



## Random Lengths Phone Practices Survey

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A Random Lengths survey about what people think about their own, and others', phone habits in the wood products industry. Updated: February 25, 2005

1. What is your type of business?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Producer		27.7%	322
<b>Wholesaler</b>		<b>29.5%</b>	<b>343</b>
Co-op		0.9%	11
Retailer		20.8%	242
<a href="#">View</a> Other (please specify)		21.1%	246
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1164</b>
(skipped this question)			0

2. What is your job?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Trader		21.6%	250
Sales Manager		17.7%	205
Executive		27.5%	319
<a href="#">View</a> Other (please specify)		<b>33.3%</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1160</b>
(skipped this question)			4

3. How many hours each day do you spend on the phone?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
less than 3 hours		35.8%	412
<b>3-6 hours</b>		<b>50.1%</b>	<b>577</b>
more than 6 hours		14.1%	162
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1151</b>
(skipped this question)			13

4. How long does the average conversation last?

		Response Percent	Response Total
less than 1 minute		1.8%	21
<b>1-5 minutes</b>		<b>76.3%</b>	<b>877</b>
more than 5 minutes		21.9%	252
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1150</b>
(skipped this question)			14

5. Do you use a (select all that apply):

		Response Percent	Response Total
speaker phone?		39%	375
headset?		50.3%	484
<b>speed dial system?</b>		<b>61.1%</b>	<b>588</b>
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>962</b>
(skipped this question)			202






6. If the person you're trying to reach is tied up, on average, how long will you hold?

		Response Percent	Response Total
Not at all		5.6%	64
1 minute or less		34.7%	397
<b>1-2 minutes</b>		<b>45.1%</b>	<b>516</b>
2 minutes or more		14.5%	166
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1143</b>
(skipped this question)			21


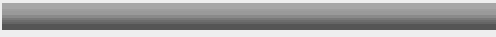

7. What does your company play for its callers placed on hold?

		Response Percent	Response Total
<b>Music</b>		<b>37.6%</b>	<b>428</b>
News		1.4%	16
Company information		19.4%	221
Silence		36.1%	411
<a href="#">View</a> Other (please specify)		5.4%	62
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1138</b>
(skipped this question)			26





8. What would you prefer to hear when you're on hold?

		Response Percent	Response Total
<b>Music</b>		49.8%	567
News		25.2%	287
Company information		13.5%	154
Silence		9.7%	111
<a href="#">View</a> Other (please specify)		1.8%	20
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1139</b>
(skipped this question)			25




9. How often are you put on hold interminably without anyone checking to see if you want to leave a message?

		Response Percent	Response Total
Frequently		20.7%	235
<b>Occasionally</b>		70.3%	797
Never		9%	102
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1134</b>
(skipped this question)			30

10. When you're on hold, how often do you like the switchboard to check back with you?

		Response Percent	Response Total
Never		2.7%	31
Every few minutes		44.3%	502
<b>Every minute</b>		48.3%	547
<a href="#">View</a> Other (please specify)		4.7%	53
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1133</b>
(skipped this question)			31

11. Do you prefer reaching automated telephone answering systems?

		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		10.8%	122
<b>No</b>		77.3%	875
No Preference		11.9%	135
<b>Total Respondents</b>			<b>1132</b>

(skipped this question)	32
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12. Under what circumstances do you use e-mail instead of the phone? <a href="#">[VIEW COMMENTS]</a> (Comments supplementary to an article published in the March 4, 2005, issue of Random Lengths.)	
<a href="#">View</a> Total Respondents	952
(skipped this question)	212

13. Do you have a receptionist screen your calls?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Always		16.5%	185
Sometimes		30.3%	339
Never		53.1%	594
Total Respondents			1118
(skipped this question)			46

14. What's your policy on how soon you return phone calls?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Within an hour		35.1%	394
The same day		25.9%	290
Within 24 hours		5.3%	59
No policy		19.8%	222
<a href="#">View</a> Other (please specify)		13.9%	156
Total Respondents			1121
(skipped this question)			43

15. What are your pet peeves?						
	Indifferent	Slightly annoying	Somewhat annoying	Very annoying	Most annoying	Response Average
Being put on hold without being told you're going to be put on hold	6% (64)	11% (123)	19% (215)	40% (445)	23% (260)	3.64
Not being given the option to queue on hold	11% (113)	15% (165)	31% (329)	32% (342)	12% (125)	3.19
Talking to someone who is using a speaker phone	19% (207)	19% (202)	23% (244)	22% (239)	18% (192)	3.01
Talking to someone who is using a cordless/cellular device that is cutting out	5% (60)	19% (215)	29% (323)	35% (384)	11% (122)	3.27
Having to listen to something unpleasant while holding	13% (142)	25% (277)	30% (326)	22% (241)	11% (118)	2.92
Being asked to identify myself	61% (668)	15% (167)	12% (133)	7% (77)	5% (57)	1.81
Having a person not identify themselves when they answer	24% (266)	28% (304)	23% (255)	17% (186)	8% (92)	2.58

Playing phone tag	17% (184)	25% (272)	<b>31% (337)</b>	18% (199)	9% (104)	<b>2.79</b>
Having a call answered by an automated system	16% (180)	15% (163)	18% (197)	21% (229)	<b>30% (337)</b>	<b>3.34</b>
Voice mail that doesn't give the option to return to a live operator when called party is absent/busy	11% (126)	13% (145)	20% (224)	24% (269)	<b>31% (340)</b>	<b>3.50</b>
Being put through to voice mail without being told that called party is absent/busy	10% (114)	11% (121)	18% (204)	26% (284)	<b>35% (383)</b>	<b>3.63</b>
Being told that the called party isn't available without being offered options	6% (64)	14% (155)	25% (279)	<b>31% (347)</b>	23% (257)	<b>3.52</b>
Having to share the attention of called party with other callers or duties	9% (102)	18% (198)	<b>28% (312)</b>	26% (283)	19% (208)	<b>3.27</b>
<b>Total Respondents</b>						<b>1107</b>
(skipped this question)						57

16. What is the most frustrating aspect of doing business on the telephone? [\[VIEW COMMENTS\]](#)

<input type="button" value="View"/> Total Respondents	<b>794</b>
(skipped this question)	
	370

17. Enough criticism... are there any practices that you wish to compliment? [\[VIEW COMMENTS\]](#)

<input type="button" value="View"/> Total Respondents	<b>634</b>
(skipped this question)	
	530



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INFORMATION SERVICES FOR THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY



## Random Lengths Phone Practices Survey

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### Question 16

#### What is the most frustrating aspect of doing business on the telephone?

1. Being put on hold for a long period of time . 2. Being asked to identify myself and then being told that the person in question is not in. If they are not in just say so and ask if the calling party wants to leave a voice mail.

1. Being sent through to someone's voice mail without being told the person is not available. 2. Calling an 800 number for service and not being given the option to speak to a person and not having a clear option to solve the problem at hand. Additionally, if you can get through to a live human being your hold time is way too long.

1. Fools who hide behind their voicemail. Much of the time, if I was their boss, I'd determine that they're not cut out to make decisions or to tackle the tough stuff. Hiding behind voicemail is a very bad reflection on that party. So return those calls! remember: 'Bad News is better than No News!' 2. The worst is being returned to the secretary (from 'hold') because my party is still talking, instead of going into his voicemail, where I can 'read the bible' (leave a long detailed message) if necessary, thereby allowing them to call back with The Answer. Secretaries are not the one to leave detailed or complex messages. Get me to voicemail immediately if I can't talk to my party!

1. Individuals and businesses who haven't made the minimal investment in an answering device. I should be able t call 24 hours a day and at least leave a message. 2. People who leave messages that only say 'call me back'. We can avoid wasting time on phone tag by leaving a complete message.

1. Not being able to leave a voice mail 2. Being put on hold for over a minute 3. Not having call returned

1. Phone tag; but I have to admit that I am often the source of this problem as I can often be on the phone or in meetings. This is one of the reasons why I like e-mail as issues can be dealt with when both individuals have time. 2. People that call and leave a voice mail, but no indication as to why they are calling.

1. They are sitting at their desk and not answering the phone as their voice mail will take a message 2. When you leave specific information on a voice-mail and request that they return your call as it is important. And they do not return your call. 3. When you are trying to reach a party and instead of the receptionist offering their extension number (in case you need to call again) they just put you through and you find that 'again' you are talking to their voice mail.

1. Dealing with automated phone systems. 2. When asking a receptionist if you can talk to so and so, receptionist says yes, puts you through to a machine. 3. persons leaving their return number so fast it is difficult to understand.

1. Having someone call me and then immediately place me on hold. 2. Having some one call who has call waiting, and then cuts you off or hangs up to talk with someone else. If you call to talk to me then finish talking to me before switching to someone else.

1. Not being able to reach a person or voice mail.

1. Salespeople that continue to call you unsolicited after you have asked them to only fax or e-mail offers. 2. Having an operator tell you your party is not available when you have just talked to them and they are expecting a return call. 3. Caller ID that doesn't identify caller 4. Automated systems that send you in circles and you can't seem to get a live person 5. Automated systems that take you through more than 1 menu to get to a live person

1. Small talk.

1. Unreturned phone calls 2. Persistent calls from potential vendors with nothing of substance to offer me 3. Lack of receptionist (automated answering systems with multiple menus)

1. Not being able to communicate to the party when you need to. i.e. put on hold, out to lunch, not available. 2. Having the whole sales staff out to lunch at the same time!!!

A supplier not returning a call within a reasonable amount of time (1-2 hours)

Absence of feedback provided by facial expression

Accuracy in quotes and or promises made

Actually it saves time. I accept it's downside.

Actually making contact and automated answering systems.
After having done this for thirty years, not much. Probably the most frustrating is when we play phone tag (but that's just part of the program).
Aggressive, will not take no for an answer, pushy person. Phone solicitation etiquette is lacking. Cell phone service is poor. Fully automated systems are the pits. Want you to do surveys or continue to sell you more services. What happened to taking care of my problem?
All of it.
All the automation.
Always getting voice mail. Phone tag.
Answering Home Depot calls.
Asking for an individual, then being put on hold because the person who answered was too lazy, or incompetent to advise you that the person you need to talk with is tied up, or on the phone already. This usually results in another call having to be placed to the same party.
At times, it is harder reach an individual than being there in person.
auto/ans.
automated answer
Automated answer systems and then having to leave a voice mail, not knowing if the party is in or not.
automated answerers
automated answering
Automated answering - and being dead-ended into a voice mail box.
automated answering and it takes more time than emailing
Automated answering machines.
Automated answering service
Automated answering services. It takes too long to go through all the options.
Automated Answering systems
automated answering systems and voice mail jail.
Automated answering systems and voice mail. This costs the customer doing business with us a ton of money do to the lost opportunity to purchase lumber especially when markets are active. I hang up and go to the next customer
Automated answering systems that force you to listen to multiple options before giving you the option to talk directly to a real person.
Automated answering systems with lengthy options to reach the desired party.
Automated answering systems with no options to talk with a person.
automated attendants
Automated automatic phone systems --- I want to speak to a person
Automated menu based phone systems that take lots of time to find out the individual is not available
Automated phone answering services are the bane of our industry, causing a huge amount of wasted time both playing phone tag, and waiting through the options.
Automated Phone services that go no place
Automated phone systems
Automated phone systems Limited mobile phone coverage
Automated phone systems . They need to be outlawed !!!!!!!
Automated phone systems that keep you from a live person.
Automated switchboards that go directly to voice mail without the option to speak with a person. Also, someone eating or chewing gum while on the phone (especially a headset)
Automated systems.
Automated systems - with no personal contact
Automated systems or receptionists that are rude or not very helpful.
Automated systems that do not allow you to talk to a person and people who eat or chew gum while talking.
Automated systems that don't allow you to talk to a real person.
Automated systems that go through too many options.

Automated systems that require entry of information and no way to 'back up' if an error is made, or that just 'dump' you into automation hell. Automated phone systems are a pox on humanity.

Automated systems that you can't get out of or get anywhere

Automated systems with no options and no live people People who are continuously out of the office and no one else will return a call.

Automated telephone service and playing phone tag.

Automated voice services.

Automatic answering machines.

Availability of person being contacted

Availability of the other person. I also don't like the flippant attitude of some company frontline people who give the impression that they don't value your business call.

Availability of the sought out party.

Bad attitudes

Bad communication. Some people here only what they want to hear.

Bad receptionist, being cut-off, being put on hold, and forgot about.

Because we choose to take every phone call, we get some really annoying New York stock exchange traders that say 'you asked me to call back with some recommendations to buy'.

Being able to reach the person who is trying to get a hold of you.

Being asked several times who I am and what company I am from.

Being asked who is calling BEFORE knowing if the other person is available. (call screening)

Being asked 'Who may I say is calling'. Being interrupted during a conversation. People who won't leave information on my voicemail when they know what information I need. Instead, they leave 'Tag your it' message, and I have to call them back. GET ME THE INFORMATION YOU KNOW I'M AFTER! If there is circumstantial situation that we need to talk about then fine, let me know when is a good time to call get a hold of them. Let me know what I need to do to get a hold of them personally.

Being at the mercy of whoever answers.

Being forgotten on hold.

Being forwarded to voice mail, and not being told by the operator or the recording, that the person I'm trying to contact is out of the office.

Being given voice mail by a receptionist, leaving a message, and finding out later when no return call is received that they aren't there and haven't been there. Losing an order because you can't get through to a live person.

Being interrupted on either end. This is rude no matter how you look at it.

Being left on hold forever, and automated phone answering systems that do not let you get back to a live person for help.

Being left on hold with no where to go or talk to

Being on hold

Being on hold for long periods

Being on switchboard, I personally think it is rude to do screening. It is none of my business who phone who.

Being placed on hold and no one comes back to you

Being placed on hold by the originator of the call

Being placed on hold not knowing if the person is even there.

Being put into a computerized answering system and not knowing the extension of the party that I'm trying to reach

Being put into voice mail without being told that a caller is busy and unavailable.

Being put off by a buyer and him not calling back.

Being put on call to answer another line.

Being put on eternal hold

Being put on 'eternal' hold & not having someone come back to check on me

Being put on eternal hold or people who do not return their voice mail

Being put on 'eternal' hold!

Being put on forget.

Being put on hold



Being put on hold and left there.
Being put on hold and no answer and no one coming back - No return phone call - message never delivered -
Being put on hold and not being able to talk to anyone
Being put on hold and not being checked on. Telephone marketing that will not except no and that you don't have time to talk.
Being put on hold and not checked back with in a short time period.
Being put on hold and not knowing the person I called isn't even in his or her office. Also computerized phone answering devices should be blown off the map.
Being put on hold and not taking my name
Being put on hold by an automated system and then being told that the person isn't available
Being put on hold for a long time.
Being put on hold for long period of times and not being checked on. Also being asked to leave a message and never getting a returned called.
Being put on hold for long periods of time to find out info about something I've asked about.
Being put on hold for long periods of time.
Being put on hold for too long...
Being put on hold forever and nobody comes back to you a switch board operator whose main job is not answering the phone and looking after the caller
Being put on hold forever.
Being put on hold foreveerrrrrrrrrrrr the person you need to talk to NEVER being available when you call.... always having to leave a voice mail or call him back.
Being put on hold so another call can be taken, i.e. call waiting.
Being put on hold so they can take another call
Being put on hold when I don't have time myself to accomplish my work.
Being put on hold when the person I'm trying to reach is not even there. AND/OR Getting voice mail when I know the person I'm trying to reach is at their desk.
being put on hold while person talking to answers another call!
Being put on hold without being told the person called in already on another line.
Being put to voice mail without being asked Going straight to automated system We like people, he's at lunch, he's sick etc.
Being screened and the person not taking your calls.
being stuck in a chair all the time and not knowing who you're talking to well
being told no
Being transferred to one department and then another and then another and it appears as though no one can help you. Being treated as some one who doesn't know anything. Having the person on the other end do the 'yes, oh, hmmm' which indicates they are not listening
Being transferred to voice mail automatically. phone tag and un-detailed voicemail.
Being unable to get a hold of person.
Being unable to reach people when needed or when something is fresh on your mind.
Being unable to reach the person called on the first attempt.
Busy signal ...
Call being answered by speaker phone without identifying any other people in the room. Being slammed onto 'mold' without any warning. Receptionist not checking back when on hold. Other party eating while trying to talk on the phone. Receptionists with no personality.
Call screening and some one who will take several other calls while he puts you on hold to take them we should get rid of call waiting
Call waiting, being interrupted while in conversation.
Call who will not tell switchboard who they are and what they want both in full they never get through
Calling a customer and the other party putting me on hold for another call
Calling an automated phone system and having to go through 10 steps to get to where you want to go. Getting put on hold and left there.

has you enter their name for directory and you don't know who to talk to. Also asking for a party and not being told they are not in just sent to the VM system.

Calls not being returned

Calls not returned Caller not identifying self Caller not telling nature of business up front

Calls screeners with zero sense of urgency or are simply lazy to get intended party

Calls to companies using answering machines

Can't 'see' the facial/emotional expressions-loss of translation

Can't see the reaction. No personal contact.

Call phone coverages.

Cell phone reception.

Cell phone with weak signal

Cold callers.

Cold calls that don't respect my time. Never do they ask if I have time to listen to them. Voice mail systems which just state names and they are away from their desks. I feel they should be updated daily, so the caller knows if they are in the office on the day they call.

Communicating with people who never learned to speak English. I do business in the USA and Canada only. If I were to live where another language is predominant and expected to do business, I would expect to become proficient in the language.

Companies that obviously need, but never incorporate a dedicated receptionist make me crazy. Automated general mailboxes with no options are even worse. I deal with a company that I hope reads this, that if the phones not busy, then the general automated mailbox picks up that you have to dial like \*8100 or something to actually get a 20% chance of talking to a human. I'm their vendor and it makes me crazy, can't imagine what their customers think. It amazes me that companies can't see how important the entry point of their business is.

Constant interruptions

Contacts that don't return calls.

Continual phone tag. But once contact is made, it is okay.

Dealing with automated systems that don't offer opportunity to talk to a 'real' person

Dealing with companies that have not invested in decent technology as in no voice mail. Leaving a voice mail accomplishes so much more than just leaving a message to return your call.

Dealing with overloaded receptionists. Not having the ability to dial direct to the contact I am trying to reach.

Dealing with people who are juts too busy - they need help to cover all their calls and they do not have an assistant that you can talk to.

Dealing with people who don't listen to specific instruction.

Dealing with receptionists that HATE their jobs.

Different time zones. people who become very aggressive on the phone, yet meeting them they are very meek.

Difficulty getting hold of people when the market is active.

Difficulty in getting the certain person needed on the phone in a timely manner. This is especially annoying in the midst of a volatile market when trying to place orders on material that has been quoted as sub-prior.

Difficulty reaching the party called. Not knowing is party called gets the message or not to call back. Party called not calling back. Not be offered other options to handle the reason call was made.

Doing business in person and the other person keeps taking calls especially on a cell phone.

E-mail gets things down 'on paper' which established accountability.

Endless automated attendant menus.

Endless automated menus

Eternal hold. INFOMERCIALS on hold. Automated phone service. Screening calls

Everything about it, being on the phone for hours is hard. Some days I jump just hearing a phone ring..

Eye to eye contact

Failure of suppliers to promptly return calls or inquiries

Failure to receive a prompt call back.

Fighting the frenzy activity of a hot market. Also, I hate when someone takes half a message and then says...'hold on...they are getting off the phone.' Just finish the message and let me go. :)

Getting a hold of people

Getting a hold of the other party..
Getting a hold of the people you need to talk to.
Getting an automated answer when calling and then having to spend 2-5 minutes pushing buttons before a live person comes on the line.
Getting an automated operator and having a hard time to talk with a real person.
Getting around voice mail
Getting automated answering systems
Getting automated phone answering service that does not work properly.
Getting bounced around until you find the right person that you are looking for.
Getting caught in an unrelated conversation that detracts from getting my work accomplished.
Getting hold of the person.
Getting information to everyone quickly - one at a time !
Getting into a phone loop that won't let you talk to someone
Getting lost in a voice mail maze.
Getting my answer now
Getting off topic for long periods
Getting people to leave a full message instead of just call me
Getting put on hold by automated teller without having any other options
Getting put on hold forever without a voicemail or message option
Getting that person on the phone, with no interruptions and that I can trust that our verbal arrangement will hold up.
Getting the attention of the party
Getting the person on the phone to begin the transaction.
Getting the right person prompt when you need to.
Getting through to the person you need, efficiently.
Getting through to your sales person during a good market
Getting to the person that you need to talk to....
Getting 'trapped' in voice mail and never speaking to a 'live' person.
Getting Voice Mail, especially in moving markets
Going thru several options to get to a human
Going to voice mail
Hate automated systems rude receptionists businesses w/out multiple lines (always busy)
Having a call answered by an automated system
Having a connection with poor sound quality.
having a non human answer the phone. I would rather have a busy signal. Also, non returned calls.
Having an automated answering system hang up on you!
Having callers get voicemail instead of the person they are calling for. And when creditors or sales people call in and are rude when they can't speak to employees.
Having misunderstandings that need resolved face to face.
Having people know that you're on a timeline and not calling back to give you a progress report if they are unable to meet your deadline. I don't like having to call them back to ask what the status is.
Having someone put you on hold for more than a few seconds to answer another call especially after you have been on hold for several minutes.
Having someone talks on speaker phone when it's an individual call. It's just plain rude.
Having the person sound put out while they are talking to you. Can not see their emotions. Not getting your point across clearly enough as you could in person.
Having the receiver page for whom is needed and not indicating to the caller that they are busy and may not be with you as quickly as you would like.
Having to call back a few times to finally connect.
Having to deal with unprofessional receptionist. It seems a lot of companies use the receptionist chair for an entry level job into the rest of the office. Hard to find a good receptionist that is well-trained.

Having to explain my business to another person before I am put through to my party.

Having to go thru an automated telephone system, and not being able to reach the correct person I want to talk to. I would really like to see all executives place all their telephone calls, and see how they react to automated telephones. But they probably won't because it would be a waste of their time! Don't worry about who is on the other end.

Having to hold for ten minutes for someone that you need to talk to. However, they are good that's why they are busy.

having to leave a call back message, then not getting a call back for a very long time

Having to leave a Vmail rather than someone just leaving a note. Most Vmail takes an extra 2 mins just to get to a point to leave a message. Being placed on hold and then after holding being told that the person is not available.

Having to leave message after message, call after call for a customer who wants an immediate answer. Almost as bad as a customer saying they will call back within 'a few minutes' and do not call back for several days, if ever.

Having to listen to small talk before getting down to business

having to listen to someone stories that you don't care about when leaving a voice message and the machine cut you off before your done with the message

Having to make multiple calls regarding the same subject because of party availability.

Having to make multiple calls to get in touch with a vendor, lack of return calls.

Having to read the mood - especially when its a delicate or hostile call. Particularly if you don't know that person well. 'was that sarcasm or did he really say that?' Getting a voice mail where the person calling rapid fires his phone number, thus eliminating any chance to make the return call Receptionists that respond to you with 'just a sec' and now you're on hold - or more often, permanent ignore which means you actually have to call back in order to leave a message

Having to rely on verbal communication alone is not the best way to get your message across, so sometimes it can be limiting.

Having to talk to one 'assigned' person to our area knowing at there may be other people in the office knowing the same information but they won't talk to you because they either don't get credit or are assigned to you so they are unwilling to help you.

Having to wait

Having too many voicemails backed up to be able to check. Email is usually the best way to get a hold of Vendors.

Hearing well enough Receptionists/secretaries who mumble softly or indistinctly, or seem to be in a big rush to transfer your call.

Hold without options. Hold without being checked on.

Holding!

Holding for long periods of time only to have their phone system 'drop' your call.

Holding while other calls/clients are holding for you.

Holding without knowing when the person will become available

How fast phones have made business become and how more efficient you need to be because of more communication.

I am on the road all the time, difficult to return calls

I believe the phone tag issue when you are trying to get an answer quickly to facilitate a purchase or a sale.

I don't find many frustrations. Most people have voice mail which works well.

I don't find the phone to be frustrating most of the time. If the other party is difficult to reach/never returns calls then it becomes so.

I don't have a receptionist, just 2 lines I try always to catch, voice mail from which I return calls religiously and a mobile phone for emergencies (not to mention e-mail and a text pager). People whose egos are such that they will only call my mobile phone are a piece of work!

I feel that voicemail is very frustrating for us. As a manufacturing facility, it has made cold calling for our sales people almost impossible. I know that some firms feel it's a luxury to not have to speak to someone if you don't feel you want to, but how can you promote yourself, your company, your products with this type of attitude?

I find doing business on the phone fun. the only drawback is the impact on my personal life...I never want to talk on the phone after hours. from a business perspective, probably telephone tag is the most frustrating. as well as receptionists that never learn to identify you and it is like your first call every call. Very irritating.

I find retrieving voicemails most frustrating. I try to manage all calls without having receptionist put them to voicemail.

I find the following VERY ANNOYING! 1) Callers you've never spoken with behaving as if they know you and calling you by your first name. 2) Prospecting Sales Reps leaving a callback number that requires you to call them long distance. Get an 800 number!

I have 2 phones on my desk with 8 lines on each one. I also have 2 cell phones with 2 lines on each one. The most frustrating aspect?... I can't escape!

I like eye contact.

I like the voice mail option but I am frustrated the greatest when I have to go through several platforms/options before I get to the person I need to or go through several options only to hit a dead end with a need to redial. Also, It is frustrating when the options do not cover all the options. i.e.. the options may say 'For Sales' or 'For Service' but not 'For Billing Questions' Also, many directories are set up requesting full names or last names. In my business I know many on a first name basis and either do not know their last name or if I do know it, I can not spell it.

I personally hate automated answering systems. They waste MY time.

I really dislike automated phone systems that many time require 4 or 5 functions to speak to a live person.

I really have no problems do business on the phone. If I did I wouldn't be in this business

I think it's a tie between playing voice-mail phone tag and cellular phones that cut in and out or have horrible reception.

I would like to mention 2- One that is not mentioned on your survey- when the other party is rude/uncaring. That happens more these days than it used to. Another is inefficiency of the use of the system- i.e. when a voice mail can be left in detail, I can call back with an answer rather than call back to find out what the question is. Another example of this frustration would be the duplication of efforts- where several people from the same location call in about the same topic.

If i were to have a problem I would follow with a fax.

If something is time sensitive and you are playing phone tag

I'm not out in the woods practicing forestry. Cellular reception sucks in our tree farm - causing a lot of frustration trying to make connections.

Impatient switchboard operators that just want to get rid of the call.

impersonal

In calling people, the most frustrating thing is not being able to reach them or someone who can 'get it done'. In being called, being inundated with calls that should be done via e-mail is frustrating and is compounded by people who leave voicemails with no specific information. Thus, the worst scenario is to receive a voicemail with no detail that requires that I call someone back (potentially playing phone tag) only to find out that what they were calling me about could have been done by a 10 word e-mail. The core principal is to respect the time of others. if everyone does this, most problems go away.

In my position as a buyer, when the market is going crazy and I can not reach the people via phone.

Inability to deal face-to-face

Inability to get called party on line on first call. Being directed to voice mail without being given the option to leave a message with operator

Inability to reach a live person.

Inability to reach other party

Inability to reach party called.

Inability to reach someone...the perpetual game of phone tag.

Inability to reach the desired party on the first call.

Inability to reach the person being called on a timely basis

Incoming calls that do not identify themselves

Incompetent receptionists

Interminable phone option trees that lead to voicemail.

Interruptions

Interruptions during important conversations within the office by other business or by the needs of staff.

Interruptions from either side.

It is not personal--eye to eye.

It is what i do, so I guess I wouldn't know.

It seldom happens with forest product industry, but having 1 to 5 options and pressing 3, then having another 5 options and by the time they get to the fifth message I forget which option is correct and then having to start the process all over again because I don't know which of the 5 option is correct and having to redial and start over again and finally getting the right department find out there is a 20 minute wait to talk to a live person and then find out they really can't help me and then have to start the process all over again.

It's hit or miss as to reaching the other party and it takes too much time. We use email and Nextel 2-way radio much

more often.
I've been doing this for so long, as it's an integral part of our business, that I guess I no longer see any frustrations. It's just part of what we do.
Just being told the party requested is not available, and no options about contact. I.E. He is not here! then silence.
Lack of accountability if something goes wrong, he said she said.
Lack of face-to-face; ability to read situation.
lack of good cell coverage in all regions;
Lack of personal connection.
Lack of quality hardware/headset
lack of returned calls.
Lack of well trained receptionists; systems that are ill programmed when using auto-attendant; people who do not return calls promptly
lazy receptionists
Leaving a message for someone and finding out later that the person I want to speak to is out of office or out of town.
Leaving a message regarding a hot topic and not getting a call back, either within a reasonable amount of time or not at all.
Leaving a voicemail in a situation you need an immediate answer
Leaving messages that are not returned. Also leaving a detailed voice message and when the call is returned the party did not listen to the entire message, which was left with the intention of saving time for both of us.
leaving messages that aren't returned.
Leaving several voice messages and either that person not updating their message about being out of town or not being able to transfer to an assistant.
Length of time it takes
Line busy
Listen to their personal problems. This has happened in the past and the two sales reps were asked not to return and if they did the companies would be removed from our vendor list. This did work
Listening to a canned voice say 'thank you for your patience' and keeping me on hold indefinitely.
Listening to company propaganda
Listening to salesmen when you are to busy to talk.
Loose personal relationship.
Losing the 'face to face' interaction
Loss of time waiting to contact that person.
Loss of time.
Lost in phone mail or calling and only getting answer transferred to another voice mail.
machine contact only
making actual contact with the party
Making contact with the party you want to reach. The quality of cell phone conversations Automated answering systems.
Menus
Miscommunication
Miscommunications still occur - and phone tag
Missing calls
Missing important calls because of lack of patience.
Most auto answer systems, too impersonal.
Never being able to put a face with a name.
Never getting to speak to the person you are calling.
Not being able to observe the other persons expressions, or mannerisms.
No call backs
No face to face contact
No frustrations. I don't think there is a better way. I believe its the people handling the phones that mis-use them. I think

all calls are important and I treat them all equally with respect.
No indication of whether your message is coming across.
No paper trail.
No record of conversation
No resolution on issues.
No return call
No return calls to voice mail
No visual contact
No visual feedback during a discussion
No voice mail available
No voice mail or message options
Not able to look the other in the face. Sometimes it is nice to be able to read body language.
Not always understanding the situation you have called into, what's going on before or after the call. The persons attention level during the call.....
Not being able to communicate details.
Not being able accomplish something else while tied up on phone
Not being able to be face to face and make a more meaningful connection with the other party.
Not being able to connect same as for last thirty years
Not being able to connect with the party you are calling, then playing phone tag.
Not being able to connect with the person on the first attempt.
Not being able to contact the right party
Not being able to discuss everything I want to offer without losing my customers interest.
Not being able to get a hold of a person when I want to talk to them.
Not being able to get a hold of anyone at the company in person
Not being able to get a hold of intended party, and waiting extended periods of time for the return call
Not being able to get a hold of people, automated phone systems, and receptionists that will not take down a hand written message.
Not being able to get a hold of the individual who will make the decision.
Not being able to get hold of the person you need to, and having to talk to someone else who hasn't a clue what you are asking about
Not being able to get in touch w/ a person and not having the option to go to a receptionist. Leaving a message for someone who is gone but hasn't changed their voicemail to let people know they are gone.
Not being able to get in touch with a real person
Not being able to get someone on the phone. Playing 'phone tag'
Not being able to get the person I want. Not being able to hear. (I need a hearing aid)
Not being able to get through
Not being able to get through to the person you need to speak with.
Not being able to get to a real person. Automation may save money up front, but I suspect it costs much more in lost business in the long run.
Not being able to hold for the intended party when the conversation is critical. Also, when put on hold, having to listen to Canadian political news and the idiots calling in with their moronic views.
Not being able to leave a message
Not being able to leave a voice mail message that the person will respond to.
Not being able to look the other party in the eye
Not being able to pick up non verbal signals
Not being able to reach a specific person, then, if a voice mail is left, that person not responding with a return call in a timely manner.
Not being able to reach key people in a time of crisis.
Not being able to reach party.
Not being able to reach somebody, phone tag.

Not being able to reach someone and having to call back.

Not being able to reach someone.

Not being able to reach the party you want to talk to and not getting a reasonable prompt call back. Automated answering that go through is some cases as many as 6+ prompts before you even get to someone and in some cases never get to a live person.

Not being able to reach the person and not knowing when they will be back, where they are (they could be on vacation for the next month) or if they will call back soon.

Not being able to reach the person you are calling

Not being able to reach the person you are trying to get a hold of. Also, people that have their calls screened.

Not being able to reach the person you called. Automated systems not much in the industry but hate them

Not being able to reach the person you need to speak to. Playing phone tag.

Not being able to reach them

Not being able to reach your party with no idea when they will return.

Not being able to read body language

Not being able to read the customer's facial and body language. Only able to interpret voice expressions.

Not being able to see the facial expressions of the person on the other end of the line.

Not being able to see the person face-to-face.

Not being able to see the person react to your conversation i.e.; prices, delivery

Not being able to see what the other person is doing body language can be huge

Not being able to share written information such as spreadsheets and memo's which would better explain your conversation.

Not being able to speak to a live person when it's very important I reach someone regarding what I consider an emergency. Phone tag.

Not being able to speak to a real person

Not being able to speak to the person the person called (person is either 'On the phone or away from their desk)

Not being able to speak with a real person but instead an automated system. or an incompetent receptionist

Not being able to talk to someone when I need to.

Not being able to talk to the party I am calling the first time

Not being able to talk with the customer, and having to identify myself more than once.

Not being called backed

Not checking back.

Not connecting with the intended party when called.

Not consistent enough to contact people that you need. That is why a lot is done through computer functions

Not face to face

Not getting a call back in a timely manner, or having brokers call and not caring if this is a good time to call or not.

Not getting a call returned

Not getting a return call

Not getting returned calls.

Not getting the person I need in a timely manner.

Not getting the person you are calling on the phone.

Not getting the person you are calling when you call and having the call dropped when transferred to voice mail or not having the option to leave a message with a real person.

Not getting the person you want in a timely manner. Or people who have there phone on Ignore all day.

Not getting the person you want on the phone

Not getting through on the first call.

Not getting through to a person who can make a decision

Not getting through to my party and having to leave a message or v-mail.

Not getting through to someone, leaving them a several voicemails and they do not return your calls.

Not getting through to who you need right away.



Not getting to speak to the person I called
Not having a live person answer the phone, and then get put to e-mail without being told.
Not having a person answering; but instead getting an automated system that thinks they know what you want.
Not having calls returned. Poor phone connections
Not having calls returned promptly
Not having calls returned, Having to many options on auto systems Uh-Uh
Not having calls returned.
Not having documentation of the conversation
Not having my call returned by a supplier (sawmill), which happens way too often. Too many sawmill sales people lack professionalism. Otherwise, phone sales are great. Too many suppliers have a person screening their calls with no thought that the practice may cost the company business.
Not having the actual conversation.
Not having the full attention of the person that you are communicating with.
Not having the personalism.
Not having your called returned within a reasonable amount of time.
Not hearing back
Not knowing if you have their full attention
Not 'official' enough to take action on.
Not reaching a person when you have time sensitive issues to discuss like logistics or purchasing to cover orders in a rising market.
Not reaching the individual in an important situation. Automated phone systems that take forever to reach the intended individual. Someone not having a direct voicemail.
Not reaching the intended party on the first go, and having to wade through automated options before being able to leave a message. And especially, not getting the option to return to a live operator if routed through to the party's voice mail.
Not reaching the person (and not getting return calls)
Not reaching the person called on the first try. Not having calls returned timely.
Not reaching the person or their voicemail on the first attempt.
Not returning phone calls.
Not saying goodbye
Not seeing people's body language
Not seeing the person you are talking to. Body language can tell you a lot. Some automated systems are not user friendly.
Not so much on a 'land line' but having bad reception on cell phones where the calling party is constantly cutting in and out. The most frequent excuse is that the calling party is in a bad area. Well if you're in a bad area, don't call me until you reach an area where the reception is better!
Not speaking to a live body
Not talking to a live person.
Nothing really - assuming that the person I'm calling will either takes calls, or return calls in a timely manner.
Nothing, it beats the crap out of the mail system. Just be patient. We are so spoiled by technology, don't let it get you down.
Nothing... I like doing business on the phone.
Nuisance calls (who sometimes are otherwise good well established customers) but call and say 'I know you can't cover this, but....' Missing an opportunity to write an order because you were unable to connect (this is not a frequent event, but it does happen). For me though, the single most frustrating aspect of doing business via the phone is that some customers want to start every call by exchanging local weather reports...I don't really care what the weather is here and I sure as hell don't care what the weather is elsewhere....
One incoming call right after another, and callers holding because they won't talk to anyone else (and aren't afraid to tell you about it either)
Options where you have to press 1 then 9 then something else. endless!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Original call is answered by an automated system.
Our business does not offer enough lines, and they are antiquated.

phone calls from others). Then, by the time you finally get through to the person you wanted, they have nothing left to sell. 'junk' call: 'Good morning, this is Fred, wanted to check in to see what you might be looking for today.'

People -- it's in our nature to frustrate each other! Seriously, we all want a perfect world but we are our own worse enemies. America needs to get back to phone basics, I mean, answer your phone with a message or operator that talks to you with options. Companies today are getting carried away with cost cutting on (my opinion) one of the most important tools we have, (contact) the phone. Use real people not machines, live people is America not machines that sound like drive ups. Use real people, and give the caller and the receiver options.....

People at other end take down the info correctly.

People in a hurry not paying attention

People not calling you back

People not following the 'Golden Rule'.

people not getting messages no face to face contact to see if they are lying

People not returning a phone call

People not returning voice mail messages in a timely manner, at least within the day. Automated answering machines with 100 option, you can wait all day to get the ext. number you need or pass the one you need trying to figure which one you need.

People returning my call and not reporting a detailed response to the questions I asked.

People saying they aren't there, when they are!

People surprising you with calls at moments that are inconvenient.

People that do not return your message promptly

People that expect you to immediately handle their crises when they call regardless of what you were doing before that.

People that ramble on when they should know everyone in this business is busy

People using voice mail to screen their calls

People who are too busy (or important) to communicate.

People who do not return phone calls.

People who don't return calls

People who don't return phone calls

People who haven't yet learned to leave a message on voice mail so you can return to them with an answer. Equally annoying are people who have voice mail available in their company, but won't use it or check it.

People who use voice mail to avoid taking calls and then never return the calls.

People who won't call back or follow up. If someone is taking care of the issue that I left on voicemail, it is nice to be told that so I don't think that I am being ignored.

People won't come to the phone.

Perma-hold

Person answering phone and putting you on hold and not coming back to the call so you can leave a message for the person you called.

Person called not returning the call at all.

Persons talking fast and not plain

Persons unavailable.

Phone attendants who do not acknowledge your request, they simply plug you through and say nothing. Being put through to voice mail after I've asked not to be. Phone attendants who act incredulous

Phone calls not being returned.

Bad phone lines (noisy), hearing others in background

Phone tag. Delay to respond. Not knowing if the person is absent for a long period or not

Phone tag. The endless tunnel of automated phone systems

Phone tag automated systems

Phone tag - most cases you can communicate 75% of the message by using voice mail. Take the time to explain why the call back is needed.

Phone tag. Voice mail.

Phone tag & receptionist that do not know what they are doing.

Phone tag and holding.

Phone tag and not getting called back and then some one say's did you get my e mail. When I dealing on the phone I expect to get an answer on the phone

Phone tag and the receptionist put me to voice mail without indicating that it is going to happen.

Phone tag is the most frustrating aspect. That is why I like e-mail so much better.

Phone tag when there is no voice mail

Phone tag when you need an answer NOW

Phone tag!

Phone tag, and un-returned calls.

Phone tag, screening (caller id)

Phone tag. Long messages before being able to leave voice mail for someone.

Phone tag. Leave a message with your question or your answer, so I can respond

Phone tag...but the phone is still the best way to get to the most customers in the shortest amount of time

Phone tag...I'll call back twice and then its on the bottom of my pile.

Phone Tag...Put on hold & forgotten...People that don't return calls.

Phone tag and hold time

Placed on hold and playing 'phone tag'

Placement into a voice mail system when the person is out or on vacation and you need a live body to get an immediate answer.

Playing phone tag and a face to face conversation is required at times, to convey information like explaining a simple drawing.

Playing phone tag and not getting return calls promptly

Playing phone tag on an important matter.

Playing 'phone tag' or having to leave multiple voice mails can get very frustrating, especially when the market is very active.

Playing phone tag.

Playing phone tag. Not getting calls returned

Playing phone tag. Dealing with those that don't return calls or forward their phone because they are currently to busy. We are all busy.

Playing phone tag. It wastes time for everyone involved

Playing phone tag; having a hard time contacting the customer.

Playing telephone tag Poor cellular service

Playing telephone tag and people leaving a voicemail message with no detail. These usually go hand in hand and are started by a message that says ' hey call me' and it takes most of a day to connect only to find out what they wanted in the first place and then having to get the information and then play tag again to give it to them.

Playing the phone tag game. This results in not being able to complete a task timely.

Poor telephone answering habits. i.e. not identifying company, who is answering, can I help you. Just normal courtesy.

Poorly trained staff. The other thing I hate is voice messages that are too long. Most annoying is when a voice message with the person's voice, of whom you are trying to reach, comes on; then another voice comes on to tell you to leave a message at the tone; and sometimes another voice comes on to tell you to hang up or press # when done. If there is a person on earth who does not know that stuff... Messages should be as short as possible. Callers know what to do. Also, annoying is a phone message that never gets changed. So, you never know when the message that you left will ever get answered. Could they be on vacation? One may never know.

Potential for miscommunication and errors.

Prospecting can be tough

Reaching the party

Reaching the people you need to speak with.

Reaching the person needed in a quick way.

Reaching the person you are calling

Receptionists that have not been trained properly with phone etiquette

Receptionists that want to send me into voice mail rather than putting me on hold and allowing me to wait for the party I called to get off the phone

Receptionists who ask 'and does he know what this is regarding?' (I want to reach through there and ring their little neck)

Receptionists who do not wish to take a message.
Receptionists who don't know where your party is or when they will return.
Receptionists who screen calls for salespeople.
Ringling in to an automated telephone system, not knowing the person's extension, having to listen to the phone tree for all of the options, then getting the person's voice mail and leaving a message for him/her only to find out a few days later that they forgot to update their voice mail message when they left for vacation and they really aren't in the office to return your phone call.
Rude and/or indifferent persons screening calls and not knowing if messages are delivered.
Rude arrogant people not passing message on to your contact bad manners being hung up on left on hold for long period of time switch around to the wrong person.
Rude clerical staff, those who tell you the person is not available, but doesn't ask to take a message or send you to voice mail. They sound like, 'He's on the phone, I'm in control, what are you going to do about it?' Another great one, which I even see in our office, is the 'not my department and I'm not going to lift a finger for you' response.
Rude people
Rude people who treat an incoming call as if were a nuisance.
Rude phone etiquette
Rude receptionists on speaker phones who put you through to voice mail without telling you that the party you are calling is out until a future date.
Rudeness of the receptionist or person answering the phone.
Screened calls. Sometimes it takes 30 seconds to identify yourself to the receptionist prior to speaking with the person to whom you are returning their call
See the last question, plus customers not returning my calls
Sharing time. With e-mail, instant messaging, Nextel walkie talkie and pagers available many people use all of these devices at the same time with no regard or respect for the first calling party's time, 'please hold while I answer my incoming e-mail, page, Nextel, instant message etc.' i.e. 'you are not as important as my incoming call.'
Solicitation calls
Solicitations for ink or toner cartridges.
Some automated phone systems
Some automated services. Unreturned voicemails
Someone chewing gum while on the phone
Sometimes it's very difficult to really understand what the other person wants or needs when you cannot see them. Some people more than others, aren't the best about expressing things over the phone.
Sometimes you feel like you don't have someone's complete attention & you can tell because they seemed zoned out.
Sometimes you never actually meet your counterparty
Speaking with someone who is not a professional. They do not speak clearly, are indifferent to your requests or do not know how to utilize their phone system.
Surveys
Tag
Tag and on hold
Takes too long too many people not available to talk
Talking to an automated voice rather than real people.
Talking to someone that cannot speak understandable English.
Talking to someone who knows something.
Telephone tag
That person being available to talk
That you are always on the phone all day long
The amount of phone tag that is played.
The amount of time wasted waiting to connect with the person you need
The attitudes of unsolicited vendors that think you actually owe them the time to chat and discuss your business.....QUIT CALLING!
The automated call service

The inability to talk with someone when I need them.

The indifference of some 'unknown' clerical types who feel free to assure action and then promptly forgetting both the promise and the action. The anonymity is a cloak of incompetence for a few.

The 'introductory' sales call fishing for information on our company/my buying habits, etc. Too time consuming/scripted. Send a letter/fax/email. I hate industry related PHONE surveys. I am willing to participate, but they turn in to the same long, drawn out format. I like this surveys format. Nice job.

The lack of recorded information to easily reference back to.

The need for 'polite conversation' -- sometimes you just want to state your business and move on without a lot of conversation

The noise

The time aspect is usually at the caller's whim. The receiver has to react to a call and do it on the caller's time. OR Voice mail is overused. If something can wait, don't leave a voice mail. If someone is gone, use e-mail if possible. Voice mail receivers sometimes tend to allow calls to go into voice mail for screening purposes and won't answer the phone, even if they are in.

The time spent waiting for mills and or customers to call back.

The 'untouchables' .ie - people who obviously are trying to avoid calls. they have their cell phone ring to their office instead of voicemail and they are never in the office. The funny part is a lot of them claim they don't want people to have to go to voicemail and claim to do this for 'better' customer service. We all know the truth though.

There are times when talking over the phone just doesn't cut it. You need to be able to sit down with the person to have a real conversation. Also rude receptionists and awful elevator hold music can set the tone for a not-very-happy phone call.

There isn't one really. I live on the road-without a cell phone there would be a lot less business...

Time

Time it takes to get person you need to talk to.

Time spent on hold. I can usually check a few e-mails while on hold. Although e-mail doesn't have the personal touch, it is by far the most efficient way to do business.

Time spent on hold. It is somewhat unproductive.

Time spent waiting for a person or a call back

Time wasted missing calls or caller

Time wasted on phone tag

Time zone differences.

Time zones. Getting phone calls returned promptly. Being put on perpetual hold.

Time zones. I'm EST and its frustrating having to wait 3 or 4 hours before West Coast companies start work.

Times that I feel screened and receive no return phone call and the automated categories that may or may not fit my needs

Timing, reaching the person you want to communicate with on the first try.

Too many calls from office jockies

Too many steps in an automated answering system. Someone that talks too fast.

Too slow

Try solving problems that can only be solved by personal visit.

Trying to complete sale and having other lines ringing to be answered

Trying to dial through to a supplier when they open for business, and all you get is a busy signal.

Trying to give someone an order and they ask you to hold on with out putting you on hold and you hear them talking to someone next to them very loud back ground noises or conversations going on always playing phone tag because they will not leave a detailed message they just say call me back

Trying to reach a certain person

Trying to reach a salesperson during a busy market.

Trying to wade through an automated system that never allows you to talk to a person. When a person doesn't update their voice mail message so you know if they will even get the message you leave.

Unable to reach someone.

Unanswered voice messages

Understanding customer who do not speak loud enough or clear enough to get their name or inquire.

Unfriendly or rude receptionists. LOOOOOOOONG voice mail messages.
Unprofessional morons who use profanity
Unreturned calls
Urgency to my problem, which is really my customers. This shows poor customer service on both parties,
Usually the incompetence of the person most companies put forth to handle phone inquiries, and their programmed, inflexible responses.
Various problems getting to person
Verbal agreements may not hold after transaction is processed.
Very impersonal
Vocal box
Voice mail
Voice mail (also known as 'avoid' or 'ignore') multiple fax numbers for one company (it system only allows for one entry)
Voice mail / call screening
Voice Mail Jail, not being able to contact someone after 1 or 2 attempts
Voice mail. Knowing someone is at their desk and they activate voice mail as they are too lazy to answer the call
Voice mail messages that are inaccurate or that do not communicate actionable information
Voice mail: callers not leaving detailed messages; not having voicemail available; and when the market is moving lack of prompt reply to voicemail.
Voice messages that are so fast you can't understand what the person is saying.
Voice messages which ask that you return the call, without leaving a reason to return the call.
Wading through an automated phone system. Especially at a mill.
Waiting
Waiting for a call back and feeling like a pest calling back because I do not get a call back on an inquiry.
Waiting for all the options on an automated system. I still choose the wrong one most of the time. And receiving unwanted calls, especially from brokerage firms.
Waiting for person to pick up
Waiting for a person to answer
Waiting for someone to call back, especially if you need to get a hold of them. It's also hard to gauge if you have a customer's full attention.
Waiting for the phone to ring!
Waiting for the recipient
Waiting on someone to either come to the phone or waiting for them to call you back
Waiting time.
Waiting. Calling automated systems with no live body to talk to. People who don't return calls - seldom or never. Having a receptionist answer and immediately say 'can you hold'.
Wasted time
Weird sound on the telephone line.
When a market is moving being held on the phone with someone who can't make up their mind or just wants to bs.
When I ask for a certain individual, and sent to voice mail
When I'm not able to get to the person I am trying to reach.
When in the middle of business with someone on the phone, they put you on hold to take an incoming call on their second line -- usually leads to being on hold for a prolonged period, and person you were talking with loses track of everything we were talking about.
When people do not answer the phone and you are put on hold constantly.
When people either make assumptions about what I need without taking the time to ask questions (people trying to 'sell' me) or when I am trying to reach someone, being screened so stringently it makes it almost impossible to reach the person I need to speak with.
When someone calls and doesn't leave a message .... when people are in, but too often in meetings that they can't be reached.....
When someone repeats themselves over and over again.

When the party I am trying to reach does not have voicemail, and I have to relate a complex message to a phone reception person.

When the person answering the phone is incompetent, and when the call is answered by an automatic answering service and you have to punch SEVERAL numbers to get to where you want to go.

When the person you are talking to has another conversation going with either someone in their office or another client on another line.

When the person you are talking to just starts talking to someone else without asking if you can wait a moment. Most people I deal with are very professional on the phone, the ones who aren't get very few call from me.

When the phone service is out, then business gets put on hold.

When upper management forgets the importance of having a real person as the first point of contact

When you answer an incoming call, and the caller has you on hold.

When you call and can't reach a real person

When you cannot get someone on the phone that you need to talk to.

When you can't get a hold of someone, or get an answer about something.

When you get to many phone calls from lumber traders when you are not buying and they know it.

When you have lousy hearing combine with bad phone service.

When you have to navigate through automated phone systems - It is horrible!!!

When you have to wait on a automated system to listen for your option so that you know the correct button to press, and it takes forever.

When you leave messages and the callee does not get back to you within a reasonable timeframe

When you lose orders, because you can not get somebody on the phone.

When your operator puts you with the client's operator and your client's phone is busy forever.

Working through some automated answering machines

You can only make so many phone calls in a given day. Other avenues of communication in conjunction with the phone are needed to conduct business, especially in a fast paced market. Holding and automated systems are very frustrating.

You can only reach one customer at a time.

You can see the expression of the person on the other end of the line.

You can't actually reach out and wring a neck or two.

You can't demonstrate your people skills. When first starting in the business you get a lot of no's or you can't get through the gatekeeper. Usually meeting a customer face to face works better, or it is easier make a sale.

You don't know when they will call back

Your questions address it.



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## Random Lengths Phone Practices Survey

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### Question 17

**Enough criticism... are there any practices that you wish to compliment?**

> Voice mail is a fact of life. Using it appropriately by leaving complete messages get the best and most prompt responses. > Leaving detailed daily greeting on voice mail so callers have an idea what to expect in terms of response and options for redirecting questions. > People who, when transferring callers, stay on the line until the transfer is completed. > Ask before transferring a call if they want to leave a voice mail in case the transfer fails. > Provide the direct number of the target of a call transfer before the transfer in case the transfer fails. > Thanking callers for calling.

1. Upbeat receptionists that are always positive when you call; even when the person you are calling is busy or it is just busy in general. 2. People that (when leaving voice mail messages) indicate the reason for their call. This allows me to get information prepared in advance of calling back.

1. Caller ID that works! 2. Trained receptionists that don't waste your time and keep you informed.

1. Friendly and professional receptionists. 2. Prompt callbacks.

1. Just getting down to business is always good

1. Those humor recordings that some companies have when you are put on hold. 2. Being able to solve problems immediately with someone sitting 3000 miles away from you.

1. Checking back in a timely fashion if you are put on hold. 2. Directing your call to a competent party if the party you called is not available.

5 stars to company's that use a LIVE receptionist.

A cheerful receptionist that checks back when I'm on hold

A cheerful and pleasant personality on the other side of the phone.

A cheerful operator on the other end of the line that remembers your name. i.e.: Bev Hires at Richmond International.

a cheerful receptionist

A courteous receptionist that is efficient. A voice mail system that is informative.

A friendly receptionist.

A friendly receptionists are a commodity. One with a great personality can make the wait bearable.

A friendly, personable receptionist. We have 2 customers that I constantly compliment on their receptionist's professionalism and the great first impression that is made.

A good receptionist can change an attitude or make someone look forward to placing a call. Worth her weight in gold.

A good receptionist makes all the difference.

a good receptionist, who is pleasant and knowledgeable about their job

A good receptionist.

A good voice mail system is a life saver, as is e-mail when you can't contact someone.

A happy pleasant voice at the other end.

A little information, he is on the phone? he is gone. Just knowing if he is in.

A live receptionist that answers the phone

A live receptionist who recognizes your voice and calls you by your name

A live receptionist/operator. I believe that the last company with live receptionist. will get all the business.

A live voice giving options and offering to help or redirect the call if appropriate. We mandate that an incoming phone rings no more than 2 rings before EVERYBODY starts reaching for the phone. Reminder button alerts the person when



call has been on hold after 30 seconds
A majority of people are polite, return calls etc. and dealing with them is not a problem.
A nice person who is understanding
A nice pleasant voice on the other end
A person with pleasant voice
A polite, informative response from the person answering the phone e.g. ' John has just picked up a line but the call should be brief. Would you like to hold or could I have him call you back ?'
A real person with a sincere, positive attitude.
A receptionist
A receptionist that has the sense and phone manner that makes you feel as though you are important and will help in any way that she/he can.
a receptionist that you can develop a relationship with that will help you get through when she knows your call is important and the person you called is being hung out by a less important call.
A switchboard operator who frequently checks back with you while on hold
A voice that says hello in a nice manner & takes care of you.
A warm body answering the phone
After calling a company for months, years, or any extended time its very nice to develop voice recognition and place names to individuals. A little more personal touch helps, I think.
All calls must be answered regardless of the situation everyday of the call
All in all most people are polite, friendly and respectful when on the phone.
All negative, sorry
All those companies that still utilize a system with a live, intelligent, and 'friendly' person on their switchboard.
Almost all of the time people are pleasant and helpful
An efficient telephone operator can be a delight to encounter and is a valuable asset to any company.
An operator that remembers my name from my voice.
Answer machine or answer service works will if the party will ask the question so when you call back you have the answer.
Answers with in three rings, pleasant friendly voice, called party connected within 2 min or returns call promptly
Any company who actually has a human answering the 'front door.'
Any pleasant, professional receptionist can make a call less frustrating
Any receptionist that will help you reach your party.
Any receptionist who will help me to get in contact with the person I need.
Anyone who returns their calls via phone or e-mail promptly.
Anytime a genuinely cheerful person answers the phone, it speaks volumes for the company that they represent!
As above, when someone knows you are trying to meet a deadline and they find they are unable to give you what you need by then, they call you and let you know what's going on.
Asking for a call-back, rather than wait
Attentive and friendly operators
Automated phone systems
Automated systems that allow human contact. Staff who treat a caller like he's welcome, who make sure your reason for calling is addressed one way or another. People who make sure your directed the right way, even if you have the wrong department/location.
Automated systems that are well laid out and not dead ended, such as giving a number to get to an attendant so you are not stuck in a system, and having a directory that is up to date and accurate.
Being checked by someone when on hold. Phone being answered by a real person. Getting 'Please' and 'Thank you'.
Being given option when someone is not available.
Being given the choice to hold, go to voice mail or if someone else could help
Being given the option to hold before going into the voice mail system.
Being on the phone, you can feel the other person. You can cover vast territory. You are able to manage problems without leaving your office.
Being prompt and knowing what you are looking for during a call

Being recognized and put in touch with the customer.
Being told the person needed is currently with someone else, and given options for contact. Being checked back with frequently and updated about contact if placed on hold.
Being told when my party will be back is unavailable at this time.
Business calls that are concise, accurate and have had prior thought.
Business that answer in person and give feedback regarding a person's availability, etc.
Businesses that have a line open for preferred customers/suppliers only
Businesses that have a real person answering the phone, that are very professional, knowledgeable and pleasant to talk to.
Businesses that make sure all issues/questions are addressed and taken care of if possible before hanging up.
By phone you are able to build the relationship you have with your customer by talking about things they like outside of business. You can also learn more about your customers over the phone...
Call backs are always good
Called parties that have a direct line answered without going through operator.
Callers who identify themselves and their organization first up; callers who speak clearly; callers who have a smile in their voice
Callers who identify themselves when you answer.
Calling and reaching a live person instead of a machine.
Calls being answered within one or two rings. Given the option to leave a voice mail message. Helpful, courteous, person that answers the phone.
Calls returned quickly with the correct information
Calls that are answered by breathing people who care about my business and theirs. Being asked options when my call can not be answered by my called party.
Can be very efficient
Can't emphasize the importance of a friendly receptionist enough (human of course). Being a receptionist is the worst job in the world, people are pushy, rude, demanding, and impatient. They also want the receptionist to be able to answer all their questions, tell them jokes, flirt, etc etc. So finding a quality receptionist is extremely difficult but very important, especially if you rely on your receptionist to keep people on hold for you.
Can't think of anything. Sorry
Can't think of many
Cell phone users who pull over to use the handset.
Cell phones
Cheerful and helpful voice
Cheerful receptionists who remember who I am from the sound of my voice. A customer that has made a receptionist aware that I am one of their important suppliers and the receptionist shows concern that I get hold of my contact or make sure they get a message to them.
Cheerful secretaries/admin. assistants.
Cheerful, direct, and professional phone manners. They are fast becoming extinct.
Cheerful, identified answers
Cheerfulness, promptness, attentiveness to on hold
Clear concise voicemails that leave all the relevant details and don't absolutely require a call back.
Clear speakers
Companies that actually have a nice person answering the phone and she doesn't put you in cyber-space.
Companies that constantly check with you if you are on hold offering other options or just acknowledging I'm holding.
Companies that continue to use live, professional, operators. This, to me, demonstrates that the company has placed a higher priority on customer satisfaction than on counting 'costs'.
Companies that have a live person answer-even if it is not the one I called
Companies that have enough guts to hire a pleasant Operator that knows what she/he is doing
Companies that have receptionist that can recognize your voice.
Companies that have well trained, courteous receptionists.
Companies that still answer their phone with a pleasant, helpful person.

Companies that use user friendly auto answering services.

Companies using live people answering the phones

Companies who still believe that a human voice is worth the cost.

Companies with a live receptionist

Companies with direct dial lines that go directly to the desired party are appreciated because if that person is on the other line you get that information right away and can either call back later or wait for the person to clear the other line they are on, or leave a voice mail message.

Companies with individual phone lines for key personnel.

Companies with real, live people to talk to

Companies that have an actual person to answer the phone.

Compliments to the receptionist who is keen on the fact that there has been a game of phone tag going on and goes the extra step to take a personal memo the the contact in an effort to complete the union.

Considering the volume everyone buys and sells most people do a good job.

Conversations that are to the point and with clear opinions are very appreciated.

Courteous phone manner, quick return calls

Courteous receptionist is the greatest

Courteous Service Attentive receptionists Prompt return calls

Courteous, pleasant responses

Courteous and efficient receptionists.

Courtesy

Courtesy by the other person, plus the recognition of who you are, or what service you have provided that was 'exceptional'.

Customer or mill that is always available

Dealing with a receptionist who recognizes your voice and does all they can to asset you.

Direct communication on the phone is still better than e-mail. It's easier to pick up information in a voice conversation and sometimes e-mails can be taken out of context.

Direct interchange and the ability to judge the other persons response.

Direct lines rather than through switchboards and call back within the hour, if nothing more to say I'm working on it.

Direct lines that can be picked up by others in the same office.

Directly reaching party called. Ability to leave detailed message.

Effective automated systems that get you where you want to be quickly.

Effective use of voice mail is great, much more productive than operators.

Efficient receptionists secretaries that give options and know where there people are (you are not holding for a person that two minutes later you are told they are not in today!)

Efficient, courteous and professional phone skills.

E-mail

E-mail and instant messaging have become a very helpful tool.

E-mail can relay 100% more information in a fraction of the time, in writing, without voice mail, and it can be retrieved at a time that is convenient.

E-mail cuts out the small talk that takes up time

e-mail speed/should use more in our business

E-mail. Hands down my favorite means of communication.

E-mailing

E-mails have saved me much time.

Even though I'm accustomed to having an automated system answer the phone, it's still nice to get a helpful and cheerful person when one needs assistance.

Even with technology this is still a relationship-based business and that is what makes it a terrific job

Everyone is usually friendly!

Everyone who still has a real live courteous receptionist who can take a message in person.

Fast, efficient, effective and economical.
Firms that have kept 'real people' answering their incoming calls.
for most part in our industry its very good done the old fashion way all around
For the most part everyone in our business sooner or later will develop the phone etiquette they need or they won't put food on the table. It's still a relationship based business.
For the most part the wholesale lumber market has figured out that if buyers (willing to buy) get annoyed with the treatment they receive on the phone, they will vote with their dollars to move on to other wholesale sources. Most professional wholesales (and mills) offer efficient phone service.
For the most part, wood products professionals have good phone skills.
Friendly receptionist who can pick out your voice after a few calls and checks on you every 2-3 minutes if your put on hold.
Friendliness by receptionists/assistants.
Friendly people who answer the telephone in a cheerful voice with a willingness to help.
Friendly personal contact.
Friendly Receptionist Receptionist who remembers me Responding or returning messages promptly
Friendly receptionists
Friendly receptionists...worth their weight in gold...
Friendly switch board operators
Friendly voice on the other end that knows you. Friendly voice in general. When I am routed to the right person or department on the FIRST try. Companies that provide quick solutions to my problems.
Friendly voices, helpful manner, prompt reply
Friendly, happy people answering the phone
Friendships. Jokes. Happiness. Closing Deals. Smiles.
Get to the point and does not waste any time
Getting a live competent person on the other end
Getting to talk to person you want People that call back asap
Good attendants are priceless.
Good English, absolutely no cursing or swearing, all of which I call professionalism
Good idea about the e-mail survey, I can complete it when I have time, not while I'm trying to take calls from customers.
Good lively music on the hold.
Good music
Good reception gives the company a far better image than the company may think it does. Unfortunately this is rarely a planned procedure. It more often happens by happy accident that the person hired for reception is personable and attentive to the caller's needs and time constraints
good receptionist
Good receptionist who appreciates your time
Good receptionists
Good receptionists who are polite and communicative.
Good receptionists..... quick responses on e-mails people leaving accurate voice mails telling when they will be back, contact cell numbers etc..
Good spirited people, well mannered.
Good survey!!
Good Switch Boards with voice mail option. Prompt call backs.
Good telephone manners good attitude helpful person goes out of their way to get you with the right person or your contact gives you good info so you can reach them.
Great for developing and nurturing a business and personal relationship. Much better than e-mail in negotiating because of being able to sense attitude and voice tenor.
Guys who immediately return all calls are to be commended despite all of our busy schedules
Happy receptionists
Have a pleasant willing person answer the phone and apologize if the person whom you wish to speak to is not

available, then give me option for voice mail, cell number etc, and let me decide which suites me.
Having a great call is rejuvenating.
Having a live person answer
Having a live person answer the phone.
Having a means of communication. our store has been in operation since 1862.....it must have been interesting then without a phone.....
Having a person answer that has a positive outlook
Having a real voice pick up the phone.
Having an actual person answer the company phones.
Having the receptionist wish me a great day!
Hold music? I like it when there isn't any commercials.
Human being (receptionist) answer the phone
Humans on the other end
I always appreciate a friendly and efficient voice answering the phone. I don't ever mind being asked for my name, because I know I appreciate knowing ahead of time who is calling for me.
I always like when the person who is answering the phone identifies themselves, that way you get to know them better. Also, identifying the company and a nice greeting works too. Nothing is worse than calling in and getting an unpleasant 'HELLO!' or 'YEAH!'.
I am a believer in daily voice mail messages to let people know where I am as I travel extensively and internationally.
I appreciate a friendly voice answering the calls I make.
I appreciate a receptionist that speaks clearly, is courteous, and will respond to my needs regarding availability of person I am calling.
I appreciate being asked for my opinion
I appreciate courteous receptionists who make it a joy to speak with them.
I appreciate good quality reception - advising the status of the person I'm calling (i.e., in office / out of office) and offering a choice of alternatives (voice mail / hold etc).
I appreciate it when callers return my calls promptly. There are some people that make this a matter of personal courtesy -- that impresses me.
I appreciate it when I place a call and there is a human voice on the other end that sounds cheerful and happy to be there. Someone who is willing to spend some time offering you assistance in finding the party you are looking for, suggesting that you talk to someone else or offering their voice mail number and transferring you through.
I appreciate it when people use manners and speak clearly on the telephone.
I appreciate it when the person answering is informative about the one for whom the call is for. Advising me to hold or to use voice mail depending on the situation is very helpful.
I appreciate those who return calls to acknowledge that they received my voicemail message even if they don't have the answers yet. I know of some who don't call for days and their excuse is that they didn't have the 'answer' for me anyway.
I can't say enough about a receptionist that treats my call as though its the most important thing she has to do that day.
I can't stress how important a good reception is to any company. Especially when they know you by your voice.
I compliment any company that continues to have a person answer the phone instead of an answering system. I further compliment companies that give each individual a phone number that can be called separately from the main number that rings directly to their desk. In this case, it is also best when a message tells you if they are on the phone or away from their desk before it puts you into voicemail.
I compliment the people who know how to use voice mail and tell me the reason/nature of their call and exactly what they need from me. That way when I return the call, I can have the answer and not waste time.
I do love voice mail when used correctly...we are in a busy world ...if someone leaves info I can return the call with what they need (or leave another VM) Also the invention of Instant messaging is AWESOME...everyone should have that!
I do not mind automated phone systems but I wish there was always the option of talking with a live person. I like to know if someone is in the office or out when I call so that I can get an idea of when my phone call will be returned.
I don't mind voice mail because you can leave a message and tell the caller what you need then they can get back to you with the answer.
I enjoy speaking with a pleasant receptionist while waiting for the person I'm calling
I enjoy the people who are honest and tell you exactly where the person is and when you can expect a return call. Also people who have voicemail with a message giving you their cell phone number so that you can reach them without

waiting.
I enjoy the phone ringing at work. It means that business is steady.
I enjoy the random length on e-mail.
I enjoy the weekly b.s. sessions we have when buying or selling each week.
I feel lucky to have the customers I have in that we are able to have jovial conversations & able to communicate lots of information in a short period of time on the phone. I deal with decision makers, where I do not have to call back to close deals. For the most part everyone, with the exception of a few, in the lumber business is very nice. I do believe some have cut too much middle management and unlike before it is becoming increasing difficult to get a hold of people.
I have found several locations where the voice mail (when individuals are not available) to be very informative about when you can expect a response and that way you can try to be available for the call.
I have learned to communicate a lot through a combination of e-mail and voice mail. Both technologies have improved my production.
I have many customers that will stay on the line while I try to make things happen. Its a very fluid business and sometimes patients is a virtue.
I like a person answering the phone to be able to assist and direct calls to the appropriate person.
I like callers who identify themselves without having to ask. I like people who leave voicemails that ask what they need so you can call them back with an answer, not to find out the question. And, I like people who change their voicemail to say when they are out for the day.
I like e-mail. I like websites (that are functional). I like people to give me the option of e-mail vs. phone time.
I like it when a support person answers a direct line promptly when the party I am trying to reach is away from their phone, and tells me the person is away and outlines options; cell # voicemail, take a message, will return, etc.
I like it when someone's voice mail tells me there schedule for the day so I know if they are just away for a few moments or on vacation for 3 weeks.
I like live bodies, but our office using teleprompts because we had complaints on the live bodies. There is no perfect solution.
I like phone systems where a live person answers and only goes to automated when really busy. I like the one minute ring back option. There's nothing like a pleasant, personable voice on the other end of the line. I always try to present myself in that manner.
I like receptionists that are pleasantly willing to take a message instead of sending you directly to voice mail.
I like receptionists who act as though my call is important.
I like that people have voice mail to leave a detailed message vs. leaving a message with an operator.
I like the people who call in with something productive and wastes neither his time nor mine.
I like to have a person on the other end answer rather than a automated calling system. By talking on the phone you can develop a relationship that wouldn't be there if every thing was e-mails
I like to hear a smiling voice answer for companies. I have been lucky to be associated with some of the best.
I like when someone is pleasant, and offers a solution when my initial request cannot be handled. I like caller I.d. it speeds the process along.
I love a good receptionist! They can often eliminate the need for phone tag by redirecting calls or taking good, concise messages...and as much as I like voicemail, often that doesn't get retrieved in a timely fashion...but a good receptionist can see that your message gets the attention it needs.
I love dealing with a person and not by e-mail or anything else. I like to get the problem solved with the person themselves.
I love fun hold music and really pleasant front line people who answer the phone.
I love it when I get an assistant that knows his or her job and can get you answers even when the Big Guy is busy.
I love it when receptionist recognize my voice and understand how I need to be transferred.
I love it when they answer the phone quickly and get me transferred where I need to be without wasting time.
I love voice mail to leave a message. It's much better than leaving it with a person, I can be way more detailed.
I love voice mail. It makes sure the recipient gets the message just as the caller wanted!
I prefer talking to a warm body as opposed to a recorded message. There are still companies that provide that wonderful, personalized service.
I prefer to speak to a receptionist if I am not able to speak to someone directly. and in general, working on the phone is a very good way of doing business quickly.
I really appreciate folks that identify themselves up front and get to the point of their call. I also appreciate a receptionist (old world I know) who knows where folks are and promptly offers a solution if they are not available

I really like voice mail. The person you are calling gets YOUR message in YOUR words and tone if they are not available at that time.

I still like phones, but prefer e-mail most of the time.

I still prefer a receptionist over the automated phone systems, it makes business much more personable.

I thank God for everyone who returns calls.

I think automated systems have really improved and the really good ones allow you to get to the person you want or their voice-mail quickly and efficiently.

I think it's great when someone uses voicemail properly. To me that means leaving a detailed message with what they want, speaking clearly and then repeating their phone number at the end.

I think that most of our industry will return a message in a prompt fashion.

I think that the receptionists are one of the most underrated positions, they can make or break your business

I want to compliment the companies that still use a receptionist.

I would have to say that when I call and the person I am trying to reach is not there, the secretary will inform me on there return or if they are on vacation. So I am not waiting for call I know they are not there.

I would like to see more humans answering the phone, its a better personal touch

I would only say that a cheerful attitude is worth its weight in gold.

I'd like to compliment some of the excellent receptionists that are very pleasant and professional that I talk to every day when calling my customers.

Identifying whom is calling when the phone is answered. And asking if anyone else can help if the party called is out or busy.

If a firm does not have a live voice answer (a receptionist) I prefer having only 1 to 3 platforms before going into voice mail. That works for me. If a firm uses voice mail have them return calls that same day unless they leave a specific message detailing their schedule that day.

If the person is busy, given the option to go into voice mail or to be put on hold.

I'm indifferent on the matter but it appears that voice mail , cellular phones and e-mail are today's way of doing business if you want to be successful.

Individuals who make a point to check up with you when on hold.

Issues resolved quickly

It can be quick

It can be very efficient. Between the telephone and e-mail we have been able to essentially double our business without expanding staff.

It helps greatly when a customer leaves a message telling me what he needs. I can then have the answer for him when I call. It helps to leave your name, company and phone number when expecting a returned call. 'Call me' doesn't tell me who I need to call unless I happen to recognize the voice.

It is a pleasure to talk to a pleasant voice that attempts to help you even if to no avail.

It is always nice to hear a human voice answer the phone.

It is good to connect with people via a live conversation. Although, I prefer e-mail because it allows me to work more efficiently and manage my time how I see fit.

It is just nice to know the person's name whom you are speaking to.

It is still the most inexpensive way to be in front of your customer base on a regular basis. Most of our customers still lack internet.

It's a pleasure to do business with companies That still have a real person answering the phone.

Its always nicer to talk to a happy person. The cheerful traders and customers are the ones I speak with most.

It's great when a receptionist checks back frequently so that you aren't left wondering out there in la-la land

It's still more fun actually talking to people.

Leaving the information on my answering service instead of calling back again and again.

Leaving useful information on voice mail when playing phone tag

Like people that identify themselves when they answer the call. Like having someone check back frequently when on hold and then given the option to leave a voicemail or message. People that return calls in a timely manner. People that speak into the phone so you can hear what they are saying.

Listening to trivia while on hold and having your call returned within an hour.

Live operators and messaging.

Live operators, better yet, direct lines to the party you're calling.

Live operators/receptionists are great. The automated systems can't anticipate all the possible requests, and can't point you in the right direction if the party you called is not currently available (traveling, out of the office for an hour, on the phone, etc....the automated system provides no clues).

Live people answering the phone and taking enough care to make sure you are dealt with professionally

Live people who are pleasant and helpful.

Live person actually answering the phone. Not one employee nor one customer calls our headquarters without their call being answered, by the third ring, by a live person.

Live person answering phone and giving a choice of holding or going to voicemail.

Live person answering the phone. Always sound happy and friendly even though you don't see the person.

Live receptionist. Return calls timely

Live' receptionists who return to see if I'd like to continue to hold

Live, friendly people that answer incoming calls. An automated system kills more sales and inquiries than is ever known. Hire more people to answer phones.

Love e-mail

Love having a direct line to dial into.

Love voice-mail. It enables the caller to leave a detailed message that doesn't get 'lost in translation' by having another person involved.

Manners on the phone or off are always appreciated.

Many.

Many of the more established companies still use a human receptionist and handwritten messages. This is still the better way to handle clients, second only to actually reaching the intended party.

Many places I call are very professional in the way they handle telephone calls.

Mills and buyers that have people available to answer calls

Mobile phone availability.

More sales companies are trying to re-evaluate the use of automated systems. More are realizing that a friendly voice as a first impression is very important.

Most companies in the Random Lengths subscription community are very courteous and professional on the phone.

Most mill people are very courteous, and anxious to please. I think the older people in this business have a lot more tolerance, and that tolerance transmits to their wisdom. They know that it takes a relationship to make any deal work. That is a joy to me, having traded lumber products for over 43 years.

Most of our suppliers return phone calls promptly. Most of the receptionists are very polite and offer me options if the party I am calling isn't available.

Most of the people are pretty quick at taking an order. it doesn't take a long time to place an order, just a long time in getting hold of someone

Most people and systems do a good job. No one likes to be told the person is in and you get the voice mail. OK if the person gets back to you. We all prioritize who we want to talk to and when to get back with them based on our own needs.

Most people are prompt at returning calls.

most people deal professionally

Most people I deal with do a good job returning calls

Most people I have dealt with are very friendly over the phone.

Most people in our industry are very pleasant and enjoyable to talk to.

Most people in the lumber trading business are of high moral and ethical standards. They take the business seriously and try hard to improve themselves and their relationships daily.

Most people we have to deal with are fantastic people and are a pleasure to talk to. Especially at our main office.

Most phone calls are returned promptly and almost always know what the subject matters is if you leave a message.

Most receptionists are very friendly and helpful.

Most receptionists in the lumber industry understand the 'hold' factor and do a good job of checking back.

Most secretaries are very professional and do a great job getting to know you.

Most suppliers and customers know how to make the best of it



used via e-mail (i.e. Buymetrics).

My favorite quality in a receptionist or person who answers the phone is when my voice is recognized immediately. Another important quality is knowing when it is (or isn't) ok to chit chat.

My former boss used to tell me that he could tell if I was smiling or not, and I didn't believe him until I heard some 'frowners' on the phone, and you can really tell. So, I appreciate when people smile on the phone!

My head set! stopped neck and shoulder pain, and it is easier to multi task while talking to customers

Nearly everyone i talk to is pleasant and knowledgeable.

Never being ask who's calling Not being left on terminal hold.

No

None.

None. I wish everyone would just use e-mail.

None...unless the music playing while I'm on hold is one of my favorite songs, no wait, they always pick up during the song...no, none.

Not having an automated phone system !! You should always have access to human beings

Nothing beats a good direct-dial connection with an efficient voice-mail system.

Often a phone call is necessary to accomplish action/understanding.

On balance most companies handle their phone business well .

Once in awhile, I'll reach a company that doesn't have an automated system. You can really get to who you need to talk to.

Ones that tell you up front how many calls are in front of you and give you options to contact your party.

operator checking in with you while waiting on hold.

Operators that give you the option of voice mail, cell phone number, or e-mail if they know the person you are attempting to contact is going to be especially difficult to reach at the current time.

Operators who keep you advised as to how long your wait will be

Other than personal contact, direct access to customers and people by phone is imperative.

Other than, where would we be without phones? I do like voice mail, instead of leaving messages with other people. Then if your call's not returned you know it's not because the person didn't get the message.

Our customers are great and I enjoy talking to them!

Our industry has many pleasant people, who are enjoyable to talk to.

Paced, concise, clear voice messages are a wonderful thing. Instant ID by the caller - always appreciated Receptionists that immediately advise that Joe is on the line, would you like to go to his voice mail or hold? Now you have all your options & its your decision how to go forward

People answering their own telephone.

People that answer their own phones.

People that aren't to important to answer their own phone. Also people that know your time is valuable and keep you informed while you wait.

People that change their phone messages every day to say if they will be in or not. They should be commended. Certainly, it is a fine display of customer service.

People that identify upon calling

People that know their job, even with a phone

People that still answer the phone in person.

People that use voice mail regularly - it is quick and avoids the phone tag problem. I don't like it when voice mail is not available. I really like a quick response when v-mail is used.

People that use your name, especially when they are not a regular contact.

People that watch their e-mail and reply while they are on hold on a return phone call.

People who answer their own phone. Rather rare but very nice.

people who answer with who they are, takes away the guess work of who you are talking to

People who are willing to help and are courteous.

people who call forward to cell phone to deal with business when they are at lunch or at meetings

People who can answer with a 'smile' and know how to communicate and use the system where they are employed

People who change their voice mail daily, referencing the date and whether or not they are in are to be commended.

People who change their voice mail messages daily to let you know if they are in or not on that day.

People who do what they say they will do.

People who get back to you when they say they will

people who give the option of leaving a message, holding or voice mail

People who identify themselves when they answer the phone.

people who identify themselves when they call

People who identify themselves, return messages promptly, and people who change their voice messages to indicate when they may be back in the office.

People who leave cell phones in their vehicle when they're in your place of business.

People who return calls in a manner that makes me feel important.

People who return calls promptly and identify themselves

People who return messages promptly

People who return voice mails even when they do not know the person leaving the message.

People who will check back after they have put you on hold to see if would like to continue to hold or if you would like to leave a message.

Person that answers the phone does not ask 'who it is'

Personal answering and honest help

Personal attention

Phone attendants who acknowledge your request by saying 'Thank you' or 'One moment please' Phone systems which don't automatically switch you to voice mail after 4 rings. People whom you can see smile just by listening to them.

Phone calls save miles and allow access to alternate points of view within a short time period. Very cost effective tool for gathering data.

phone does allow you to talk to a LIVE person

Phone professionals, astute e-mailers, MSN users.... 'People who operate at the Speed of Business'

Placing an e-mail address within the voice message allows me the option to send an e-mail, which seems to be faster than voice mail today.

pleasant and efficient people answering the phone

Pleasant helpful people answering the phone instead of automated

Pleasant informative operators

Pleasant people on the phone who actually act like they like their job

Pleasant people who treat every incoming call as if were the most call of the day.

Pleasant receptionists are the greatest asset for a company - it can very often give you the best first impression of the company you are calling. Also nice to speak to a 'live' body.

Pleasant sounding receptionist...even better if they recognize your voice and call you by name.

Pleasant sounding voice, callers that aren't too busy to listen to specific needs, people who return calls promptly

Pleasant sunny voices that recognize you, the caller

Pleasant voice, that directs my call correctly. I get a warm fuzzy

Pleasant, helpful receptionists that speak and understand ENGLISH!

Pleasant, knowledgeable, and helpful switchboard operators.

Please ignore me on hold so I can get some work done

Pleasant attends

People who talk business and that's it. Most times I am busy and want information and want to move on.

Polite receptionist....

polite conversations.

polite reception

Polite receptionists that give you choices regarding how to handle your call. Voice mail is often a favorite choice if the person called is busy.

Polite receptionists, and there are many. Being told immediately that person is busy and given options. The first person that answers the phone can set the tone for the rest of the call.

Polite, friendly, and outgoing people answering.

Polite, friendly, helpful people....

Politeness to all that answer or take messages,.

Politeness, attentiveness, integrity, and trust

Professional people who are on top of their profession...returning messages as soon as they can

Professional practices include: - people who return calls promptly - people who identify themselves and the purpose of their call when calling - people who ask if they have caught you at a bad time and acknowledge that they may be interrupting your day - people who take calls and are willing to spend a couple of minutes to determine if it makes sense to speak further - people who treat each other with respect. After all, hopefully we are doing our best to do a good job growing our businesses.

Professional receptionist that is personable and answers the phone, then gives info as to whether called party is available/busy/not there etc.

Professionals who have voice recognition & understand the importance of your call & getting you to the person you desire.

Prompt answering of the phone

Prompt replies either by phone or e-mail.

Prompt return calls voice mail

Prompt return phone calls & quotes

Prompt return voice mails. Short voice mails.

Promptly returned phone calls

Promptly returning phone calls

Proper use of e-mail prompt personal attention on the phone

Quick call back

Quick communication

Quick response on message left.

Quick return phone calls

Rather than leaving the message that I called you now you call me. The person will keep calling until contact is made.

Real live operators

Real live people with real live manners!

Real operators who take real messages, or offer to transfer you to a voice mail system, according to your preference, not the receptionist's

Real people answering phone.

Real people that know you and make sure you get to the person you want or get the message to them so they can return your call. people that follow up and that return calls.

Real person on switchboard

Receptionist

Receptionist that are professional, Buyers that are professional, companies that respect the partners they do business with,

Receptionist who are friendly.

Receptionist who have 'personality' when they answer the phone!

Receptionist/someone (human) that answers the phone and represents the company well. one who knows they are the first voice for that company, and their attitude and cooperation are appreciated.

Receptionists that are cheerful

Receptionists that are friendly and try to help and check on you, not treat you like the devil because you are a salesman

Receptionists that are responsive, example: he's on the phone, could I have him call you or would you like to go to voice mail?

Receptionists that do a good job upon initial pick up. I just like to know where I stand in terms of being able to talk to my contact in short order- so I can make a decision as to what to do - hold, go to voice mail etc.

Receptionists that give options.

Receptionists that keep you posted as to the status of the person you called for.

Receptionists who ask if you want to remain holding and offer to take a message.

Receptionists who check back often and offer voice mail/ to take a message/another person.

Receptionists who continuously check to see if they can help me while I'm on hold for a customer/client.

Receptionists who like their job and can identify your voice because you call frequently.

Receptionists/Secretaries who are polite when they answer the phone make the entire calling experience so much nicer. Simple things like 'Good Morning' and 'Thank you for calling' go a long way.

Receptive, pleasant, human beings who answer the phone and communicate effectively.

Returning the calls fast.

Sales Reps who call you sir until you've given them your first name. Sales Reps who don't try and pitch you on the phone and ask if they may send you some info.

Salesmen taking no for an answer, and salesmen who actually remove me from 'the list' without strings attached.

Salesmen who know how to service multiple phone calls at one time. I love when I am transferred to the person I need, they answer, acknowledge me and ask me to hold for them while they finish their other call. In this practice the salesman can prioritize his own calls rather than having the receptionist try and do it for him. It's more efficient rather than leaving voice mails and playing telephone tag.

Salesperson answers the phone

Say what you are going to do and do what you say.

Service, pleasant voices

Several companies we do business with have exceptional front line secretaries that expedite our calls

Showing respect and using good manners on the phone are essential.

Some companies do an outstanding job with the phones. They identify them selves in a pleasant and professional way when answering, they are helpful if the intended party is unavailable and they are technically adept with the phone system as to be able to get you where you need to go without cutting you off or leaving you on perma-hold.

Someone leaving a voicemail that leaves time of call , number that they can be reached at and what the best time to reach them is.

Someone with a can do attitude, that does not blame others.

Sometimes its nice to simply chat with the other party.

Speakerphones are great for non-sales related conferences.

Speaking with a live receptionist

Speed dial + identification

Speed dial and a great receptionist!

Speedy return of calls; good automated answering systems;

Still would rather talk to a human being than an automated answering system.

Systems that allow you several options on reaching someone.

Systems that distinguish between a caller being on another call and out of the office entirely. If someone is just on another call I have found that my calls are returned sooner.

Talking to a live person

Talking to a person that wants to please you.

Talking to some nice people

Talking to someone on the phone can save time by getting an immediate response so you can continue to do business. A conversation can be pleasant and build good relationships. It is easier to convey attitudes, excitement, intent by voice rather than e-mail.

Telephone and personal relationships are much better than computer sales

Telephone is still more personal.

Thank-god for phones.

The ability in most cases to leave messages, so you don't have to keep trying to make contact

The addition of voice mail has been helpful when needing to leave a long message, as long as it isn't the only thing used.

the caller identifying what is the purpose of his call

The cheerful & 'happy to hear from you' voices and the 'thanks for calling' or the 'good to hear from you' that I get from many of my trucking people, whether or not I am able do business with them that day.

The companies that have very competent and professional people that handle the switchboards

The friendly and helpful receptionists at some of the places I call, they go out of their way to connect me with the person I called.

The live people are fantastic, helpful and pleasant

The lumber trading culture in general has a very good telephone etiquette: prompt call returns; most businesses are not using or abusing of auto-attendant feature and voice-mail is usually optional.

The option of holding or going to voice mail.

The personal touch

The phone allows you to get a feel for how the other person is feeling on the other end - e-mail can be read wrong and be impersonal

The phone is still the best way for inside traders to build personal relationships with customers.

The professional, respectful manner in which sales people and staff receive and address my call.

The pro's who know how to use a phone. No system can beat someone with knowledge who answers a call.

The receptionists who have been real professionals still remain in my memory after 31 years of this!!!

The speed at which things can be accomplished when 'the stars align.'

The use of live operators during business hours still adds to the professional image of companies that continue to use this practice

There are a minority of excellent receptionists that are awesome and friendly. It's so rare though that it's really noticeable. I don't think companies train anymore on phone etiquette.

There are a number of companies that the receptionist is always polite, let you know how your call will be handled and make sure it is.

There are many talented receptionist who know customers by name and company.

There are some companies who go out of their way to have a pleasant receptionist answer the phone. Others might as well have a dead person. Companies need to realize the importance of that front line company representative.

There are some excellent voice mail systems and automated receptionists.

There are some organizations that are very professional and efficient with their phone systems (as well as individuals). As a buyer, I find those traders who are proficient in the use of the phone easier to deal with than those not at ease, or at least confident in there phone techniques/etiquette.

There are still good companies that have a excellent professional receptionists that recognizes me when I call, tells me a best guess on when my party will be available or will take a note or vmail if asked.

There are still some great receptionists out there that recognize a voice and truly try to help you reach the right person.

There is no better way to quickly address an issue than by phone, even if you have to hunt down the other party.

There is no substitute for the spontaneous give and take that results from a phone conversation with your supplier or customer. It is difficult to discern tone or mood from the keyboard strokes of an e-mail correspondence. While great for trading purchase orders, giving detailed instructions, or taking care of tedious details, e-mail takes all of the fun out of the art of trading. I simply enjoy the rapport that develops from 'real' conversation. Assessing market conditions, developing trust, persuading, learning - all are best facilitated using the telephone.

There is nothing better for a company than a good receptionist, one that might recognize your voice, one that will ask if you want to hold, but let you know if you do hold, that there are two people on hold ahead of you. A happy receptionist will put a smile on your customers face.

There is nothing like voice communication to build trust and partnerships.

They pay my bills.

This business has always been done with a phone call, and the trust that's been established between parties. Though it has changed a little with new traders coming on board, I believe it's the best business that we're in as your word is gold.

Those companies that have a human voice on the other end, giving you the status, of the person you are trying to call and the options you have in order to get in touch with them the quickest way.

Those companies that haven't gone to automated answering services and that still take written messages (not everyone checks voice mail regularly enough, a piece of paper in hand is more likely to get a quick response).

Those few people who are organized enough to take verbal direction and follow through

Those having live operators

Those people that respond promptly.

Those pleasant people who answer and you can hear them smile.

usually the same ones who sound like they enjoy their job and are able to exchange pleasantries (not weather reports) in a brief 5 to 10 second transaction...they are also the same ones who, when they can, also offer advice such as - he/she are almost done with a call 'do you want to hold, leave a message, or go to his/her voice mail?'.... good receptionists deserve lots of credit.

Those that have competent receptionists that are friendly and intelligent. They cannot be paid enough.

Those that still have a live person

Those who have a human answer the phone, or transfer to someone taking calls for an individual who is out of the office.

Those who like to conduct business efficiently in a minimum amount of time without a lot of time wasting conversation...

Those who still use live receptionist or better yet live sales people who answer the phones.

Those with a real person on the other end

Those wonderful and talented receptionists that are NOT a recorded voice, but have the ability to recognize voices and names. They make me feel like their company cares if I do business with them.

Through phone conversation you have the ability to answer all questions at one time

To thank the businesses that have good operators and keep them.

Updated voice mail every day that tells if the party is in today and when they will return phone call

Use of faxes and e-mails definitely helps, headsets are great

User friendly phone systems. One mill, my trader has his own 800 #, but as I get into his voice mail if he is busy, I can hit 0 and get to a live person quickly who can advise me as to how long he will be.

Using a phone is a relatively quick and great way to establish relationships....i.e. personal touch. It increases communication efforts when talking minimizing misinterpretations. You are able to directly talk to an individual.

Using e-mail as a way to communicate

Verbal communication is still strong.

Very upbeat person who answers

Voice mail and e-mail are both tools that can make my life easier if people would use them wisely. We live in a high tech world, one day, hopefully everybody will be on a similar page.

Voice mail has improved our business, I believe. It has cut down on the amount of phone tag and wasted time considerably.

Voice mail has made it possible for important calls to come in even when away from the office or already on the phone. When people go to a automated system, and it's done right, it can be very helpful.

Voice mail helps and e mail when available is a neat deal when necessary. There are times when it is important to talk even if you have to hold

Voice mail helps cut down on non-productive phone time and helps speed up quote pricing

Voice mail is a great thing

Voice mail is great.

Voice mail is one of the best tools. I am not missing calls while on the phone.

voice mail option

Voice mail systems can be very effective if used correctly. The person using voice mail should ALWAYS update their message with their intended schedule daily so that the person calling has the correct expectation regarding a returned call. Also, if leaving a message on someone's voice mail system, be sure to leave information so the person return the call and respond accordingly.

Voice mail that give an option to be sent to a live person.

Voice mail very useful

Voice mail when used properly

Voice mails that state when the person called is out of the office, then gives an optional contact.

We like 1 on 1. Telephone is our most used system of communicating

Well managed & attentive phone etiquette.

Well-trained receptionist

When a live human being answers the telephone and is helpful it can make me happy all day.

When a person answers the phone and doesn't sound as if you are interrupting something much more important. A friendly voice.

When calling a business that has a receptionist that is friendly, informative, and professional, but there aren't many

around. I always compliment the business manager when this is the case.
When customers listen and tell you what they are looking for as opposed to avoiding the questions
When leaving a message phone message: Leave name first, return phone number second, slow and clear enough to easily understand, then message.
When live, personable people answer the phone and are capable of performing expected 'receptionist' functions.... Having the option given of voice-mail, page, or to hold for the requested party. Also, offering to take a message from me to be personally delivered by the receptionist... that would be nice.
When people call in with a complaint, yet they are very pleasant
When people call you back when they say they will. When I am given the option or told that e-mail or phone is the best way to get a hold of me.
When people who use voice mail keep their messages short and updated regularly
When there is friendly receptionist, that makes all the difference.
When you are offered the opportunity to hold or go to voice mail. If holding, operator checks back fairly frequent.
When you call a vendor or company and are able to be helped by who ever answers the phone without being passed off to someone else. I love talking to someone who knows their products. You can ask your question and they can give you the correct answer without holding or getting passed off. Better though, to be told the person doesn't know the answer and getting you the correct person that knows rather than feeding you a line and being told incorrectly.
When you call and the person identified themselves, the company and asked how can they help!!!
When you do reach someone, they are knowledgeable and can take care of what you called for.
When you get a respond even if the guy isn't in.. good music on hold or good information, even if it's news.
When you reach a company that does the above and often call you by name makes a caller feel good!! Few companies do so. Some when you call you wonder how they ever sell anything.
Whether it be a receptionist, sales person, whomever, I enjoy when they are courteous and efficient in getting to the point. When answers can happen on the same phone call. When I get an educated person on the line quickly. When others are involved with my account (besides just one person being assigned). When both parties are reasonable in expectations for call-backs.
Wireless headsets...when a salesperson can get away from his/her desk to go check with shipping all the while still speaking with me and not putting me on hold!
working with friendly people
Working with others in the industry that are near a phone does make the wheels turn faster.
Yes a pleasant person answering the phone and people being friendly even they can help or not even getting you to call someone else If done friendly like it makes business a lot easier.
Yes, companies that use real people to talk to live people, what a great idea! Sounds better than machines or electronics to me anyways...enough said!!!!
Yes, there are still a few companies who still understand it's important to have a personable employee answering and monitoring phone calls. When I call them it's like a breath of fresh air in the smog ridden world of phone automation.
Yes. Most people in the wood business tend to be friendly and use to doing business over the phone.
Yes.....I want to compliment those who still feel it is proper to put a real, live and pleasant person on the switchboard to answer calls.
You can leave a message on voice mail and they can call you back with your answer, don't have to ask the question all over again
You can make a transaction over the phone very quickly. can you imagine trying to make lumber purchases only when your rep is in town!!!!
You can reach many customers in one day.
You can really tell who is smiling and who is not. It comes through loud and clear.



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