

Examples of Voice Mail Greetings for a Manager

By Alan Kaye

In addition to using the five Kaye magic points™ (see Tip Sheet 1) you may choose to add an 'opt out' sentence. If you do, it is important that this sentence tells callers exactly what choices are available to them. For instance, if you give the caller the choice of speaking to someone else you should include information about the likelihood of that person's availability. A good example is: "Press 0 to speak to (name) my secretary who MAY be available." Or, "Press 0 to be transferred to another member of staff in the department."

Whilst there are some example greetings below, it is best to take these ideas and use your own words to get across the message that suits your business. Be aware that voice mail used effectively is a time management tool and with so many ways to communicate today the objective is not to return every phone call.

On occasions it will be more effective for you to use another form of communication such as e-mail or to forward this message to a colleague's mailbox for them to deal with. Thus the use of keywords such as action or respond adds power to the greeting. Avoid saying, "I will phone you back". Remember you are seeking information from your callers that you can ACT upon. If the customer wants a return phone call, they will request this quickly enough! You don't need to encourage them!

For example, if your caller's message is, "Our fax machine jammed and I did not get your fax. I have now sorted it out so please re-send your fax", you want them to leave this information on the voice mail. Your action here is (obviously) to send the fax again. If you do this no return call is needed. It's that simple!

Example A

Example message for a Manager - the greeting should reflect that day's activities.

"Hello this is Fred Bloggs on November the first. I am out this morning but will be back at 2.30pm. Please leave me a detailed message as to the reason for your call and I will action it on my return. Alternatively if you press zero, Julie, my secretary *may* be available."

Key points

- You say 2.30pm knowing you intend to be back at one.
- You are letting callers know when you will access their message and giving yourself one and half hours to call back people who think their call is urgent but you don't.
- You are only saying Julie *may* be available.

- Do NOT say, "If your call is urgent press zero". This is because a phrase like this implies a promise that most of the time you will not be able to, nor want to, keep.

Example B

"Hello, this is Fred Bloggs on November the second. I am out of the office all day today in a series of meetings. However, I will be in all day tomorrow so please leave me a detailed message that I will action on my return. Or, if you prefer, press zero and leave a message for Julie to action."

Key points

- You are letting people know when you will be back in the office and most reasonable people will respond in a favourable way to a greeting such as this. Remember if they *do* need to, or prefer to, speak with you they may put the phone down without leaving a message, being quite happy to call you the following day. Information is power and one less call for Julie or your reception to handle!
- You are inviting them, if they press 0, to leave a message for Julie and if she is able to take the call then they consider this to be a bonus!

Example C

"Hello, this is Fred Bloggs on the afternoon of November the second. My plans have changed and I am now in the office for the rest of the day. However, if I am on the phone or in a short meeting, please leave details as to the reason for your call and be assured I will action it soon. Press zero if you would prefer to speak to Julie who *may* be available."

Key point

- There is nothing to stop you changing your greeting more than once a day! This is really no different to saying to your receptionist, "Something has come up. If anybody calls tell them..."

Example D

"Hello you are through to Fred Bloggs on November the fourth. I will be out of the office all day in a series of meetings but I will continue to access my mailbox on a regular basis. If you leave me a detailed message with the reason for your call I will ensure you receive a response within a couple of hours."

Your voice mail system can be accessed remotely from anywhere in the world. This means that you can listen to your voice mail any time you like allowing you to access your messages on a regular basis, not just when you return to the office. And, by making use of the *forward with a message* feature, you can delegate tasks to colleagues for action thus offering a quicker service to your customers. You can either ask a colleague to deal with the matter directly, "Julie, please e-mail this person the account application form that they are requesting", or you can ask for more information to be

obtained for you before you return a call. For example, "Julie, please listen to this voice mail and obtain the dates required from accounts and leave them on a voice mail for me to collect later this afternoon. I will then phone this customer back".

Key Point

- If the customer phones back later that day Julie is more likely to be in a position to say, "I know Fred has got your message and intends to phone you later". This makes the customer feel that even though they have not yet been contacted, action is taking place behind the scenes. It also educates the caller for the future in that they know messages they leave are dealt with.

One last tip!

As a manager be responsible for your own messages. When you are out, the voice mail system should become your link with the office *AND* your secretary. Learn to post all messages in the voice mail to each other. This way when you ring in and your secretary is out or on the phone etc., you still get your messages.

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