



Business - Creating a Wonderful Environment - Using Your Telephone to Build a Good Image

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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I know many professionals who state that they are annoyed by the number of telephone calls they receive, frustrated with voice mail and disgusted when they can't get through to people they want to speak with. There are some techniques, however, that will help you to build good relationships and get the information you need in a timely fashion.

Your Voice Mail Message - When someone calls your office they will be pleased to hear a professional business message. Invite them to leave a message for you, explain when you will return their call and direct them to your website. They might be able to answer some of their own questions by reviewing the information you have on the website. They will know when to expect your return call and also hear the voice of a friendly and polite individual. All of this builds rapport and is much more effective than exchanging several messages where you each state your name, number and the words "Call me back".

Leaving Messages for Professionals- "Telephone tag" is a frustrating and time-consuming activity. When you need information from someone, you can leave a clear and detailed message for them that states exactly what you need to know, when you need the information and how it can be sent to you. Be sure that you slowly and clearly give your name, telephone number and website address so that they can respond appropriately. This works extremely well when you want to check with accounting departments about unpaid invoices or when you need specific reports that can be sent to you by email attachment. You can leave a message listing all the invoice numbers, dates and amounts and then ask them to leave you a message indicating when and how they will be paid. Or you can request a specific report and ask the other person to send it directly to you through your email address.

Leaving Messages for Clients - Many clients who call you will want to know basic information that is likely on your website. When you return their call, you can direct them to that website and indicate when they you will be available to answer any questions that are still unanswered after they review your site.

There are times that established clients call stating "I just want to book an appointment". If I have an idea of their preferences, I will leave a message offering them two or three available times and ask them to confirm by voice mail. This saves several calls back and forth to accomplish the same results.

Return all Calls in a 'timely Manner - My voice mail states "We will return your call on the next business day" and I insure that this is done. I have even called clients from as far away as Jamaica in order to honour that statement. Now I have an assistant who regularly listens to and return calls, even when I am out of country. And, of course, cellphones allow even more communication opportunities than we had a few years ago.

Also, remember that It is better to leave a positive message on a machine than to keep trying without leaving a message. The person who initially left you a message will respect the fact that you tried to reach them.

The telephone is a "tool" and like any tool can be used improperly or with expertise. When you use it effectively, it will help to build the wonderful adventure that is part of having a business.