



'Celliquette' An Old-Fashioned Solution to a New-Fangled Problem

"The world we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far creates problems we cannot solve at the same level at which we created them."

— Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein, arguably the greatest thinker of the 20th century, could have been predicting the rise of the ubiquitous (and frequently annoying) cellular telephone when he penned those words. Anyone victimized by the ring of a cell phone in a theater, at the ballpark or during a Rotary Club luncheon would probably agree that this is an advanced-thinking problem in search of a solution.

The solution could be a technological one, a closing-the-curtains-on-the-20th century device enabling the caller and callee to communicate telepathically (and silently) through brain-wave transmissions. Sound like science fiction?

Let's consider a more plausible and immediate solution for this new-fangled problem grounded in old-fashioned manners. Let's call these manners "Celliquette" — etiquette for the cell phone. These first two Celliquette rules address cell phone users:

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Using Email to Your Advantage

The Internet, especially email, has moved from the periphery to front and center of our business lives. The question, today, is not whether you do email, but what is your email address. We are increasingly perceived as Neanderthals if we're not communicating on-line.

Bill Gates spends at least two hours a day reading and responding to his email, according to a New Yorker article. How much more time do you spend with email each day than you did a year ago? How about two years ago? More importantly, are you making the most of that time — in terms of productivity, effectiveness, and positioning (yourself and your company)?

Because you always strive to make positive first impressions, and powerful lasting impressions, you must be committed to using email to your business and professional advantage. Following is a brief user's guide of email netiquette. Much of it I learned from Steve Prentice, my friend and computer coach:

- **Don't assume what you send is a private communication.** You don't want to join the long list of embarrassed senders and receivers of email messages. Virtually every email system has administrators who have access to every message sent through it. Messages often travel from server to server several times before reaching their destination. That means your message could be read by system administrators all over the country — or around the world!
- **Don't write in anger.** Once it's gone, you can't get it back. Your email letter will be in the recipient's mailbox within seconds, or minutes.
- **Make your subject line work for you.** Each email letter requires a short description in its "Subject" line, informing the reader



about the contents of the letter in six words or less. This is especially important when sending email to someone who won't open the mail just because your name is attached. Avoid using all capital letters, lots of exclamation points or dollar signs — the trademark of a spammer.

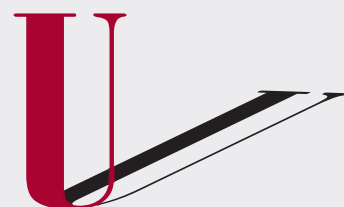
- **Use a signature.** An email signature is two or three lines of text, usually your name followed by your telephone number, email address and web address, if applicable. The recipient will appreciate this professional touch. (You can configure your email software to insert the signature at the bottom of each letter automatically. Click the Help menu of your email software and select Signature.)

- **Be considerate when sending attachments.** Sending attachments of documents, spreadsheets or graphics is useful, fast, and economical. But, remember, not everyone has the same type of software. Mention the name and type of file being attached so that recipients don't waste time trying to open incompatible files. Better yet, if you aren't sure about compatibility, send an introductory letter describing the software you use and learning about your recipient's software.

Another problem with attachments is their size. Large files, especially those with a lot of graphics, can tie up the line for minutes or even hours, making it impossible for other mail to get through.

- **Make sure attachments have been de-bugged.** Viruses (such as Melissa, which recently wreaked havoc on millions of business computers) are programs that can inhabit your computer and cause reactions ranging from annoying text to complete data loss. You don't want to learn that your document transmitted a virus to another computer. Make sure

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“LIFE IS NOT SO SHORT BUT THAT THERE IS ALWAYS
TIME ENOUGH FOR COURTESY.”
— RALPH WALDO EMERSON

(Email – continued from the front)

your computer has up-to-date software that scans for and eliminates viruses. Scan everything before sending.

- **Send thank you notes on paper.** An emailed “thank you” doesn’t replace a hand-written note.

- **Don’t send unsolicited mail.** Bulk email sent to thousands or hundreds of thousands of addresses is known as “spam.” The Internet is best used as a one-to-one medium. Avoid the temptation to broadcast a message in order to generate new leads. Spamming shows a blatant disregard for the privacy of Internet users.

- **Be brief.** Business email messages should be brief and to the point. Email tends to be much less formal than paper mail. And that’s OK. But contrary to some of our peers, we recommend a traditional “Dear.....” opening. This friendly touch softens the techno feel of email and distinguishes you from the thundering herd. And be careful that in the name of brevity your message doesn’t seem harsh... bark, bark, bark. Reread and soften the tone before sending.

- **Spell and write correctly.** You will be judged by the quality of your writing, spelling and punctuation. Take your time and do it right.

- **Avoid writing in capital letters.** Avoid the temptation to emphasize text by writing in capital letters. This comes across either as shouting or speaking very slowly, and neither makes you look professional.

- **Voice inflection and facial expression can convey subtleties in live communication, but in email text is text.** Not everyone will pick up on

your sarcasm or, believe it or not, realize you are joking unless you make sure it is denoted as such. Use smiling faces, ☺, or bracketed words, >>grin<< to make sure your audience understands your intentions. (FYI, in email parlance LOL means “laughing outloud.”)

- **Call with a reminder.** If you need a quick reply to an email, call and let the recipient know you’ve sent it (especially if the recipient doesn’t check his/her email as often as you do).

- **To quote or not to quote.** In responding to email through the “Reply” function of most software applications (Netscape, Internet Explorer, Eudora, AOL), quoting the sender’s original message puts your answer in context. This is especially important if you are inserting comments into the sender’s original copy. Let the sender know at the top that’s what you’re doing. However, if you simply wish to reply and you are confident that quoting isn’t necessary, then it is polite to delete the sender’s text, thus reducing the size of the email.

- **Be polite, diplomatic and forgiving.** Don’t send anything by email that you wouldn’t say to the person face-to-face. The facelessness of the computer/Internet world can make us forget that recipients of our messages are human beings. Respect their feelings. Your correspondence should reflect the same courtesy and common sense you use in writing a traditional paper-and-postage letter.

Take care not to correct a correspondent’s spelling, grammar, diction or syntax openly. While poor writing is bad, it’s even worse to embarrass the sender by revealing mistakes publicly.

Please email your comments or questions to: roz@usheroff.com

(Celliquette – continued from the front)

Celliquette 1: Don’t invade other people’s privacy and quiet time. Turn off cell phones in most public places – restaurants, churches, gyms, civic club meetings, playgrounds, libraries, movie theaters, opera houses, concert halls, classrooms, soccer fields, conference rooms, etcetera, etcetera.

Celliquette 2: Wear a pager (in the silent vibrating mode) when you’re in a public space. Upon receiving a page, discreetly determine the urgency of the message. If the page sender requires an immediate response, politely excuse yourself and find a private place to whip out the cell phone and take care of business.

That’s it. Two simple rules (after all, Mr. Einstein, this isn’t rocket science) for cell phone users that promote good business and, yes, world peace. Now, let’s turn our attention to appropriate, dignified responses by victims of cell phone abusers:

Celliquette 3: Never swear at, glare at, or physically assault (kick, strangle or punch) an abuser infringing on your space.

Celliquette 4: Never hurl an abuser’s phone through a window (closed or open) or slam dunk a phone down a stairwell (regardless of the abuser’s most flagrant violations of discretion and civility).

Celliquette 5: Whenever possible ignore an abuser’s boorishness, though a discreet shrug, oh-no-not-that-again headshake or disapproving glance is acceptable in polite company.

Celliquette 6: If you find an abuser-infected situation intolerable, approach the boor with a disarming smile (understanding that abusers tend to be self-centered and prone to defensive – and sometimes violent – attacks). Follow the smile with a sympathetic position statement. For example, “I understand that your call must be extremely important; otherwise, you wouldn’t be pursuing it in the presence of so many others. But we would greatly appreciate your finding a more private venue for your conversation. I’m sure you understand. Thank you ever so much for your kindness.”

VOICE MAIL – THE TOOL WE LOVE TO HATE

We’ve devoted this edition of *The Leader’s Edge* to the most effective ways for you to put your best foot forward through email and cell phones – both increasingly important forms of business communications. By using these tools well, you distinguish yourself and your company. You appear more professional (and you are). You gain an edge.

We can’t leave this discussion without sharing a few thoughts on the communications tool we all love to hate... VOICE MAIL. The only thing worse than getting someone’s voice mail on the third or fourth return call of a phone-tennis day is not getting it. Just ring, ring, ring. Or getting a voice mail box that’s too full to take your message. Which means, in either case, the ball’s still in your court.

We offer these four tips for more successful voice mailing:

1. Install voice mail if you don’t already have it. The best system, most people agree, is a live voice offering a voice mail option. If that’s not practical

for your office, make sure to update your greeting every day with the date, expected return time, whether and when you will check messages while you’re out, and other ways the caller can reach you (pager, cell phone or email, for example).

2. Check messages frequently and return calls promptly.

3. When you leave a voice mail, keep the message brief; be positive; state clearly what you need and when you need it; give the date and time of the call; and leave numbers where you can be reached and the best time to call.

4. Although the voice-mail process is mechanical, your greeting message doesn’t have to be. Remember, a human being will hear your greeting and your message. Be warm and friendly in what you say.

Bottom line: if we want to be leaders, we must use every tool at our disposal effectively and with purpose.



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We would also love hear your ideas for future editions of **The Leader’s Edge**.

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