

Seven Tips to leave more Skilful Messages By Alan Kaye

Leaving a good message is a skill. Most messages left on voice mail systems are incomplete and contain little detail apart from a name and number. Equally, e-mails are often lengthy and lack useful content. Both forms of communication have major benefits for businesses. However, the major benefit of voice mail - it has the advantage of picking up on your voice tone - is often overlooked.

Tip 1 - Life is short so don't be boring! A verbal message is an opportunity to shine. Where appropriate, make your messages entertaining and amusing, as well as informative. For fellow team members a voice mail message can be an effective and prompt way of giving praise and encouragement.

Tip 2 – Leave short but detailed messages. Keep to the point; speak clearly and not too slowly as to be tedious. We speak quicker than we type but we listen about 3 times quicker than we talk! So focus on the clarity of what you say.

Tip 3 – State your name, phone number and then the subject before recording the bulk of the message. This is a courtesy and allows the person receiving the message to listen to the first few words and know what it is about. With this information the recipient can choose to deal with it immediately or save it for later without having to listen to the whole message.

Tip 4 – In Tip 3 I refer to messages that relate to ongoing business transactions. If you are canvassing for business, do NOT leave messages on voice mail for people you do not know. You will not get a reply unless you are deceptive as to your reasons for leaving a voice mail. Such deception is poor business practice and best avoided.

Tip 5 - For complex messages, jot down a list of the main points you want to cover to make sure you say don't forget anything important. Writing messages down first will improve your skill at leaving them.

Tip 6 – Remember, organise the content of your message in this order:

- name followed by phone number
- subject; main message
- closing statement saying whether a return call is necessary, the best time to reach you and summarising any action you wish the recipient to take as a result of your message.

Tip 7 – Make sure the tone of your voice is appropriate for the message you are leaving. Remember, face-to-face communication is 55% visual body language,

38% voice tone, and 7% the words we use. On the phone, because the person you are calling cannot see you, your voice tone becomes even more important.

Key point - HOW we say something is more important than what we say!

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