

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Making The Most Of The Phone Messages You Leave

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Voice mail systems and answering machines are a terrific enhancement to telephone communication in today's business world. What a valuable time-saver! Just remember that the messages you leave for others communicate much more than actual recorded words (they give valuable signals about the level of professionalism others can expect from doing business with you and your company).

Here are a few reminders to help you always put your most professional foot forward:

- Before calling someone who has a messaging system, don't just grab the phone and start dialing. Take a moment to think about what you will say if you get their "machine". If the communication is detailed, jot down some notes before you dial the number. Your concisely worded message will enhance your credibility. It also saves you both time because the other person will be able to prepare a response before calling you back.
- No matter how often you call the other person, don't forget to identify yourself. (You'd be surprised how often people are so pre-occupied that they forget this critical step.)
- Leave your phone number even if the other person has it, so they won't have to waste time looking it up.
- Speak slowly using a clear, pleasant, and professional voice. The most common error in leaving voice mail messages is speaking too quickly or mumbling (especially when leaving phone numbers).

By making it easy for others to return your call, they will gain confidence that doing business with you will be an equally pleasant experience. Be sure that your employees also know how to professionally leave messages. After all, they're representing you and your company.



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