

How to talk to customers by telephone

Here are some hints about how to have a successful telephone conversation with your customers:

1. Prepare. Think about what you want to say before you dial the number. Make a checklist of the important points you want to cover with the customer.
2. Be friendly to the person who can connect you. They could be *your* next customer! If they put you on hold, keep smiling while you wait so that you are ready when you get through to the customer.
3. Greet the customer warmly. When customers take a call, they want to speak to a human being, not a machine.
4. If the customer is out of the office or on voicemail, always leave a message. Say your name clearly and give the reason you are calling. Offer to call back later, or invite the customer to return your call.
5. Speak clearly, listen carefully and don't interrupt. Use different words to show you understand your customer's needs. Be positive and avoid negative expressions like "It isn't possible" or "I don't know". If you don't have the information your customer needs, promise to get back to them and give a specific time.
6. Before you say goodbye and hang up, tell them the next step. Thank your customer and make sure they feel special!

(adapted from *The Business*)



Ex.1 Match these expressions with their English equivalents from the text:

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. wskazówka2. udany3. poczta głosowa4. pokryć5. przerwać6. konkretny	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• voicemail• to interrupt• specific• successful• to cover• hint
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Ex.2 Complete these "telephoning" phrases with the missing verbs:

call / dial / greet / leave / make / put / return / take

1. to _____ the number
2. to _____ a checklist
3. to _____ somebody on hold
4. to _____ the customer
5. to _____ a call
6. to _____ a message
7. to _____ back later
8. to _____ the call

Ex.3 Say these sentences in English using some expressions from the previous exercises:

1. Gdy odbierasz telefon, powitaj klienta z uśmiechem (*smile*).
2. Jeśli nie możesz oddzwonić, zostaw wiadomość.
3. Dam ci kilka konkretnych wskazówek.

I know English idioms!

This lesson's text deals with making telephone conversations. Here's an example of a related idiomatic expression:

- a telephone tag = *a series of telephone calls between two people in which each time one party calls, the other is not available to answer (telefoniczny "berek"; sytuacja, w której dwie osoby chcące ze sobą porozmawiać nie mogą na siebie trafić)*

Phrasals, phrasals...

The language of telephoning is rich in phrasal verbs, here are those that appeared in the reading text:

- to get through to sb = *to manage to reach somebody (dodzwonić się)*
 - I've been trying all day to get through to Mark, but unsuccessfully.
- to call back = *to return the call (oddzwonić)*
 - I can't talk to you now, I'll call back later.
- to get back to sb = *to contact somebody later (skontaktować się ponownie)*
 - I'll get back to you later with those figures you asked about.

Grammar corner

Let's study this sentence from the text: "If the customer is out of the office or on voicemail, always leave a message." The fragment is an example of a conditional sentence with a typically present tense after "if", but with the imperative (rozkazująca) form in the main part ("leave"). Another example can be this: "If you don't have the information your customer needs, promise to get back to them and give a specific time."

GLOSSARY	
customer	klient
hint	wskazówka, rada
to have a conversation	przewodzić rozmowę
successful	udany
to prepare	przygotować (się)
to dial the number	wykręcić (wybrać) numer
checklist	lista kontrolna
important points	ważne punkty
to cover	pokryć, tu: omówić
to connect	połączyć
to put sb on hold	poprosić o zaczekanie
to keep smiling	uśmiechać się
to be ready	być gotowym
to get through	dodzwonić się
to greet sb	powitać
warmly	ciepło
to take a call	odbierać połączenie
human being	człowiek, istota ludzka
out of the office	poza biurem
voicemail	poczta głosowa
to leave a message	zostawić wiadomość
clearly	wyraźnie
to give the reason	podać powód
to offer	zapropnować
to call back	oddzwonić
to invite	tu: zachęcić
to return the call	oddzwonić
to interrupt	przerywać
to avoid	unikać
to promise	obietcać
to get back to sb	skontaktować się ponownie
to give a specific time	dokładnie określić godzinę
to hang up	rozłączyć się
the next step	kolejny krok
to make sure	upewnić się
to feel special	czuć się wyjątkowo

ANSWER KEY

Ex.1

1. hint
2. successful
3. voicemail
4. to cover
5. to interrupt
6. specific

Ex.2

1. to dial the number
2. to make a checklist
3. to put somebody on hold
4. to greet the customer
5. to take a call
6. to leave a message
7. to call back later
8. to return the call

Ex.3

1. When you take a call, greet the customer with a smile.
2. If you can't return the call, leave a message.
3. I'll give you a few specific hints.