

Cell Phone Courtesy in the Workplace

Happy National Cell Phone Courtesy Month! Do you mind your mobile manners? Using mobile devices, like cellphones and tablets, in the workplace is becoming more acceptable than ever before. In fact, one in three Americans use their mobile phones to make work calls, and another 82 percent use text messaging for business communication.

Here are a few Do's and Don't's of workplace cell phone courtesy:

DO turn your ringer on silent or vibrate. Be conscientious of the people working around you, and how the sound of your ringtone could disturb or distract them. If your office has an open floor plan or is laid out in cubicles, your ringer has the potential to be heard throughout the whole office. **DON'T** be that guy.

DON'T take personal calls at your desk if you work in a shared space. Your coworkers have better things to do than listen to what your wife needs from the grocery store or what time you have to pick the kids up from soccer. Take personal phone calls to an empty conference room or another private location. Never use the restroom as a place to talk on the phone - you never know who may be in listening range.

DON'T take a phone call or answer a text message during a meeting or having a face-to-face conversation with someone. Be respectful of your coworker's time! Be fully engaged during the meeting, and check your phone after it is over. Having your phone out, even under the table, is a clear give away that you are not paying attention during the meeting.

And lastly, **DO** be careful that you **DON'T** accidentally text a boss or coworker something you meant to send to a spouse or friend! If you use your personal cell phone for business communication, be sure to label your work contacts with your business name, such as "EFR John Smith." That way, when you're trying to reach out to John, your buddy from college, you have a better chance of avoiding an embarrassing wrong-number situation.

Use these cell phone courtesy tips to fully engage and not distract others during productive working hours. When using a mobile device, be cognizant of your surroundings in the workplace. Keep private matters private and business matters professional!

Time-Out

When was the last time you avoided checking your work email for 12 hours, 24 hours, over the weekend, or perhaps an entire vacation? It used to be that when people left work they were mostly disconnected from colleagues and clients until the next day. As our personal devices have developed, so too has a cultural norm that work information is available at the click of a button from anywhere and at any time.

According to Forbes, communicating with colleagues after business hours may cause stress, disrupt sleep, interfere with personal relationships, and prevent your brain from relaxing and recharging for the next day in the office. An easy solution to help you feel refreshed in the workplace is to give yourself a time out from work each day. If you plan to be out of the office on vacation, communicate your anticipated availability with colleagues so they understand why you aren't responding to emails. If something is urgent, encourage colleagues to call you. Otherwise, let the notifications wait and know that when you do respond, you will be recharged.

