

Quiet in the Cube: Mission Impossible?

Written by Peter Post



I work in an open-cube atmosphere, and I have an occasional problem with neighbors who speak so loudly on their phones that I find it distracting.

Is there some way I can get them to “turn it down” without antagonizing them?

The loud phone voice is one of the most frustrating problems that cubicle dwellers face.

The reason is simple: the perpetrator has no idea he's disturbing others. In your case, you mention that the problem is “occasional.” Before you talk to anyone, ask yourself if this is really a point worth raising. If the problem truly is occasional, it may be better to leave it alone rather than make an issue out of it. If you decide to talk to your co-workers, ask to speak to each of them in private, where you can explain the issue calmly without embarrassing them: “John, I asked to talk with you about something that is difficult for me to bring up. But if the shoe were on the other foot, I know I hope you would talk to me. It’s about your phone voice...”

Source: Post, Peter. "Etiquette at Work." Boston Globe 5 Mar. 2006.

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For more information on [Emily Post Business Etiquette Programs](#) contact Director of Sales and Relationships, Dawn Stanyon at Dawn@emilypost.com.