep the habit</li> <li>✿ Guests are listening to us while we are on the telephone (This is why we should move out of public areas when receiving calls on our (work) mobiles!</li> <li>✿ You never know who is on the other line!</li> </ul>	
10 min	<b>Stretch break</b>	<p>Excellent work – this deserves a stretch break! Please be sure to be back and ready to go in 10 minutes.</p> <p><i>Trainer's note: Play some funky music!</i></p>	
5 min	<b>Role Play</b>	<p>Often a guest or a colleague is not available so we must take a message.</p> <p>Let's try this in a role play.</p> <p>The caller asks for a person. The person is in a meeting which is scheduled to end at 5pm. The caller wants to change a restaurant reservation from 15 to 13 guests and would like to inquire about a future date for a meeting.</p> <p><i>Trainer's note: Give a volunteer a message pad and play the caller (practice standard greeting at same time). After the call, take the message pad and go through the call step</i></p>	

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		<i>by step:</i>	
5 min	<b>Taking Messages</b>	<p><i>Trainer's notes: Other than the standards mentioned on the slide, develop following learning points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Some names are common and could lead to confusion</li> <li>✿ Asking what the call is in regards to allows the person who will call back to prepare for the call</li> <li>✿ If you ask what the call is in regards to, often you can take care of the issue (change restaurant reservation) but be ensure to inform your colleague</li> <li>✿ Repeating numbers digit by digit avoids confusion, especially in an international environment (language, international numbers) – you can invite someone to a flipchart and say your number in clusters which will lead to confusion, i.e. six hundred twenty four can be 624 or 600 20 4 etc.</li> <li>✿ For difficult names you can help your colleague by additionally writing the name as spoken, i.e. Szybrijscinsky = Shubrishinski</li> <li>✿ Fidelio has a message printing option</li> </ul>	
5 min	<b>Phonetic Alphabet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ If you use the phonetic alphabet please use the standard one and do not make words up</li> </ul> <p><i>Trainer's note: Go through the phonetic alphabet quickly and practice pronouncing the words.</i></p>	
10 min	<b>Etiquette</b>	<p>As we have talked already in our DNA it is not Company's philosophy to train robots or "script" guest-employee interactions. However, to make your life easier, let's look at some simple, polite and professional ways to implement the standards we discussed at the beginning of this session. Having a repertoire allows you to change your routine and is</p>	

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		<p>helpful in case of language restraints.</p> <p><i>Trainer's note: Practice the standard phrases and agree on additional possibilities, always using positive, professional language. Creating/agreeing on standards together increases the commitment to actually implement them.</i></p>	
5 min	<b>Difficult Callers</b>	<p>No matter how professional, polite and friendly we are on the phone, we may always encounter difficult callers. Dealing with them is more challenging on the telephone as we do not have body language to support our words and address the sub-conscious. Our words, tone of voice and of course our actions/solutions become more important!</p>	
5 min	<b>The rude of angry caller</b>	<p>Angry or rude callers are usually upset because they want to complain about something.</p> <p><b>Q: What should we think of when handling complaints?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listen with empathy</li> <li>- Offer solutions to the “real” problem</li> <li>- You own the problem</li> <li>- Ask whether guest is happy</li> <li>- Let the guest know you appreciate their feed-back</li> </ul> <p>These steps stay the same on the telephone.</p> <p><i>Trainer's note: Go through the Do's and Don'ts quickly.</i></p>	
5 min	<b>The talkative caller</b>	<p>By using appropriate communication tactics you can stay in control of the conversation. These tactics will also help you guide face to face conversations.</p> <p><i>Trainer's note: Go through the Do's and Don'ts quickly.</i></p>	

Time	Topic	Learning Activity	Resources
5 min	<b>The hard to understand caller</b>	<p><b>Q: Why are callers sometimes hard to understand?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Language barriers</li> <li>✿ Accents</li> <li>✿ Bad telephone line</li> <li>✿ Background noise</li> <li>✿ etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Trainer's note: Go through the Do's and Don'ts quickly.</i></p>	
5 min	<b>Re - cap</b>	<p>Let's re-cap what we have practiced so far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Active listening is more than just hearing what the other says</li> <li>✿ There are standards regarding telephone communication</li> <li>✿ There is reasoning behind our telephone greeting</li> <li>✿ Taking messages properly can help avoid mistakes and misunderstanding and are an opportunity to provide great service</li> <li>✿ There is a standard phonetic alphabet professionals use</li> <li>✿ There are methods for dealing with difficult callers</li> </ul> <p>Wow, there is more to picking up a telephone “than meets the ear”! What a pity it would be if you put in all this effort and damage the great impression you have made by ending the call unprofessionally.</p>	
5 min	<b>Ending the call</b>	<p>In order to avoid this, let's look at three simple tips.</p> <p><i>Trainer's note: Go through the points.</i></p>	

Time	Topic	Learning Activity	Resources
15 min	<b>Role play</b>	<p><i>Trainer's note: Split the group into teams of 3 and let them pick 3 role plays which you have prepared on (coloured) cards. Every person should once play the caller, the employee and the coach who listens and gives feed-back.</i></p> <p><i>You can also pick volunteers, brief them on using the cards and ask them to role play in front of the group. The group then gives feed-back. Role-play several situations.</i></p> <p><i>When doing telephone role play it is helpful if the caller and the employee do not see each other. They can turn their chairs and sit back to back; a pin board or whiteboard can be used as a separator or one of the players can use a telephone in another room and the group listens to the conversation via speaker phone.</i></p>	
2 min	<b>Wrap up</b>	<p>Participants complete the Training Evaluation Form and Action Plan.</p> <p>“Thank-you and good luck!”</p>	