

Does your Phone message reflect the right Image?

Excerpts from NSD Sue Kirkpatrick

When we are "In Business", we need to think differently about the telephone line that is used for our Business.

Are we EASY to get in touch with? People will do business with people who are convenient to reach.

Have you called your voice-mail or answering machine lately to hear what other people hear when they call you? If YOU were calling YOU, would YOU want to do business with YOU? :)

Do they know WHO they have reached? (It is important to identify yourself by name, not just phone number because not every prospective client or consultant will recognize your voice)

Is it professional? Do they know they have reached someone who is serious and yet excited about their business and about their call? Tone of voice is very important. It needs to be upbeat and to the point. If it is too long, people will hang up because they are impatient.

Do people ever get a busy signal when they call you? People are very impatient with busy signals and will call someone else or give up on trying to call you.

Voice mail is much better than Call Waiting. I use my family line to call out on a lot and the only people who have that number are family members. I have Call Waiting on it in case it is an emergency, but I realize it is very rude to interrupt someone and take another call because the message it sends is that this call may be more important than you, so I will be right back.

Do you have your line blocked against anyone calling in that has their caller ID blocked? If you have their call blocked, they can not get in touch with you. Again, they will give up and find another person to do business with. I realize that telemarketing calls are a hassle, but if it is our line that we are using for business, we can not afford to put that block on because we are losing business when we do.

Do family members other than your husband answer your business line? I have called people and sleepy teenagers and small children have answered that I was concerned would not be able to pass on the message. Are we missing some messages? If they are going to answer the phone, make sure that they are trained in how to take a message, that paper and pen are by every phone and that they have a system for getting the message to you. If that is not the case, it is best for them to let Voice-mail pick the business line up and get a family line for other family members to use.

Do people ever get a real person when they call? If people ALWAYS get a machine or Voice-mail when they call you and never get to talk to you, that may be discouraging also. I have always answered my phone when I am home during my business hours. Of course, if it is family time, I let voice mail pick it up.

Running an "in home" business has so many advantages that in my book, it is the only way to go. We just need to make sure that we make the adjustments we need to make to run it like a business. How we have these things set up tells everyone a lot about how seriously we take our businesses. We will be paid accordingly.

Here is an example of an ideal message delivered in an upbeat tone. "Hello, you have reached _____ household and _____, Independent Consultant with Mary Kay Cosmetics. Your call is very important to us. At the sound of the tone, please leave your full name, telephone number and a detailed message and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Meanwhile, Have an awesome Day! You deserve it!"

When you have a separate family line, which is ideal, you can drop the _____ household and it will sound even more like a business.