

CALL TRANSFER ETIQUETTE

by Lydia Ramsey

"Let me transfer your call..."

What goes through your mind when you hear those words? Do you have visions of being placed on hold, waiting for someone else to come on the line, repeating what you just said, and then hearing one more time, "Let me transfer your call?" Feelings of frustration set in and your confidence in the company you dialed begins to diminish. It's a game of musical phones played to a tune that no one enjoys.

If you don't like being transferred from person to person over the phone, your customers don't care for it either. There are a number of ways to transfer callers without creating more problems along the way.

Listen to the caller's issue.

Even if you think you know immediately what people want and who can help them, hear them out. Don't interrupt. You could learn something that will change your mind about how to handle the call.

Avoid saying the word "transfer."

Tell people that you need to "send" their call to another department or employee. Offer to "connect" them or "put them through" to someone else. Using a different term can save your callers undue anxiety and fellow employees from having to deal with edgy customers.

Check to be sure that the person to whom you are sending the call is actually available.

Your customer will not be happy if the call unexpectedly goes through to a voice mailbox. If you know that the person who can help is not in, ask before transferring callers to voice mail. They may prefer another route.

Verify that you have the right person before connecting the call.

If you aren't certain, ask the caller to wait while you check. Tell callers why you need to transfer them.

Give your caller the name and the direct number of the person to whom you are directing the call.

That way, if there is a disconnection, your customer knows whom to ask for when they call back. If you have the ability to stay on the line and make an introduction, that is all the better.

If you want to provide customer service that will delight your callers, offer your name and phone number and invite people to call you back if their needs are not met or their questions are not answered. Thoughtfully and carefully transferring calls reflects positively on your entire organization and will eliminate musical phones.