The art of the effective voicemail

There's no doubt about it – leaving a good sales voicemail is hard.

And even if you do record well-crafted messages, do prospects actually listen to them, or take the time to call you back? Not usually. So, what's the point? Should we even bother with voicemails? Absolutely, and here's why. Although you might get a higher response rate from an email or another type of message, responses to voicemails are generally richer and demonstrate a greater level of interest. So what you lose in quantity, you gain in quality.

10 steps to the effective voicemail

1. **Don't start with your name** – Most voicemails usually start off exactly the same way: "Hi, this is [Your name] with [Your firm]. …" The problem with this typical approach is that the majority of our voicemails get deleted right after this introduction because the client either knows your company and therefore has a certain assumption about what you do, or they don't know your company and therefore probably don't care. Start off your voicemails with "Hi Bill, the reason for my call today is, …" and then add in some sort of short value prop that focuses on getting their attention. The goal is to get them to pay attention to the value you bring instead of some preconceived notion of what you do. Then back it up at the end with "please call me back at 555-555-5555."

2. **Don't reference failed attempts** – If the prospective client didn't care the first few times, why should they now? By referencing previous message that didn't work, you're automatically giving the green light to delete your voicemail before they listen to the rest of it. Always have a different reason for your call.

3. **Keep your voicemail 20–30 seconds** – That's the sweet spot. A voicemail in this timeframe sparks curiosity without demanding too much time.

4. **Don't try to sell** – Ask a question or give them a reason for your call to try to peak their interest enough to call you back. "The reason for my call is twofold": number one (value proposition) and number two (let them know how you have helped other clients just like them).

5. **Don't hang up without leaving a voicemail** – If you're going to call a prospect, you must leave a message. Regardless of whether the prospect was actively screening calls or simply away from their desk when the phone rang, your number will pop up as a missed call. And if there's no accompanying voicemail? Well, it must not have been terribly important.

6. **Slow and steady wins the race!** – Start your voicemail with a regular cadence, but get slower the longer you speak. It sounds counterintuitive – but you will sound more articulate and confident when you're not rushing, and you also sound more authentic.

7. **Say you'll follow through with an email** – Give them two ways to respond. A simple, "I'll also follow through with an email" before you hang up is short, concise, and shows thoroughness on your part.

8. **End with your phone number** – Your phone number is the last thing you should say on a voicemail. Say it once, slowly, and make sure to repeat it again.

9. **Best and worst times** – Best 6:45 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Worst – Monday 6 a.m. to noon and Friday afternoons.

10. **Practice, Practice, Practice** – Call yourself and leave the message or call a coworker or your manager and leave them the message. Ask yourself, if I received this call, would I call back?