

VOICE OVER

Ever wondered how your work colleague knows so much about you? You know, really personal things. Aren't you just ever so slightly suspicious?

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Well, it's obvious. You are probably one of those really annoying people who have their mobile switched on permanently on their desk. You answer it whenever it rings, have a good old social chin wag, or worse, have a fight with your other half – all within earshot of everyone else. And then you wonder how everyone seems to know that your spouse has wandering eyes and you feel very insecure about it!

Ok, so you might say 'oh, I'm not like that. I'm very discreet'. Sorry, it doesn't wash with me. An office is a place of WORK. If you need to sort out your holiday, plan your next social engagement then fine. But have some consideration for others. Take your phone and go outside. Then you can really let rip! Added to which the privacy will no doubt help your standing in the company enormously!

But this brings me onto another bugbear. Smokers. Because they go off and take five-minute fag breaks about 6-8 times a day, they actually don't have to work as hard. Now, going back to what I was saying. What if you did the same with your personal calls? Took this time in lieu of not being a smoker (but smokers couldn't claim this perk too!). Somehow I just don't think you'd get away with it. Now where is the justice in that?

It is not just personal calls that get the office masses all wound up. It's those who (strangely) feel they have to shout down the phone. Perhaps they think they literally need to project their voice across the country rather than let the phone do it for them. It reminds me of those people who shout loudly at foreigners thinking they will be more likely to understand. Anyway it is distracting to those trying to get on with their jobs.

So, in the spirit of corporate harmony I think we might all need to go back to basics and have a little reminder of office telephone etiquette.

Here are a few things to start you off:

- put your mobile on mute (if you dig your heels in on this then at least get a half decent ring tone – not the bloody crazy frog – it will get half the office rifling through their bags!)
- take/make your personal calls outside
- save your 'phone fights' for your lunch break
- talk quietly
- answer your phone promptly – a ringing phone can be a big distraction to others
- have the courtesy to apologise to those around you when your mobile does ring
- don't be an arse and show off your newest mobile model – it's really annoying!
- don't take personal calls when you are in a work meeting – that's enough to get the boss seeing red

Now, go forth into the corporate world knowing you will be a symbol of peace and harmony and your private life will remain well, private.

