

Techknowledge
 By Candace M. Little

On-hold Messaging

What Callers Hear on Hold can Increase Revenue

ON-HOLD MESSAGING SCRIPT

1:20 Script length

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS:

EMI: A call center business owner, female age 40-50 – a bit discouraged, dramatic, smart

DAN: An insurance salesman, male age 30-40 – excited, helpful, professional

SERVER: Female age 18-25 – chipper

ON-HOLD SCRIPT:

- 0:00-0:02 **MUSIC CUE:** JAZZ ENSEMBLE RESTAURANT MUSIC.
- 0:02-0:03 **SOUND FX:** VOICES IN BACKGROUND.
- 0:03-0:04 **SOUND FX:** FAINT CLANKING OF DISHES.
- 0:04-0:06 **SOUND FX:** WATER GLASSES BEING FILLED.
- 0:06-0:16 **SERVER:** I'll be your cashier when you're ready. Let me know if there's anything else I can get for you two.
- 0:16-0:17 **SOUND FX:** SERVER RIPPING CHECK OFF OF ORDER PAD. TAPING IT ON THE TABLE.
- 0:17-0:18 **SOUND FX:** A WOMEN'S WALLET UNZIPPING.
- 0:18-0:30 **DAN (sincerely):** Oh no, lunch is on me, Emi. I know you usually cover it, but really, I insist. Things are going great with insurance sales and it seems business isn't as booming for you...
- 0:30-0:44 **EMI (discouraged):** How could you tell? Is it really that obvious that I'm letting this recession take over my call center business like Papa Jaws eating the swimming lady?
- 0:44-0:45 **SOUND FX:** JAWS MUSIC
- 0:45-1:03 **EMI (discouraged):** I just can't seem to keep my customers on the phone long enough for my associates to talk with them. And the customers who do end up staying on the line are upset and rude ... I'm guessing that's why, even in this economy my employees are dropping like flies.
- 1:03-1:05 **SOUND FX:** FLY BUZZING, HITTING WINDOW AND DROPPING
- 1:05-1:17 **DAN (excited):** You know what? I have an idea. My company has recently invested in some on hold messaging to help inform and retain our customers on the phone. I think this could really work for your business too.
- 1:17-1:22 **EMI (hopeful):** On hold messaging? What exactly do you mean? Don't you have that boring hold music?
- 1:22-1:25 **DAN (with a smile):** Oh no, not anymore.

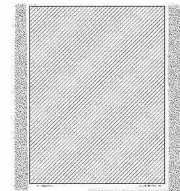


Please Hold

On-hold messaging is a resource few businesses are tapped into right now, says Leave Me On Hold President Nate DiPalma. DiPalma and his Park City team write and produce targeted on hold message recordings for clients in Utah, and across America. But almost all businesses could benefit from having customers learn about products while holding on the phone, even if it simply keeps them in a good mood.

"If you don't put anyone on hold you don't need this," says DiPalma. "But I haven't seen a business that we couldn't fit one way or another. Use the hold time to entertain, as marketing, sales or an informative opportunity. Some companies may think they don't put anyone on hold—but they do."

TriTel Communications sells on-hold messaging systems as part of their one-stop shop for communication-related products in Utah, and parts of Wyoming, Idaho, California and Montana. President Jay Brown says 50 percent of callers put on hold will hang up after one minute of waiting and 34 percent of those callers



will never call back.

These numbers are particularly scary when they are your existing costumers calling, being put on hold, waiting, hanging up and never calling back. "It takes 10 times more time and money to find a new customer than to retain the existing base," says Brown. "Why not market to customers who have already done business with you and are, in fact, on your phone right now?"

There's also a higher likelihood your customer will hear the message, as opposed to them paying attention to direct mail pieces or advertising on the radio or TV. TriTel's system for on-hold messaging allows the user to record messages using a microphone connected to a computer or to insert hold music. Leave Me On Hold makes a custom professional quality recording for your business in the form of a play or narrative. Both services cost an average of \$500—much less expensive than running an ad or sending direct mail pieces.

Thanks for Holding

Maxi Marketing reports 88 percent of callers prefer on-hold messaging to other hold options, and 16 to 20 percent of those callers made a purchase based on an on-hold offer. Research shows that callers listening to a custom message will wait on hold twice as long as those listening to music and three times as long as those waiting in silence.

DiPalma says that makes sense because no one wants to be put on hold, and if we could be entertained while we wait, or even laugh, we'll be more likely to wait for "the next available representative."

Woman's World magazine reports that the average person will spend almost two years of their life on hold, and *USA Today* reports that executives spend more than 20 minutes a day on hold. DiPalma says most people plan to be put on hold, and 99 percent of them don't like it. But some of his clients have had callers actually asking to be put back on hold so they can listen to the custom message.

More on-hold callers engaged and listening means more revenue for the company—which DiPalma and Brown say is not only their main goal in the end, but every company's business goal. **UB**

