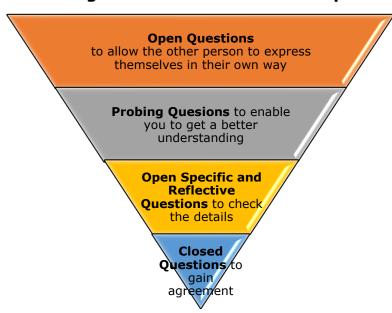




Communicate (on the Telephone)

Structuring a Call: The Funnel Technique



Using the funnel technique will help you to:

- remain in control of the conversation
- gather the information that you need
- ensure that the other person feels at ease and willing to talk to you

Structuring a Call: TEA

Tell

- •Tell the other person why you are calling.
- •Tell them about the background (e.g. I've been asked to call you by John) if appropriate.
- $\bullet \mbox{Tell}$ them how long the call will take, and if the other person needs to have anything.

Explain

Ask

- •Explain how the call will flow by provding an outline of the structure e.g. first I will, then I'll...
- •Explain each point in turn.
- •Use words and phrases that are meaningful to them.
- Focus on THEM. What your information means for them, not you or your company.
- •Check their understanding at regular points, and answer any questions that they have.
- •Take your time, and be willing to repeat things.
- •Ask for a specific response.
- •Make it clear what will happen next, and make sure that you have the other person's commitment to any actions required of them.
- •Ask if there are any further questions.
- •Ask the other person to take a note of your contact details if they wish to speak to you later.

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CARES

CARES provides a good acronym for general good practice on the telephone.

Concentrate

- •You will need to concentrate when listening to your customers and colleagues.
- •Sit straight up and lean slightly forwards to help you to pay attention
- •Block out distractions, and only have things on your computer screen that relate to the call your are making/taking

Acknowledge

- •Ensure your customer knows you are listening and that you understand what is being said.
- •This may be done by verbal agreement, such as, "Yes", "OK", I see", etc

- •Take full notes and make sure that they will make sence to someone who looks at the record 'cold'.
- •Note down actions that you take.
- •Remember to note when a follow-up should be made and how.

Record

Encourage or Empathise

- •If you encourage the caller to tell you details of their query, tell them what you can do or why you need the details.
- •Empathise with the caller's situation; you will build rapport and have a better conversation.
- Paraphrase your understanding of what has been said/agreed to check understanding.
- •Check back at regular intervals, not just at the end.
- •State what will happen now. Be clear about what you will do, and what the other person needs to do.
- •Include timescales where appropriate.

Summarise

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