

Top Ten Tips for Choosing the Right Answering Service

Compare service and expertise; an answering service has the potential to take your business to the next level or have a negative impact

- 1) **In-depth training in the multiple sectors.** Ask about the training processes the staff goes through. Ensure that your answering service understands these needs and that their entire team can appropriately handle complex calls. A formalized training program will ensure that your families are treated with dignity and respect.
- 2) **Solid understanding and appreciation of the companies they represent.** Does your answering service really understand your business? You know this is a demanding profession and so should your answering service. You assist families during one of the hardest times in their lives. Ensure your answering service understands this and is experienced in managing callers with varying emotions. An answering service well versed in terminology relevant to your profession can also be of great value.
- 3) **Experienced, seamless representation.** Your answering service should not say “We are the Answering Service” unless asked by the caller. The call should be a seamless representation of your business. Calls should be handled with the same level of care you would expect from your own staff. Ask how the company ensures that there is appropriate staffing to avoid long rings or hold times. Ask if the company participates in the ATSI & CAM-X Award of Excellence programs which evaluate calls and if they conduct in-house call monitoring. Always ask for references!
- 4) **Complete transparency; on-line access to all call recordings.** Your answering service should allow you to listen to every call to ensure they are meeting or exceeding your expectations. Complete transparency is a must and you need to be able to do this online to ensure that your high standards are being maintained. Additionally, the telephone operators know they are being recorded. This reminds them to *always* be top-notch.
- 5) **Customized solutions** to ensure operating under your exact instructions. Every business is different, and you need to ensure your answering service understands this. Do *not* accept a standardized message form for the information your answering service collects. Ensure that you get as much or as little information as you need. A customized script will ensure you get nothing less and nothing more. Your answering service should seem invisible to your families giving them the impression that it's part of your company.



- 6) [Website Integration](#) and state-of-the-art technology with the company in mind. Many answering service companies can integrate with your website or your Information Management System. Specialized answering services have access to many different software applications. Ask about other *features* tailored to your needs!
- 7) [Multiple back up measures](#) in place guaranteeing [operational 100% of the time](#). Ask about emergency planning. Ensure that your answering service has an Uninterrupted Power Supply (Battery backup), with an automatic transfer switch to an industrial sized generator. If the power goes out, it should not mean that your answering service is no longer taking calls for you, leaving your families stranded. Even worse, they may call the competitor down the street.
- 8) [Call Forward/No Answer and Call Forward/Busy](#) programmed on your line 24/7. These features are a must. Your calls can automatically divert to your Answering Service after a pre-determined ring or if all lines are being utilized. You never want a family in need to get a frustrating busy signal.
- 9) [Web Chat](#) allows for an alternate method for your families to connect with your company. Add a web chat button to your website so that your answering service can connect with new and existing customers in a quick, convenient manner. This type of service is being adapted globally and is gaining consumer acceptance at a rapid pace. Find out if your Answering Service can offer this service.
- 10) [On Call Updating](#) on the call answering service's website for your convenience. Why pay your answering service to update your on-call list when you can have your office staff do it for free? Find out if you can log in to your answering service account and update your on-call list or make changes online.

