Cell Phone Etiquette

With all the new technologies today, cell phone etiquette is fast becoming a major issue in business, especially meetings, today. Let’s face it, some people are just plain rude when it comes to cell phone use, which by the way includes text-messaging on the cell phone as well. The disruption of cell phone use, including text messaging, is causing such a problem that some business executives ban the use of cell phones during meetings. According to Krotz, cell phones are not the issue, the users are.

1. Consider when and where you carry your cell phone. It should be accessible but not out in plain view on the table; however, some individuals prefer, for emergency situations, you have the phone on the table for accessibility rather than rummaging for the phone in a bag or purse.

2. Use a cell phone ring tone that does not play an annoying melody, and answer the phone promptly. Use silent mode when in a theater, restaurant, or other public venues. At formal meetings and social occasions, your cell phone should be turned off or on silent/vibrate. Take emergency calls only.

3. Do not use annoying habits when others are in the room while you are talking on the cell phone: bobbing your head up and down, giving others the “just a minute” finger, rolling your eyes, etc. Try to move away from the people in the room who might be talking to others.

4. When calling on a cell phone, be brief and to the point when conducting business. Remember the 10-foot proximity rule. Try to be at least 10 feet away from other people when visiting on the cell phone. Do not look up information. Have information available before calling or call the person back.

5. Do not answer the telephone in heavy traffic. Hang up and drive. If the phone rings, advance to a safe area, part, and call the person back. Do not dial while driving. In fact, cell phone use at all while driving should be limited as it is believed to have been a contributing factor to some traffic accidents.

6. Use your normal voice when speaking on a cell phone. If possible talk in lower tones so as not to bother individuals around you. Better yet, move to another room if you must take a call.

7. Remember using your cell phone in public sends the message that the people around you are not as important as the person on the phone.

8. Do not wear the earpiece when you are not talking on the phone, especially during a meeting.

9. Keep in mind that text messaging is also a form of cell phone use. You should not be hiding your phone under a desk or table and text messaging a friend or colleague while visiting with another person. Again this situation emphasizes that the people around you are not as important as the person receiving the message.

10. When leaving a message for someone, do not assume the cell phone automatically saves your contact number, Make certain you leave your name, telephone number for a call back, and times when you can be reached. Say your name and number slowly and distinctly as if you are writing them on a sheet of paper. Consider spelling your name.

11. Do not answer someone else’s phone unless you were asked to or unless you are fairly certain it is a lost phone. Remember a cell phone is private property. Almost all cell phones will display missed calls so be mindful of another individual’s privacy and property.

12. Avoid inappropriate topics of conversation and inappropriate pictures for your cell phone address book. Sometimes cell phones display these pictures for others to see.