

Creating a Great Caller Experience . . . A Walk Through Your “Phone Door”

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How many business owners or managers call their own company to truly evaluate the overall caller experience? The fact is very few. The reality is that part of the customer experience is not only how patrons are greeted at the front door but the “phone door” as well. Everyone knows the cliché “You never get a second chance to make a first impression,” however it is the absolute truth. How do your employees answer the phone? What about your auto attendant and voice mail greetings? Are they up to date, professional, concise, and inviting? What do callers hear when placed on hold? A local radio station...Dead air? Ninety-Four percent of marketing budgets are spent on enticing consumers to call but only 6% on handling that call. If you have never addressed the situation, chances are it could use improvement. The good news is with a little planning and the right training you can create a great “phone door” for your patrons.

TOP 5 TIPS TO ENHANCE THE CALLER EXPERIENCE

5. THREE RINGS

Make sure your main phone lines are answered in three rings or less. Whether you have a live receptionist or an automated attendant, it shows your company is ready to quickly attend to the caller’s needs.

4. STAY POSITIVE AND REMAIN CONSISTENT

Train your receptionist and employees to answer each and every call in an upbeat, enthusiastic, and consistent manner. It is not always what you say but how you say it that sets the tone. A friendly cheerful tone lets the caller know you are happy they called, are interested in helping, and love your job. Remember, enthusiasm is contagious. A professionally produced auto attendant greeting will ensure the call is answered professionally and consistently each and every time.

3. THE NAME GAME

Research shows that customers respond favorably when they hear their name. It establishes an immediate connection. Employees should answer not only with the company name and introduce themselves, but make sure they use the caller’s name during the conversation.

For example:

Receptionist: “Thank you for calling the XYZ Company, this is Bill how may I direct your call?”

Caller: “This is Mary Johnson, and I am calling about the TV you have on sale.”

Receptionist: “Absolutely Mary, may I let you speak with a sales associate? They’ll be glad to answer all your questions? Thanks again for calling XYZ, I’ll transfer you now.” By using the caller’s name it lets them know you will treat them like a real person, not just a number.

2. NEVER PLACE YOUR CALL ON “IGNORE”

It's important to be aware of what your callers hear while on hold. Silence is not golden; it makes callers feel ignored. Seconds feel like minutes and minutes like hours. Don't frustrate callers with dead air or advertise for other companies by playing a radio on hold. Entertain and inform your callers with music that reflects your brand and the overall image of your company. Even better, add professionally written and produced messages that educate and inform the listener.

1. GOOD GREETINGS, GOOD BUSINESS

Most businesses use voice mail systems to efficiently handle calls. The manner in which your employees manage their outgoing greeting can leave a lasting impression. It's important to be proactive. How many times have you heard a voice mail that someone is on vacation and will return March 7th? Well guess what, today is March 9th and they forgot to change their greeting. It's unprofessional and leaves the impression that the call is not important.

Here's a typical voice mail greeting: *“You have reached George Jones. I am either on the phone or away from my desk. Please leave your name, number, and a message, and I will return your call as soon as possible.”* It may sound okay at first glance, but does the caller really care that you are on the other line or away from your desk? Probably not. Don't waste their time with unnecessary information. Keep it short, and let the caller know what to expect.

Try this, *“Hello, you have reached George Jones at extension 305. Your call is very important to me, so please leave your name, number, and a detailed message. I will return your call within 24 hours. Thank you again for calling The XYZ Company.”*

This greeting concisely accomplishes a clear objective. You assured the caller that they are important, reinforced your name and the company name, gave the caller your extension, and most importantly, let them know when they can expect a return call.

For more information on creating great caller experiences, visit www.onholdbusiness.com or call 800.584.4653, ext. 382. We are here to help.



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