

I Left a Voice Mail - Why Don't They Call Me Back?

AND WHAT YOU NEED TO **STOP** DOING

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Have you heard yourself saying, "I am so sick of making calls, leaving voice mails, and not getting anyone to return my phone calls!" Have you ever found yourself wondering, "Why don't they call me back? Am I being avoided? Am I being too PUSHY?"

Let's face it, voicemail goes lock and step with follow up. Perhaps when follow up is even mentioned you think to yourself, "Follow up... all I can think of is all of the customers I can't get a hold of... or those I need to reach out to again but don't... or all those follow up failures from last year... how can I get back on track?" If you find yourself going there mentally with your self-talk, you are far from alone. Notice when your-self-talk is centered on you and not in a helpful way. These are comments I typically hear during my interactive direct sales training / small group or coaching sessions. Yet those who excel and master direct sales typically master follow up. They find their way, and so can you.

Reaching out to your customers on a regular basis is simply a good practice. Befriending the phone is one of the best ways to build your business and master your conversational skills to develop relationships.

Equally important in deciding who to call, what to say, and when, is to put yourself in the right frame of mind and manage your expectations for reasonable results. In the absence of preparation, your sessions might feel tedious, painful, and unproductive, much like having a tooth pulled. Until I wrapped my

head around how my phone calls were landing and began to see each call as an opportunity to WOW my customers with my standard of dedication to service, the phone to me was King Kong: heavy and intimidating.

Most direct sales professionals do not keep enough regular contact with their customers or clients. This action is a way to set you apart. Your level of service is how you ultimately distinguish yourself between you and fellow entrepreneurs, sales professionals, and direct sellers.

The phone has changed.

Then



Now



People used to answer the phone. Not today!

It is said that upwards of 85 percent of outbound phone calls go to voicemail today. This means that if you find yourself expecting to receive a return call, as if you were calling a friend, you will end up routinely disappointed. It is important to understand this up front, as failure to do so can result in a vicious cycle of feeling defeated, consequently derailing your desire to enthusiastically make phoning a regular part of your business practice. Unless you reframe it, it is as if you are pursuing a painful tooth-pulling experience with phone follow-up.

Here is what you need to STOP doing to get over the "Why Don't They Call Me Back" syndrome:

1. STOP EXPECTING THE RETURN PHONE CALL.

This means that if you do get one, you can be pleasantly surprised. Overall, however, people today do not return calls as they used to. If you are calling someone who works in corporate America, many times it is not until the end of the day that they are able to check their voicemail. I remember working in a corporate role where the volume of meetings, tasks, and ad hoc items prevented a steady attention to my phone.

2. STOP ASKING THEM TO RETURN YOUR CALL.

Make it a point to call them again. When you leave a message that asks someone to return your call, you have inadvertently just made yourself an item on their already overflowing TO DO LIST. Reaching the contact is your



responsibility and your priority. Yes, leave your phone number as a courtesy; however, let your contact know that you will try to reach them again. When you do this, be sure to state when you will try back, along with a short, compelling reason as to why you wish to speak. It could be that you have exciting news to share about what is being offered this month or to update them on a new product release. Do not use this airtime to try to sell, book, or recruit. Indicate if the reason you are calling is time-sensitive, and give your deadline. (I need to touch base with you by Thursday...)

3. STOP CALLING AND NOT LEAVING ANY MESSAGE.

Today in our technologically tethered world, if you dial a number and hang up without leaving a message, there is a good chance the person can identify your number. This person might be screening their calls or sitting next to their phone and is using voicemail for the peace of

some uninterrupted work time. Regardless of their reason for not picking up, make it your practice to always leave a brief, motivating message indicating you have something of value or newsworthy to offer.

4. STOP WONDERING IF YOU ARE BEING A PEST.

Most of the time people will respect you for providing great customer care. If you have left several voice messages and wonder if they

appreciate your efforts, give the recipient an opportunity to 'opt out.' This exit strategy yields the strongest response. If you don't hear back, let some time and space go by before your next attempt.

5. STOP FEELING BAD ABOUT CALLING AGAIN.

Use permission-based phone follow up. Always end each interaction with your prospect by saying, "May I contact you again when there is something new?"

Each time your customer or prospect hears your voice directly; you are re-positioning yourself at the top of their mind and delivering a memorable standard of personal service. When you remain at the top of their mind, your chances of meeting your customer's needs and wants will increase. These service-minded habits will help you develop a mutually beneficial relationship where your contacts prioritize reaching you when they are ready!

When you STOP making these five common telephone traps, you will START to realize that your best opportunities are within your control. ♦

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Barb Girson (ACC), president of MySalesTactics, helps companies, teams & entrepreneurs gain confidence, get into action, & most importantly... grow sales. Need a speaker for your next event?

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