Answering Incoming Calls Training

Phone answering skills are critical for businesses clients. The telephone is still most business's primary point of contact with customers. And the way you answer your phone will form your respondent's first impression of our study. These phone answering tips will ensure that respondents know they're dealing with a "Winning!" research institution:

1) Answer all incoming phone calls before the third ring.

2) When you answer the phone, be warm and enthusiastic. Your voice at the end of the telephone line is sometimes the only impression of your research institution a caller will get.

3) When answering the phone, welcome respondents courteously and identify yourself and your organization. Say, for instance, "Good morning. Center for Human Resource Research. Marge speaking. How may I help you?" No one should ever have to ask if they've reached such and such a place.

4) Enunciate clearly, by keeping your voice volume moderate, and speak slowly and clearly when answering the phone, so your respondent can understand you easily.

5) Control your language when answering the phone. Don't use slang or jargon. Instead of saying, "OK", or "No problem", for instance, say "Certainly", "Very well", or "All right". If you're a person who uses fillers when you speak, such as "uh huh", "um", or phrases such as "like" or "you know", train yourself carefully not to use these when you speak on the phone.

6) Train your voice and vocabulary to be positive when phone answering, even on a "down" day. For example, rather than saying, "I don't know", say, "Let me find out about that for you."

7) Take telephone messages completely and accurately. If there's something you don't understand or can't spell, such as a person's surname, ask the respondents to repeat it or spell it for you. Then make sure the message gets to the intended recipient.

8) Respond to all calls within one business day. We can't emphasize this one enough. Remember the early bird? The early callbacks can get the survey, the problem solved... and reinforce the favorable impression of your research institution that you want to circulate.

9) Always ask the respondent if it's all right to put him/her on hold when answering the phone, and don't leave people on hold. Provide respondents on hold with progress reports every 30 to 45 seconds. Offer them choices if possible if you are transferring the call, such as "That line is still busy. Will you continue to hold or should I have my director call you back? What number would you like us to call you back on?"

10) Don't use a speaker phone unless absolutely necessary. Speaker phones give the respondent the impression that you're not fully concentrating on his/her call, and make him/her think that his call isn't private. The only time to use a speaker phone is when you need more than one person to be in on the conversation at your end. This is why we strongly recommend and require you use the headsets.

11) We may use a voice mail system to answer call. We have gone above and beyond to make sure that the respondent is greeted with a professional message recorded, that does the same thing as tip # 3, and gives respondents any other pertinent information before it records their messages. We will be coming to you with lists of respondents that need to be contacted immediately. Please exercise good diligence to return those calls as soon as possible.

We will update our voice mail message as needed. So give us feedback if the respondent mentions anything that would have made it easier for them to leave a message. For instance, "… the voice mail system for your research institution didn't say you would be closed for a holiday" Let us know immediately.

12) We work as a team so it is important that everyone else who answers the phone answers the same way, including those working from home. We will be calling the phone to check on how our phone is answered and to verify that the phone is being answered in a professional manner. If you don't pass the test, we will go over this telephone answering tips until you get it right.