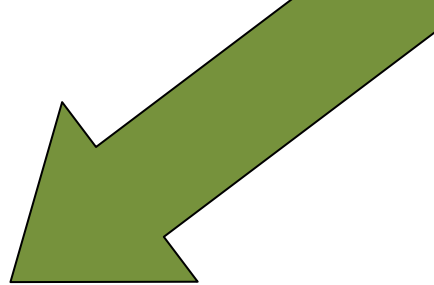
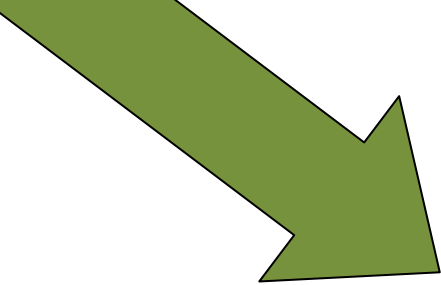


The page features a decorative graphic consisting of three overlapping blue circles of varying sizes, arranged in a diagonal line from the top right towards the bottom right. Two thin blue lines intersect at the top left, forming a large 'V' shape that frames the circles. The circles are composed of concentric layers of different shades of blue, creating a 3D effect.

The 10 most common mistakes business owners make with voice mail and on hold

Free Report

Carlos Garcia
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Things to avoid when setting up your office voice mail and on-hold message

In today's high-tech world of instant messaging, email and video conferencing, believe it or not, most customer interaction with your company still happens on the phone! Customers calling in for order status, scheduling, follow ups and more all face the possibility of being greeted by a pre-recorded voice greeting or being put on hold while they wait to speak with a representative. What callers hear is paramount to your business' success.

Industry expert Carlos Garcia, owner and founder of **Please Hold Advertising, Inc**, shares crucial insights to help you get the most out of your phone.

"In my over 20 years of working with customers I have noticed all too often two key components of customer interaction are overlooked - the voice mail greeting and what callers hear when put on hold."

In a perfect world we would be able to answer every call to our company in person and give that caller our undivided attention. But, , this is not always possible. Many factors prevent us from giving the ideal customer interaction on the phone including such things as: an unexpected wave of inbound calls, not enough customer service reps to handle calls, long winded customers with lots of questions, peak call times and many other reasons. This inevitably pushes callers into a voice mail system or forces us to put people on hold until we are able to attend to them personally. No one is immune from having to interact with a pre-recorded phone messages or the dreaded hold button.



Your phone is a key component in establishing credibility.



Mistake #1 - Using a radio on hold - Letting your competitors hi-jack your customer on hold.

Yes, they still play music on the radio, but they also run a lot more radio commercials to make up for lost revenue because of streaming music apps. In the beginning days of Please Hold I was cold calling my favorite BBQ restaurant, Shorty's BBQ. While waiting on hold to speak with the manager, I found myself listening to a radio commercial for Tony Roma's Rib restaurant, Shorty's competitor, with a location only a mile away. When the manager finally picked up my line, I asked him if Tony Roma's was paying him to advertise to his customers on hold. Long story short, Shorty's BBQ restaurants have been customers for over 20 years now.

88% of callers prefer on hold messages versus dead silence or radio, source Telemarketing Magazine.

Mistake #2: Recording your voice mail using the speakerphone function with a lot of office background noise

Calling a business and getting a voicemail greeting that sounds like it was recorded in a gym with people talking and cell phones ringing in the background makes your company look and sound unprofessional. Or worse, hearing a dog barking or baby crying in the background. I once asked a prospective customer if that was a German Shepherd or Golden Retriever that I heard on her voicemail. Turns out it was a Labrador Retriever. Oh, well, at least I was close.

Mistake #3: Listing every employee on one long office directory recording.

Forcing callers to wade through a laundry list of pre-recorded names with directory extension is just wrong! We've all heard it before; "You may dial the extension of the person at anytime during this message. For Sally Allison dial extension 101, Maria Bravo dial extension 102, for David Chapman dial extension 103", so on and so on. You have to feel sorry for the poor soul who needs to talk with Marc Zaingood at extension 129. May I recommend using the Automated Directory function of your phone system. This is much quicker for your callers to

find the desired person to speak with and is much easier to manage if a new person is hired or someone is fired.

Mistake #4 - Using the factory default greeting on your mobile; “You have reached 305-555-1234. Please leave a message after the tone.” Unless you are intentionally avoiding people or are in the federal witness protection program, for heaven’s sake, record something with your name or company name to let callers know that they have reached the right number. [Get some great mobile phone greeting ideas on this link.](#) This default mobile greeting is to be avoided at all cost!

Mistake #5: Making the Auto attendant/AA greeting too long.

I have seen businesses get carried away with a very long AA greeting that includes ten different department options and a labyrinth of sub mailboxes. It’s almost as if they intentionally want to avoid talking with customers.

News flash. 70% of callers will opt to press 0 to speak with the operator or receptionist. A voice mail greeting with every department may sound like an efficient way to process calls, but you run the risk of making your business sound like it doesn’t care about its customers.

Mistake #6: Making the “0” for operator choice and invalid option

This is a great way to make your caller’s blood pressure hit the roof. Just imagine how upsetting it is to force your caller to select one of the many department options when all they want to do is to speak to a human being. Then when they press 0 expecting to speak to someone right away, they are greeted with “*that is an invalid option*”, then are forced back up to the very top of the voice mail funnel all over again. I must say personally, this is one of the most frustrating voicemail situations I face when calling companies. This is common practice if you are calling the IRS or other local, state or federal government agencies. It should not be how you treat callers in your business.

Mistake #7: Forgetting to re-record your voice mail after returning from holiday.

“This is Bill Jones for XYZ Mega Corp. I will be out of the office on holiday from December 22 and will return January 5. Please leave a message after the tone. . .”

Forgetting to update this a day or two after you return is excusable, but letting it run well into February is not. Put a reminder on your phone to help you avoid this embarrassing situation.

Mistake #8: Letting your voice mailbox get full

“I’m sorry, but the user’s mailbox is full and cannot take messages at this time. Good bye.” This demonstrates a lack of organization and responsibility on the part of the person I am trying to reach. Make it a habit to delete unneeded voice mail messages from your mailbox on a regular basis to free up space. This will help you avoid this embarrassing and unprofessional situation.

Mistake #9: Using unclear music in the background of your greeting

“I’ve got a great idea, let’s put some music in the background using a boom box while Victoria records the greeting that I wrote down on this napkin after happy hour last Friday.” I actually had a situation just like this with the owner of a small personal training outfit once. In most, if not all cases you should not record a background music bed with your voicemail greeting unless it’s professionally recorded in a recording studio with a professional voice over talent. Otherwise it makes your company sound cheesy, cheap and small.

Mistake #10: Sounding nervous or stressed on your greeting.

“This is Mark Jones err, I’m not here right now, uhhh, leave a message with your phone number, oh err and I’ll call you back. (then sounds of Mark fumbling around to find the stop recording button.) Step away from the phone, count to 10 and re-record your greeting like you mean it! If you can’t, then get someone else to record it for you.

Need some help with tuning up the sound of your phone system? Call me to schedule a personal phone call to discuss how to improve your company phone image.

Carlos Garcia,
President and Founder

Please **Hold** 

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