

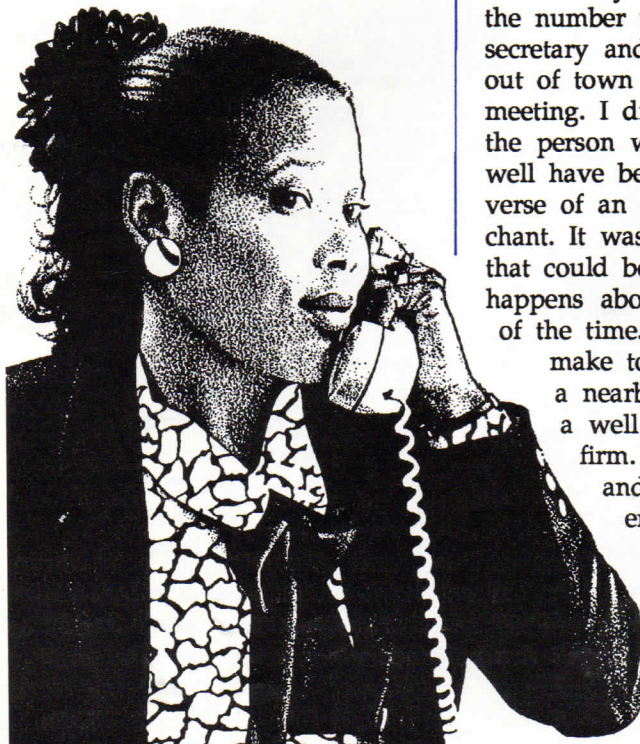
vital signs

Spring, 1990, Volume 2, Issue 3

Telephone etiquette at work

What did you say?

The name of your company should not only be easily understood, but pronounced with a touch of sell, a little good cheer and enthusiasm. Getting that name pronounced properly is of tremendous importance to your organization.



In my business I call a lot of people on the telephone who work for various companies and organizations. For years I've been keeping a kind of unofficial score of the percentage of the names of those companies and organizations I can understand when the phone is answered.

It's like trying to understand the street names called out by a person on the subway, or the bus driver. Once in a while you'll get a winner. You can actually understand the name. But it rarely happens. I just had to place a call to a friend of mine who is staying in a hotel. I got the number when I called his secretary and discovered he was out of town on a business meeting. I dialed the number and the person who answered might well have been singing the first verse of an ancient Eskimo war chant. It was a sound — that's all that could be said of it. And it happens about eighty-five percent of the time. I had another call to make to a friend of mine in a nearby city who works for a well known brokerage firm. I'm happy to say, and I'm sure her employees are delighted to know, that the name of that firm came through clearly in a well-modulated, beautiful voice. But most of the time it's

a burred blah, with the worst possible voice approach—a turn-off attitude—and the impression that the person answering the phone is trying to swallow a golf ball.

True, whoever is answering the phone is busy. Lots of us are busy. Being busy is not a valid excuse for not answering the phone properly in a soft, well modulated voice, with the lips and tongue in full and supple working condition so that the name of the company can not only be clearly understood, but even pronounced with a touch of sell, a little good cheer and enthusiasm. Getting that name pronounced properly is of tremendous importance to the organization.

We should all speak into the telephone as though we were speaking to a person across the table from us; softly, clearly, and with good taste and manners. It doesn't make any difference at all how busy we may be.

Article written by Earl Nightingale from *Our Changing World* and submitted by Jeanie Driver, who felt that this article is not at all typical of Southeastern, but was interesting enough to share with others. ■

Uncommon thoughts on common things

Hair grows at the rate of about half an inch a month. I don't know where he got his facts, but Mr. Washington came up with that one when we were comparing barbers. That meant that about eight feet of hair had been cut off my head and face in the last sixteen years by my barber.

I hadn't thought much about it until I called to make my usual appointment and found that my barber had left to go into building maintenance. What? How could he do this? My barber. It felt like a death in the family. There was so much more to our relationship than sartorial statistics.

We started out as categories to each other: "barber" and

"customer". Then we became "redneck ignorant barber" and "pinko egghead minister". Once a month we reviewed the world and our lives and explored our positions. We sparred over civil rights and Vietnam and a lot of elections. We became mirrors, confidants, confessors, therapists, and companions in an odd sort of way. We went through being thirty years old and then forty. We discussed and argued and joked, but always with a certain thoughtful deference. After all, I was his customer. And he was standing there with a razor in his hand.

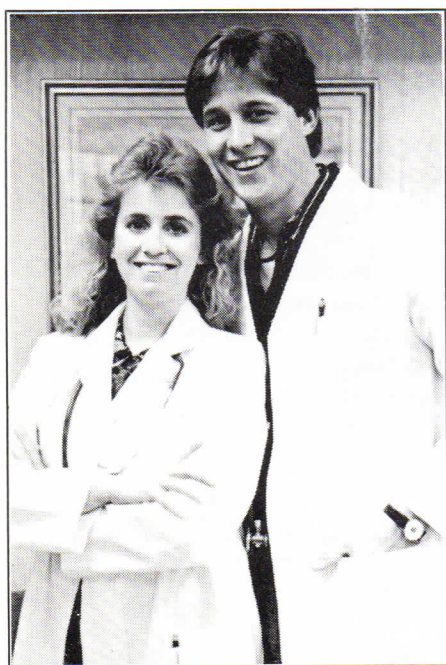
I found out that his dad was a police officer, and he grew up poor in a tiny town and had prejudices. He found out that I

had the same small town roots. Our kids were the same ages, and we suffered through the same stages of parenthood together. We shared family stories and car troubles and lawn problems. I found out he gave his day off to giving free haircuts to old men in nursing homes. He found out a few good things about me, too. I never saw him outside the barber shop, never met his wife or children, never sat in his home or ate a meal with him. Yet he became a terribly important fixture in my life. Perhaps a lot more important than if we had been next-door neighbors. The quality of our relationship was partly created by a peculiar distance. There's a real sense of loss in his leaving. I feel like not having my hair cut anymore, though eight feet of hair might seem strange.

Without realizing it, we fill important places in each other's lives. It's that way with a minister and congregation. Or with the guy at the corner grocery, the mechanic at the local garage, the family doctor, teachers, neighbors, co-workers. Good people, who are always "there", who can be relied upon in small, important ways. People who teach us, bless us, encourage us, support us, uplift us in the dailiness of life. We never tell them. I don't know why, but we don't. And of course, we fill that role ourselves. There are those who depend on us, watch us, learn from us, take from us. And we never know. Don't sell yourself short. You may never have proof of your importance, but you are more important than you think.

By Robert Fulgum in *All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten*. Submitted by Betty Rouse. ■

SunBelt keeping up with latest styles



Southeastern's SunBelt Textile Division was pleased to announce the arrival of new lab coats at a sales meeting held in February. Designed by Textile Specialist Doug Sasser, these new lab coats reflect the changing styles in today's healthcare apparel industry and are SunBelt's first move toward the uniform apparel market. The new lab coats, modeled Sarah Bryan and Cliff Christianson, will provide Southeastern customers with style, comfort, and quality at very affordable and competitive prices.

Copy written by Communications Design.

Sarah Bryan and Cliff Christianson model SunBelt's new lab coats for photographer Anna Clark.

Southeastern involved in heart transplant

Several of Southeastern's employees were very pleased to have a small role in a successful heart transplant operation. One of our customers, Lifenet, turned to sales representative, Bruce McKenna, for medical equipment needed for the transplant of a heart into a sixteen month old Virginia Beach boy. Customer Service representative Debbie Rudisill, and Special Order Department employee, Sharon Banks, worked together to obtain the fetal catheter through Baxter General Healthcare, one of our vendors.

From the Virginia Pilot Leader Star, Norfolk.

"A 16-month-old Virginia Beach boy who received a new heart last week during the first ever procedure for Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters is breathing on his own and is able to drink light liquids, the hospital said.

And, with his condition

steadily improving, his parents have been able to hold him.

"We're delighted that his parents have been able to rock him in their arms in the pediatric intensive-care unit," said Ann Madden, the hospital's pediatric transplant coordinator.

The boy remained in critical condition Sunday. But his vital signs have become "significantly more stable in the past twenty four hours," a hospital spokeswoman said. Not only was he taken off a respirator late Sunday, "but he is starting to feed on some light liquids," Madden said.

"The patient remains quite sleepy but is definitely more alert," Madden said, noting that the child's condition is improving as hoped.

The boy, whose name has been withheld at the request of his family, suffered from a life-threatening congenital heart defect. During six hours of surgery Thursday, a cardiac transplant

team, led by Dr. Glenn Barnhart, implanted a donor heart in the boy.

The boy is expected to be in the hospital for at least five to six more weeks."

Opening copy by Communications Design. Newspaper article contributed by Jim Williams.

Collecting Insurance Benefits

If you know a senior citizen who is frustrated by filing medical claim forms, not actually collecting benefits, or having to refile because of clerical errors, the following may be helpful.

Medical Business Associates, Etowha, N.C., offers a Medical Benefits Service that specializes in filing Medicare and private medical insurance claims. After MBS subscribers register, they forward their medical bills or receipts and their insurance company explanations of benefits to MBS. MBS files all insurance claims and maintains complete records and copies of each claim. Insurance payments are mailed directly to the subscriber or provider from the insurance company. Subscribers receive quarterly reports detailing their insurance activity plus a year-end report for tax purposes. In addition to the ongoing quarterly report, MBS provides a consulting service for subscribers with a backlog of unprocessed claims

continued page four, column two

How much does losing a customer cost?

What does it cost your company when a dissatisfied customer decides to never spend a dollar with you again? Losing one customer a year who spends five dollars a week with you will cost 260 dollars a year. Not much, really. But the dollars add up quickly if you lose customers with any regularity. Add to that the cost of unhappy customers steering away other business and you'll see the obvious importance of providing good service to your customers.

Dollars lost in a year if each customer is:			
number of customers lost a day	spending an average of \$5 a week	spending an average of \$50 a week	spending an average of \$500 a week
1	\$65,000	\$650,000	\$6.5 million

To reach 6.5 millions dollars, multiply 260 (annual work days) by 52 (total weeks per year). Multiply that total by 500 (total dollars spent in one week).

Published in Inbound/Outbound, January 1990, from the Front Line Service Newsletter, MN. Contributed by Les Herod

Birthday celebrations



Happy Birthday wishes to the following employees!

April birthdays

Bill Bateman	4/12
Art Capps	4/28
Willie Carroll	4/30
Norman Davis	4/07
Bud Faircloth	4/02
Jean Jackson	4/09
Henry Kauffelt	4/28
Karon Lane	4/05
Janice Nettles	4/14
Frances Pritchert	4/05
Wayne Rader	4/11
Earl Smith	4/17
Vernon Stephens	4/24
Constance Townsend	4/12

May birthdays

Lori Atchley	5/21
Albert Beck	5/24
Donna Clodfelter	5/12
Ronnie Crosby	5/20
Clarence Gilliam	5/18
Kathy Hicks	5/24
Lisa Hood	5/02
Mrs. Eleanore Manning	5/27
Thomas Reeves	5/05
Joey Sanders	5/17
John Ward	5/12

June birthdays

Patti Albright	6/13
Lynn Aldrich	6/13
Debbie Allee	6/12
Mark Ashjian	6/20
Mark Bass	6/18
Cyndy Ell	6/19
David Jackson	6/17
Daphne Manning	6/04
Darryl Marshall	6/27
Linda Phillips	6/25
Vicki Ruiz	6/01
Debbie Rudisill	6/30
Shirl Sparks	6/15
Mike Sposa	6/14
Jim Royal	6/03
Patti Tolar	6/23

Collecting Insurance Benefits continued from page three

over a long period of time or for an estate.

Lynne Myer, R.N., vice president of Medical Business Associates, says, "Many of our subscribers have had difficulty filling out their claim forms. Equally important, they are enjoying a busy retirement and they realize we are able to help them with their medical claims just as their tax person helps with their taxes. Sometimes they are not aware of their benefits, and they're paying premiums for excessive insurance coverage when they can least afford it."

For additional information, including an MBS application form, send a self-addressed, business sized envelope with twenty five cents to: Medical Benefits Services, P.O. Box 1689, Etowah, N.C. 28729, or call (704)891-5560. Article from Newspaper Feature Report: Clipbook of Free Stories/Columns (January/February 1990) ■

Business trip tip

Hotel credit card calling

When you have more than one phone call to make from your hotel room, don't hang up after each call. Simply push the # button between calls. You'll stay connected with your long distance carrier. But your hotel will only see your phone call as **one** call. You'll save many extra 75 cents, or whatever your hotel charges. *Inbound/Outbound December 1989. Contributed by Les Herod.*

The employees' corner

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort."

John Ruskin

Welcome to Southeastern!

David Matko
Karen Johnston
Cindy Handley
Damon Dill
Richard Green
David Houser
Brent Buroker
Paula Johnson
Jon Nolan
Todd Vranian
Pam Greenhill
Keith Godwin
Keneth Asbury
Linda Arthur
Brinda Williams

New employees and employee birthday columns collected and submitted by Linda Faircloth.

Congratulations to Betty Rouse!

Betty was recently elected into the Virginia Society For Healthcare Purchasing and Materials Management Board of Directors as an Associative Representative.

Picnic!

Paradise Acres

John McMillan Road

Directions: Take 301 South to Exit 59 Hope Mills. Go left over the bridge four miles to John McMillan Rd. You will see sign for Paradise Acres - turn right (John McMillan Rd.). Paradise Acres is one half mile on right.

From Raeford Road take Hwy 59 (Hope Mills Road) through Hope Mills to John McMillan Road. Turn right to Paradise Acres.

June 2 - Eat 1 pm