Telephone/Cell Phone Etiquette Tips Job Aid

There are four areas of telephone/cell phone etiquette that you should be aware of when communicating with your future employers (and anyone with whom you speak at their company):

- Professionally place a call.
- Leave a courteous and succinct message.
- Politely answer a call.
- Set up your voicemail.

Be sure to follow these professional telephone etiquette guidelines.

Placing a call:
Call from a quiet environment, and have paper/pen ready. Practice what you are going to say/write it down! Mentally prepare - smile even though they can’t see you! Identify yourself: “Hello, this is X, a current student in the X program at OSU. I am calling in response to the (job title/position). Do you have a minute to talk?” If you did not reach your contact, get a best time to contact him/her. Call to an employer no more than two times in one week and for no more than two weeks.

Leaving a message:
Be courteous to the person who answered the phone: “Thank you Ms. X, I look forward to hearing from Mrs. Y.” State your name, purpose of call, and number where you can be reached. Be specific about when you can be reached. Thank the person who answered. If your calls are never returned, try e-mail, a letter, or someone else in the company. If unsuccessful, this is telling you something about the company and/or your means of contact.

Answering a call:
Try to answer at the end of the 1st ring - no later than the 3rd ring. If you receive calls on a shared landline, remind friends that you may get calls from employers. If an employer calls you at an inconvenient time, politely explain this, and offer to call back at a time convenient to the employer. If returning a call, promptly return it 24-48 hours from the time it was received.

Setting up voicemail:
Voicemail and answering machine greetings should be professional, concise, and absent of any music, slang, or inappropriate language. (Avoid the “fake out” voicemail message where you pretend to answer the phone.)

Speak slowly. Say: “Hello. You have reached xxx xxx-xxxx. I am not available to take your call at this time. If you would like to leave your name, number and the reason for your call, I will return your call as soon as possible. Thank you.”
Special Notes on Cell Phone Etiquette:

The same rules apply for cell phone etiquette. Remember, keep it professional!

Don't answer your cell phone if you are not in an environment appropriate to receive business calls. Noisy backgrounds, poor reception, and dropped call do not look very professional.

If your cell phone rings, and it's not a good time to talk, then let the call go to your voicemail. Potential employers would rather have you return the call promptly.