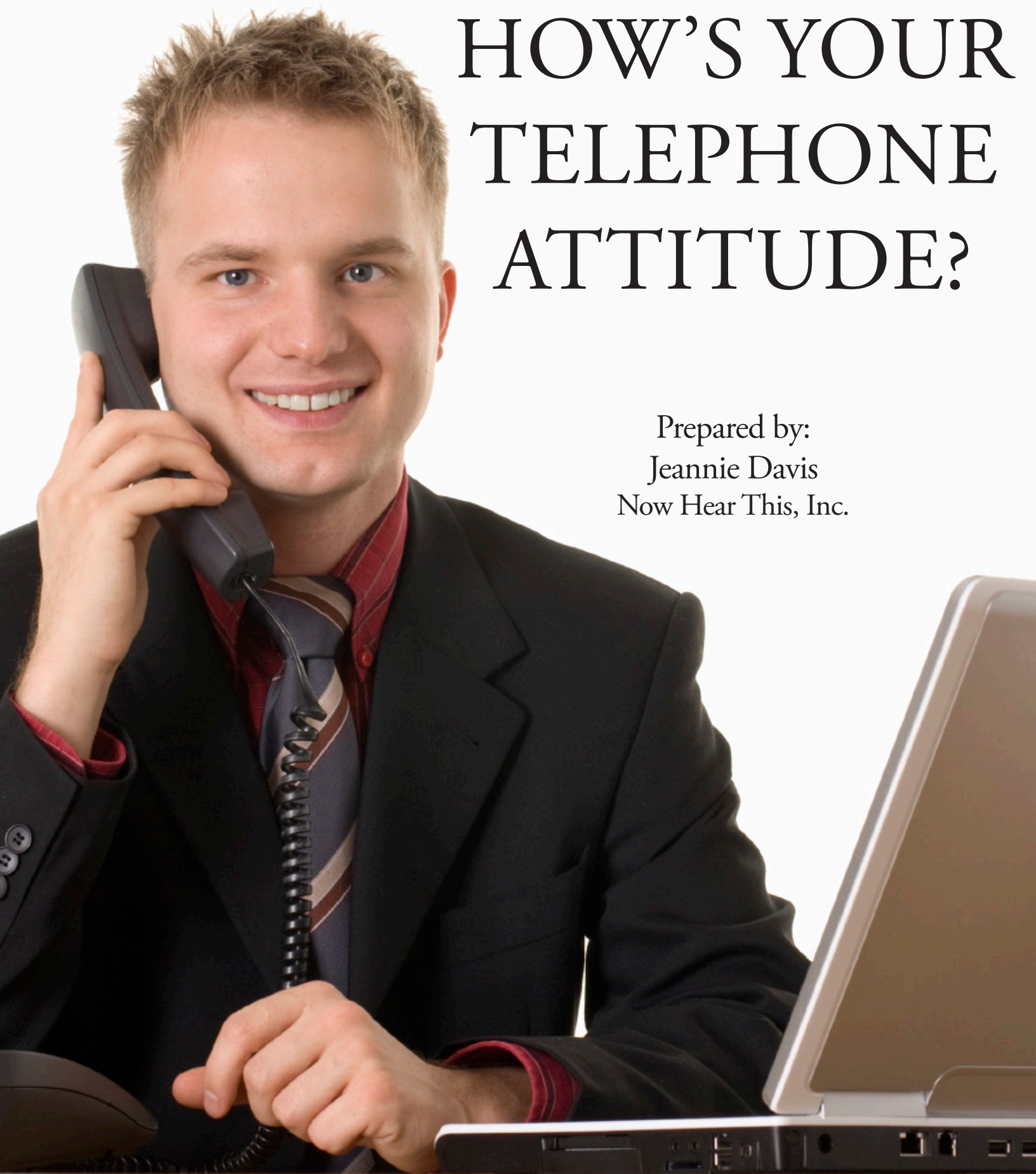


HOW'S YOUR TELEPHONE ATTITUDE?

Prepared by:
Jeannie Davis
Now Hear This, Inc.



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How's Your Telephone Attitude?

When asked why you enjoy working with your favorite customers, you'll likely identify their positive attitude as the major reason. You see them as having great perspective and pleasant temperament. They're high-spirited and exhibit sensitivity in most situations. We benefit from relationships with people whose positive attitudes enrich our lives. It's comforting and enjoyable when our customers, coworkers, managers or supervisors demonstrate a positive attitude.

Have you ever taken a negative attitude to work? If the workday progresses without a hitch, chances are your attitude will improve. But, if your day is riddled with irate callers, tight deadlines, too many meetings, conflict or delays, it's likely you'll have a worse attitude than the one you had. Your attitude impacts the level of customer service you provide. It even impacts your ability to successfully sell your product or service.

You'll have greater success getting and retaining customers when you learn to manage a positive telephone attitude and improve your skills in the following areas.

- **Put A Smile In Your Voice.** It's a fact that people can hear a smile through the telephone. When your smile can be heard, chances are you convey the right image-the one your customers expect and appreciate-the one that helps you establish a rapport and build long-term, loyal business relationships. Put a small

mirror on your desk next to the telephone as a friendly reminder to smile before you pick up the phone-not after.

- **Look Good To Yourself.** Self-esteem-what you think about yourself-is the driving force behind your attitude. People define themselves through a basic sense of pride, dignity, confidence and self-respect and convey these qualities through their relationships with others. Looking good to yourself means more than feeling good inside. It also means looking good on the outside, which lets others know how well you view yourself.
- **Develop A "Can Do" Attitude.** When you transmit a positive "can do" attitude, people are naturally more responsive. It's easy to forget how productivity and customer relationships suffer when our attitude isn't on straight. Anyone can provide good customer service. Your challenge is always to strive for customer service excellence by going the extra mile.
- **Practice Positive Thinking.** Research has shown that 80% of what we say to ourselves is negative. Sometimes you need to assess your initial reaction, work through negative circumstances and take it upon yourself to turn things around. Ask yourself, "What can I do to help this be a more positive situation?" Make a habit of replacing negative, helpless thoughts with positive, powerful ones.
- **Use Positive Language.** People understand and respond one-third more quickly to positive words than negative ones. Some words and phrases typically elicit a negative response from customers Think how you react when-as the customer-a service provider says: "I'll try," "You'll have to," "I don't know" or "I can't." What other word choices would solicit more positive

responses? Notice how you respond differently when specific comments or requests are phrased in a more positive manner.

- **Create Mutual Reliance.** Most people think of "XYZ Company" as you: the person they deal with on a regular basis; the person they depend on for a long-term, healthy relationship; the person who makes them feel special. Practice weaving your customer into the fabric of your organization by speaking in a manner that expresses mutual respect and conveys a message that they're part of your company. Use these examples: We, Our, Let's, Us, Together.

Everyone experiences bad days-times when you're not at your best. It's easy to forget how productivity and customer relationships suffer because of a negative attitude. It's imperative you treat customers with respect and give them more than they expect. Make their experience of dealing with you and your company as pleasant as possible.

Jeannie Davis is president of Now Hear This, Inc., a Colorado-based communications training company specializing in professional telephone skills workshops, seminars and keynote presentations. An expert in the field of telephone communication, she is the award-winning author of Beyond "Hello:" A Practical Guide for Excellent Telephone Communication and Quality Customer Service. Davis has worked with many Fortune 500 companies and trained thousands of people to maximize the profit- and image-building power of their #1 business communication tool. For additional information and a free "video brochure" about on-site training programs, reach Jeannie at 1-800-784-5525 or visit online at www.phoneskills.com.

