



7 Vital Things To Remember When Leaving Messages On The Phone

So many of us now lead such busy, time-pressured, on-the-move lives, that the once unusual need to talk to message machines, answer-phones and voice-mail has now become an increasingly essential part of most peoples day. Despite this, the quality of messages often leaves a lot to be desired, and in some cases can generate for the recipient a whole heap of frustration and misunderstanding

So... here are a few tips on how to best use the technology, to get maximum effectiveness from leaving a message.

1. Leave Your Number - Always!

Most of us will naturally enough leave our name on the message.... but many people, especially close associates, friends or family, chose not to leave their number. This probably based on the logic that:

- "They should have it"
- "They ought to know it - I ring often enough"
- "They'll think I'm treating them as unorganised or stupid..." etc etc.

There are some drawbacks to these perspectives:

- the person may not be into memorising numbers as much as we are
- we may not, in fact, be as important to that person as we think we are!
- Even if they DO have our number, they now have to drop everything to find their address book, or to change screens and look it up in the database....

All these things take time, and are avoidable minor annoyances. Giving our number makes it easy for the other person to call us back... which is what we want them to do. So please do it... especially if you ever call me!

2. Speak Slowly And Clearly

How many times have you played the message to hear an indistinct "Hi, this is John For???????? and my number is 83?-??46?" (really fast)"... and you've had to rewind and listen again and again to try and decipher the key words, and key number. Yes?

Please remember that whilst our name and number may be old hat to us.... it's brand new and unknown to our listener. So speak clearly when enunciating your name, spell it if it's unusual... and speak the number slowly enough for someone to be able to write it down. I prefer to say it twice, as a sign of helpfulness and respect for the person listening.



3. Say What Time You've Called

As you end the brief message, let the person know at about what time and day you're calling. Many people are away for several days, and come back to a whole heap of messages, with no idea which day or week they arrived. "Its about ¼ to 3 on Friday afternoon" is very helpful to the listener, and again shows a professional attitude and an awareness of the likely needs of the listener.

4. Say When Will Be A Good Time To Call You Back

Again, if telephone tag is being a problem, indicate when you're likely to be around to receive a call back. "I'll be in most of tomorrow, or this evening after 6" is useful information.

5. Keep It Short and Sweet

Resist the temptation to have a one-sided conversation on the phone with the answer machine or voice-mail. "Just ringing to get your feedback on the proposal" is sufficient, but does indicate the general area so when replying, the listener can begin prepared with the right files etc.

6. Be Bright and Friendly

A positive, cheerful voice helps to encourage a reply.... the opposite does not! Smile as you speak and, if you want to really sound dynamic and professional.... stand up whilst you speak. It works!

7. You're Not Talking To A Machine

Remember that you are, in fact, talking to the person on the other end of the line... even if a tape recorder is recording the message. The awkwardness of "talking to a machine" is getting less and less these days, but it helps to stay focussed on the other person and the information and not so conscious of self

In conclusion....

Every day you'll have plenty of opportunities to practice all these things. Decide to get good at them, and every message you leave will work as another excellent advertisement for who you are and what you represent!