

HOW TO MAXIMIZE RESPONSE RATES FROM SALES VOICEMAILS



Maximizing Sales Performance

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01

3 REASONS WHY VOICEMAILS ARE STILL SO IMPORTANT

One of the most common questions we hear sales reps ask is whether or not leaving voicemails for prospects is a complete waste of time. It's true that since the advent of email and unlimited texting, it has become more difficult to get calls back from voicemail messages. *Harvard Business Review* (HBR) predicts that text messaging among business people aged 40-50 will triple in 2014, while according to a Vonage study, retrieved voicemails have fallen 14%. But does that mean that sales reps should abandon their voicemail strategy completely?

Far from it! Here's why voicemails are still vital:

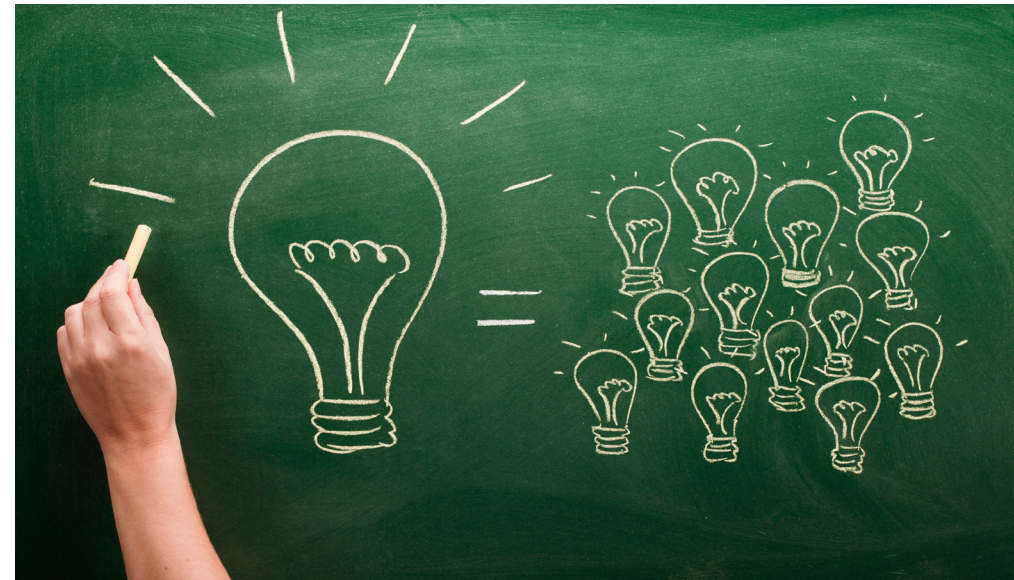
Voicemails Humanize Your Company and Demonstrate Professionalism

The mere act of listening to a rep's voicemail can be powerful. Hearing the voice of an intelligent and friendly sales rep can be the best way to make your company likable. Things like price and value propositions are important, but they are often less powerful than branding, which is exactly what you're doing when you leave a voicemail.

Therefore, the goal of every voicemail shouldn't simply be to get a call-back. It should also be to position your company as the sort that your prospects would like to do business with. Whether or not prospects actually call back, a great voicemail message can familiarize them with your brand, build rapport and subtly nudge them toward a buying decision. Because of this branding opportunity alone, voicemails are still as relevant as ever.

Voicemails Also Trigger Online Responses and Other Engagement

One of the most important things to remember is that voicemails should be just one component of a greater sales communication strategy. Sure, not all prospects are going to call you back. But there are a lot of prospects who will respond in other ways. It's common for prospects to hear a voicemail and then follow up through email or text messaging. Following up voicemails with emails gives prospects options for how they'd like to respond. And in this age of self-educating consumers, simply hearing about your company could easily inspire prospects to download eBooks, reach out through social media, engage with your company's blog and other actions that lead to purchases.



“More than 70% of sales calls go to voicemail, which is precisely why optimization is so important. Paired with the added speed that voicemail automation provides, even incremental gains in response rates across an entire team are incredibly valuable.”

Howard Brown
Founder & CEO
RingDNA



With the Right Strategy, You're Still Going to Get More Responses

If you do the things suggested by the experts in this book, you'll not only reap the benefits of what we've discussed earlier, but also get more responses. The following guide will give you a starting point for optimizing voicemails. We'll tell you the top reasons that prospects aren't responding. Then we'll discuss the ideal length of a voicemail and reveal some of the most important things that should (and should never) be said in voicemail messages.

Remember that voicemail optimization is an ongoing process. To that end, we'll show you the best ways to benchmark the success of your voicemails, while maximizing the chances that your prospects will call or email you back.

SECTION

02

THE TOP 5 REASONS PROSPECTS AREN'T GETTING BACK TO YOU

If you're reading this eBook, we'll assume that you're not getting as many responses from voicemails as you'd like. If so, don't worry. The first step on the road to optimization is identifying exactly why prospects aren't calling or emailing you back. Based on our experience, here are the top five reasons we've found that customers don't return voicemails.

Fear of the Unknown

From the time that we're young, we're taught to be wary of strangers. When prospects receive a voicemail from a rep they've never heard of working for a company they are unfamiliar with, that voicemail will likely be written-off as an annoyance. It's therefore a sales rep's duty to quickly establish rapport with a prospect.

There are a few ways to do this. One of the best ways is using a referral. If you mention that you've done business with someone they know or a company they admire, it can go a long way. If you don't have a credible referral source, don't worry. You can also establish rapport by sending an email in advance of your voicemail. This email will hopefully familiarize your prospect with your name and company. And, at very least, it will enable you to say in your voicemails that you're following up, so it doesn't sound like a cold call. Finally, another way to generate higher response rates is to prioritize prospects who have already interacted with your company's marketing content. If a prospect is already familiar with your company's blogs and ebooks, she'll be far more prepared to have a serious sales conversation.

“Engage prospects in a conversation by getting them to ask ‘How do you do that?’ One way to do this is by using verbs to describe the outcome of being your customer instead of using nouns to describe your product and its features or benefits.

Craig Elias
Author of SHiFT
shiftselling.com



Your Voicemails are Too Long

If your voicemails are longer than 15-30 seconds, then they are just too long. By and large, your prospects don't have time to listen to a verbose voicemail message. Keeping voicemails short and to-the-point shows your prospects that you respect their time. Your company's value proposition is almost certainly too long to be condensed into a 30-second voicemail. Instead, focus on introducing yourself and building a relationship with your prospect that will hopefully be continued in the near future.

You Sound Too Salesy

Perhaps the biggest mistake many sales reps make during a voicemail is trying to sell their products. Reps often try to sell over voicemail, but a voicemail is just not the right venue for a sales conversation. Focus on sounding friendly and knowledgeable, remembering that your prospects have an excellent radar for sales-speak. If you sound too salesy, a prospect is going to delete your voicemail faster than you can say “lowest price guaranteed.”

You Sound Bored/Boring

Do you want your prospects to be excited to get back to you? Well then you better sound exciting! A trait shared by many unsuccessful inside sales reps is a lack of energy. But the best inside sales reps virtually all sound excited when they speak to customers. Remember, the idea is for your prospects to want to talk to you. Start thinking of the kind of person you would want to talk to. What type of tonality would inspire you to respond to a salesperson? Try to mimic that tonality when speaking to prospects.

Your Voicemails Aren't Distinct

If your message is the same as every other sales voicemail your prospects have ever heard, you're probably not going to get very many responses. But if you can sound engaging while differentiating yourself from the rest of the pack, your phone is going to be lighting up far more often.

We spoke with Craig Elias, a top sales trainer, about how to get more responses from voicemails. According to Craig, “Engage prospects in a conversation by getting them to ask ‘How do you do that?’ One way to do this is by using verbs to describe the outcome of being your customer instead of using nouns to describe your product and its features or benefits. Use these verb-based questions on those who recently experienced a Trigger Event, and are now dissatisfied with their existing solution. You'll be amazed at how much easier it is to get a response. Two examples of this would be asking a new Chief Financial Officer if they are interested in learning how to eliminate inventory write-downs, or asking a new VP of Sales if they would like preferred vendor status in a highly competitive market.”

Later in this eBook, we'll show you some more ways that you can leave voicemails that really stand out.

SECTION

03

5 SECRETS TO LEAVING THE PERFECT VOICEMAIL

TOP SECRET

Always Refer to Prospects by Their First Names

You might think that using a prospect's full name sounds more professional. But when prospects hear their last name used, it sets off an alarm that the person calling doesn't actually know them. And we already covered that distrust for the unknown is one of the biggest reasons prospects don't respond. Instead, we recommend always using your prospect's first name. This demonstrates familiarity. You can try using their first names twice in each voicemail greeting.

Choose the Perfect Tone by Profiling Prospects

As we mentioned, having the right tonality in your voice can help inspire a prospect to respond to you. However, you might choose to adjust your tonality slightly depending on your prospect. A marketer in his mid 20s might respond best to a more casual voicemail, while a CEO in her mid 50s might respond best to a tone of voice (and choice of language) that's more professional-sounding. When possible, check out a prospect's photograph on LinkedIn. Then, when leaving a voicemail, imagine that you are having an in-person meeting with the individual you saw in the photograph. Developing the right intuition for tonality can be a priceless skill for inside sales reps to acquire.

Stand Out

If you're starting your voicemails by saying "Hi this is [name] from [company]," be advised that nearly every sales rep from every company begins voicemails exactly the same way. Why be grouped with all of *them*? Instead, try to find a way to stand out and sound unique. One way to do this is to sound more intelligent than other reps. You can do this by mentioning some applicable fact-based research. Another way is to mention a mutual

connection, if one exists. Some sales reps have even found success using (professional) humor in voicemails.

We spoke with Robert Minskoff, Founder of Minskoff Growth Strategies, who developed a method that has helped him get far more responses. “Because leaving a voicemail, with the hope of a return call, for a busy, hard-to-reach prospect can be one of the most difficult tasks in a B2B environment, I utilize the SHaRP method. S - Short and to the point. H - Humor, keep a sense of it. R - Reference a professional or personal name to drop which will help get your voicemail to the top of the list. P - Persistence: only those that keep trying will have success.”

Make it Easy for Prospects to Respond

We recommend that you make it as easy as possible for prospects to respond. Leave your call-back number twice in a voicemail message. Also, remember that it can be confusing for prospects if you ask them to call you back at a number that is different from the one that appears in their caller ID. For example, if you dial a prospect from your mobile phone, don't ask them to call you back at work. Or if you give your email address in a voicemail message, it should ideally be short and easy to spell. Spelling out a long email address over a voicemail will probably result in a voicemail that's too long.

Also, never tell a prospect to call you back at a certain time. If a prospect is busy at that time, it gives them an excuse to opt out. Whether you are available to talk all day or not, it's best to let your prospects think they have the option of responding at any time that's convenient for them.

Be Tenacious

We've found that telling prospects you plan to call them back makes it harder for them to dismiss you. Often times, if they are interested in your offerings, they'll simply take the initiative and respond to you rather than waiting for you to call again. It can also be good to follow up voicemails with an email message. Some prospects prefer to send emails, so it's good to give them both options.

If a prospect just doesn't respond, don't be afraid to try again. It often takes several tries to get a hold of a prospect. Tenacity has been proven to pay off. Your prospects, by and large, don't mind repeat attempts. According to a study by PossibleNOW, 3 out of 4 respondents were happy to receive between 2-4 sales calls in a 30-day period. And when you do leave a follow-up voicemail, don't mention previous failed attempts. Instead, focus on delivering your message and building rapport with your prospect.

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Robert Minskoff
Founder of Minskoff Growth Strategies
minskoffgrowthstrategies.com



SECTION

04

THE BEST AND WORST TIMES TO LEAVE VOICEMAIL MESSAGES

In order to get prospects to respond to you, you need to call them at optimal times. The same times that are best for getting prospects to pick up their phones are also the best times to leave voicemails. Remember that if you're selling nationally (or internationally) it's vital to take advantage of time zones to optimize prospecting time.

The Best Times to Leave Voicemails

In B2B sales, one of the top goals is getting a key decision maker on the line. According to an MIT Lead Response Management study, 4-6 pm is the best time to contact a lead. This makes sense because a lot of key decision makers work late. During the later portion of their day, they may have more time available to have a sales discussion. The same study reveals that the best days to call prospects are Wednesdays and Thursdays. While the Lead Management Study reveals that 8-9 am is a good calling window for qualifying leads, if your specific goal is to leave a voicemail, you might want to call earlier so your prospect sees your voicemail first thing in the morning when they get in.

Best times

6:45-9:00a Wednesday, Thursday
4:00-6:00p Wednesday, Thursday

The Worst Times to Leave Voicemails

MIT's research showed that calling on Mondays and Fridays were the worst days for getting responses. If you dial a prospect on Monday, they are likely going to be too busy to have a sales conversation. Let them settle into their week before dialing them. On Friday, your prospects are probably trying to close out the week's tasks and may not be interested in engaging in a new sales discussion.

Worst Times

6:00a-12:00p Monday
12:00p-6:00p Friday
Nights
Weekends

SECTION

05

ADVANCED VOICEMAIL TACTICS

For companies that are serious about voicemail optimization, here are a couple advanced tactics that can help you garner more responses from prospects than ever before.

Use Voicemail Automation Software

We know that many inside sales reps complain about having to leave voicemails. We get it. Leaving voicemails can be time-consuming, especially in industries where reps dial a lot of leads every day.

According to one study from the Keller Center of Research at Baylor University, sales reps left an average of 150 voicemails in a day. At 30 seconds each, you're looking at 25 hours in a month spent just leaving voicemails. And if your team has 10 sales reps, that's 250 hours in a month just leaving voicemails. It's easy to view this as wasted time. Yet, as we've argued, voicemails should still be a critical component of any inside sales strategy. A fantastic way to receive the benefits of leaving voicemails for prospects without hindering sales productivity is by using a voicemail automation tool.

RingDNA's voicemail automation solution enables inside sales reps to prerecord various voicemail greetings. Then, the moment a call goes to voicemail, reps simply select a voicemail greeting from their library and leave a perfectly recorded voicemail with one click.

Reps are then free to move onto their next call without spending any time leaving voicemails. The more prospects reps dial, the more opportunities there are to get responses. In particular, companies that dial a lot of leads in a day can have dramatic increases in sales productivity by using voicemail automation.

A/B Test Voicemail Greetings

For years, marketers have been using A/B testing to optimize landing pages. The same basic strategy can help inside sales reps optimize voicemail greetings. Try dialing 200 prospects using one greeting and then another 200 prospects using a different one. Measure which message gets more responses. If a particular voicemail is getting more responses, it can help sales reps identify voicemail best practices.

ringDNA

Maximizing Sales Performance

RingDNA maximizes inside sales performance by helping the sales teams qualify, connect with and convert more customers. RingDNA is the only revenue acceleration platform created specifically for the specialty roles that exist in today's inside sales teams.

- Outbound sales teams make more calls to the best leads
- Inbound sales teams optimize incoming call conversions
- Marketers discover which campaigns drive the most valuable calls

RingDNA is the only inside sales & marketing platform made 100% for Salesforce customers by Salesforce experts, providing the industry's best and easiest CRM integration.

[Start a Free Trial](#)

[Get a Demo Today](#)

Find us on the [Salesforce AppExchange](#)

Call us: 866.513.5862

yes - this is a
call tracking number!

Email us: sales@RingDNA.com

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