



A comprehensive guide to the  
***do's and don'ts***  
***of business calls***



# ***Knowing how to answer calls professionally can make or break your business***

**Hi, Delyth here, and thanks for picking up a copy of our guide!**

At Answermyphone.biz, we're the phone-answering gurus (in fact, we're officially the most-loved telephone answering service in Wales!). And during our 11 years of award-winning services, we've picked up a few tips and tricks along the way.

**Taking care of your customers over the telephone and making them feel well informed and appreciated is essential.**



For most types of business the telephone plays a major part in daily operations. This is because businesses need them in order to call out and contact suppliers, business partners, and clients or customers. As important as the phone is, it's just as important that businesses know the difference between what is good and what is bad phone etiquette.

Businesses must understand how interacting with clients and associates over the phone will either portray them in a positive light or a negative one. In the hands of a poorly trained employee, manager, or business owner, telephone use can have an extremely negative impact on the business.

Whether you're an SME that needs assistance with phone answering, a newly established business startup, or you're simply looking for a guide to aid with training your staff – then this is the read for you. Hopefully by the end you'll have a good idea of what you need to take into consideration when it comes to taking those all-important business calls.

***Delyth Jones,  
MD of Answermyphone.biz***

## *First impressions are everything*

### *When it rings, answer it*

**This first one is probably the most obvious, but that doesn't diminish its importance – you should endeavour to answer all calls in reasonable time.** Nothing says unprofessional like leaving a caller hanging on a ringing line. They have made the move to call your business over others, so reward them by answering their call promptly.

For this reason it's important you don't allow the phone to ring any more than three times – the second or third ring is the ideal time to pick up. Any less is too quickly, callers don't expect their call to be answered on the first ring and doing so will either catch them off guard, or give the impression that you're more available than you are.



### *When you pick up, identify yourself*

**Always mention your company name as well as your own in your greeting.** It confirms where the caller is ringing and who they're talking to without them having to check and sets the tone for a professional conversation.

In the same vein, never just state the company name as your answer. I've heard "Business Ltd" as a greeting on many an occasion. It's off-putting, unwelcoming and almost aggressive. Be pleasant and helpful to the caller; say something along the lines of, "Good morning, Business Ltd, John speaking. How may I help you?"

**At Answermyphone.biz, we answer every single one of our clients' calls using their chosen greeting and business name, so customers never know that they've been put through to a third party. Professional greetings can really pay off.**



## *Mind your words*

### *Use oral cues*

**More than half (55%) of human interaction is based on body language.** This is what makes telephone communication so different from a face-to-face conversation. No one can see you nodding to yourself at your desk, so oral cues are the verbal equivalent of a quick nod of recognition and understanding.

Engage with the person on the other line, or at least pepper in a quick “mhmm” or “yes” every now and then – without interrupting – to let the other person know you’re actively listening. Because of the lack of body language, you can never be too polite on the phone.

### *Professionalism is paramount*

**Speak clearly and use professional language** – enunciate your words and avoid using slang, jargon and filler like “u-huh”. You are speaking to a business contact, not your drinking buddy. Keep it friendly but professional and business-like.

Never say the words, “I don’t know” either. The ideal response to a question where there is not a definite answer or you genuinely aren’t sure is to say, “I’ll find out for you”. Even if you have no idea what they are talking about remain positive and professional as it shows interest and an eagerness to help.

Rude or impatient callers are everyone’s worst nightmare. The trick to dealing with them is to stay calm, try to remain diplomatic and be polite. Show a willingness to resolve the caller’s problem or conflict and remember that their problems and concerns are important. Hear them out, make a commitment to help them, and follow through with your promise.

What it all really comes down to is this: The person who answers the phone should always talk to the caller in a way that he or she would like someone to speak to them.



## ***It's not just what you say, it's how you say it***

### ***Speak with a smile***

**Answering the phone with a smile on your face may sound a tad cheesy but it really works.** When you smile it affects the sound of your voice, giving it a more pleasant and friendly tone. You want your voice to reflect a positive and enthusiastic attitude.

So it doesn't matter if you're having a bad day, are half way through a complicated spreadsheet, or about to head home. Your caller takes priority. As a result, warm and welcoming is your new mood.

**At Answermyphone.biz, all of our clients' calls are answered in a professional, friendly and accommodating manner, thus presenting the best possible first impression of their business; ensuring happier customers and therefore more sales.**



### ***Speak with clarity***

**Nothing is more off-putting to a caller than an unnecessarily fast talker;** take the time to keep your voice at a calm and natural pace. This allows your muscles and your mind to relax, which prevents any exhaustive rambling. Be aware of the tone of your voice; focus on conveying a level of confidence and authority.

For clarity, the telephone receiver should be held a distance of two fingers from the mouth. Enunciate your words, and speak slowly and clearly in a moderate tone, so that you can be easily understood. The caller should never have to ask you to repeat what you just said due to unintelligibility.

## ***Always be one step ahead***

### ***Preparation is key***

**Setting up your space in advance will leave you feeling confident and prepared for any kind of call.**

For instance, always have a pen and notepad ready at your desk. This will prevent you from having to panic search your drawers for a post-it in the middle of a call.



It doesn't hurt to quickly prepare your 'phone voice' and take a deep breath before answering a call.

Practice inhaling a breath and picking up the phone so that you're speaking on the exhale, therefore giving some energy to your voice. Give the caller your full attention and put aside what you were doing before the phone rang.

### ***Check and double check***

**When taking a message, be sure to always check the information you are noting and confirm anything that you are unsure of during the call.** Especially if you are taking down email addresses or telephone numbers – you don't want a hot business lead in your hands that you can't get back to, so always read them back. Here's a super useful checklist for those bits of information we tend to forget to double check until it's too late:

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| ✓ Full name of the caller              | ✓ What time they called   |
| ✓ Contact details                      | ✓ Company name            |
| ✓ Best time for a call-back            | ✓ The content of the call |
| ✓ Any messages that need passing along |                           |

Learn the phonetic alphabet and use it when you are confirming any spellings. It's not difficult to mix up letters like 'M' and 'N', but it's also not difficult to confirm "So is that N for November?" You don't want to be the person sending emails to 'Helena' and making yourself look bad by putting 'Dear Elena'. It feels sloppy and shows a lack of care.

## ***Holding, transferring and ending***

### ***Ask before putting someone on hold***

**Ask the caller's permission before placing them on hold and provide a reason for doing so**, whether it is to give you a chance to collect information or contact another department. It is important to remember to always thank the caller for their patience. Show that you respect how important their time is.

When you do end up putting someone on hold, make sure you go back to update them every few seconds or so and offer them a choice, "I'm sorry that line is still engaged, can I take a message and ask them to call you back?" is a great option. Keep the caller informed and show you are willing to help.

### ***The same goes for transfers***

**Never just put a call through.** Doing so without saying what you are about to do comes across as abrupt, and breaks any built up rapport immediately. A simple, "I'll just put you through", or "One moment and I'll connect you" will do the job. Don't forget to also inform the caller and explain the need for the transfer unless they are asking after a specific person.

This may seem obvious yet a lot of people do forget – before transferring a call, confirm that the person to whom the call is being transferred is available. This gives them a heads up, allowing them a moment to prepare. If your colleague is in a meeting or they've stepped out the office, let the caller know and offer to put them through to someone else who can help or to take a message.

### ***Finish like you started***

**There is no shame in practicing a natural end to a telephone call!** Thank the person on the line for taking the time to speak with you, and end the call with action items if necessary. This will help set up expectations about any next steps and avoid any missed communication.

Finally, when ending the call, do not hang up the phone without a positive closure such as "Thank you for calling", or "Have a good day". Little things like this can really make all the difference when it comes to representing your company in a positive light.

## ***Make the most of your calls***

### ***Avoid voicemail like the plague***

**Answering machines are incredibly impersonal, and 80% of first-time callers who hear a recorded message simply hang up.** Don't put them off because a new customer will almost certainly call the next business in your industry that bothers to pick up. Prospects are always looking to speak to a real person, not a robot.

In addition, if an existing customer or business associate is trying to reach you personally and they repeatedly reach your voicemail instead of you, it gives the unprofessional impression you're avoiding important calls.

### ***Missed calls = missed opportunities***

**Be aware that your out of hours callers are just as important as those who call within office hours.** You may well receive calls in the evening and over the weekend, so have a professional call answering service in place for these people. Your next big sale could come through when your office is closed.

Even during office hours, dealing with the flow of inbound calls can be extremely time-consuming and distracting. It's no good hiring great staff to improve and grow your business if they are going to be glued to their phone all day answering mundane enquiries.

**Phone answering services like the team here at Answermyphone.biz can handle these calls, allowing you and your team to concentrate on growing your business.**







## ***A little something for you...***

A powerful telephone presence is a crucial skill at every point in your career. So master the tricks in this guide to give your phone calls real productivity and confidence.

### ***However...***

Research has shown that telephone calls are the single biggest distraction people face in the workplace. When you are constantly having your workflow interrupted, it breaks your momentum, and the time it takes to get yourself back into the swing of your work is time wasted.

When you and your staff are being bombarded with calls, this can be a serious drain on the productivity of everyone in your office.

### ***So what's the next step?***

***We want to offer you a no obligation, no strings attached and completely FREE two-week trial of our phone answering services. Simply call 02920 695999 to get started!***

In fact, 98% of the people that trial us have been so happy they chose us, they became clients and haven't left us since. So we guarantee you a high quality, professional service that works for your business.

So give us a call to have a chat about what we can do and to answer any questions you may have.

**Call 02920 695999 now and book your FREE two-week trial of our services.**

## ***What our customers say...***



"Answermyphone.biz have been answering our calls since December 2010. The service has been invaluable for us as a growing business. I have peace of mind knowing that any unanswered calls will flick over to them where they can answer the phone in a professional manner. Have you ever called a company whose phones ring and ring? Did you call them back? Probably not. Answermyphone.biz offer a service that is valuable to SMEs regardless of size and I highly recommend looking into it."

**Ed Barnett**  
***Cartridge Mate***



"Having used your telephone answering service for several months now, I wanted to commend you and your staff and an incredibly professional and polished service.

None of my clients to whom you have answered a call had any indication that you were anything other than an employee within my business, and the enquiries/messages were always dealt with in an impeccable manner

You and your staff have taken great time to get to know the intricacies of my business in order to provide a seamless service and this has really shown in the quality of communications you have provided.

I very much appreciate all that you have done for me and my business so far and I would have no hesitation in recommending your services to anybody."

**Hazel Hannant**  
***Contemporary Photography***



I was out on an appointment, and I rang my office three times and didn't get a reply, I was very concerned that my customers could be having the same problem. I immediately contacted Ade and took advantage of a free one month trial.

I was amazed at the amount of calls that AnswerMyPhone.biz had answered and was very impressed that my clients did not know that they were not speaking to a member of my staff.

I would recommend AnswerMyPhone.biz as they have proven to be an asset to my business.

Thank you Ade & Del"

**Tracey Williams**

***LT Insurance Services Ltd***



Adrian is an extremely professional individual who runs an excellent business. Go-Eco has employed AnswerMyPhone.biz for some time and the service is exceptional. What makes these guys stand out is their knowledge of my business and the way in which this is applied. For example if a call comes in they answer it professionally but also establish the nature of the call and respond to it accordingly adding value through understanding. Oh and they are flexible and great value too! We have also utilised other expertise within Adrian's organisation for as varied activity as outbound sales and credit control all with excellent results. Give them a go they even have free trials available!!!"

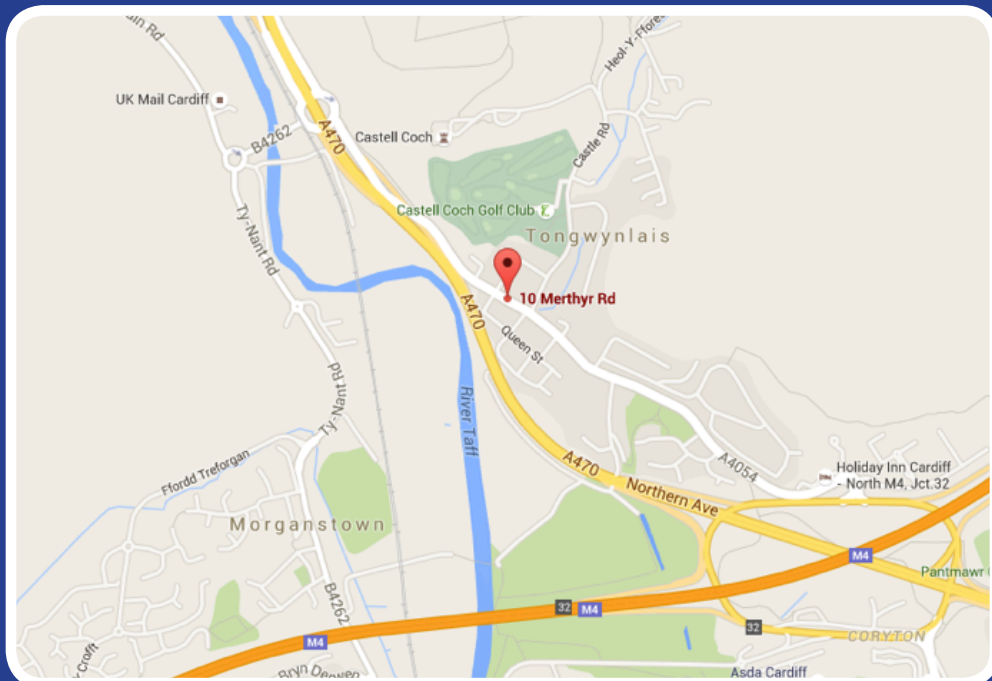
**Mark Miles**

***Go Eco***



## More than just phone answering

Find out how we can help improve the missed call rate of your business and increase your sales numbers



**02920 695999**  
[www.answermyphone.biz](http://www.answermyphone.biz)

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