



GET YOUR POSTURE STRAIGHT

Leaders understand the importance of posture. There is more to posture than sitting tall or standing up straight. Posture also relates to a frame of mind or attitude when communicating with our customers.

Posture – Two Differing Attitudes

There are two primary postures used throughout the day: deference and guidance.

During the day a leader must toggle between these deferring and guiding attitudes. And while everyone on the team must understand and use the proper posture, there is no one who needs it more critically than your front office team and those communicating via phone.

Why is this?

Phone conversations lack the visible cues of body language, but even so, a caller perceives posture and attitude over the phone. So let's empower these valuable leaders who are on the phone.

Deference

A dictionary definition says that deference is, "respectful submission or yielding to the judgment, opinion, or will of another."

Simply put, it is being courteous and respectful. This is appropriate for our offices. Examples of when this is used is when we:

- Offer a greeting and say, "How may I help you?"
- Ask permission to place someone on hold and say, "May I place you on a brief hold?"
- Wrap up a conversation by asking, "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

Guidance

Guidance is providing direction, leadership, and advice.

Even in an elective-based business, it is still appropriate to

by Amy Demas

"Know your powers. The power of your words, your silence, your mind, your body language and your body itself. Control them."

Sonya Teclai

guide. We politely guide. Examples of when to do so are:

- Setting appointments and saying, "The doctor can see you at [Option A] or [Option B]. Which one works best for you?"
- Advising of the best option with, "My recommendation is to..."
- Providing awareness of consequences by saying, "Yes, we can look for a late appointment; that will impact treatment time. Do you wish for me to continue to look for the last appointment of the day or explore an option closer to what the doctor recommended?"

The Switcheroo

All too often there is a switcheroo, and team members are unaware. A majority of those on the phone self-report 100% compliance with the proper posture of deference and guidance.

Reprinted from
The Newsletter for Members and Friends of Ortho2
July 2019 - Volume 37 Issue 3

My evaluation of tens-of-thousands of calls verifies differently.

A classic example of the switcheroo is when callers get told they will be put on hold and then broadly asked when they want to come in for an appointment as if you have 24/7 availability.

Oh no!

The Solution

First, talk with your team about the difference between deference and guidance. Rehearse the examples above.

Second, evaluate phone recordings and provide appropriate feedback. Consider this with a caveat. Giving feedback in a way that encourages change is not always in the wheelhouse of the skills of most doctors and managers.

Finally, consider hiring a team coach for communication training. ☺

About the Author



Amy Demas, MBA, DTM, DFSS is the President of Communicate Excellence, a consulting firm specializing in the communication and phone skills of your front office to improve the customer experience and case acceptance.

Contact Info: 203.266.2881 • www.communicateexcellence.com