

## CUBE POLICY

The following guidelines should be observed:

- Speak softly: Be aware that your voice projects. A loud voice makes working conditions difficult for co-workers. It's distracting and makes concentrating on the task at hand very difficult and should they also be engaged in a telephone discussion may very well overwhelm the voice in their telephone. Use your "library voice". Don't talk through cube walls or congregate outside someone's cube. Don't bring visitors to your cube to meet with them. Go to an office or conference room. Don't yell across the cube farm barriers. Get up and move to the other person's location.
- Common Areas: Be mindful of conversations that are held at the front desk, in Gail's reception area and in the corridors. These conversations also carry and should be communicated quietly.
- Do not use a speaker phone: The person next door is not only distracted by your voice, but your party's voice, too.
- Confidential matters: Do not discuss confidential matters in your cubicle. Cubicles offer very little privacy, so you should not discuss confidential matters there. Your conference room is an excellent place to hold meetings where confidential information will be exchanged. If you need to discuss the issue on the telephone, find out if you can borrow a phone in someone else's office to conduct this discussion.
- Cell phones: Keep your personal cellular phone off or in silent mode. You are on the phone, and engaged in a long but hopefully profitable consultation with a client. Your cellular phone starts ringing. Because you are engaged, it will take longer for you to answer the call. In the meantime your phone will create more noise and distract other employees. When you go to lunch, take your cellular phone with you. This is to ensure that should your phone ring, you are at hand to answer it. Leaving it behind is unfair, especially if it's on, as the noise may prove distracting. Also, a cellular phone is very valuable, and you should not leave it lying about. It is your responsibility to look after it, not pass the buck to your neighbor.
- Keep your personal calls to a minimum: It is best if you receive personal calls at lunch or during your breaks, and no more. Your private life is your own, and you should not inflict it on your neighbors or the workplace.
- Use your conference room for meetings: Space is at premium in open plan office arrangement, so it's best that you meet your clients at a conference room, rather than at your desk. First of all, you want your client to be able to relax, and to have the opportunity to provide them with excellent service without interruptions from your phone, colleagues or the activities taking place around you. Also, your neighbor is in fact, in her office, and should have the privacy to conduct business without worrying about a non-employee listening in on what she says.
- Do not use screen savers which make noise: One person's music is another person's noise, so it's very important that you allow others to work in a quiet area.
- Interruptions: The cubicle next to yours is someone else's office. Would you barge into a colleague's office without knocking and being told to come in? The cubicle is your colleague's office space, so respect it. Respect other people's space when they look busy. When your colleague looks busy, pretend that the office door is closed, and they are in a meeting with the company president. So there should be no interruptions until you pick up the signal that they may be willing to talk. On the other hand, don't make eye contact with someone when you don't want to be interrupted. Try not to sneak up behind someone in a cube. Announce yourself at their doorway or lightly knock on the wall. Post a sign or flag at your cube entrance to signal when you can't be interrupted.
- Do not interrupt someone who is on the telephone: You should refrain from using sign language to interrupt someone who is on the phone. It is better that you wait until the call is finished, before you approach the person and tell them whatever it is that you'd like to discuss.
- Hear no evil, see no evil: Should you happen to overhear private or confidential conversations, pretend that you never heard it all. More importantly, don't repeat what you heard to others. Never read someone's computer screen or comment on conversations you've overheard. Resist answering a question you overheard asked in the cube next to you
- Beware of smells: Don't wear too much perfume or aftershave: you may think that it smells wonderfully, while your neighbor chokes on it! Keep snacking to a minimum. Would you walk into someone else's office, pull out a chair and start snacking? Absolutely not! The same principle applies to cubicles. Yes, you are in your side of the room, however, the partition offers very little privacy, so your neighbor will be forced to listen to all the crunchy noises your apple makes, or worse, have the aroma of your fries wafting in her direction while she tries to get some work done. Food odors can bother your hungry or nauseous neighbors. Shoes must be kept on at all times.

- Be careful of the impression you make: Your cubicle gives your colleagues and people around you an impression of the person you are. Recognize that, and make sure that it does present a good impression. That means that it should be kept tidy and clean, with documents filed in their proper places.
- Prairie-dogging: Don't "prairie-dog" over the tops of cubes or peek in as you walk past each one.
- General Noise: Use email or instant messaging to communicate silently with your coworkers. Play radios at low volumes or use a headset. Set your PC volume to a low level and turn off screensaver sound effects. Set pagers to vibrate. Eat quietly. Avoid gum-popping, humming, whistling, slurping, pen tapping and other extraneous noises.

Questions regarding cubicle etiquette should be directed to the Operations Manager or Department Administrator.

*Updated 10/9/2014*

*Adapted from "Cubicle Etiquette by Jill Bremer"*