

[Sound Telecom](#)[Solaxis](#) – A Division of Sound Telecom**The Phone is Ringing! Who is Answering It?  
Branding and Answering your Phones**By [Michael LaBaw](#)

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Abstract: This article is focused on presenting the reader with a thorough understanding of the basic steps necessary to implement an effective Telephone Answering Service that can provide the image and proper branding a business owner needs.

It happens every day.

You call a business and you cannot believe the lack of attention your phone call is given. Consider a few of the irritating situations that you have encountered:

- The phone rings and rings with no answer.
- You are delivered into "voicemail jail" with no way out.
- The line is busy and your call is not connected. You have to call again.
- The phone is answered by a hurried, agitated or rude receptionist.
- You are abruptly placed on hold for what seems like an eternity.
- You are met with dead silence while holding. There is no music and no marketing message.
- You reach someone on a cell phone and it is noisy with a poor connection. They are distracted by something else they are doing.

Unfortunately, these are not unusual experiences. Businesses often work hard to create an incredible and memorable brand image to set themselves apart. Business owners understand that a quality brand image is ubiquitous and all areas of contact and customer interface are considered important. However, one area of contact is almost always overlooked: phone answering is typically left out of the mix. Businesses must remember that branding encompasses every impression a company makes on its customers. Leaving phone answering out of your branding equation is both unwise and impractical. Answering your business lines in a professionally branded way is a vital customer contact conduit. In the January 2010 Consumer Reports Magazine a survey was taken that asked Americans to rate 21 of their most irksome "gripes" on a scale of 1-to-10. The two gripes that topped the list were "unexpected fees" and "not able to get a human being on the phone." Four of the top 13 were related to phone and cell phone use.

When employed optimally, a properly trained receptionist, a professional telephone answering service or a well-developed voicemail strategy can provide the professional image that creates a great phone experience for your customers. Isn't it great when you reach a business and the phones are quickly answered by a professional, courteous and friendly person? It is a memorable experience that stands out in the day-to-day phone foray!

Consider the benefits of a live, 24-hour telephone answering service to a business. A professional answering service welcomes new prospective customers and helps retain existing business relationships. Telephone Answering can be added into your branding strategy very quickly and can immediately offer:

- Professional Image - A professionally trained telephone answering service receptionist is available to answer your calls 24 hours a day to providing the personal touch.



- Stop “Voicemail Jail” - Avoid lost business opportunities due to lack of proper response and a poor voice mail strategy. Responsiveness is vital to winning business. Often callers will not leave a message, they simply dial a competitor.
- Answer Every Call - Every *missed* call is another missed opportunity and can cost you sales. When you don't answer your phones properly you are waste important marketing and advertising dollars intended to get the phone to ring in the first place. It costs money to make the phone ring, so answer it!
- Provide 24 Hour Service - A 24 by 7 presence always provides a competitive edge and added customer service.
- Responsive Service - Your important messages can be relayed instantaneously to the right person at the right time by phone, fax, text, email and variety of wireless devices.
- Supplement your Existing Staff - Properly handle calls after hours and on weekends. A professional answering service will be there even when you cannot.
- Receptionist Relief - Forward excess or overflow phone traffic during the day, at lunch, during breaks, for planned vacations or unexpected illnesses.
- Gain Customer Support Expertise - Focus on your core competencies and let a professional answering service maintain your branded response presence.
- Business Continuity - Keep your lines of communication open during weather-related incidents, natural disasters and unplanned or planned outages.

A quality telephone answering service will provide free consultation to assess your business support needs and will assist in developing economic solutions that fit together with your existing support configuration. All call centers are not created equally, so choose wisely. Do your homework and ask distinguishing questions. Focus on the provider's ability to assist your organization in professionally branding your phones. Get references! Excellent branding is intentional, not accidental. Frequent and consistent application of great branding applies to every facet of your organization. Give serious consideration to the way your phones are answered. Answering the phone is an area where you can make an immediate and very positive impact on your customers' impression of your organization.

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