

# Who Picks It Up?

TOP TIP



# TUESDAY!

**At a recent conference with around 1300 UK business owners – just like you – the host played out the recordings of several calls that his team had made earlier that week.**

The calls were made to businesses picked at random from people in the room.

The number they called was the one listed on their website.

They were rang a few days before the conference, during normal working hours.

...so they were doing exactly what any normal potential customer would do

The results were really eye opening.

Each of the recordings were of voicemails and – as a fellow business owner - they were painful to listen to. Some were just the automated default “please leave your message after the tone” that you get with the phone provider.

Some did have a recorded greeting from the person asking people to leave a message – which is a bit better but not by much. And some said they were out of the office and not accepting any calls right now!

All of those examples give the same message to the customer.

They're effectively saying, we don't value your call or query enough to deal with it right now.

So the customer will hang up and ring a competitor who they can talk to.

If I were to pick up my phone and call your business right now, who would answer the phone?

Now, if your immediate reaction was “our receptionist” that's great, but what happens when he or she is on the phone and everyone else in the office is on a call?

Does the phone simply ring out waiting to be answered? Or, worst still, would I be subjected to the sound of business death: the engaged tone? Nothing says ‘we're a small local business that doesn't care about our customers' more than said customers being inflicted with a dead phone line or an automated “leave a message” request.

## The Problem

OK then, let's revisit the original question. What would happen if I were to call your business right now? Probably one of the following:

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## **The call is answered within 3 rings**

That's excellent. Top marks. It would be even better if your team are happy and ready to deal with customers' questions.

## **The phone rings and rings and rings and rings and then finally one of your team answers**

Ok, so at least you've answered the phone in person, but the majority of callers only hang on for 5-8 rings and then move on.

## **The phone rings and rings then goes to voicemail**

Should be better. Using a call answering service to make sure all your calls are answered by a real person is a much better solution.

## **The call goes straight to voicemail**

This just screams, 'I'm a small business with one phone line', telling the caller you're on the phone and there's no one else to take their call.

## **The line is engaged**

This is shocking... How are you still in business? No, seriously. If you're only able to answer one or two calls at a time then you're seriously limiting your growth by missing out on potential new business.

## **No answer at all**

This is a quick way to go out of business! If you don't get this sorted then you might as well give up now!

## **The Stats**

Out of the 50 businesses called here's a breakdown:

31 answered the phone

10 of them within 3 rings

21 within 45-60 seconds (still way too long as most people give up after 5-8 rings)

5 rang and rang then went to voicemail

3 calls went straight to voicemail

4 calls had an engaged tone

And 7 didn't bother to answer the phone...it just rang and rang and rang...until even the ringing gave up on itself and rang out

Only 10 of the 50 (just 20%!) have a realistic chance of getting some business as they're 'Johnny-on-the-spot' when answering the phone

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You can stick your head in the sand, say 'It won't happen in our business' and do nothing, or you can be a smart business owner and take action to make certain all your incoming calls are answered in the correct way.

### The Fix

- i. A flexible telephone system allows you to route calls to the right place at the right time.
- ii. Employing a call answering company to take your overflow calls means all your calls are answered by a professional receptionist, showing your customers that you really care and because they feel like they've conversed with someone in your business, it will massively decrease the chance they'll hang up and find another number to call.

They're so affordable, and a whole lot less expensive than losing a customer and you now have all your calls answered every single time.

Just give us a shout and we'll point you in the right direction to get your calls answered.



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