

Telephone Honor Roll

It is definitely true that you only have one chance to make a good first impression. Despite this fact, American businesses too often have receptionists who are neither pleasant, courteous, upbeat nor even understandable. What's worse, in my opinion, is the rising tide of dependence upon voice mail and the subsequent inability to talk to a human being.

For those still employing receptionists, however, many of these companies seem to feel that anybody can "answer the telephone." While it is true that almost any person can be taught the mechanics of answering the telephone, lasting impressions are made – especially on first-time callers – of the type of organization you have by the way that phone is answered.

Every time the phone rings, it is an opportunity for someone to make either a good or a poor impression on the caller. It is the commitment of Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home to have a person – not a machine – responding to the ring of the phone. We are in the people business, and people should be able to talk to people. But we ought to be speaking in a positive and memorable fashion.

Needless to say, we will build our businesses with good impressions. Agreed, we must follow through with the rest of it, but the beginning is important. It is incumbent upon us to be pleasant, cheerful, courteous, helpful and enthusiastic, whether at the switchboard or at any desk anywhere.

Regrettably, not everyone measures up to this standard. I am always impressed, however, with the able practitioners of this art. For that reason, as I make calls, I intend to start collecting names of those who demonstrate remarkable skills and attitudes on the telephone. I'll call it our "telephone honor roll," and from time to time, I will share their identities – and their places of work – with you. Who would like to be first?

--Beecher Hunter