**Bilingual Telephone Greetings**

Welcoming your members or clients is an important opportunity for your organization or business to make an impression. The ability to offer your client the choice to use either English or French is a valuable service.

**Telephone reception**

* Answer the telephone in both official languages and continue the conversation in the official language chosen by your client and use the corresponding documentation.
* Keep a "cheat sheet" by the telephone with key phrases to respond to callers. A good list is provided by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat at: *From Bonjour to Au revoir - Usual Expressions on the Telephone.*
* Identify bilingual person(s) within your organization to whom telephone calls may be referred. When transferring the call:
* Inform your client that you are referring him/her to someone else.
* Give the client the name and the phone number of this person and tell the client this person is bilingual.
* Inform your colleague of the language used by your client.
* Ensure that voice mail messages are recorded in both official languages. Provide examples of messages to employees (see examples below).
* If your organization does not have a receptionist or is unable to staff this position with a bilingual employee consider letting calls ring into a bilingual voice mail. Ensure that the call is returned by a previously identified person with the required language skills.

**Additional resources**

Toolbox (<http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/docs/toolbox.pdf> ), Office of Francophone Affairs, Government of Ontario

This user-friendly kit may help you in your everyday communications with the public in French, be it over the counter, on the telephone and in writing.

*Service to the Public - Getting on Board!*, (<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/tb_a3/serv_pub-eng.asp#gb1>) , Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

The information found here is designed to help in the delivery of Government of Canada services; however it may be a useful reference for organizations.

*Source: Making your organization bilingual – Canadian Heritage*