

Enticing Voicemail Messages

By Jill Konrath

Sick and tired of prospective customers never calling you back? Then it's time to take a good hard look at what you're doing - or not doing - that's creating these results for you.

Voicemail is a fact of life today. Whether you like it or not is irrelevant. And believe me, getting through to decision makers is only going to get worse. So if your livelihood depends on getting in to see these people, you better learn how to use it to your advantage.

First, let's take a look at the basic formula most sellers use in their voicemail messages:

- Hello, Mr/Ms __. This is __ calling.
- I'm an account executive with __ company.
- We make/do __.
- Our product/service is leading edge, high quality and __.
- I'd like to get together to learn more about how you do __.
- And tell you about how our __ can help your business.
- Please call me at __ to set up a time.

What's wrong with it? It's boring, boring, boring. No one in their right mind would ever waste one precious moment of their time to meet with a seller who said this.

Let me repeat myself. This approach does NOT work. I don't care if that's how you were trained. The world has changed. Even your own mother wouldn't call you back today - and that's pretty darn bad!

Most buyers from big companies are bombarded with more than 50 calls like this each and every day. Your message is "zapped" before the second sentence is out of your mouth.

HOW TO BE ENTICING

Being enticing is about saying or asking something in a manner that truly piques a prospective decision maker's interest or curiosity.

You have to put on your thinking cap too. There's no way around it. Enticing voicemails don't just flow out of your mouth when its time to leave a message. In fact, lack of planning is guaranteed to make you sound trite and cheesy - exactly like the kind of salesperson everyone detests.

Here are five strategies you can use to increase your enticement quotient:

1. Reference your Research

Do you know how few sellers actually invest time studying their clients before placing a call? Very few. You'll immediately set yourself apart if you mention it in your voicemail. You might say:

- "In researching your firm prior to calling you today, I noticed that ..."
- "In reviewing your company's website and marketing collateral, it became apparent to me that a critical issue you're facing is ..."
- "In studying your organization's strategic direction and comparing it to others in your market segment ..."

If you're not doing this pre-call research prior to contacting a big company, you're making a huge mistake. Dig in. Do it. What you learn can help make your voicemail even more enticing.

2. State a Strong Value Proposition

Powerful value propositions focus on the business outcomes companies get from using your products or services. Framed in business terminology, they highlight specific measurable results. Examples of enticing value propositions include:

- "In working with another firm like yours, we reduced space requirements by 10%, saving them over \$500k on lease payments and capital equipment reductions of over \$300,000."
- "We help shrink time-to-revenue on new product introductions - a big issue facing companies today. In fact, research into failed product launches shows that 70% of executives blame weak value propositions as a major factor in their poor sales results."
- "After working with our firm, our average retail clients see sales conversions increases of between 39-57% and their average order size increase by 13-18%."

Prospective customers are enticed by strong value propositions because they address critical business issues AND demonstrate significant value. To increase their effectiveness, mention that the results come from businesses like theirs - or even name-drop some prominent clients.

3. Share an Insightful Idea

Nothing is more tempting to future customers than an idea that can help them achieve their goals or solve their pressing problems. You have to do some pre-work to use this approach, but oooh, it is seductive. When you leave a voicemail, don't tell your customers everything. Only tell them enough to get them drooling to learn more.

To be enticing with a thought-provoking idea, you combine it with some facts you've gathered from your research of their business and your value proposition. Examples might be:

- "Over the past month, I've invested a great deal of time studying your website and what you're trying to accomplish with it. Based on my analysis, I have some interesting ideas regarding how you could leverage it to create additional revenue opportunities."
- "I've been following your firm closely for the past six months, since its merger with Beta Industries. After hearing about your recent round of lay-offs, I have some ideas that I'd like to share with you regarding how you can reduce the risks of potential legal action."

4. Dangle Important Information

Do you know something that your prospective clients don't? If so, let them know you have this lucrative information. What tempts prospective buyers? They're always interested in learning more about:

- Their customers
- Competitors
- Industry trends
- Visionary ideas.

If you have access to this knowledge, use it. One of my clients recently used this strategy to land appointments with hard to reach decision makers. Essentially, here's what they said:

"We recently conducted a study of how your customer's needs are changing relative to decisions on group life insurance. I'd like to set up a time to review some of the key points with you. I know people in your firm will be very interested in what we've uncovered."

5. Conclude with Confidence

Today's buyers won't waste time helping you learn about their business. Nor do they want to hear your product/service pitch. Enticing voicemail messages must end with strength, that customers will get immediate value if they meet with you. Several options that have proven to be effective include:

- "We should talk. The savings I'm talking about can drop right to your bottom line. Give me a call at 651-429-1922 and we'll set up a time to get together."
- "While I can't promise you the exact same results, I can assure you that it will be worth your time. My number is 651-429-1922. Give me a call and we'll set up a time to get

together."

- "If you'd like to find out how (big, well-known company in related industry) have utilized similar ideas to gain significant market share, you can reach me at 651-429-1922. I look forward to getting together.

Please notice how these closures demonstrate a quiet confidence and assuredness in the value of an appointment.

SUMMARY

Are you ready to be enticing? As you can see, it requires some serious thinking, a good understanding of your business case and the panache to pull it off as a professional.

While the strategies discussed don't ensure a callback, they will guarantee that you stand out from the crowd. Creating a series of these enticing messages enables you to penetrate your customer's natural defenses. When you do actually connect, getting an appointment should be the natural next step.

And, don't be too surprised if you pick up the phone some day and it's your prospective customer - begging to meet with you!

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Jill Konrath, author of *Selling to Big Companies*, helps sellers get their foot in the door of large corporations, create demand and win profitable contracts. Get a free *Sales Call Planning Guide* (\$19.95 value) when you sign up for the Selling to Big Companies e-newsletter. Just send an email with "subscribe" in the subject line to jill@sellingtobigcompanies.com. For more info, visit <http://www.SellingtoBigCompanies.com>.