

Voicemail Guidelines

Voice Mail Helps You Do Your Job

Voice mail is an amazing tool that can make your job easier to manage. Voice mail answers your phone when you are on the line as well as when you are away from your desk. Voice mail allows users to forward messages on to the right person.

Sample Greetings

Voice mail leaves incoming callers with an impression of you and your department. Why not make it a good impression by extending good customer service to your voice mail greeting? Greetings are your opportunity to tell your customers important information.

Samples: Some departments date greetings by day or by week; some indicate emergency numbers like a pager, an alternate contact or a cell phone. There are some sample greetings to get you started.

Personal Greeting (I am away from my desk): *Hello, you have reached the voice mailbox for (your first and last name) at (your dept). I am unable to answer my phone at this time. Please leave your name, number and a detailed message and I will return your call today. If this is urgent, I can be contacted on my mobile at xxx, xxxxxx.. Thank you.*

Personal Greeting (I am on the other line): *Hello, you have reached the voice mailbox for (your first and last name) at (your dept). I am currently on my telephone. Please leave your name, number and a detailed message and I will return your call when I am off the telephone. Thank you.*

Extended Absence: *Hello, you have reached the voice mailbox for (your first and last name) at (your dept). I will be out of the office (these dates). I will be returning calls on (this date). Please leave your name, number and a detailed message. Thank you.*

Other Options to Add to Your Greeting

- *I can be emailed at xxx@youraddress.ie*
- *You can send a text message to my mobile on xxx, xxxxxx*
- *Today is (date). I will be at my desk until noon, and then in meetings until 5pm.*

General Guidelines for Greetings

- *No music or jokes.*
- *Record your greetings from a script to avoid "um" and "uh."*
- *Aim to record a brief greeting.*
- *Speak slowly and clearly.*

- *Affiliate your self with your department (e.g. "You've reached John Smith from Nutrition").*
- *Avoid using the standard system greeting: personalize your greetings.*
- *Avoid chewing gum, food, or slurping beverages while recording your greeting!*

Leaving Voice Mail Messages - how to structure effectively

Leaving a voice mail message is like making a short public speech with a distinct objective. Here are some tips to help you convey the right message to your audience:

- **Plan Your Message:** Consider the points you want to make and jot down a few key words. Limit the points to one or two per message.
- **Get to the Point:** A stream of consciousness approach doesn't work. Begin with a purpose. "The reason I am calling is...."
- **Be Brief:** Many voice mail systems will allow users to leave a three-four minute message but a voice mail message that is more than one minute is TOO LONG. Try to respect people's time and aim for a 15-30 second message.
- **Speak Slowly:** The listener needs time to process information and write it down. Be sure to pause as you say your telephone number. *"My number is 530 (pause) 752 (pause) 5612."*
- **Enunciate Clearly:** The telephone can distort high frequency sounds such as /f/ and /s/. Pronounce word endings and do not swallow syllables. This is especially important when giving your name.
- **Put Vitality in Your Voice:** A monotone voice lacks enthusiasm. Try to stand up or smile as you leave your message (standing to increase energy). People can hear a smile over the phone, really.
- **Modulate Your Volume:** A loud voice irritates the listener. A soft voice won't always be heard, and the listener may miss vital information or nod off. Stand or sit up straight and speak directly into the receiver. Do not cradle the phone in your neck or use a speakerphone.
- **Modulate Your Tone:** Avoid sarcasm and irritation if you want your call returned. Keep an even temper and state your request.
- **Avoid Telephone Tag:** Give the listener options. Tell them when you can best be reached to prevent frustration. *"I will be out most of the afternoon and will return to my office at 4pm. tomorrow I'll be at my desk in the morning."*
- **End with your phone number:** Although you have already given your phone number, say it again and let it be the last thing the listener hears. This will give time to write it down.

Please consult your technical department regarding setting up voice mail on your telephone.