



Date: 10/23/2009

Issue: October 2009

People: [Bob Compton](#)

Best Practices for Voice Marketers

Sophisticated mobile marketing is a medium growing in popularity, from email to text and now voice. A far cry from traditional telemarketing or call blasting services, direct voice marketing is truly a tool for building customer relationships, running niche marketing campaigns, and providing customers with information that provides value to them.

Leveraging the power of the human voice makes communications much more personal than direct mail or email, and when voice marketing is done right, it can take 80 to 90 percent off a company's traditional marketing expenditure and improve marketing results. What follows are six best practices marketers should consider to truly reap the benefits of voice marketing.

1. Get permission

Before implementing a voice campaign, make sure all the recipients on your list have given express permission to contact them through this medium. On September 1 the Federal Trade Commission issued an updated Telemarketing Sales Rule, which increased standards to ensure that proper permission is obtained from message recipients. Whereas in the past an organization simply needed an existing business relationship to allow it to contact a consumer, organizations are required to obtain express, written permission (customers must actively opt-in) to contact consumers.

2. Communicate effectively

- **Call to action** Always send a voice message with a concise and stated purpose, and clearly convey the desired action in your script. Remember, many subscribers may not have a pencil or pen handy, so make sure your call-to-action is easy to remember. A few more specific tips include focusing on a specific call-to-action, use memorable URLs when driving listeners to a website, request only quick and easy actions from listeners, provide a direct transfer feature, and include a promotional code to help track actions by customers.

- **Say what you mean** Once you decide on a call-to-action, write a script before recording a message to help gather your thoughts, make sure important information is included, and test the length of your message. It is important to include and repeat dates, times, and locations in all messaging. It's also very important to let recipients know why you're calling at the outset of a message.

3. Is it live or recorded?

Approximately 58 percent of delivered calls go straight to an answering machine or voicemail, so it is important to ensure that messaging is clearly understandable to recipients, whether a person or machine answers. Consider recording an alternative message to be played exclusively for machine answers.

4. Be concise

For most voice campaigns, short messages are most effective. The average listening duration of a voice marketing call answered live is 30.4 seconds. For marketing messages, reminders and notifications, try to limit messages to 20 to 25 seconds. For transactional messages, deliver the most important information within the first 20 to 25 seconds, and limit the entire message to 60 seconds or less.

5. Know your list

When deciding on the timing of a voice marketing campaign, consider the types of phone numbers on hand from subscribers. Are they primarily daytime or evening phone numbers? Are they home, mobile, or business numbers? Knowing the types of phone numbers available will help you plan your campaign and reach subscribers more effectively.

6. Test and retest

Voice marketing isn't an exact science, so you'll have to find out what works best with your customers by testing different variables and analyzing the results. Try testing different call durations, calls-to-action, script structures, "star power," and send times. By analyzing the impact of different variables, you can help determine the ideal message for maximum campaign impact.

About the author: Bob Compton is cofounder, chairman, and CEO of Vontoo voice marketing. Contact him at bcompton@vontoo.com.