

SALES EXCELLENCE

SALES EXCELLENCE EXPLORES THE BEST PRACTICES ON IMPROVING SALES EFFECTIVENESS BY IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

STAYING OUT OF VOICEMAIL JAIL!

THE EXECUTIVE GROUP

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VOICEMAIL JAIL

Do not take this basic sales principle for granted; leaving an effective voice mail is critical to your success or you just might wind up in *Voice Mail Jail!* Leaving the proper voice mail can mean the difference between returned calls or lost opportunities. There are different reasons and elements necessary to understand as it relates to leaving good voice mails. There are basically two purposes for leaving a voice mail in sales, one is to call as a way of introduction and hopefully secure an appointment (the prospecting side) and the other is to follow up either from a meeting or because they are already a client and you are trying to stay in front of the customer (the account management side).

It is important to remember that the sole purpose of voice mail is NOT to sell your products or services, it is to **get an appointment**. Obviously, a key point to remember is that you are selling yourself, but other than that your objective is to create interest, get them to call you back and motivate the prospect to grant you an appointment.

The example I use when I call a VP of Sales and Marketing is, "In my 20 years of doing business, I have found that 20-25% of an organization's sales force is underperforming and selling below quota". I always get the response, "Yes, and this is possibly light."

4 PRINCIPLES FOR LEAVING VOICE MAIL

There are 4 principles for leaving voice mail which are all centered on motivating the prospect to talk to you. You must provide:

To motivate your prospect, you must provide:

- ✓ Reasons worthy of calling back
- ✓ Possibilities of benefits for them (what's in it for me?)
- ✓ Something of value
- ✓ Proof of Performance: results and accomplishments

RULES OF THE ROAD

RULE #1: KNOW THE PERSON'S NAME AND TITLE

To avoid shooting yourself in the foot right from the start do not be guilty of ignorance. Before you make that call make sure you know the correct pronunciation of the name of the person you are calling. Make sure you know their correct title and position in the company as well. If you are not sure of either then place a call to the switchboard, secretary or admin to find out. Do not embarrass yourself by making your first call your last call.

RULE #2: SLOW DOWN!

This is not a race to see how many words you can get out of your mouth in 60 seconds or less. Yet time and time again I have received voice mails where I couldn't understand the person's name and had to play the recording back 3 times just to write down their number. The person on the other end shouldn't have to work at being able to get back to you. Make it easy for them to deal with you and the rest will fall in place.

RULE #3: CONTROL THE CONVERSATION AND YOU CONTROL THE PROCESS

Regardless of the reason for leaving a voicemail, keep in mind that you must maintain control of the communication and conversation. When you leave a voicemail, and you end the voicemail by giving them your number and asking them to return your call (and sometimes we even say something so ridiculous as "at your convenience"), you have just given up complete control of the sales process. You have put the control of calling you back in the hands of your prospect or client. **Don't hold your breath waiting for the return call.**

So how do you stay in control? My preference is to say, "Mr. Prospect, when you have a moment to return my call my number is xxx-xxx-xxxx, but due to the possibility that we'll wind up playing telephone tag, I will try calling tomorrow between 2 and 4 to see if you are available to talk."

You accomplish three things: 1) you take control of the process; 2) you show respect for their time; and 3) you show commitment to follow up.

Then when you do follow up, you confirm your sincerity and conscientiousness.