

Convert Your Answering Machine into a Sales Machine

A very bad start: “Your call is so important to us that we decided to handle it with a me-too message on a cheap machine.”

You can quickly and easily convert your answering machine into a sales expert that’s on full standby duty all day, every day. You can’t totally eliminate a caller’s disappointment with getting your answering machine instead of a live person, but you can certainly make the best of the situation by using a friendly tone and, of course, offering a reward for calling.

Instead of saying something your callers have heard a million times before (“Sorry we missed you...” or “Your call is important to us...”), how about something like this example:

“Hi! I’m Evan Smith, president of Valley Nursery and Landscaping. Our business hours are 9am to 5:30pm Monday through Friday and 9am to 4pm Saturday. We’re closed on Sunday. For driving directions, press 1. To leave a message, press 2. To make up for missing your call, I’d like to offer you a reward. Visit valleynursery.com and click on the big green dot to print a discount coupon. Use it in our store within the next 7 days and you’ll get an extra 5% off anything in the store, including our weekly sale items. In the future you can press 2 immediately to skip this message. Thank you for calling Valley Nursery and Landscaping.”

By simply changing the outgoing message on his answering machine, Mr. Smith has turned a potentially negative experience into a strong positive by:

- Adding value and credibility to the message by addressing the callers himself;
- Clearly stating their hours of operation;
- Offering driving directions (hardly anyone does this);
- Informing them about weekly sale items; and
- Rewarding them with a discount coupon.

This personal approach enables Mr. Smith to deliver a competition-killing message to his callers, which is this: “I love my customers!” *The psychology of this is 100% positive.*

By encouraging his callers to visit his Easy Sell landing page, he’s giving himself many more selling opportunities. As you know, he can display *lots* of information and images there. He’s in the type of business where every photograph is a potential trigger for further inquiry.

To limit the number of discount coupons floating around out there, Mr. Smith changes the expiration date on them every week, so they’re valid for only seven days. This also adds urgency to the discount offer, which is always a good idea.

Does he care that savvy customers go to his landing page every week to get another discount coupon? No, he doesn’t, because it builds traffic in his store and he’s learned that coupon customers become *regular* customers. He considers the 5% discount part of his advertising cost.