

Some Common Faults of Telephone Service and How to Avoid Them

You probably never realized how many of the common faults of telephone service, as you come in contact with it, are due simply to careless use of the service by the public. Let us give you a few examples to illustrate this:

A number is guessed at, the wrong bell is rung, an innocent subscriber is disturbed, a voice says, "They gave me the wrong number"—and the Company gets the blame.

A bell rings,—it rings again—still no answer. The Operator finally reports, "They do not answer," (note she never says "they are not there") and the connection is taken down. Five seconds later—just six seconds too late—the ring is answered and the tardy subscriber gets "Number please" from an Operator who knows nothing about the call in question as she had nothing to do with it. Upon being told "Why! you just rang my bell!" she can only say what we instruct her to say: "There is no one on your line." She apparently acknowledges the error and again the Company is blamed; especially, when a little later the called party meets the calling party and says she was "right there all the time."

A person steps in and "borrows" the use of a telephone. When through talking he leaves the telephone off the hook, thus keeping the line "busy" and causing a series of busy reports to be made to calling parties. Finally, a clerk, or servant, finds the receiver off and replaces it. Business is resumed and the friend, who has been "trying for fifteen minutes" to get the line blames the Company severely when he is told, truthfully, that "I have been right here all the time and the line hasn't been in use for twenty minutes."

The same thing results when the called for subscriber forgets, or overlooks, the fact that he is sharing a party line with someone else, and that therefore the line might easily have been "busy" all the time and he not know anything about it.

We have no desire to dodge our full responsibility for giving good service. We are not only willing but very anxious to learn all the real troubles of which you have to complain—even those for which we are not directly responsible.

We want this help from you—in the form of accurate detail complaints—and we will help you cure those for which other subscribers are responsible; by printing these pages in our directory; by explaining in any way we can the operation of our system and the reasons for our rules and regulations; also by calling attention to the following simple rules, which, if followed by all will make it easy for us to give, and for you to get, Good Service—which is what we are here for.

REMEMBER THIS

No community ever enjoyed really first class telephone service unless the Telephone Company had the intelligent and hearty co-operation of its

SUBSCRIBERS AND THE PUBLIC

RULES FOR GOOD SERVICE

1. Use the Directory. Never try to remember a telephone number. It's all right if you do remember it; but to try to remember is to begin to guess. If you have the least doubt about it, look it up and thus save time and trouble.

(As a matter of fact, you know, you have no more right to disturb a subscriber by guessing that his number is the one you want than you have to disturb him in any other entirely needless way.)

2. Spell Out all Numbers, by giving each figure separately, as "Kearny, two, five, six, one," for "Kearny 2561"; "West, two, oh, oh, four," for "West 2004."

(The following of this rule is essential to good service. A majority of errors in calls is directly traceable to confusion between "eighteen" and "thirteen," "twenty-three" and "thirty-three," etc., which sound so much alike over the telephone; also to the fact that subscribers do not correct the Operator if she repeats the wrong number.)

3. Speak Distinctly, especially when giving the number to the operator, and when talking over a toll line. Talk into the mouth-piece.

4. Answer your Bell Promptly. A ring means a friend calling you—don't make him wait, or perhaps miss you entirely.

5. Until your Bell Stops Ringing do not remove the telephone from the hook.

6. Be Brief but Courteous to the Operators. We require them to be so to you. They have no time to converse with you; they do not know subscribers' names; they deal entirely with numbers.

Courtesy, like virtue, is its own reward, but pays extra dividends in connection with telephone service. Try it.

P. S.—By the way, when you know that a false call is due entirely to your careless use of the wrong number, why not acknowledge it to the "innocent bystander" who answers the call? Why leave the Operator to shoulder all the blame?

7. Call for "Information" when you can't find the telephone number you want, or to get answers to any questions regarding subscribers' names, numbers or addresses. Your regular Operator cannot answer such questions.

8. Report all Complaints to "Complaint Department."

To be most effective they should be not only prompt but should describe accurately the trouble encountered. Many forms of trouble look alike at first, and most of them we will not know about till you tell us. If you can't get Exchange at all, call up from a neighbor's or send us a postal card.

9. Advertise That You Have a Telephone, but don't put its number on your letter heads, bill heads, cards and wagons. Why? Because this only increases the amount of trying to remember such numbers by the public—also the continued use of obsolete numbers—which in turn only hurts the service and doesn't help your business at all. Think this over.

10. Be Reasonable. You always are—yes, of course—but what we mean is this. It is unfortunate—for us—that a telephone subscriber sees nothing, when getting service, but himself and one telephone instrument. He doesn't see the other hundreds or thousands of subscribers and he gets no idea of the work we are really doing and the violent and uncertain changes in the number of calls given us at various hours of the day.

We have Rushes of Business just as the street cars, the stores and the Post Offices do. Yet a man who will patiently wait in line two or three minutes to be allowed to deposit his money in someone's Bank will become "disgusted with such service" if he has to wait in line fifteen seconds to get an Operator to connect him with his residence that he may inform them he "will be a little late to dinner."

It's a Fact. And we think the reason is indicated above. It's human nature, perhaps; but human nature can be improved if one tries, and all we ask is that you try. Ask yourself these questions:

"Does any other company or store in town wait on me so uniformly promptly, or cause me so little direct loss of time, as does the Telephone Company?"

"Can I get the services of a street car, a clerk, a sales girl, a cashier, or of any one else nearly as quickly, whenever I want them, as I can those of a Telephone Operator?"

So We Repeat—be reasonable in your complaints, and patient withal, if the Operator is occasionally too busy, waiting on our other customers, to give you instant attention. Meanwhile we will undertake to make your average service prompt and the longer delays reasonably few and far between. When you are not satisfied with it, don't discuss the matter with the Operator, but let our Manager know about it.

11. Observe these Rules if you believe they are good ones. If not, call on our Manager, see our plant in operation, and give him an opportunity to convince you. For we must all work together if we are to have

GOOD SERVICE