



# Understanding booth manners

Mutual assistance, team cohesiveness and convivialité are essential for the smooth running of any conference. Here's a checklist of booth manners for beginners.

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## In the booth

- Remember that an interpreting booth is a confined space. Act accordingly;
- Keep the documents neat and orderly;
- Do not smoke;
- Switch off your mobile phone;
- Take care not to wear jewellery that can make a noise, like wrist bangles;
- Agree preferred seating and lighting arrangements with colleague(s);
- Turn volume right down on your headset if you leave the booth;
- Keep quiet when not working (microphones pick up all background noise so do not shuffle papers, be careful when pouring water, do not eat or make other unpleasant noises);
- Talk into the microphone (some colleagues who regularly work for TV can offer precious advice). But don't speak too close to the microphone as this will distort the sound;
- Check the teams language combination and preset the relay switches;
- Make arrangements in relation to working time and changeovers and do not leave the booth when off mike unless it is necessary. Do not disappear for too long.
- Agree the length of your working stints as suits the meeting but change over during a natural break in speech;
- Be prepared to help your colleague, but not intrusively. It is usually clear when someone needs help with finding a document or a new term;
- Make sure you know how to operate the equipment;
- Try to work with the headset volume low so you can modulate your voice and make sure you monitor what you say either uncovering one ear or leaving both half covered. Remember that adjusting the bass and treble can help as much as increasing volume;

## Teamwork



- Get to the meeting on time; a good rule of thumb is to get there 30 minutes before it begins, at least on the first day;
- Introduce yourself to colleagues and the technician;
- Do not hesitate to help your colleagues on the team with difficult or obscure terms; they in turn will help you;
- Tell your colleagues if you're a beginner; they will be supportive;
- It is bad manners to brandish your business card at a meeting you haven't organised. Let the consultant interpreter/team leader do the PR work;
- Don't be worried about not knowing something. Languages are difficult;
- Remember you're part of a team, so be supportive of your colleagues;

### **Survival kit**

- Don't forget your spectacles
- Notebook
- Pens and pencils and pencil sharpener. Highlighter
- Wipes for cleaning the headset
- Bottle opener
- Throat sweets/voice tablets (avoiding crinkly paper)
- Paper clips/stapler
- Binoculars are useful in big conference centres where the interpreters are a very long way from the speakers and screen.
- Bring along a printed invoice in advance if you've been asked to. A scribbled bill on scrap paper looks unprofessional.

### ***Further Reading:***

- Booth manners for seasoned interpreters

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#### **Recommended citation format:**

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