

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



120 How to Give Good Phone

The way a company's phones are answered and callers have their needs met is an art form. Many organizations struggle with a job that ought to be routine. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's ring up a topic that should be on a manager's radar screen, today...on The Extra Point.

Recently I was making a call into Calvo's SelectCare, needing to connect with one of the managers for some information.

A young woman answered. Her tone was full and rich. My "radio" ear picked up on a good voice.

I gave her my name and company, and who I was trying to reach. She asked permission to put me on hold while she checked to see if my party was available.

"She's been trained on good phone etiquette," I said to myself. The reason you ask permission before you put someone on hold is that not everybody wants to wait. Oh, they could hang up if the wait is extended, but you've already given your name, company, and who you want to speak with. You think, "If I just hang up, maybe the receptionist will walk into so-and-so's office and say, 'You can't believe how rude this Jerry Roberts is. He called for you and while I was checking your availability, he hung up on me. Man, some people!'"

The young lady came back on, thanked me for holding, and said my party was in a meeting. When I added how I needed to connect as soon as possible, she asked permission to place me on hold again. Returning to the call she thanked me again for my patience, and said the end of the meeting was uncertain.

As I'm about to say, "Okay, please leave a message that I called," she said, "Mister Roberts, since we don't know when the meeting will end, I'll monitor the situation and

as soon as that happens and I can connect you, I'll call you back. Would that be okay?"

That was a bit unique. She was going to *monitor the situation*? She could have just taken the message and been done with me. We talked a little longer and her performance was extraordinary. The calmness of her voice, the confidence with which she spoke, the professional way she handled me on that call, I said, "What is your name?" She replied, "Cleo."

I complimented her on how well she'd done and as I left the call I decided I wanted to meet Cleo when my meeting took place at SelectCare.

On that day I sat down with Yovez Anderson and Jake Calvo I told the story of the phone call with Cleo, and that before I left the building, I wanted to meet her. Yovez frowned, "I'm sorry, but today was her last day. She's already gone." Ohh, I was disappointed. I wanted to talk to Cleo and ask her how she had been trained, her ideas on the proper way to process calls, and learn some of her customer service experiences. They just nodded and said that yeah, Cleo was special and they were sorry to see her go. She was leaving Guam and would be missed.

Answering phones well is so important for every organization. If you've got a "Cleo" on your team, make her or him feel special. They're enhancing your image. Take care of them.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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