PBP Executive Reports

COLD CALLING:

Cracking the

Voicemail Barrier

A SPECIAL REPORT FOR SALES PROFESSIONALS

Cold Calling: Cracking the Voicemail Barrier

PBP Executive Reports are straightforward, fast-read reports designed for busy executives. PBP Executive Reports excel at cutting the fluff, eliminating jargon and providing just the information today's executives need to improve their organizations' performance.

This PBP Executive Report was compiled and edited by the editorial staff of *The Selling Advantage*, one of the most respected newsletters serving the Sales profession. Not only does this report include effective techniques and strategies used by real salespeople on the front lines, but it delivers the best and latest thinking on handling voicemail.

This report is brought to you by:

370 Technology Drive
Malvern, PA 19355
800-220-5000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Voicemail can seem like the brick wall of sales.

But there are plenty of cracks in that wall. This report includes a variety of strategies and tactics the sales professional can use to get through the blockade and make their pitch.

Voicemail — which gained popularity as a way of downsizing administrative and clerical staffs — often prevents you from talking to the decision makers who need to hear about the solutions or benefits you have. This telephone call management tool is unavoidable and frustrating to the sales professional.

A tough fact: 70-80% of business-to-business calls get voicemail.

There are four basic, overall approaches to the problem of voicemail. Which ones you decide to use and how you use them will be based on your experience, testing and measuring results.

Most of these strategies and tactics are simple, low-cost methods to either help you avoid voicemail altogether or boost the chance of getting a call back by leaving the right kind of message.

All of the recommendations have been tested and used by successful sales professionals and coaches who have tracked their effectiveness using carefully designed metrics.

There are no guarantees of successfully evading the voicemail trap, but using the right approaches will boost contact rates, which almost always result in higher sales.

Included in this Executive Report:

- Why voicemail exists (Page 3)
- Benefits of getting past voicemail (Page 4)
- Four strategies for managing voicemail (Page 5)
- Customer reconnaissance (Page 5)
- Listen and Learn: Gathering information from the message (Page 6)
- Try different times (Page 7)
- Creating a voicemail “master list” (Page 7)
- Try different routes (Page 8)

- When you have to leave a message (Page 9)
- Classic voicemail blunders (Page 9)
- Using ‘intrigue statements’ to get through (Page 10)
  - The Idea Intrigue Statement (Page 10)
  - The “Only You” Intrigue Statement (Page 11)
  - The External Referral Intrigue Statement (Page 11)
  - The Internal Referral Intrigue Statement (Page 12)
  - The “I Thought of You” Intrigue Statement (Page 13)
  - The “Something Completely Different” Intrigue Statement (Page 13)
  - The Candid Intrigue Statement (Page 14)
- Delivering the message well (Page 15)
- Tone of voice (Page 15)
- How often to leave a message (Page 16)
- The 4/3 Follow-up Process (Page 16)
- The Ultimate Voicemail Strategy (Page 18)
- The 10 components of a good voicemail (Page 19)
- FAQ’s on voicemail (Page 20)
- 5 rules for making your voicemail “user friendly” (Page 21)

The Executive Report

Cold Calling: Cracking the Voicemail Barrier

When the telephone rings at companies these days, most of the time nobody answers.

In fact, 70-80% of all business-to-business calls hit the wall that's known as voicemail. With sales calls, this can be a critical barrier that sales professionals have to work hard to get around to speak directly to prospects and customers.

Reaching the decision maker beyond the machine is crucial to a successful sale. Getting through to only 20-30% of the decision makers, on average, impacts your contact rate. And that can seriously impact sales results.

It only follows that working through voicemail effectively can boost your bottom line.

The strategies in this report can help you and your salespeople get past voicemail, reach decision makers and sell more.

Which, as we all know, is the real bottom line.

Why voicemail exists

It's not hard to understand why most companies quickly and enthusiastically adopted voicemail in their organizations.

This simple call-answering technology was adopted so companies could eliminate secretarial and receptionist jobs. As the pool of typists, stenographers and all-around gatekeepers began to shrink, managers and employees took on more of their own administrative tasks – including answering their own phones.

Voicemail rapidly became a cost-effective way for capturing and screening phone calls. In much the same way the personal computer took over the job of writing letters and creating reports, voicemail became part of the suite of electronic tools that stood in for the vanishing administrative assistant.

In many ways, this replacement technology improved communication because:

- Those ubiquitous pink message slips that got lost, smudged or were illegible became a thing of the past
- A recorded message that could be saved or replayed at will was in many ways a more accurate form of communication, and
- Managers and executives found that they could pick and choose who they wanted to talk to without having to depend on an assistant to explain their absence or get talked into putting the caller through.

Screening calls was a bonus to busy executives who didn't want to get tied up on the phone.

Zero is an option

You know the drill: You call a customer or prospect, a voicemail message comes on and you have to decide:

- Try again another way or another time, or
- Leave a message.

But these aren't your only options.

Try hitting the number "0'.

Many phone systems use that number as a default that goes to a live person, such as a receptionist or assistant.

It can't hurt to try!

Benefits of getting past voicemail

The professional edge gained by learning to work through voicemail has a wide range of benefits.

Not only will you and your salespeople achieve a higher "reach rate," but you'll significantly reduce the frustration and burnout that afflict many in the sales force.

The respect and confidence that result from "getting through" to prospects and customers ultimately increases confidence.

And with more returned calls, salespeople will be making more presentations that lead to increased sales.

4 strategies for managing voicemail

There are four primary strategies for handling voicemail:

- Reconnaissance: Research, listen and learn
- Sneak attack: Different times
- Outflank: Booby traps and extensions, and/or
- Frontal assault: Leave a message.

The first three strategies deal with evading or avoiding voicemail, the last is about what to do if attempts are unsuccessful and you need to leave a message for the prospect or customer.

Reconnaissance

Getting information on a prospect or customer before making a call means more than just checking a Web site for the basics.

To find better information, it's best to look for an ally in the organization who'll give salespeople what they need. Two good sources for this kind of intelligence gathering:

- a **company's customer service department**, and
- a prospect's own **sales reps**.

If a company is large enough, it will have a **customer service department**. The people who work in this department are trained to give information. If you call and simply say "listen, I'm trying to find out some information about your company and its staff, I wonder if you can help me," you'll often get a lot more information from them than you would from a busy administrative assistant or receptionist.

The second source to contact is the prospect's own salespeople. Call the sales department and identify yourself as a fellow salesperson. For example: "My name is Bill Adams, a salesperson like yourself, and I wondered if you could help me." In most cases, the salesperson will be sympathetic, because he or she knows exactly what it's like.

In a test of this tactic, the sales departments at 63 companies were called and the right information was received 47 times. What's the right information?

- Contact name
- Pronunciation of the name
- Direct extension
- E-mail address, and
- Best time to call.

This is information you can't get from a Web site, where often the only information listed is a main switchboard number.

Listen and learn

When salespeople do call a prospect or customer and voicemail answers, it's best to resist the temptation to tune out or turn off.

Listen to the recorded greeting message. Is it specific? Does the person leave clues or details that can be used to plan the next step?

Assess the tone and the words. What can be gathered about the personality behind the message?

It's also important to think about what the message actually says.

Some people leave daily messages that contain clues that can be used. For example, "Hi, this is Bill Adams. Today is Monday, January 10. I'm tied up in a conference today but I will be checking in for messages. So if you'd care to leave your name, number and a detailed message, I'll get back to you as soon as I can."

What does this message reveal? For starters, it's very detailed. You can assume this is a detail-oriented person.

It also says this is someone who checks messages, so leaving one means you'll have higher odds of it being heard. Leaving a similar kind of detailed message will ensure that it interests the prospect.

At the same time, it's probably best not to leave a message for this kind of person. In all likelihood, they run through their messages and return only the calls from folks who pay them – customers or managers.

They figure vendors will get back to them!

Try different times

Typically, when people say they're out of the office, most salespeople figure it's best to call the next day. Not so. Anyone who's been out of the office for a day will spend the next catching up on everything they missed.

It's usually best to wait an additional day under these circumstances.

The goal is to reach a live person. If that person is a "C" level executive (VPs, CEOs, CFOs), it's best to try very early in the day.

Try calling between 7 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. Many executives will pick up the phone because they're curious about who would be calling them at this hour.

Their day hasn't begun to heat up, they're not in meetings and their assistants aren't in yet. So they tend to take calls. And if you get through to two or three every morning, that's 10 or 15 a week. That could be anywhere from 40 to 60 contacts a month simply because you called when most people don't.

Create a voicemail master list

Working from a written master list – instead of using one on a computer – helps salespeople get into the rhythm of dialing. If they don't reach one prospect, they can quickly move to the next.

Cycle through the master list. Start at the top and dial the first number. If no one's there, don't leave a message, go onto the second, third and fourth. When you reach the end of the list, go back to the beginning and try again. Don't worry about their caller ID. If you do reach someone and they say "You've called me three or four times!" the answer is: "Yes, I have. And boy, I'm glad I got a hold of you."

Try different routes

Caller ID is one of the big "booby traps" in making prospecting calls. Sometimes referred to as call display, this technology displays your telephone number and often your company's name on prospects' or customers' phones.

Not all prospects and customers have this feature, but it's becoming more prevalent. And they're using it to dodge sales calls.

This is especially true with existing customers. Perhaps you've sent them a quote and now they're avoiding a commitment. They see your number pop up on their caller ID and let it go to voicemail.

There are a couple of ways to avoid this trap. First, **try different extensions.** You can do this with:

- The "**bookend technique**" – Suppose the prospect or customer's extension is 109. Since you've already tried calling at different times (early morning, late in the day), you suspect your calls are being screened. So try calling the extensions immediately before and after 109, in this case 108 and 110. Numbers at larger companies tend to be in sequence. This isn't always true, but if it works you'll get someone nearby. That person will transfer the call and the ID will then be an internal number that the prospect is more likely to pick up.
- The "**different phone technique**" – Use another phone if you suspect your business phone is being screened. Try using your home phone or your cell phone.
- The "**different department technique**"– Again, if your business phone is being screened, call another department within the prospects/customer's company, request the prospect by name and asked to be transferred. The call will be identified on the display as internal.

- The "**secret weapon technique**" – As a last resort with larger companies, call the CEO's office or the executive suite, where a live administrative assistant or receptionist is likely to answer the phone. Ask for the contact by name and the staff will transfer the call. Calls transferred from the executive suite almost always get picked up.

When you have to leave a message

The suggestions for getting around call screening and absent contacts will work some of the time. Many salespeople have tried them.

Ultimately, everyone has to leave some voicemail messages to reach some prospects and customers.

And it's easy to do it wrong. Some examples:

Classic voicemail blunders

The Infomercial: This happens when a salesperson dumps too much information about his or her service or product in the message. With 60 seconds to leave a message, many salespeople try to fill it. Fact: Nobody wants to have to listen to that much information when they're scanning messages. The recipient will delete it. Don't make the mistake of thinking you're educating or "marketing" to them.

The Insipid: These messages tend to be rhetorical in nature and frequently silly. They sound something like: "Hi, this is Susan Fisher from Acme Consulting. If I could show you a way to reduce your inventory costs by 10% a year, would you take a moment or two to listen?" People get upset with this kind of message. It's cheesy and trite. However, many salespeople are taught to leave these kinds of messages. The problem: It doesn't deserve a response. Of course, everyone wants to reduce their costs! But do they really think you know anything about their needs and problems? Probably not.

The "Village Idiot": This is, the, um, you know, um, idiot, um message, ah, where, like, uh, gee, I wasn't expecting this. And you make the ums, the ahs and the duhs. If you do leave a message like that, see if their system has options that will allow you to redo the message. But often, you can't. That's why it's best to have a message you've practiced ready to go. Then it won't be a problem.

Using intrigue statements to get through

The basics of preparing a message are really pretty simple: State your name, your company name and deliver an intriguing message. Then tell them what you want them to do. The first two steps are simple, the last two are the tougher tasks.

There are a number of different kinds of intriguing messages. They include:

The Idea Intrigue Statement: This is most effective with existing customers, but it works with anyone you've had a relationship with in the past, even if you've only spoken to them. And sometimes this type of message will work with a totally new prospect. An intrigue statement goes something like this:

> "Hi, Jan, this is Brian Anderson at Boulder Office Supply. Jan, I have an idea that I'd like to run by you that might help you cut some of your office product costs. Could you please call me at ..."
>
> "Ideas" are harmless, they're non-threatening. They don't seem salesy, and they imply being helpful. People tend to be receptive to ideas. So this is often a way to get existing customers to give you a call back. Of course, you have to make certain you actually have an idea you can give them. It might be an idea to save them money or improve productivity. But you need to be prepared when the phone rings.

The "Only You" Intrigue Statement: This is a real award winner. While it typically gets the best response from both customers and prospects, it's particularly effective with prospects. The "Only You" statement goes something like this:

> "Hi Tom, this is Jim Burger calling from Taylor Software in Cleveland. Tom, I have a question that I'm told only you can answer about personnel evaluations. Could you please give me a call at...?"
>
> What makes this so effective is the phrase "I have a question I'm told only you can answer." Think about it. How flattering is that to the recipient? They're likely to think, "Yes, I'm the only one who can answer that question!" Everyone has an ego. And if the "Only You" message is delivered well, it's a very powerful message.
>
> Now the reason why they're the only person who can answer this question is that you've done your research on them. You've talked with customer service or a salesperson in the company who's given you this prospect's name and extension. This research gives you the pretext to leave this kind of message. You're not making it up.

The External Referral Intrigue Statement: Again, this kind of statement is best for prospects. However, it requires an active referral gathering process. This means that you've gotten out and asked other customers of yours for prospects and they've given you the name of someone you should contact. If you have this information, use it and deliver it well, this can be the best kind of message to leave. It often gets some of the highest response rates because you've established a connection with the recipient.

The external referral intrigue statement goes something like this:

> "Hi, Dr Aiken, my name is Renee Henson. I'm calling from Talley Healthcare in Flagstaff. Dr. Aiken, I got your name from Karen Ford in Phoenix and she suggested that I give you a call with an

> interesting program we've implemented. She thought you might be interested. Could you please give me a call at ...?"

The Internal Referral Intrigue Statement: This variation on the referral statement is sometimes called the "squeeze play," which means it's very effective at getting someone to call you back.

It usually works in a scenario where you've called a director or vice president and actually gotten them on the phone. But they tell you "Listen, I don't really handle that. You need to talk to Calvin Hancher on this." You get Calvin's number. Now, you're calling a subordinate.

You get Calvin's voicemail and here's where you deliver your "internal referral intrigue statement." Here's what you might say:

> "Hi Calvin, this is Andy Pratt and I'm calling from Challenger Resources in Philadelphia. Calvin, I was just speaking with your District Superintendent Robin Walters and she suggested I give you a call directly regarding some special offers on educational software. Could you please give me a call by Tuesday, as I promised to get back to Robin by the end of the week."
>
> This works for a couple of reasons. First, you've told the recipient you've talked to their boss and you'll be reporting back on the results of your call. Be sure that when you talked to the boss, you've said something like "I'll call Calvin and I'll let you know by the end of the week what happened."
>
> The boss will always reply "Yeah, yeah, sure." They never expect you to call back, but now you've laid out what you're going to do and you can use it legitimately in your voicemail.

You'll notice that none of the intrigue statements contained a lot of information about products or an offer. You're deliberately keeping it vague because you don't want to tip your hand and have the recipient disqualify you from the start.

You're trying to "intrigue" them" by giving them a little bit and having them call you back to get more.

By proposing a deadline for the call back, you're also creating a sense of urgency that can be very effective. This technique gets a good response in many cases.

The "I Thought Of You" Intrigue Statement: This message is very powerful for existing customers. But key to its effectiveness is being able to deliver it well and with sincerity.

The message is simple:

> "Hi, Dan, this is Shelly Gould over at Claymont Industries. Dan, the reason I called is that I thought of you when I received this flier from Billings Manufacturing that features a new mounting coil. I was thinking it might apply to some of the projects that you're working on. Could you please give me a call at ...?"

Again, if you deliver it well, it becomes true. Of course you thought of them! You thought of how you could make a sale by calling them. But now you're sounding like you have your eyes out for them on special deals.

If you're a good salesperson, that's the way you should be responding to them. The reason this works is because it really does convey your intent: To help your customers and their businesses.

The "Something Completely Different" Intrigue Statement: This message is a bit different because it breaks a few rules. It's definitely worth a try.

The message starts off with a statement that lays out a problem. It points to your customer or prospect's "pain" point. Something that plagues them day to day.

But the message doesn't give them a solution. It hints at one, but they have to call you back to get it.

It goes something like this:

> "Jack, most small businesses are paying too much for advertising that just doesn't seem to work. This is Claire Brown calling from

> Alternate Calling, Inc., and depending on your situation, there might a a good chance that we can increase the results of your advertising dollar. Please give me a call at ...”

You’ll notice that the message is intentionally vague because, again, you don’t want to give away too much and have the prospect disqualify you.

It doesn’t give too much information, but it will intrigue them to think that you might have a solution to their problem.

They’re likely, many times. to call back.

The “Candid” Intrigue Statement: This idea comes from a salesperson who’s had pretty good results with it.

It’s often best used with prospects who get bombarded every day with sales calls and vendor requests. Its basis is in being upfront and talking with candor to the prospect.

A typical version goes something like this:

> “Ms. Wheeler, this is Katy Murray from Neely Corp. We’re a reseller of hardware and software. Ms. Wheeler, I know that you probably get half a dozen calls a day from IT vendors across the country and I know you can get the same products from all of them. But at Neely Corp., we really are different in our approach to your needs. I know you simply can’t take my word for it, but if you could give me a call, perhaps we could discuss how we might help you in procurement.”

What you have done here is laid it on the table by expressing understanding and sympathy with the prospect’s situation. The hope here is that the force of your personality is going to win over the target.

They’ll say “Well, that’s a little bit different. Maybe I’ll cut this guy some slack and return the call.”

Delivering the message well

There's plenty of stumbling and bumbling when leaving a message, and everyone's guilty of some of it.

But the bottom line is that, if you're going to leave a message, it's a good idea to have it memorized like any good Hollywood actor would before the cameras start to roll.

That being said, there are many different ways of communicating thoughts and ideas to others. But in the case of voicemail, we're talking about using the phone to do it.

The phone doesn't give you the benefits (and drawbacks at times) of things like body language, eye contact or gestures. In a face-to-face encounter or discussion, a full 55% of the message is communicated through body language and only 7% of the message is through the words we use.

And of course, face-to-face selling is hands down the most effective way of selling. But it's not always possible.

So we often use the phone to make our first approach.

Tone of Voice

On the telephone there are two things we use to communicate, our tone of voice and choice of words. The impact breaks down this way:

- Tone of voice: 84%
- Word choice: 16%

Ultimately, the goal is to leave an impression and make sure it's a good one.

This means definitely avoid being annoying. It means sounding lively.

It means making the message sound inviting.

That's why writing it out and practicing it is vital. It's what salespeople need to do so that when they finally leave a message, their tone will automatically be upbeat and elicit a response.

How often to leave a message

Let's face it, if you leave too many messages, the customer or prospect can get the feeling you're stalking them.

They fear you just won't let go, and you're being too aggressive. Avoid this even though it's important to persist at times just to get through.

The 4/3 Process of Follow-Up

The basic premise: Keep trying, but control the pace of your attempts to make contact.

Bottom line: You can make four phone calls, spaced three days apart.

Call #1: You can start off with any of the previous intrigue messages that you think will work best with the prospect/customer. Record the call in whatever you use to track sales calls, Outlook, Act or another method.

> You message could go like this: "Hi Laurie, Mark Adams calling from Seaborg Consulting..." Then you deliver your intrigue message and leave your number.

As soon as you're finished the call, schedule the first follow-up call on your calendar for three business days ahead. Three days is enough time for someone to get back to you if they're going to.

It's courteous and far enough away so that it doesn't sound naggingly persistent. This amount of time gives the call recipient some breathing room and doesn't crowd or rush them.

Call #2: Say you've made the first call on Thursday. Count three business days ahead (Friday, Monday and Tuesday.) Make the second call on Tuesday, the third day.

> This call is essentially the same as the first: "Hi Laurie, Mark Adams again calling from Seaborg Consulting..." followed by a message similar to the first.

Again, record the call in your log and schedule a follow-up for three days later. In the case where the first follow-up is on Tuesday, the second call would be made on Friday.

Call #3: By now, you've been attempting to make contact for more than a week. Your next call will need to be different.

Be sure that you've prepared it. Write out the script and practice it. There's a key message to deliver here and it can be crucial to successfully making contact. The script goes like this:

> "Hi Laurie, this is Mark Adams calling from Seaborg Consulting. Laurie, I've left you a couple of messages over the last week or so, but as of yet, we haven't been able to connect."

The key phrase here: "We haven't been able to connect." Notice you don't say "I've called you and left a couple of messages Tara and you haven't gotten back to me yet," which could seem like a reprimand. It could imply that you're hurt or sulking.

"Not able to connect" lets them off the hook. It works especially well with existing customers, because you don't sound neglected or annoyed. The customer doesn't have to feel any guilt associated with the call. You've given them some grace.

Now, log the call and schedule the final call for three days later, in this case the following Wednesday.

Call #4: By now, you'll notice, you've been trying to make contact by phone with this person for two weeks.

You've made three follow-up calls, which is way beyond the average number most reps make. (In fact, 87% of reps give up after the first message. The ones who do make a second call stop there 98% of the time.

Between calls you can insert an e-mail or fax.

The final call is what's sometimes called the "Drop Dead Message." It tells the customer/prospect you're not going to bother them anymore, but if they need to get back to you, give a call, and you'll be glad to help.

If not, you haven't burned a bridge. They'll be grateful and you'll feel like you've done your level best to talk with them.

It goes like this:

> "Hi Laurie, this is Mark Adams calling from Seaborg Consulting. I've left a couple of messages but we haven't been able to connect as of yet. It would seem to me at this time there's not an opportunity to pursue the quote (or speak about your needs, whatever is appropriate.) If things should change, please give me a call at ... otherwise I'll give you a call next quarter."

In some cases, this will be the call that will get you a call back. It doesn't happen often, but it does happen. So the effort's worth it.

The ultimate voicemail strategy

There's one final strategy to use and it's called the "Reciprocity and the Dimensional Mailer."

This approach works best on executives. The basic premise: Send them a bulky package, something that's got dimension and scope to it.

It should contain business books or something of value to the prospect or customer. It's not a good idea to send marketing materials or other promotional trinkets. They're not effective for this strategy.

After the package has arrived, make a follow-up call leaving a voicemail message if you don't get through. Say something like:

> "Yes, Mr. Crayton, this is Mark Adams calling from Seaborg Consulting. The reason for my call is to follow-up on that little package I sent you, the book 'From Good to Great.' I was wondering if you could give me a call with regard to an idea that I have."

The book strategy works especially well because people feel the compelling need to call you back if only to say "thank you."

Once you've got them in a conversation, then you can do some qualifying of them as a prospect.

Caution: This is an expensive technique and you probably can't do it a lot. But the hit rate on it is very high for getting return calls.

The 10 components of a good voicemail

The bottom line with voicemail: It needs to be "user friendly." Every single day, in every message you leave, this must be uppermost in crafting your script.

Making voicemail messages a part of your sales strategy is a wise investment. It pays not to be lazy about it.

The average voicemail message takes just 17 seconds. Once you've mastered the technique, you'll find what works best for you and your target audience.

It's best to try a technique for about a week before you abandon it. This gives you enough time to get comfortable with the approach. You'll be pretty good at delivering the message and then you can assess how it's working.

No matter which technique you use, there are 10 essential elements to a good voicemail. They are:

1. State your FULL name
2. State your company name
3. Provide an "intrigue statement"
4. Use the prospect's or customer's name
5. Keep your message short and sweet
6. Avoid a "sales pitch"
7. Deliver your message in the proper tone
8. Leave your phone number
9. Slow your pace
10. Persist using the 4/3 process

FAQs on voicemail

1. You suggest calling at unusual times, like 7:30 a.m., but isn't it against the law to call before 9 a.m.?

No, it's not. It's against the law to make *consumer calls* before 9 a.m. but it's appropriate to make business-to-business calls before then.

2. Do these techniques work with consumer calls as well?

No, they're not as effective with consumer calls, unless you already have a previously established relationship with the person you're calling. There are other strategies to use with consumer calls, which need to be both respectful and legal.

3. How should you use e-mail to support your voicemail strategy?

It's often best to use e-mail to support your voicemail, not as the first point of contact. A better idea: Use the voicemail message to direct the customer/prospect to the e-mail message you send. Much depends on your relationship to the person and there are no hard and fast rules about it. But it can be a good thing to do between call two and three or call three and four.

4. After you've made that fourth call, how long should you wait before trying to make contact again?

This will really depend on the customer, but a good rule of thumb is to wait a minimum of three or four weeks before trying to make contact again. If you're too persistent, you'll wind up turning them off completely. You can always leave the door open in your final message by letting them know when they can expect to hear from you again. And when you do call back then, you're likely to leave the impression that you're someone who follows through.

5. Is there anything you can do to boost your contact rate with higher up execs who have assistants who take their calls?

One tactic that has improved results by about 10% is to call the assistant first to let them know you'll be contacting their boss (either by mail or e-mail) and asking to confirm the correct address. Let them know that you'll be following up with a phone call. For some unexplained reason, giving the assistant notice ahead of time that you'll be calling increases the chances of being put through.

6. Is it okay to insert something like the joke of the day, with a personal touch, to your voicemail message?

Not unless you know the customer very well. With prospects you have to be extremely careful. If you decide to do it, proceed with the utmost caution. But if you find it works, there's no bad idea!

7. Should everyone on the sales team use the same message?

Having everyone use the same technique can often give you an idea of what really works on your customers. Try one technique for a week, track results and then try another. This is the only way to get empirical data on what works and what doesn't.

8. Is it okay to substitute a letter or a business card for the fourth call?

You can, and should, use multimedia messages with your customers and prospects. There's something called the "rule of seven" in marketing. People need seven impressions of you to begin to understand that you're the "real deal." Just be sure to test your ideas to see what works – and what doesn't.

5 rules for making voicemail 'user friendly'

Whatever message you use and whatever strategy you decide on, it has to be user-friendly.

You have to make it easy for the person to call you back.

It can't be labor intensive to respond, so include the important information a person needs to return the call in as short a time as possible and be sure they reach you – and not your voicemail!

The five ways to make a "user-friendly" voicemail are:

- State your full name
- State your company name or organization
- Include today's date
- Explain where you are, either generally or specifically
- Tell the caller what you'd like them to do

About PBP Executive Reports

PBP Executive Reports are straightforward, fast-read reports for time-pressed upper-level executives and managers. PBP Executive Reports excel at cutting the fluff, eliminating jargon and providing just the information today's executives need to improve their organizations' performance.

Each report is fast-read, actionable, and packed with invaluable strategies.

PBP Executive Reports is a Progressive Business Publications (PBP) company. PBP is a leading diversified information company that provides cutting-edge, high-impact information to help top executives and managers make more informed decisions and do their jobs better.

As the industry's fastest-growing company, PBP now produces a full array of information products including:

- 24 fast-read, 100% subscription-driven, business-to-business and medical newsletters
- 22 legal publications covering the education and employment markets
- 10 advertising-free buyer's guides for office equipment
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Thousands of executives in America's top-growth companies – as well as executives in all of the Fortune 1000 – use our products' concise, expert-to-expert information to improve their businesses.

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Intermec Partner Concierge
PartnerConcierge.com
480.704.4775
Intermec@PartnerConcierge.com