

In Sales, Don't Overlook The Importance of Voicemail

By Bob Hatcher, BetterSell Solutions

"Please leave a message..."

As sales and business development professionals, we leave a lot of voicemails in our pursuit to drive revenue and build client relationships. When leaving voicemails for prospects or clients, you can dramatically increase your call back rate by adjusting your message to your client's perspective instead of your own.

One of the most common mistakes people make when leaving messages for prospects is talking too much about themselves and their company. Nobody really cares what you're selling until they realize that you can help them with a problem. You should know that your prospect is probably asking themselves "Why should I listen to this?" when they listen to your message. If you leave them asking themselves "So what, how does this help me?" you are in big trouble.

An effective way to craft a compelling reason for your client or prospect to call you back is to consider your reason for calling in the first place. I.e., you need to prepare for the call. Ask yourself, am I calling to just say hello and maintain a personal connection, or do you have a compelling reason why this person would want to talk to you. You need to think about the value of what you have to say and how the information will make a difference to this person. This is your "Valid Business Reason", or VBR, for making the call. Effective VBRs are not only the key to getting return phone calls, but also the key to your initial sales call.

The VBR answers the critical question, "what's in it for me?" You know, the one radio station everyone listens to? WIIFN? If you don't have an answer for that you're wasting your prospect's time, and yours. So, think about it carefully, because without it, you're dead.

The person you are calling is as busy as you are, so messages longer than 30 seconds will decrease your chance of a call-back right off the bat. Being concise is key. Selecting what information to include in that brief message is what a VBR will help you accomplish.

Here are a few good rules in establishing your VBR:

1. How will what you're offering impact what your customer wants to accomplish?
2. After listening to your call, will they set the call as a high priority?
3. Be sure to include what's in it for them. Why should they care?
4. Keep it clear, concise, and compelling

An example of a good voicemail is:

“This is Jim Smith from ABC Company, 888-123-4567. I just found some research that provides some great statistics I believe would help support your efforts of getting budget approved for the S-series widget. Please call me when you get a minute, I'd like to discuss the key points that I think would be of interest to you. Again, this is Jim at 888-123-4567.”

Look at what we've done here. We've told the prospect that we understand their issues and we've offered to help them fix the problem. If someone called me with that I'd call them back. Wouldn't you?

Note also that we like to start the message with a name, company name, and phone number. The tendency of many recipients is to start writing down your information before they even know what you want. If you back that up with a solid VBR, and repeat your name and number at the end, you are much more likely to get a call back.

Remember, leaving voicemails is part of selling. Asking yourself why this call is important to this person will make a difference in moving the sale forward or losing it all together.

About Bob Hatcher, BetterSell Solutions

Bob is the CEO and Managing Director of BetterSell Solutions, a company dedicated to helping companies achieve sales and marketing excellence. In addition, BetterSell Solutions is a consulting partner for Miller Heiman, Inc. a global leader in building exceptional sales organizations. BetterSell Solutions helps organizations dramatically improve sales productivity through consistent, field-ready processes, benchmarking tools, development programs, and process consulting.

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