

Ringtone Etiquette

Ever noticed how at a busy, dull, board meeting a particular gentleman keeps coughing at regular intervals and his hand covers his mouth only a few seconds after he has 'coughed'. And you couldn't help wondering how sick he really was to be doing something so unhygienic? Well, the next time you witness such ill – timed 'action to sound' occurrences, you might want to re – think the entire situation. A closer look and you will know when he looks towards his phone, that the 'cough' was actually his mobile phone ring tone! Talk about ingenuity!

Mobile phone ring tones have come a long way from the standard beeps, ringing tones, the famous Nokia ring tone, to slightly pleasant sounding monotonous; which were easily forgotten with the invasion of polyphonic ringtones. And now with the way this industry is burgeoning, ring tones have become a force to reckon with: videotones, ring back tones, sing tones, the list is endless.

With so much already having been written and said about the way this industry is growing, it's not surprising to hear talks of taming it down. It's true. Ring tone etiquette is being taken seriously and people are being expected to brush up on their social behaviour in public places. Extremely loud and annoying ring tones often invite scowls from co – passengers on board trains and/or buses. More often than not, a couple of the annoyed co – passengers would think, "He blew up money over that?". The modern day definition of a ring tone, is something that clearly sets one apart from the masses ;and spares him/her the embarrassment of jumping every time a phone with a similar ring tone rings in close vicinity. Yet, the fact that individuals, in their attempt to stand out in the crowd, opt for ring tones that are extremely unpleasant and distasteful for a public environment, cannot be disregarded simply on the grounds of freedom of expression. Researchers have identified such behaviour as being incongruent with social norms.

There have been reports of a particular behaviour in public places which has managed to successfully infuriate the majority of those subjected to it. It has been observed that no sooner has an individual purchased a new phone, or probably even due to lack of any constructive activity, than the individual attempts to go through each and every ring tone available on his/her mobile phone. And quite understandably this urge happens in public places and/ or long journeys that must be endured listening to what may seem like at that time, the world's most irritating variety of mobile phone ring tones. One of the foremost rules of ring tone etiquette, according to experts, undoubtedly is that fact that ring tones must be played out and tried only in the privacy of one's home.

Recent reports have also highlighted trends within this industry that attempt to evade the etiquette rule book. 'Coughing' and 'sneezing' ring tones at meetings allow one to slip away easily without being too conspicuous. Some of the other popular ones have been borrowed from the environment. Natural sounds such as those of birds twittering, leaves swaying, and bees buzzing, only make it that much easier to alert the user of an incoming call or message, without actually attracting any unwanted attention.

Although it's being persistently argued by ardent mobile phone ring tone fans, that ring tones are a personal choice that allow an individual to make a style statement; one cannot disregard the fact that style statement's cannot be made at the cost of another individual's comfort.

About the Author

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