

Soft Skills
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Lecture - 07
Telephonic Communication Skills Part I

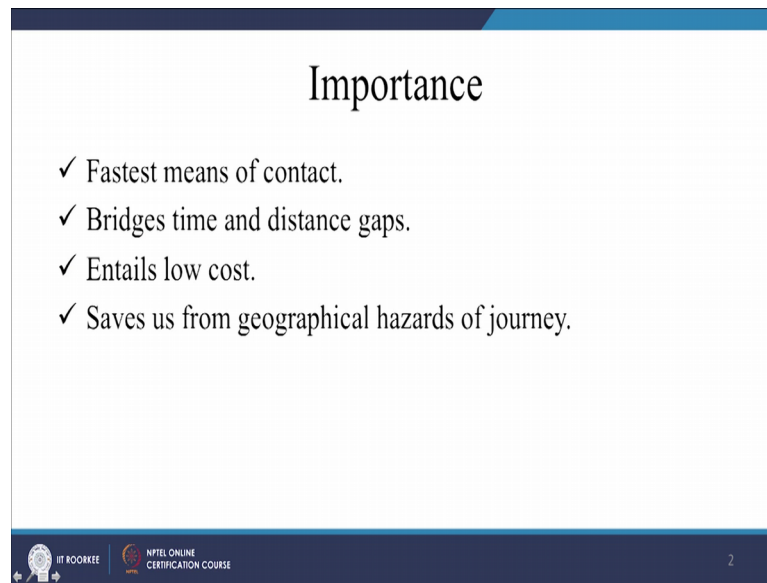
Hello. Good morning. I hope you are enjoying lectures in Soft Skills. In the series of lectures, now we have come to the module named Telephonic Communication Skills. Telephone as you all know has become a household position; most of the communications done today are with the help of telephones. Since man is a social animal he has to continue a relationship with other individuals and for this not all the time; he may be able to meet people or to have a face to face communication.

Hence the need of connecting people can be effected by telephones. Telephones are the ways to send and receive messages through instruments. Most of our friends, inmates, relatives, kinsmen are spread out a different places; at different distances and hence in order to connect with them, we have the facility of telephones; not only in our lives, but in offices also it has been observed that a major portion of tasks are being completed with the help of telephones.

Telephones play an important role in business as well as a management. You have to send the message, you have to book; a railway ticket, you have to place order for goods; you have also to provide food feedback, at the same time you also have to check and ensure the quality of goods sent and received. And for all that; you cannot go to meet people because in an as that we are leaving today; we find ourselves so, short of time hence we rely on telephones.

Telephones are the fastest means of contact; you can contact people; you can contact professionals, you can contact sellers, you can contact distributors. You can also contact if your teacher you can contact your students also with the help of telephones; hence people spread out at different geographical locations.

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The slide is titled "Importance" and lists four key points:

- ✓ Fastest means of contact.
- ✓ Bridges time and distance gaps.
- ✓ Entails low cost.
- ✓ Saves us from geographical hazards of journey.

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The distance that they maintain can be bridged with the help of telephone; moreover telephone is a device through which we can send message not only in a very fast manner, but we can also save our precious time.

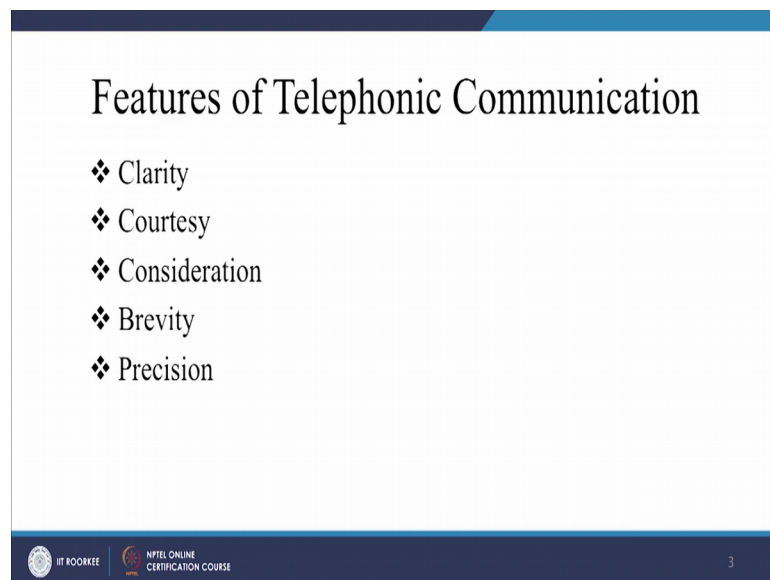
If you want to go and meet a person simply in order to have a discussion on a particular topic or you want to have some knowledge on a particular subject; all that you can do today is you can with the help of a telephone get the proper information; even in a less amount of time and even at a less cost. Since most of you either in business or in jobs you are actually to meet deadlines you are actually to have business transactions; you actually rely on telephones and with the perfusion in telephones; it has become a low cost affair to contact people and to communicate. It can actually save us from the hazards of the journey and not only can it save your time, but it can also help us inform each other in a short time and at a low cost.

Hence telephonic communication today has become vital and telephonic communication has not only become vital; rather it has become the summum bonum of our life. But then if you are professional working in organizations; you should try level best to know how you can best utilize this facility, how you can make a proper use of telephones. But before doing that let us try to understand that; are there some special features involved with this communication through telephone?

Yes; if you are having a face to face communication of course, you can satisfy all your curiosities and all your desires, all your queries through clarifications. And moreover the facility of immediate feedback that is there; since you are talking to a person who is sitting next to you or in front of you; this facility is not possible when you are talking over telephone; of course, with the advancement in science and technology and with many other agencies; they are also devising ways and have been successful also that while you are talking to the other person; you can also see them, but the question is can this facility be provided to all of us.

Since such a facility may be a costly affair and everyone is not in a position to afford it.

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Hence we ought to understand these special features that are involved in a telephonic communication. The first and the foremost is clarity; while you are to send the message or you are to receive a message; in both the ways you are communicating and while defining communication; we had said that it is a two way process in which we have to keep into consideration, the other parties interest emotion and we have to seek the cooperation of the other party. Hence clarity is very important either when you are calling, either when you are giving some information to somebody or you are seeking some information from somebody.

Hence clarity is the first requirement of a telephonic communication; then come courtesy. In a telephonic communication, majority of cases you do not see the other

person; as we have already pointed it out in the beginning that it covers the distance and the other party whom you are talking to; you are not able to see.

Hence the sort of orientation is needed because without proper cooperation; effective communication is not possible. Hence you need to ensure that while you are talking over a telephone; you need to be courteous there are several ways to be courteous will discuss that also. The first among them is why you are calling a particular person; when you are calling a person is it the right time to call the person? Is it the right way to address the person? It is the right way to receive the message? Is it the right way to transmit the message? There are all these facilities involved while you are talking our telephone.

Then comes consideration; do you ever know that while you are talking to the other party you are not able to see this surrounding that he is in. Sometimes because of certain congestion, the sound may not come clearly; hence you are to be considerate because if time in again, you get such request as can you be loud? It might be very irritating. Hence all you need is to have a persons and all you need is to have a sort of sympathy rather empathy for the other person; because roles change so frequently and sometimes you also may be in such a situation when you are not able to receive the proper sound.

So, a little bit of courtesy and consideration is very important. Next comes brevity; since while you are talking over telephone, you are spending money or the other party is a spending money. Of course, this communication cannot go for a long time; it is always better to be brief not only brief rather to be specific. You need to understand what is the purpose that you are calling a particular person, you also need to know for how much amount you should talk to the person.

It is not only the question of money; rather it is also the question of the time for the other party if he or she is in a proper frame of mind to take your message; if he or she is in a proper environment where you can re he can respond to you or if the other party is in a conducive environment where he can give you the right information. And for all these dear friends, you need to follow all these features of telephonic communication.

Now, there are two ways of giving the information and receiving the information and while receiving the call; as well as while sending the call, you need to maintain certain etiquettes you know most of the officers are having the telephonic facilities of course, with the advancement of science and technology; we have E-mail facility and other

facility. But then when we come to spoken thing; the first and the foremost and rather the easiest one to be connected to a person at a distance or to a person geographically separated and spread out is telephone.

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Challenges

- Lacks in face-to-face communication
- Not much time for orientation
- Dealing with strangers at times
- No background knowledge of the caller

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Hence while you are going to talk to him; imagine, think that you are having a face to face communication; of course, it is not face to face, but visualize that you are talking to a person; imagine the image of the person you are talking to because you know the person may at times be as stranger and most of the time, the reputation of the organization that you are working in depends upon the quality of the communication that you are transmitting.

Hence in order to preserve; in order to continue the reputation of your organization and of course, of yours also; it is always better to think that you are having a face to face communication. Though all the facilities of the face to face communication cannot be provided through telephone, but at least we have a voice and your voice can help to a great extent. How assuring, how reassuring, how convincing, how sincere, how intimate you are that can be understood through the voice that you convey.

Of course, people on the other side and even you do not have much time if you are ask the question; you do not have much time to create the answer. Because it is very spontaneous you cannot keep mump for a long time because you are over the telephone.

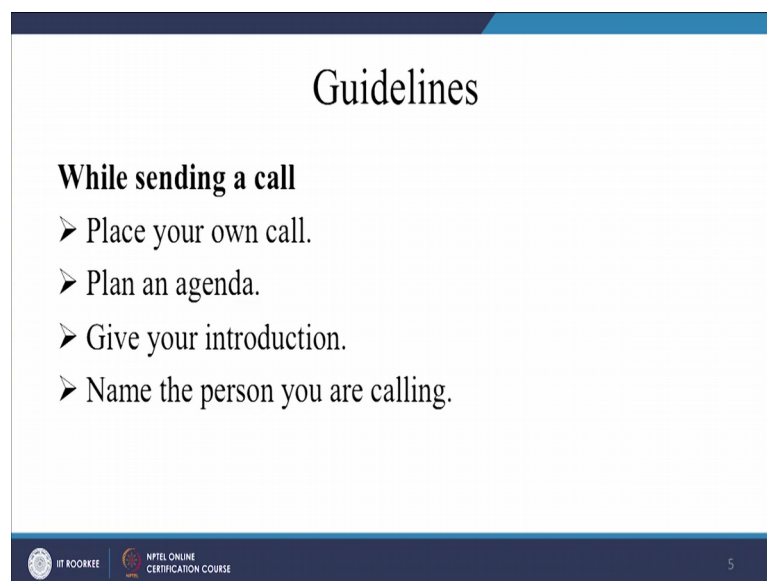
Hence, while you are talking over the telephone or your sending a message or you are calling it is always better; to prepare yourself in advance as to what information you want. You also should think that if this call can be avoided, but that is possible only when or unless and until they call is so necessary. It is better not to call if; it can be permitted because when you call you have certain limitations to follow, certain challenges; you may be or you may have to deal with the strangers who do not know much about you.

Now in such a situation the way you show your concentration and the way you show your courtesy; it actually matters a lot. You are unaware of the background of the other person; hence please visualize that you are maintaining sort of intimacy and this intimacy can be conveyed through the use of your voice, through the use of your sentences, through proper vocabulary and all that can be possible.

When you are sending a call; it is always better to maintain certain etiquettes; friends we are living in an age of netiquettes. But then in an age of netiquettes, we sometimes forget the basic etiquettes. Actually the telephonic facility has become so common that people times do not bother about the consideration of time as well as of the courtesy.

So, when you have to send a call; first is that you decide whether this call is so urgent or it is so important.

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Guidelines

While sending a call

- Place your own call.
- Plan an agenda.
- Give your introduction.
- Name the person you are calling.

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If so, it is always better place your own call; for you it is not better that you should tell the secretary or to book a call. You can place your own call and while placing your own call; before placing your own call, it is better to prepare agenda. When I say agenda; what I mean is, what is the purpose of this call? How will this call benefit you?

Because there are certain important things that you want to know from a call. If it is so, it is always better to keep a pen and paper with you jot down fine. There is no harm jotting down because if you do not jot down; maybe there are certain pieces of information left and you will have to have another telephonic tag and now there call you have to make and that may really make the other person embarrassed.

If you keep a person calling several times; everyone is a human being and he or she may feel distraught and a times distracted; hence it is better to plan we are call in advance and have an agenda. While you are planning an agenda and while you are sending a call; it is better to introduce yourself. Because as I said you may be talking to somebody; you do not have any background about; it is better to say Binod Mishra; department of HSS; IIT, Roorkee.

May I speak to Mister X; could I speak to Mister Y; now when you tell the person your name, your affiliation; a sort of background is created, a sort of cooperation ensues from that and the other person will also respond positively. Once you know the person because you are going to call the person hence you might be knowing.

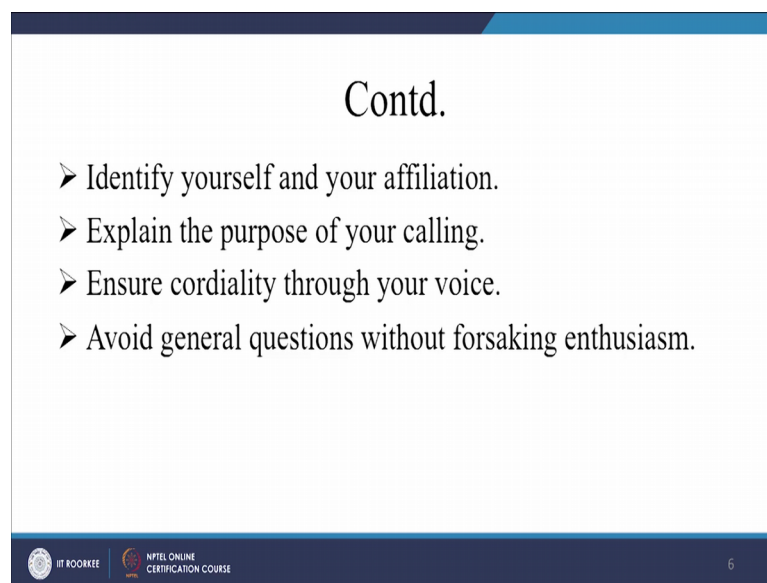
So, address him by name; people often say what is in a name, but everything is in a name. Name denotes sort of cordiality you are actually becoming close when you address a person by his or her name. You are in an organization and whatever you are doing is for your organization. Because the image of your organization is represented by the way you are calling my dear friend. So, when you have identified yourself and also mentioned your affiliation, please reveal why you are calling? What is the purpose? You could say the purpose of this call is to know about a feasible time for your invite a talk in my department.

So, if you say this the other person we will once again create a sort of background; he will know the background and then communication will become smooth. We have already discussed; that when we are communicating there has to be a common frame and

in a telephonic communication; though we have very short time, but yet we can establish it in the beginning.

It is always better to sacrifice little courtesies I say; how are you? How is the way the; these are the things that are not approved of when you are making an official call. Because it is once again the question of money and it is once again the question of courtesy. The other person is not your friend, the other person may be a busy official hence it is important that while you are calling; you be very professional.

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- Identify yourself and your affiliation.
- Explain the purpose of your calling.
- Ensure cordiality through your voice.
- Avoid general questions without forsaking enthusiasm.

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Moreover, when you are becoming professional; it is very important that you maintain a sort of volume which may not appear to be very loud, which may not appear to be a sort of cackling, which may not appear to be a sort of crack, which may not appear to be a sort distraction for the other person. Hence, while you are discussing, while you are communicating please maintain; speak clearly, but at the same time speak in a tone that is permitted; if you feel that you have been able to procure the required information; close your talk, but it is better not to close your talk ever roughly or all of a sudden; you just adjust your language.

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- Close your talk using suggestive language.
- In case of long talk, keep giving signals, such as; I see, OK, Yes etc.
- Seek/mention specific time to call in case you have not been able to call.
- Leave complete voice mail message.

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For example you can say; it was nice talking to you Misses D’Souza; I have got the required information and I think it will be my pleasure to talk to you again.

Now, this shows that how much considerate you are and how much space you are giving to other party, but at the same time you are also maintaining a sort of etiquette. Sometimes if the two parties involved in a communicative process they become so much involved and the talk furthers. So, in order to show him that you are very sincere, you could say; yes please carry on like this; the other party should never be offended.

Sometimes, you may call a person; you have not been able to be connected to the person. Or because of some sort of urgency; you could not continue the call for a long time in such a case please close the call saying you are sorry; I think I will be calling you after another 10 minutes. But while doing so if you have said 10 minutes; please assume the call after 10 minutes.

If you feel that even that is not possible; leave a voicemail, but while leaving a voicemail see to it that the voicemail is complete, the message is complete my dear friend. Because the other person might be in a state of bewilderment as to what you wanted to say. So, it is better you continue the communication by leaving a voicemail. Sometimes and nowadays; because majority of people are connected to telephones; so, there might be some problems in connection or in connectivity. Calls may be dropped at times; there may be disruptions, there may be traffic jams, there may be congestions.

So, but if you have called; it becomes your responsibility to assume the call by saying that perhaps, there was a disturbance in the channel and while answering the call, because every now and then it is not possible that the call is for you or you are making a call and the other party gets connected. So, sometimes there may be calls from for other people.

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- If the call gets disrupted, resume it by saying sorry.
- Keep your note-book ready to jot down important points.
- Be careful while answering call for others.
- Explain when you are transferring calls.

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But then you have been tracked; in such a case even though you fail that it is a sort of disturbance; it is better to answer the call for others saying presently he is not on his desk; I will leave the message and the movement he comes, he will make a call. Sometimes, there may be a need that you may have to transfer the call; while you are transferring the call, please be emphatic to tell him why you are transferring the call. Because every now and then for busy professionals; it is not essential that he will always be at his desk.

So, you may have to seek his consent and if so you can always say; may I put you on hold, may I connect you to Mister X, Mister Y; I think your own mind waiting for while dear friends; it is of utmost importance that you maintain the level of cordiality throughout communication; as I have repeatedly said in my previous lectures is a hallmark and the life and blood of all organizations. Hence, you need to be very cooperative, you need to be very cordial, you need to be very convincing, you need to be full of conviction and all, but there are times when you may have to receive the calls.

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While receiving calls

- ❖ Answer the call as soon the bell rings.
- ❖ End all other conversations.
- ❖ Identify yourself immediately.
- ❖ Create a visual/mental image of the person you are talking to.

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If you are being so, sincere while sending the call; the same is expected while you are receiving the call. Sometimes it so, happens that a call that the bell rings and rings and there is no answer, but remember if you are there. However, busy you may be somebody who is calling you might be because of some urgent purpose; hence please respond to the call immediately, but not more than after three rings and all.

If such a call comes because you never know from where the call has come; it is actually a sort of etiquette to end all other conversations while a phone call comes and while you are going to answer; see to it that you allow more room to the other party. And even when you are responding because who knows if maybe I have dialed Mister X, but Mister Y is speaking up because people change; the desk remain the same, the numbers remain same.

So, it is very important that you identify yourself immediately; you say I am Mister Jeethendr from NPTEL; how may I help you? This is very important and when you are receiving the call, please try to create a visual as well as a mental image of the person you are talking to because; when you are talking about telephone, you actually do not see the other person; there is no immediate feedback only except your voice.

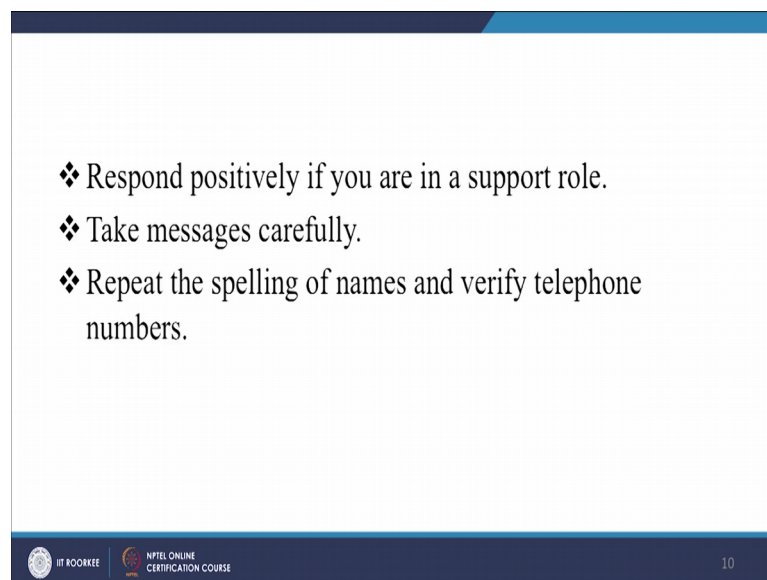
Hence make proper orientation by imagining that the person who is calling is very intimate, your voice has a sort of quality that should be conveyed and the quality is the quality of reassurance, the quality of intimacy, the quality of being business like, the

quality of being sincere, the quality of being well, the quality of being enthusiastic, the quality of showing your readiness and willingness to take the call. If sometimes or the other; you are in a support role if you are the person, we will first have the call and then transfer it; it is always better to respond positively.

Sometimes it so happens that even in an organization also when we receive a call from a person whom we are not at good terms, we may be angry or we may blurt out but that is against etiquette. It is always better to respond positively; even if you are in a support role and even if the person who is calling does not have a good term, but please respond positively. You see; it is the gesture that matters and good gesture always mean good business.

Take the message carefully; if you are not the person who has been called, while mentioning the message by jotting down message; please write the name of person who is calling, there is no harm if you can clarify or verify the names by seeking the spelling of the person. Because you know if you write the name of a person in a wrong manner that may also be considered as a sort of insult.

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- ❖ Respond positively if you are in a support role.
- ❖ Take messages carefully.
- ❖ Repeat the spelling of names and verify telephone numbers.

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So, there is no harm; repeating the spellings of names and it is always better to mention the telephone number from which the call had come.

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- ❖ Use the caller's name and also the cordial terms, such as please, thank you, I'm delighted etc.
- ❖ Stay calm if the caller is angry/complaining.
- ❖ Correct the problem and provide a time frame.
- ❖ Allow the caller to hang up even after the conversation is over.

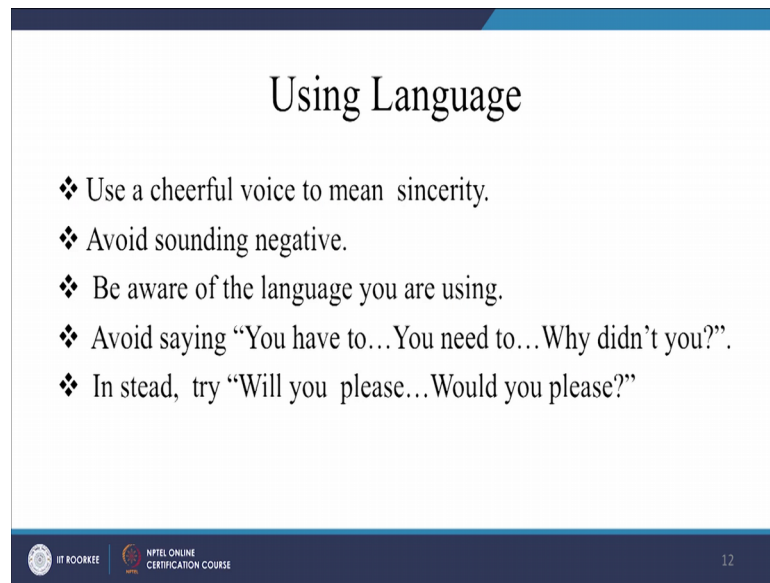
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Because the call might have been very urgent and the moment you have jotted down the message, it becomes rather your responsibility to pass on the message to the person who had been called. Use the caller's name as you had done while you are placing the call and it is better to continue saying or using present terms such as please and thank you. There is no harm if you say; I appreciate receiving a call though I am sorry; I have not been able to connect you to Mister X, but I think the moment he comes he will give you a message or give you a call.

In business organizations things often go wrong and may be sometimes the call comes from a complaint; in the form of a complaint from a customer; who is angry, a customer; who becomes very aggressive, in such a situation while you are responding to the call please be patient, stay calm and listen to the problem and say I have jotted down your concern and I think very soon we are going to respond to you. Allow the caller to hang up; even after the conversation comes to a close, this means that you are providing more room to the other party and ultimately and the most important of all is the sort of language that you use.

Of course, here since you do not have a face to face communicative facility; it is your voice as I said your voice has an intentional meaning; your voice as an intentional language, so be cordial, be polite; it is always better to avoid using a negative term such as no.

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Using Language

- ❖ Use a cheerful voice to mean sincerity.
- ❖ Avoid sounding negative.
- ❖ Be aware of the language you are using.
- ❖ Avoid saying “You have to... You need to... Why didn’t you?”.
- ❖ In stead, try “Will you please... Would you please?”

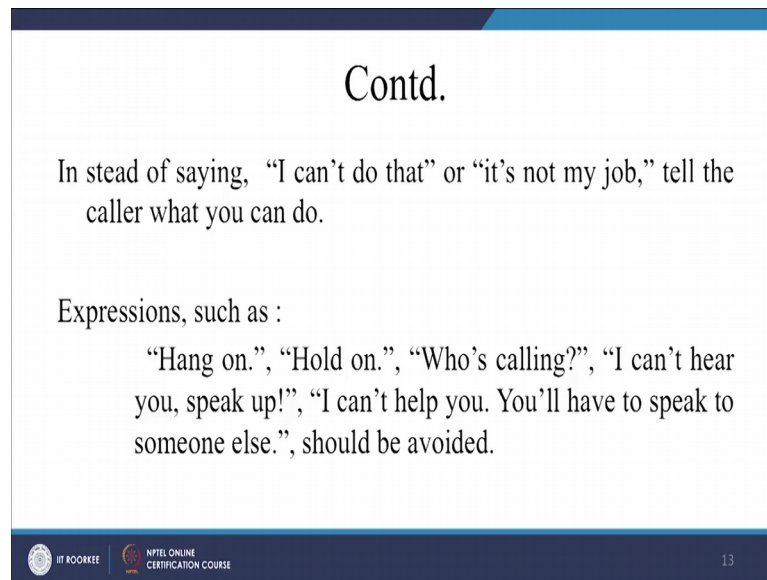
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Somebody calls for Mister X and you say no, no; he is not here or he is calling you regarding a particular issue or a subject, you should never reply in the negative; you can all bit say of course, I have jotted it down your request and I will see; how I can help, it is always pertinent to avoid the use of language which appears to be very embarrassing; for example, you have to; you need to why did not you; instead of you it is always better you can reply in such a way; we advise you or I would like you, will you please, would you please.

I mean since you are communicating with a person; who may not be knowing you or you may not be knowing him; he actually we will have a sort of impression about you.

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In stead of saying, “I can’t do that” or “it’s not my job,” tell the caller what you can do.

Expressions, such as :

“Hang on.”, “Hold on.”, “Who’s calling?”, “I can’t hear you, speak up!”, “I can’t help you. You’ll have to speak to someone else.”, should be avoided.

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Hence care ought to be given to the language and language is in your hand because you have the words which you convey; it is always better to avoid using I cannot do that; you can always say tell me what I can do for you. You have to speak to someone else should be avoided; I think, I will pass on your information to the other party and I see better what better we can do.

Dear friends, we are living in an age where all of us runs out of time, but then all of us want to communicate. And communication with the person sometimes becomes a memorable event and you either as an individual or as a member of an organization. So, try our level best to leave a mark or an imprint that your organization believes in having a proper cordial cooperative conversation or communication because that alone can help in business transactions and all.

With this, we come to the first part of this lecture and in the second part of the lecture; we shall be talking about the use of cell phones, etiquettes and then other media through which we communicate.

Thank you very much.