



Telephoning communication breakdown roleplays

Choose one of the situations below or take it from a pack of cards made from this worksheet cut up and roleplay the whole telephone conversation with your partner.

You are put through to the wrong person	You don't know who to speak to	You don't know which extension number
The receptionist mispronounces your name	The person you want to speak to has left the company	Your mobile battery is running out
Nobody with the name you are asking for works in the company	There is a lot of background noise your end	You are put on hold for so long that you have to hang up and phone again
Someone phoned you and left a number on your answer machine, but you couldn't understand any other parts of the message	You can't pronounce the name of the person you want to speak to ("Mr. Rousseau")	You have dialled the wrong number
You can't hear the person's voice very well	You can't understand their pronunciation	You can't understand about 50% of what is being said
You have a bad signal on your mobile	The person you are speaking to won't stop speaking and finish the conversation	You are being asked to agree to something but still don't really understand what is being proposed
The person you are speaking to talks quickly and says numbers and names you need to write down without pausing	The person who phones you starts talking about an urgent matter but you have no idea who is speaking	The person you are speaking to tries to bring the conversation to a close without giving you information they promised.

How well do you think you coped with the situations above?

What hints would you give people on communicating on the phone in English? What about business telephone communication in your own language?

Do you think it is worth having a company policy on telephone communications? If so, what would you include in it?

How about a company policy on email communications?