



*IS YOUR CUSTOMER
CALLING EXPERIENCE
COSTING YOUR BUSINESS?*

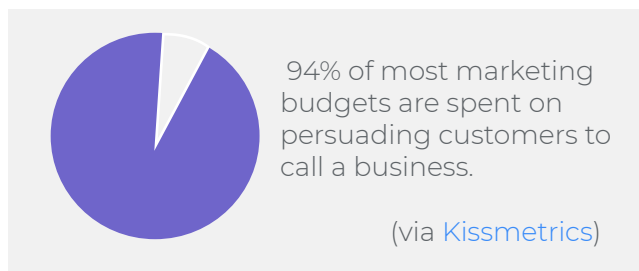
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO
KNOW BEFORE PUTTING A
CUSTOMER ON HOLD

Introduction

Answering the phone, greeting a customer, and placing them on hold is something we do so often it has become second nature. It's a standard part of business that we barely even think about.

But, maybe we should.

Organizations put almost all of their marketing resources toward getting their phone to ring.



We create clever marketing campaigns and promotions to encourage customers to call, and then when the phone rings -- nothing.

After spending time, money, and resources trying to initiate phone calls, many businesses fail to implement a customer calling strategy. By ignoring this vital customer touchpoint, they miss a big opportunity.

A phone call isn't a win when the business makes a major mistake once the phone rings – putting the customer on-hold with no strategic messaging or plan.

It's like building a pavement road to a business, then failing to fill in the last ten feet that lead through the door and up to the cash register.

Are you making this mistake? Are you going through the motions, neglecting this important customer touchpoint, and putting customers on hold without a plan on how to give them a great customer experience?

Are you providing a poor customer calling experience that is costing your business? If you are like most businesses, you probably are.

Even if you have a customer calling strategy in place, there are probably places you could improve. There are likely strategies you didn't know you needed or that you didn't know could benefit your business. This guide will identify those opportunities.

Whether you are just implementing a customer calling strategy or trying to improve a current process -- we'll help you find ways to improve your customer calling experience by answering the most important questions related to this valuable touchpoint.

4. Is hold messaging still relevant?
5. What are the main benefits of on-hold messaging?
6. How can I improve the customer calling experience?
7. How can I increase revenue using hold messaging?
8. How do I write an on-hold message script?
9. What should I say in my on-hold message?
10. Does the voice in my on-hold message really matter?
11. How do I pick the right voice talent for my message?
12. Do I need to update my on-hold messaging?
13. How often do I need to update my on-hold message?
14. How can I show the value of on-hold messaging to a decision maker?
15. How can I get help for creating my on-hold messaging?

After reading this guide, you'll be able to maximize the opportunities in your customer calls, stop wasting resources, and fill in the road between your customers and your cash register.

Is On-Hold Messaging

still relevant?

Let's start by looking at why implementing a hold message strategy is so important to your customers and business. If you aren't entirely sold on the value of on-hold messaging, here's a few stats that prove its importance.

60%

of callers left on hold in silence hang up (via [AT&T Study](#)). On-hold messages and music keep callers on the line. Callers hate to be left in silence when placed on hold. If you don't provide hold music or messaging to callers, they are very

3:00

When there is on-hold messaging, callers will stay on hold up to three minutes longer (via [Repair Pal](#)). When someone calls a business, they are highly engaged. But as they wait, they lose interest and become increasingly disengaged. Interesting and useful on-hold messaging can hold their attention longer and keep them on the phone.

61%

of customers prefer phone over email (60%), live chat (57%), online knowledge base (51%), and "click-to-call" support automation (34%) (via [eConsultancy](#)). Customers prefer phone support over any other communication channel. While it's true that many customers like to research brands, products, and services online, when they want or need help, they often want to talk to a real person.

20%

Based on information they heard while on-hold, 16-20% of callers made a purchasing decision (via [Teleconnect Magazine Report](#)). A customer on the other end of the line is an extremely engaged prospect. You can use your on-hold message to increase revenue by delivering enticing up-sells and promotions to the warm lead.

67%

of customers have hung up out of frustration of not being able to talk to a real person (via [HelpScout](#)). Callers want to talk to real people. In the digital age, customers can find most of what they need online. So when they call a business, they want to talk to a live person, not a series of auto-prompts.

What are the benefits of of On-Hold Messaging

It's easy to ignore or overlook on-hold messaging. It's not as glamorous or exciting as other marketing strategies. It's an out-of-sight, out-of-mind touchpoint that staff rarely experience for themselves. So as we start to talk about on-hold messaging, it's important to begin with the benefits and look at what a strong on-hold message strategy can do for a business.

Increases Customer Satisfaction and Retention: shows customers that you care about their entire experience from start to finish, and keeps them on the line longer.

Builds Brand Awareness: reinforces branding with custom messages and a consistent brand tone.

Motivates Callers: encourages audi-

Promotes Products & Service: creates a platform for promoting products, service, add-ons, packages, and specials to a highly engaged audience.

Projects Professionalism: builds trust by providing a professionally produced message.

Drives Traffic: sends traffic to your website and other properties.

Once you see how on-hold messaging benefits a business, you'll see why you need to improve this customer touchpoint.

How Much Time Do People Really Spend On-Hold?



More than half of Americans say they spend about 10-20 minutes every week on-hold with customer service (via Time).

That small increment of time may not seem extreme, until you do some math. Over the year, 10-20 minutes on hold per week turns into almost half a day. That equates to spending 43 days of your life on hold.



Another study found that as a whole, Americans spend 900 million hours waiting on hold in a year (via Marchex).

How can I improve the customer calling experience?

Consumers spend a lot of time sitting on hold, so it's your job to make sure they are having the best experience possible while they wait. You can improve your customers' overall calling experience in a few ways. Use this checklist to analyze your current efforts and see where you stand.

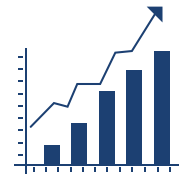
- ✓ Never leave callers in silence.
- ✓ Provide on-hold music or messaging.
- ✓ Create scripts that accurately speak to the target audience.
- ✓ Create scripts that provide callers with the information they seek.
- ✓ Deliver messaging that builds brand awareness.
- ✓ Use voice talent that matches brand tone.
- ✓ Deliver messages that cross-sell products customers may not know about.
- ✓ Decrease the time a caller is on hold.
- ✓ Utilize a VoIP phone solution that allows communication with callers from outside of the office.
- ✓ Provide auto-attendants and interactive voice response (IVR) options that quickly route callers to decrease customer on-hold wait times.

These are just a few of the many small changes that can drastically improve a calling experience. Listen to your current on-hold messaging to see where you can use this advice to improve.

How can I increase my revenue

with On-Hold Messaging?

You spend a lot of time and resources trying to get customers to call your business. So make sure you follow through and give your customers a calling experience that will improve their experience and increase your revenue.



Promote: While your business has a primary product or service that brings in most of your revenue, you can still highlight other offers by mentioning them in your message as add-ons, specials, complementary products, packages, warranties, or new products.

Motivate: Use language that guides callers to take action.

- Stress urgency by adding deadlines and dates specific to promotions. (e.g. This offer is only available through May so don't delay.)
- Offer rewards and bonuses that encourage the caller to take action. (e.g. If you add this onto your purchase today, you receive 25% off.)
- Add clear calls-to-action that tell the listener exactly what they need to do next. (e.g. Ask about, Add this to your purchase, Stop in to see our display, etc.)
- Offer referral incentives to customers to create brand advocates. (e.g. Refer a customer and save 10% off your next service.)

Be Respectful and Helpful: Never intentionally put or leave callers on hold so that they can hear your message. Always remember the point of view of the caller. They called to accomplish a task, and your job is to help them accomplish that task as soon as possible. Don't jam sales messages throughout the entire message. Periodically offer callers answers to FAQs and thank the customer for their patience.

Don't Forget About Your Away Message. Callers aren't going to sit and listen to a long message when they know no one is coming to the phone on the other side. But you can still use that as an opportunity to highlight one very short special or promotion before giving the details your caller might be looking for (such as hours, location, or website URL).

How do I write a script for On-Hold Messages?

Plan before you write. Script writing is different than the other styles of business writing, so use these tips to help you write for the proper platform.

FIGURE OUT YOUR

Decide how long your message should be. Take the average time your customers are placed on hold. Then make your message double that length before it repeats. That allows you to give as much fresh information as possible without losing the interest or attention of your audience.



CONSIDER ONE MESSAGE VS.

Decide if you need to have two different messages -- one for when users are on hold waiting for an associate and one for when your office is closed. Each message may require different information and instructions.

PUT TOGETHER THE

Ask each department head for a list of questions that your customers frequently ask them. You will use this information to help create your messaging.



READ IT ALOUD

When writing your script, remember that you are writing for the ear. Regularly stop and read the message out loud. Listen for phrases that are confusing or hard to understand.

USE EVERYDAY LANGUAGE

Speak to your audience using the language they are familiar with. Don't interject jargon and slang that makes sense to you and your associates, but will confuse those unfamiliar with your business or industry.



WRITE, EDIT, AND CUT

When you get started, just write the first things that come to mind. Get all of your ideas down on paper. Then go back with an editing eye and cut out all of the unnecessary words. You want your sentences to be short and sweet.

KEEP IT SHORT

Keep in mind that the message could end at any minute. Your messaging needs to be short and sweet to decrease the likelihood of it being cut off mid-message. Write sections that are no more than 100 words.



What should my

On-Hold Messaging say?

Outline the sections of your message using the following themes. Depending on the length of your message, you may return to a theme more than once to create your full recording.

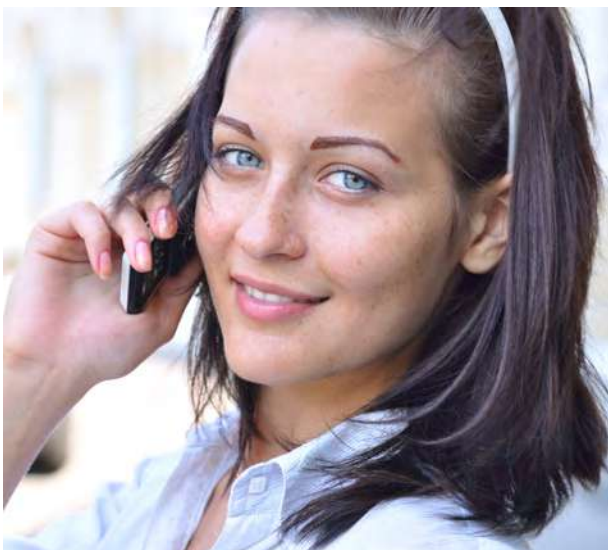


1. Welcome and thank callers for their time. Right away, be courteous and grateful.

- “Thank you for calling Bill’s Automotive, one of our associates will be with you shortly.”
- “We appreciate your patience. A Bill’s Automotive customer service representative will be with you soon.”

2. Give information the caller may be seeking. Rather than keep your customers on hold, consider what information they are looking for and deliver it. Use the list of FAQs you created and answer those questions in a concise way. Or advise the listener where they can go to quickly find the information.

- “Our business hours are Monday through Friday 8 AM to 5 PM.”
- “We are located at 123 Main Street, near the Steamtown Mall.”
- “You can find additional information on our website at www.billsauto.biz.”



3. Highlight a new promotion, event, or product.

Alert your audience of new additions to your business. That may include changes to your services or offerings. It could be a new promotion you are running or a new product you have recently added to your line.

- “For a limited time, Bill’s Automotive is offering free tire rotations when you get your oil changed.”
- “We are proud to announce that we have added Complete Car Kits to our line of products.”

4. Say something customers may not know about you. This is your opportunity to speak directly to your target audience. Tell them something else about your business that they may be interested in but don't know about.

- “Did you know that Bill’s Automotive offers car detailing? Ask your associate about adding a discounted detailing to your service.”
- “Bill’s Automotive is a proud sponsor of the Red Cross. Talk to your associate about our upcoming food drive.”

5. Continue to offer thanks. As you map out your script, continue to add messages that thank your customer for their time every 4-5 sections.

- “Bill’s Automotive values your time and we thank you for holding.”
- “Thank you for holding. A Bill’s Automotive representative will be with you shortly.”

Does the voice for my On-Hold Messaging really matter?

You now know that the right wording in a message is important. You should also realize that the voice delivering the message is equally important. Thinking through the type of voice that will represent your business is a good idea.

The voice literally sets the tone.

This is especially true when new customers that are unfamiliar with a brand call for the first time.

The voice reinforces the brand.

If a customer who is familiar with a brand hears a voice message, it should reflect what they already know about the brand. Style and tone need to match across all marketing channels.

The voice creates identity.

The voice in an on-hold message creates a first impression for a customer, painting a picture of what a brand and its employees are like. Customers will imagine a brand and employees that match the style of the voice.

The voice sets a brand apart.

Having a unique sound will make a brand more recognizable and help cut through the noise of industry competitors.

Finding a voice that matches your brand’s unique vibe provides a consistent brand experience that customers will remember and respond to.

So how do I pick the right

voice talent?

As you begin to search for the best voice talent to represent your brand, consider your industry, customers, products, and services. Think about what fits best with your unique position in the market.

Pick a style that matches your brand. While it may seem like all voice-overs are the same, they can come in a variety of styles. To define your style, first think about the words that describe your brand. Then, match those terms with voice talent.

Choose a gender that matches your defined style. Once you have identified the style you would like for your message, consider if it would be best delivered by a female or male voice. Female voices will likely go better with styles that are friendly, soft, and cheerful, and male voices often match styles that are authoritative or announcer-like.

Consider language, accent and special requests. It is important early on to consider any special requests you might have, such as having your talent speak a specific language or have an accent.

Use your imagination to create a spokesperson. If you struggle with defining a style for your voice talent, try this. Think of an actor, politician, musician, or public figure that you would love to hire as the spokesperson for your brand, and write down the qualities of their voice. This will help you create a descriptive list of the style you feel represents your brand.

Pull from the talent to enhance your message. Work with them to refine the elements of your messages. See if they have any unique abilities or offerings to add. They may be able to offer advice on voice inflections, speed, and volume.

If you aren't sure what a style sounds like, browse through the samples from [Spectrio's voice artist library](#). Our library includes common brand descriptions. Reviewing our samples can help you figure out what you like.

VOICE STYLES

- Authoritative
- Elegant
- Warm
- Natural
- Cheerful
- Energetic
- Corporate
- Mature
- Soft
- Friendly
- Playful
- Announcer-style



Do I need to update my

On-Hold Messaging?

On-hold messaging is a prime place for connecting with a highly engaged, targeted customer -- but not if the message is outdated.

You wouldn't launch a marketing campaign, post ads in newspapers or on billboards, and then neglect to change them for years at a time.

You shouldn't do that with on-hold messaging either.

On-hold messaging is a customer service tool -- but only if you regularly update it.

While your on-hold messaging will serve your business by creating marketing and sales opportunities, don't forget it should always aim to serve the customer and help them find what they need in the shortest possible time.

- **Don't give your customers and callers message fatigue.** Customers will begin to ignore and even get annoyed at repeated messaging. Don't force your audience to listen to the same message for months..
- **Don't fail to deliver the information your customers need.** As your business evolves, so will the questions that customers have about your services and products. Regularly update so they hear the most relevant FAQs.
- **Don't deliver information that is out-of-date.** Quite possibly the worst mistake you can make is delivering the wrong information. By frequently updating your messaging, you can be sure that all of your content is relevant, timely, and accurate.

On-hold messaging is a marketing/sales tool -- but only if you regularly update it.

To sell to the customers on hold, you can't record one sales message and hope it will repeatedly bring in sales. You need to be strategic about your messaging, test what works, and revise often. If you regularly update your content, you can leverage this marketing opportunity and:

- introduce new products and services as they are released
- highlight upcoming events
- promote new specials, sales, and promotions
- include seasonal specials
- stress urgency and motivate customers to take action along a set timeline

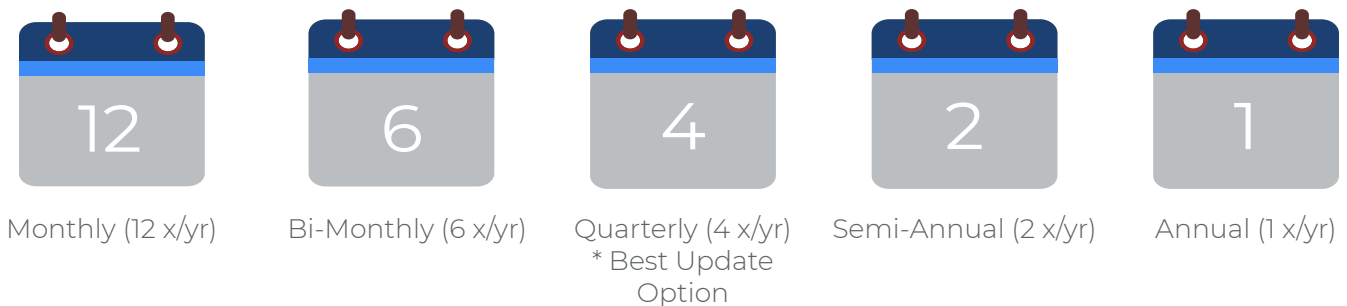
Your on-hold messages are a tool to help you serve your customers. If you don't regularly do updates, they become obsolete and out-dated. Keep your messages in top shape by consistently revising and reviewing.

So how often should

I update?

The only thing worse than having no on-hold message is having an out-dated on-hold message. So as you begin your strategy, create a plan for how often and when you will update your messaging. If you have specials and promotions that frequently change, consider revising your messaging more often. If you have set information that rarely changes, you can update less frequently.

We suggest updating your message along one of the following schedules:



1. Schedule a time once a month, or once a week if you frequently update your script, to call in and listen to the message. Listening for yourself will help you verify that all

2. If your busy schedule makes it difficult to schedule updates and reviews, consider using a provider that will manage your on-hold messaging campaigns for you. (Spectrio can plan your campaign calendar and send active reminders so you can focus on your business.)

3. If you are going to include timely offers and information in your messaging, you will need to update the information. It looks unprofessional to promote a “new” offering when it is no longer new.

4. Create a calendar with important updates that are referenced in your message so you know when to update your content.

5. If writing and regularly updating your messaging just seems like too much work, consider working with a company that can manage the process for you.

If you update less than once a year, your on-hold message strategy will not be as effective. You don't want to miss out on chances to improve your sales, marketing campaigns, and customer service with highly engaged customers.

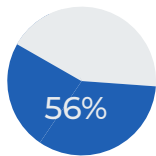
How do I show the decision maker

the value of On-Hold Messages?

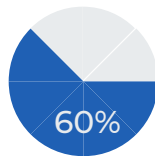
If you are not the decision maker at your company, you may have the final task of seeking approval from a C-level executive or manager. Getting approval for this project should be easy when you deliver facts about customer calling experience to your CEO or decision maker.

Show your boss just how many customers could be furthering their relationships with your business by hearing on-hold messaging.

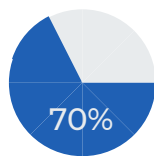
Use these facts to show the value of on-hold messaging:



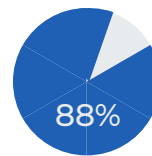
of callers receive the information they were calling for via the on-hold message.



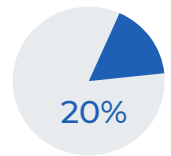
of callers will hang up when left in silence on-hold and 30% won't call back.



of callers to a business are put on-hold.



of callers prefer to hear messages on-hold instead of music or silence.



of callers make a purchase based on information they hear while on-hold.

You can uncover the number of missed opportunities by plugging your business into this formula:

The number of inbound calls your business receives/day

x

The number of days/year your business is open

=

The number of engaged, interested customers who call your business



If only ten people are placed on hold every day and your business is open five days a week (260 days/year), that could be 2,600 opportunities to turn a holding customer into additional revenue.

Over a few days, count the number of calls to your business and then go back to the formula on the previous page. Now, your decision maker may say that you don't place your callers on hold very often. But the truth is, many businesses simply don't notice how often and for how long they put their customers on-hold. You don't want to be missing out on valuable opportunities every year by not utilizing on-hold messaging.

So where can I get help with creating my messaging?

If you are ready to bring professional and effective on-hold messaging services to your business -- let us know.

Spectrio can set up and manage your entire on-hold message strategy for you. That way, you get all of the benefits of a strategic on-hold message plan without the tasks of installation, content creation, and management.

On-hold messaging services with Spectrio include:

- an on-hold message player
- professional production of the message
- licensed use of the recorded message
- script consultation services
- access to Spectrio's content library
- access to dozens of professional voice talent
- installation and full warranty on hardware
- on-going account management

We make it easy for you to upgrade your customer calling experience from top to bottom.

So, don't be like the other businesses that build a pavement road to their business -- then fail to fill in the last ten feet that lead through the door and up to the cash register. Don't spend 94% of your marketing dollars to get an engaged customer to call -- and then ignore

Call us today to implement your on-hold message strategy, nurture this vital customer touchpoint, and realize the benefits of this opportunity.

spectrio

Please let us know how we can help you!



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spectrio.com



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