

Resource Strategies for doing phone calls

While talking on the phone to people who are not close connections I have to at first concentrate hard on what they are saying. If I don't have pen and paper with me I will often not remember what has been discussed as I am not fully present for the call. I need a pen for task and organisation orientated 'parts' to record the important information.

White knuckle it or push through the hard.

For me it's been one of my major challenges in jobs over the years. And even harder in open plan offices. I cannot process audio nearly as well as written or visual stuff. And hearing a person without seeing their body language etc is not how humans are designed to operate so I give myself a lot of compassion for struggling.

I am terrible at zoning out with audio things. Things I've discovered over the years.

No one remembers a conversation completely. It's impossible.

Taking bullet point notes is useful.

Note down specific dates and times mentioned

The other person is not judging you.

If a work call, ask for or follow up with a summary email.

If you forget something, call them back.

Be very very kind to you doing a great job calling folk.

After call treat (15 mins playing a game, go on lunch etc)

Pick the time you are at your best (early bird, night owl or afternoon sloth)

Summarise while on the call (Can I just confirm I got this right?)

Tell the other person what you are doing (I'm just writing this down, taking a note, need a wee moment to think about that)

Try not to jump too far ahead in the conversation.

I worked in call centres for years and developed a "phone space" in my head. Like a place I go to make calls. I get used to stacking information in a certain way. Dividing conversation up into sections. It's very handy to have that space.

Sometimes I write a script - mostly around what to say when someone answers and the basic messages that I have to get across or questions that I have to ask. I also tell people that I don't know (particularly if I am super anxious) that I can get tongue-tied on the phone and please be patient. Pen and paper are a must!

Lists help and be prepared. If I can arrange a zoom, or meet in person for more complex exchanges I will ask for that. I still get a little nervous talking to people I don't know. I make it short and sharp and polite and I stick to the point.

I often will text first to see if it's a good time to call and what I'm calling for, and write myself a list because when I am on the phone with someone I tend to start rambling on as nerves and anxiety kick in.

Phone calls are very scary. It's easier when I'm initiating the phone call as I would have prepared for it and I know the objective of the call, so I would have written some bullet points and know what I need to know. Definitely having a pen and paper to make notes helps. Grounding also helps; feeling the feet on the floor, bum on the seat, and taking a few mindful breaths help me ground. Also used to pray for a favourable outcome. Inbound calls are more challenging as I'd get random people with random issues.

I remember doing an assertiveness course at the Next Step Centre at ARA, and there were so many people in the group who just couldn't do it - we ended up bringing in an old phone and doing role-play exercises so we could practise in pairs, making phone calls.

I find sending a message to WINZ IRD and ACC via messenger, gets me the quickest result at having a call back.

Ask people in your voice message to send you a text. If they really want to speak to me they'll leave a message, text or email.

Video calls are so much better you can read what's going on. I agree calls in shared spaces are really hard work so I do them alone. Headphones allow for free hands to write notes, type or have something to fiddle with.