

How to Avoid Fatal Voice Mail Mistakes

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Marketing and selling by phone can be the most successful and cost-effective way to connect with customers. But ending up in voice mail is one roadblock that can discourage even the most optimistic telephone professional. It can really be frustrating.

Day after day, making call after call after call only to end up in voice mail. And often you don't get a call back after leaving your message.

But you CAN get your call returned by avoiding the seven biggest voice mail mistakes.

1.) Leaving only a name and number for a call back.

Some may think that not leaving a company name is an attention getter. But if the prospect returns the call and realizes it is a salesperson trying to sell something, this tactic will leave a negative impression. When leaving a message on voice mail, be sure it offers a hint of a benefit/result that sparks curiosity, but does not talk about your products or services.

2.) Saying "I'm calling to introduce myself."

They don't care and don't have time to be introduced to every Mary, Kevin and Harry who calls.

3.) Making the call all about YOUR products and services.

Self-serving voice mail messages do not work. Prospects want to hear how they may benefit by calling you back.

4.) Leaving a message lasting longer than 30 seconds.

Most busy executives will listen only to the first two sentences before they erase you. They have their finger hovering over the delete key as they listen to voice mail messages.

5.) Using filler words like "um" and "uh."

In addition to sounding unprofessional, filler words detract from your message.

6.) Making a call without a written plan for what you will say if you reach voice mail.

A little preparation can lead to being heard and getting results. You dramatically increase the likelihood that your calls will get returned when you leave a concise, rehearsed message with a bright and energetic voice.

Think about the point you want to make and write a few key words. Limit the points to one or two per message.

ONE CRITICALLY FATAL VOICE MAIL MISTAKE

The voice mail message I received last week started out to be pretty good. The caller stated her name and company name. Then she went on to talk about a letter she had sent - and said she was following up on the letter. The message was long and I kept listening because I thought I might be interested in the product she was calling about.

Then she made that one critically fatal voice mail mistake.

She did not leave her telephone number until the very end of the message - and she said it very quickly. Just once. Her extension number was nearly inaudible.

DON'T GET DELETED

The best way to actually get a call back (and not annoy the person you are calling) is to clearly state your telephone number right after your name and company name at the beginning of your message.

Then leave a brief message and . . .
. . . at the end of your message, state your telephone number and extension number again - clearly.

When making a telephone call, be prepared to deal with voice mail. Show that you've put some advance thought and research into your call. That alone will make you stand out from 98 percent of all callers. Most busy executives will listen only to the first two sentences before they erase you.

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