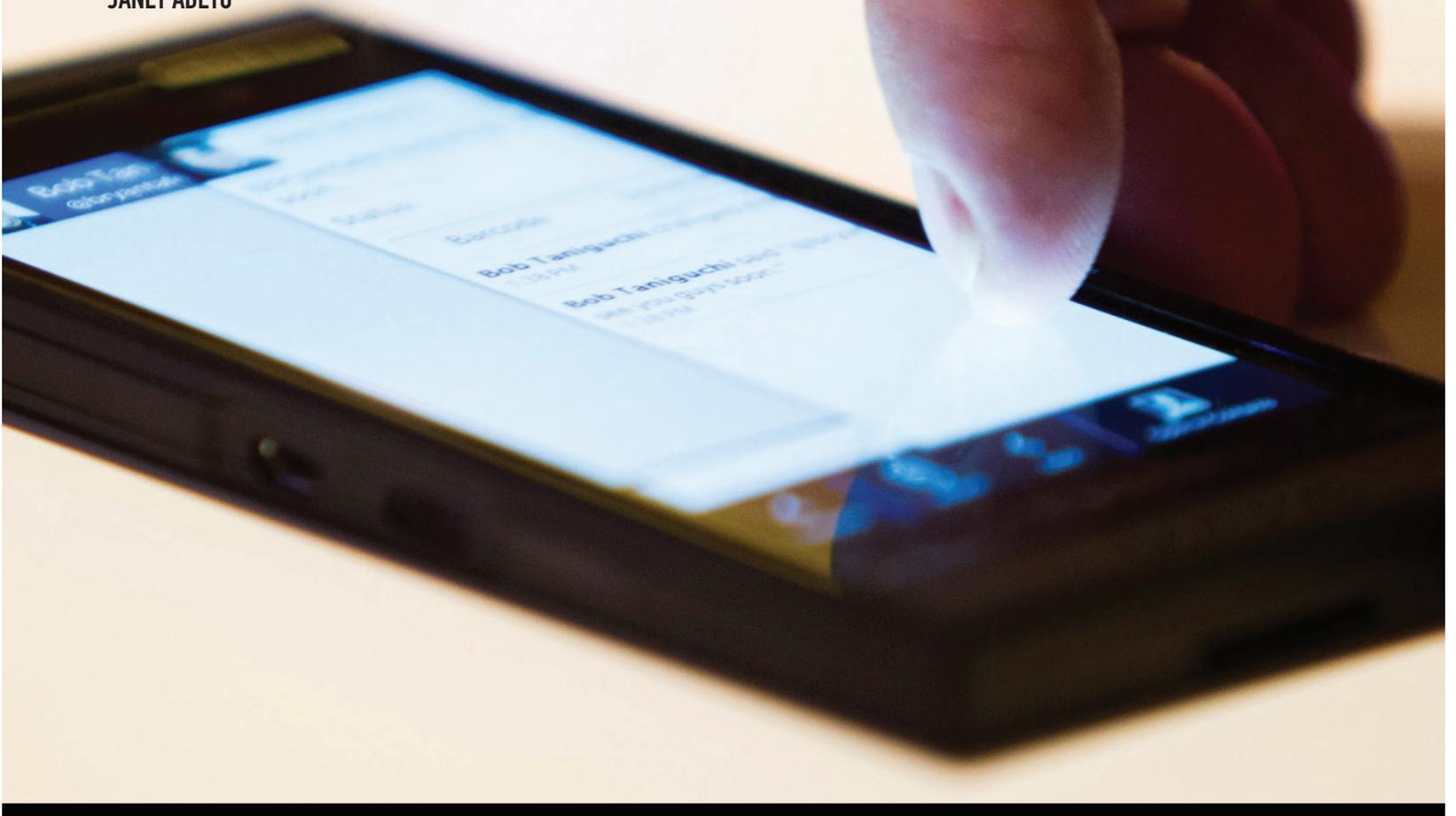


SMARTPHONE ETIQUETTE

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‘Hi-Tech smartness in your palm’

Are you like me just joining the Blackberry or smartphone craze? Everyone in my household has one either an I-phone, Blackberry, Samsung or some sort of Android phone. I must say I find them quite a sophisticated and functional gadgets, especially if you are using it for business.

How many times have you been in a meeting or seminar and found people’s heads down fidgeting with their smartphones? Personally in a few of my workshops and seminars I have discovered how distracting this act can be. I wonder if professionals are automatically expecting some form of message be it a text message, blackberry message or email message. The phone somehow is permanently in their hands or close by waiting for them to respond to it. Ultimately, at that time when concentration is most needed they are being unproductive. These phones require some technical knowledge if you really want to get the best of your phone. I recently acquired the latest Blackberry Z10, great in size and look though overnight I had to become smartphone savvy. For professionals do not get lost in the intricacies of your phone, as long as you are able to respond to immediate business emails, schedule your appointments and maintain communication with your clients you are phone. It is important you separate your social usage of your phone from your business usage.

10 Best Steps to Smartphone Savvy

Size

When buying a smartphone, purchase the size that is convenient for you to both use and carry. Ensure that you can operate the keys for the purpose of texting or emailing. Remember it’s all about your eyes from blackberry curve, bold, torch to Z10, likewise Samsung II to Samsung III, and I-phone 3 to I – phone 5 they get even more sophisticated by the day. Buy the one with the features you need and not for fancy, it should meet your immediate need.

Ringtone

Just like any other phone be careful of the ringtone you use, especially when using for business purposes. The volume of the ringtone is also one to look out for, don’t let it be overbearing. Be careful not to download a ring tone that others may find blasts in their ears when they call you. This can be quite offensive. Many have a slight ping as a ringtone for convenience. Remember for every message that comes through your BB will notify you, this maybe disturbing at times, keep your phone on silent vibration or low volume when need be.

Emails

Your smartphone sometimes cannot download heavy attachments from your email inbox, and will tell you that your message has been truncated. The same applies when sending an email from your smartphone; it should be short and brief. If you need to send any formal document you should try to send it from your laptop. Your smartphone should be used to identify and respond to emails that have come through immediately without having to be on your desk. You make quick responses that need prompt or immediate attention.

Ping Me, I Ping You

Pinging with Blackberry messenger is a very fast means of communication and is free between BB users. Today we now have others like WhatsApp available for you to talk to all your contacts easily. It can also cause a lot of distraction if not managed well. Don't let conversation by smartphone be long; it is usually for social usage. If you do not want to be contacted indicate in your profile status that you are busy. This will avoid anyone being offended by your lack of response.

Picture Profile

I would not recommend for business purposes any form of communication comes through chat form. For your personal and social usage be selective in the pictures you set up as your profile page. Pictures tend to speak a thousand words. With close colleagues at work keep professional and personal conversations separate. Remember what you do not want published don't say it on your smartphone.

Formal/ Informal Usage

Please note that when you are going for a meeting or attending an appointment, whether you are conducting or attending the meeting, the phone is the least priority at that time. Your phone should be silently kept away for the duration. Nothing can be more impolite than answering a phone when you have got the attention of others. One missed phone call will not kill you, attend to missed calls, messages at a more appropriate time. Do not respond to text messages or emails in a formal gathering, dinner or speaking engagement.

Speaker Phone

If you are a business professional who relies heavily on your phone for business communications you may find yourself using the speaker phone more often. Be observant when you do this, you will need to be discreet in talking aloud as people around you will be forced to eavesdrop unconsciously.

Social Media

The use of twitter, facebook, linked- In, you-tube and many more forms of social media are becoming ever so popular today. Many businesses are tuning into these devices to stay in touch with clients, customers, viewers and business contacts. Your smartphone is a great device for keeping social contacts and reaching out to a large community. It is important to remember to sign off after use to protect your data. Be extra careful not to refer to anything work related during social discussions, information travels superfast and can be misinterpreted.

Security

Over and above all when you own a smartphone, you will realize that a lot of your life is slowly accumulated on to it. It is paramount that you secure your smartphone with a password or pattern ID identifiable by you alone. Currently there is a software that helps you track your phone when it has been stolen anywhere in the world. All smartphones are hot cakes in many places, guard your phones jealously.

Battery

One disadvantage I have found with Blackberry phones is that the battery has a tendency to run down pretty fast, many times you may be called when your phone is off, It can be quite frustrating for someone to call and find that you are not available. Carry an extra charged battery or a charger which can be used on your laptop, in your car or office.

Cost

Smartphones can be quite expensive depending on the specification and services provided; this may depend on the network you decide to use. It is important to factor in all the necessary costs before purchase. Buy the affordable version.

Today in our current vibrant environment one can almost not do without a professional smartphone. They are also great for marketing and event broadcasts for entrepreneurs. Whatever the reason you have for obtaining a smartphone it most certainly must be used correctly watch out for my telephone etiquette tips, a real image killer if you get it wrong. Goodluck as you continue to discover the swift wave of new technology on a daily basis right in your palms. **E**

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