



Action 800 VoiceMail

Expanding your Markets Nation-Wide!

Introduction

This User's Guide Manual is provided for use by customers of Action 800 Nation-Wide VoiceMail. Material is copyrighted, all rights reserved except that you may download a copy for your personal use only. It is illegal to copy or distribute this material in any way.

Here's Our Offer:

We'll give you your own private 800-number. List it in brochure, business cards, and in your advertising. Your calls go right into our computer, which acts like a super-smart answering machine.

Your callers will hear your voice, because from your own touch-tone phone you record your own greeting.

Your caller can leave detailed messages or place an order, and you can play this recording from any touch-tone phone, at your convenience.

You have total control.

Your private, unlisted 800-number plus voicemail automatic message-recording can be used in so many ways. A simple idea. A new idea. An idea whose time has come.

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Here's How it Works:

800 Number can Triple Ad Response

We'll give you your own 800-number. Many experts will tell you that an 800-number can TRIPLE advertising response and when you can get *triple the sales* from your advertising dollar, that's just good business.

Plus: Supercharge your Ads

Our system works like a round-the-clock salesman to deliver your recorded sales message to every caller. Many people find spoken presentations far more persuasive than written materials, and both together are even *more* powerful. It's just human nature.

Plus: Efficient Order-Recording Service

Just call in to pick up orders and messages. And it costs less than any answering service in the country!

So Easy to Use!

The touch-tone keys on your phone become your personal control panel. Each message is dated, and can be replayed or saved. If fast follow-up is desired, ask us to automatically relay your message to your phone or to page you!

You get to choose the Best Deal

We offer three 'Basic Service' packages so you can choose the best deal depending upon whether your needs are low volume or high volume, and how you want to use it —

'Professional' 800-VoiceMail	\$ 9.95/month plus 14 cents/min
'High Capacity' 800-VoiceMail	\$12.95/month plus 14 cents/min
'Caller-Choice' system with four sub-boxes	\$15.95/month plus 14 cents/min

Our "Universal Guarantee"

You just can't lose! Just TRY our Action800 service for up to ten days. If less than delighted for any reason, pay only for minutes used.

Set-Up and monthly fees will be immediately refunded, no questions asked. And you'll keep the free 'Sales Power' materials just for trying our service!

Test your Ads with Two 800 Numbers!

To measure one ad against another, get TWO 800 numbers. Put one in one ad, the other in the other ad. Now, when calls arrive, you know which ad to expand, which ad to cut back

At last! A sensible way to tell which ads work best!

So Easy to Start your Service

You can start today! Go to our website at www.action800.com, and fill out the Internet signup form, or call us now to set up your service right now.

Why not start Expanding your Markets today!

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To Contact our Company

If you wish to contact us, you can contact either Abe's VoiceMail or Action 800:

Abe's SuperBudget VoiceMail™

Post Office Box 969 •• Fairfax, CA 94978 USA •• recorded information: **(415) 435-7501** San Francisco, Marin, Berkeley, Oakland, Richmond; **(408) 882-5000** San Jose, Cupertino, Santa Clara, Saratoga; **(707) 793-2100** Santa Rose, Sonoma, Petaluma, Novato.

Internet: www.abesvoicemail.com

Email: gooddeal@abesvoicemail.com

Action 800 NationWide VoiceMail™

Post Office Box 969 •• Fairfax, CA 94978 USA •• recorded information: **(415) 789-7200** San Francisco, Marin, Berkeley, Oakland, Richmond; **(408) 793-5100** San Jose, Cupertino, Santa Clara, Saratoga; **(707) 793-2233** Santa Rose, Sonoma, Petaluma, Novato.

Internet: www.action800.com
Email: custserv@action800.com



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Action 800 User's Guide

Getting the Most from Your 800 VoiceMail Service

Purpose of This Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide helpful information to clients using Action 800 Nation-Wide VoiceMail service.

You as an Action 800 client can benefit from many different kinds of information. Examples include:

- How to Set-Up and Use your Voice Mailbox
- How to Design and use an "Audio Brochure"
- How your company can get a "Company Message Center"
- How to use Message Relay, Paging, Discount Long Distance
- Marketing tips and ideas for using VoiceMail
- How to collect Referral Fees (free money!)
- (and much more)

Our goal in this manual is to provide maximum helpful information. Some pages will be tips to help you use the service smarter, some pages will be explanation of our policies to help you get the most from our company, and some pages will be 'how to use' instructions and descriptions of additional services.

We ask your participation in our effort:

- If any page is unclear, please call us!
- If you have suggestions for topics, please let us know!

May your enterprise prosper!

About Action 800

Company History

Action 800 began its life as "Network Answering Service" in 1977, offering local answering service with live telephone operators in San Francisco, serving small business clients, actors, and models.

We quickly developed a reputation for high quality, and began to search for a way to offer better service to clients.

In 1986, we branched into voice mail service, and discovered that it had service advantages in many situations. These advantages included low cost, speed of operation, and multiple call-handling capability. And customers found it easy to use.

In 1989, because of tariff changes within the phone companies we were able — for the first time — to economically bundle individual 800 numbers with voice mail services.

We quickly discovered that the potent combination of an 800 number and a spoken sales message was the most powerful and cost-efficient service we'd ever been able to offer.

Welcome to today.

How to Reach Customer Service

HOURS: 9am-5pm Monday-Friday (Pacific Time)

HOLIDAYS: We generally take off all holidays.

(Except for maintenance crew which is always on-call to keep equipment running smoothly.)

PHONE: (415) 435-8803

This is a direct line which rings into the Customer Service department. If all lines are busy, your call will spill over into voicemail so that you can leave a callback message. We will be paged so that we can respond as quickly as possible.

Using your 800-VoiceMail Service

How to Set Up your Voice Mailbox

Call your 800-Number. When you hear a woman's voice — *INTERRUPT HER* by pressing the Star (*) on your touch-tone phone. Enter your temporary passcode on the touch-tone keys, and the voice will lead you through three things:

1. You will enter your own secret Passcode, which will replace the temporary passcode.
2. You will record your own Greeting, which your callers will hear when they call you.

3. You will record your Name. Your callers will not hear your name, but you will hear it when you check in for messages, and we will hear it if we leave you a message internally.

If you have any difficulty, just hang up and start over. Nothing will be stored until you have completed all three things.

(You may change any of these items at any later time by pressing "U" for "U"ser-options.)

Picking Up your Messages

Call your 800-Number. As soon as you hear your own Greeting—*INTERRUPT IT* by pressing the Star (*) on your touch-tone phone.

Enter your secret Passcode on the touch-tone keys, and the voice will tell you how many messages you have. New messages will be described as "Unplayed" messages.

Press "P" to "P"lay a message.

While it is playing, you may press Star (*) to skip backwards (repeat a section), or you may press Number-Sign (#) to skip forward.

When you have heard the message, press either "D" to "D"iscard it, or "K" to "K"eep it for later. (If you hang up without choosing, the system will assume you want to "K"eep the message.)

After you keep or delete the first message, press "P" to "P"lay the second message, and so on.

(If you call in when you have both new ("Unplayed") messages and also some "K"ept from earlier, the system will give you the new messages first, and you will need to press "P"lay an additional time to go on to play the older messages.)

Limits of the Voice Mailbox

HOW MANY MESSAGES WILL IT HOLD? It will hold a total of 40 messages. Because of this limit, you don't want to "K"eep messages for no reason. If you "K"ept 40 messages, the mailbox would be unable to take new ones.

WHAT HAPPENS IF IT'S FULL? It will play your greeting to the next caller, but when it is time for him to record his message, he will be told by the system: "Mailbox full. Please call again later."

(Because AT&T studies show that many people will NOT call back, it is in your best interest to clear it out regularly.)

HOW LONG WILL MESSAGES STAY? "Unplayed" (new) messages will stay for two weeks. If you play them and "K"eep them, they will then stay for three days -- the day you first heard them plus two more days.

When the time is up, the messages are automatically erased!

Why? Because the voice mailbox is a computer and the messages

are stored on a very large, very fast hard disk. This hard disk storage space has a limit, and by erasing old messages, the system is creating space for new messages.

HOW LONG CAN THE OUTGOING GREETING BE? It depends upon which package you have chosen —

- On our 'Professional 800 VoiceMail' package, the outgoing Greeting which the caller hears can be up to **three minutes**.
- And on our 'High Capacity 800 VoiceMail' package, your outgoing Greeting can be up to **seven minutes!**
- However, on the 'Caller-Choice' system with sub-boxes, the greeting on message-taking boxes is two minutes, and on announce-only boxes the greeting can be up to five minutes.

(If you try to record a longer Greeting, the system will cut you off, saying "Greeting complete".)

HOW LONG CAN CALLER'S MESSAGE BE? As long as caller keeps talking (or making noise), up to four minutes.

"Smart" Time and Date

Time and Date are automatically added to each message you receive, and the system is smart enough to conserve your time. It tells "just enough". For example ...

- If the message came in today, it will just give the time.
- If the message came in during the last seven days, it will tell you the day of the week and the time.
- If the message came in more than seven days ago, it will tell you the day of the week, the calendar date and the time.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The time given is when the machine received the message in San Francisco. You will need to make an adjustment if you (or your caller) is in a different time zone.

The US time zone adjustments are:

PACIFIC TIME, no adjustment

MOUNTAIN TIME, add 1 hour to San Francisco time

CENTRAL TIME, add 2 hours to San Francisco time

EASTERN TIME, add 3 hours to San Francisco time

"Caller Choice" Menu

After the caller completes recording his message to you, if he stays on the line, he will be automatically offered several choices by the system. His options are:

- Caller can press "R" to "R"eview his message.
- Caller can press "D" to "D"iscard and start over.

Caller can press "A" to "A"ppend to his message (assuming that he hasn't already reached the four minute limit).

Caller can press "X" to e"X"it the system.

The key here is that the Caller will hear this selection *if he stays on the line*. Generally speaking, unless you suggest his hanging around in your outgoing Greeting, most people will record their message and hang up (therefore never hearing these options).

So if you want him to use these, tell him in your Greeting to stay on the line when he's finished recording.

Or if you don't want him to use these, say nothing about staying on the line and the vast majority of callers will hang up after recording.

(What happens when he just hangs up without pressing "X"? Nothing tragic. The system waits a little while, sees that he's gone, then drops the line. Pressing "X" just clears the line for another call a little faster, that's all.)

Multiple Incoming Calls

Our voice mail computer can take a dozen calls for you at the same time, although this can vary depending upon the time of day. Each caller will hear your voice, and can record a message for you.

Based on thirty years of telephone company figures, this means that you can receive tens of thousands of calls during the month, and less than 1% of your callers will ever hear a "Busy" signal. (By comparison, your local telephone generally wires your house to allow 2%-5% Busy signals.)

But please be aware that certain kinds of radio and television advertising generates all the calls at once, flooding lines for a brief period of time. For this reason, the terms of your Credit Application absolutely prohibit your use of any Action800 phone number in radio or television advertising. If you need to use radio or television, we'll be happy to refer you to another company who have set their equipment up differently. (Their rates are much higher, but that's what it takes if you expect a sudden "spike" of calls.)

Allowing Caller to Interrupt Greeting

Your caller can interrupt the outgoing sales message and immediately begin recording a message for you, if desired.

The feature is built-in, but you will need to tell him about it or he won't know he can do it. All that he needs to do is to press any key (except Star) during the Greeting. The Greeting will immediately stop, and there will be a quick beep, after which the system is recording.

The one thing you DON'T want him to do is to press the Star, because then the system will think it's you calling in, and will ask for

your Passcode. Although the odds against guessing a Passcode are 10,000 to 1, it could possibly be done, and it would not be in your best interests to have somebody play your messages!

So if you use this feature, keep the caller away from the Star key. Here is a suggested wording to use ...

"If you're calling to learn more about our fabulous blue widgets, please ... stay on the line. But if you're ready to order now, just press ONE on your touch-tone phone and then, at the beep, record your name, address, phone number, and credit-card number."

"Toll saver" Feature

On your 800-VoiceMail service, this service is included free. Here's how it works: When calling in to check messages, if you hear ringing before your voice comes on, it means "you have no new messages." Hang up immediately (before your voice comes on) and you won't be charged any 800-time usage for the call!

Your Email Report of Caller's Telephone Numbers

Included with your service is a special billing and reporting package which sends you a monthly report by email detailing all charges to your credit-card, and a listing of the phone numbers of all the callers who dialed your 800-number.

Then if you wish, you may follow up by calling them back.

Or you can just use this detail for your allocation of expenses.

Is it always complete? No, sometimes numbers will be missing, because several US telephone companies offer their customers something called 'Caller ID Blocking' which means their 'ID' (their telephone number) is not reported to the recipient. So some details will be missing. However, you will still receive an exact date and time report to account for the cost of the call.

This detailed report is included free.

Protecting your Passcode

Although it's unlikely that anyone could guess your Passcode (odds against it are 10,000 to 1), somebody might be able to if you make it too easy for them.

There are people in the world who have nothing better to do than sit around creating mischief, and just as you sometimes receive calls at home which are wrong numbers and annoyance calls, so too will your voice mailbox occasionally get wrong number and annoyance calls.

If they just leave a stupid message, little harm is done.

But if somebody gets your passcode they can cause you a lot of

bother. For example, calling up and deleting all your orders. For example, changing your outgoing Greeting to an obscene message.

These things are rare, but it makes sense to protect yourself against them. Here are some suggestions to avoid needless trouble:

- Don't write your passcode down. Make it something so easy for you to remember that you don't need to write it down. Often, spelling a short word on the touch-tone is hard for others to guess, but easy to remember.

- Don't tell others what your passcode is.

- If your mailbox is used by others in your organization, whenever somebody is fired, quits, or is transferred out of the company, change the passcode.

- Don't use easy-to-guess numbers, such as "1-2-3-4" or the last four digits of the phone number.

And if you have any reason to suspect that someone may have gotten into your mailbox, don't wait but change the passcode at once.

Touch-Tone Mysteries and Solutions

NO TOUCH-TONE! The machine needs to hear touch-tones to know what you want done. Some phones have keys to press, but they generate a ticking sound rather than touch-tone sounds. Look for a switch on the phone that says something like "TONE-PULSE" and change it to "TONE".

If the phone just won't make touch-tone sounds, you will need to use another phone.

If you live in an area where the telephone company does not offer touch-tone, get a phone with a "TONE-PULSE" switch. Use "PULSE" to call your 800 Number, then switch to "TONE" to give your commands to the voice mailbox. Likewise you could use two phones, a rotary-dial phone ("pulse") to call your 800 number, and then a touch-tone phone to command your voice mailbox once you connect.

If you travel to areas with no touch-tone phones, your best bet is to go to a phone store or Radio Shack and purchase a small device called a "speed dialer." This device can be as small as a credit card, and it's mainly used for storing phone numbers which can be played into the mouthpiece of a phone on the road. It has touch-tone keys and a small speaker. For your purposes, you will use it as a portable touch-tone generator so you can command your voice mailbox with touch-tones through the mouthpiece of a non-touch-tone phone.

PRESS STAR AND NOTHING HAPPENS! A few phones work great as touch-tone phones, except that the Star does not make a sound! These phones are mainly found in non-Bell payphones and certain of-

face phone systems.

What to do? Just press Zero (0) instead to interrupt your greeting. You will then be able to operate your voice mailbox with all of the keys except the Star (used for skipping back when playing a message).

IXC —The Nation's Best Long-Distance Carrier

In the January 1997 issue of the prestigious telecommunications magazine *Phone+*, it was reported that IXC of Austin Texas was named best overall provider of long-distance service, according to a report released by a Boston-based international consulting firm.

IXC owns and operates a coast-to-coast digital fiber network designed to meet the needs of local telephone companies and cable companies, as well as commercial and residential customers.

Generally only well-known to industry insiders, IXC owns one of the five nationwide digital fiber networks. The network possesses 'Redundant Switching' design, which means that calls go through quicker, eliminating busy signals, and only digital fiber produces the highest-quality signal.

Unlike the other large networks such as AT&T and MCI, the IXC company does not sell direct to consumers or businesses, but only through authorized resellers.

Action800 is *proud* to provide you with IXC services, as part of your 800 VoiceMail service. We think IXC is the best carrier in the nation, and your 800 service from Action800 is the best available in today's market.

Not only do your 800 VoiceMail calls arrive over the IXC digital fiber nationwide network, but if you elect any of our optional services such as discount long distance or a second 800-number to ring into your home or business phone, these services will also be guaranteed IXC top-quality service.

You may not see IXC ads on television because they don't sell to consumers or business, but you'll never find better quality sound transmission from any company in America.

Using Call-Forwarding

To send calls from your home or business phone into your 800 voicemail service, for additional message-taking, use your local phone company's Call-Forwarding.

This also gives you a way to link offices in different cities: Just

have each office forward their local numbers into one 800 number, on which we've installed for you either a stand-alone voice mailbox or the 'Caller Choice' system with sub-boxes for the various members of your group.

In northern California, our local phone company, Pacific Bell, offers several versions of Call-Forwarding. For example they have permanent versions which send us your calls when you're already on the phone or when you fail to answer. Or there's 'Variable Call-Forwarding', which works like this:

How to Turn ON Call-Forwarding

1. On your phone dial 72#.
2. You'll hear "beep-beep dialtone".
3. Dial your voicemail number.
4. When it answers, STAY ON THE LINE for at least 5 seconds.
5. Hang up. Call-Forwarding is set. Your phone may ring once, but that's just a phone company reminder that you've got Call-Forwarding on. If you ever try to turn it on when it is already on, you'll hear a "fast busy" signal.

How to turn OFF Call-Forwarding

1. Pick up your phone, and dial 73#.
2. You'll hear "beep-beep dialtone". This means Call-Forwarding is OFF.

How to Get Some Free Service!

Just Refer a Friend!

A lot of our business comes from referrals, and we're grateful when you refer a friend to us. When they sign up for 800 voicemail, be sure to let us know so that we can give you a free credit on your next renewal. This credit is \$ 20, the same as our standard set-up fee!

Important Credit Policies

Automatic Credit-Card Billing

Our standard packages assume two things:

- 1. We will be putting charges for your 800 VoiceMail on a credit-card rather than mailing you statements, and you have authorized us to put all charges through until you cancel service with at least 30 days notice and service is stopped.

- 2. We will be reporting to you via email, in order to send you the details of your billing, along with your free 'call-detail' report showing the phone numbers of your callers and the amount of time each call was connected to your 800 number.

By using these methods, we reduce our bookkeeping costs. This permits us to provide you with high value at low cost. In other words, to give you low rates, we didn't chop down the service ... we just chopped down the bookkeeping!

Bounced Credit-Card

The low rates we advertise on our standard packages assume automatic billing to credit-card, and the only way this plan can fail to save you money is if your credit-card fails to go through. This can happen if you've overextended your credit, or if you've forgotten to notify us of a lost or stolen card.

When this happens, we don't receive the bookkeeping cost-savings you've agreed to provide, so your service isn't quite as cheap as usual. In this case, we will add a small 'Bounced Credit Card' fee which reduces your usual discount, and which covers our costs to have humans patch things up.

In addition, if your credit card isn't working, unless we can obtain a replacement quickly, be aware that your service can be interrupted until your existing charges have been brought up to date. (If you wish a safeguard against this, we suggest that we keep a second credit-card number on file.)

Optional Reporting by Postal Mail, or Billing via Statements

We recommend automatic billing to your credit-card, and reporting to you via email because this method works the best.

However, if you wish us to report your charges via the postal service we can do so, although your monthly rate will be slightly higher.

And if you wish us to send you a monthly statement instead of automatically billing your credit-card, we can do so at a higher rate plus an appropriate deposit on hand. Statements are due on receipt.

Your "Credit Guide"

For each client we assign a modest credit-line when the account is set up. Your customer service person will inform you of the amount of your credit-line when you signed up.

The amount of this Credit Guide is based upon (1) your credit information, (2) your expected call-volume, and (3) other information.

Sometimes customers ask us why is there a limit. Sometimes we

are asked how we are extending credit.

As a practical matter, our business provides a consumable product. The minutes of 800-usage which bring you sales and leads is a consumable product, meaning the minutes are consumed as they are used. They can't be returned, and we can't go out and repossess them like an automobile. And IXC, the long-distance carrier who provides 800-numbers to us, doesn't waive our charges for these minutes under any circumstances.

Most companies selling low-cost consumable products do not offer any credit at all. For example, movies and restaurants.

In our case, we pay IXC (the long-distance company) for the minutes and then we provide the minutes — plus our service — to you. Since we advance the money, and then collect from you later, we're actually providing a short-term, interest-free loan. So we are forced to be somewhat conservative in extending credit.

Therefore we establish a Credit Guide for each customer based upon his individual credit history and expected needs. In some cases, we ask for a refundable deposit.

WHAT IF CREDIT GUIDE IS EXCEEDED? For example, suppose we establish a Credit Guide of \$100, and then by mid-month the customer has used over \$100 worth of minutes?

In a case like this, we will put the charges to date through on the credit-card on file. So with high volumes of calls, you could see more than one charge monthly on your credit card statement, though everything will be detailed on your monthly email call-detail report.

(If the customer has statement billing, we will call the customer and request a progress payment just like a credit-card company does).

Rush Payments

BEST WAYS TO RUSH A PAYMENT TO ACTION 800? Because it sometimes happens that minutes soar beyond the Credit Guide, it sometimes happens that we request that a progress payment be made. And just like a “margin call” in the commodities market, sometimes this must be done quickly.

Fast ways to get money to Action 800 Customer Service include:

- Credit card payment over the phone (BEST METHOD)
- US Postal Service Express Mail Overnight (NEXT BEST)
- Direct cash (not check) deposit into Home Savings of America,

Account number 181-013997-0. Home Savings has many branches in Texas, California, and Florida. Remember to *CALL US*. The cash deposit appears almost immediately in our bank (and on our computer), but we don't know it's yours -- *until you call us!*

Corporate Accounts

CAN I SET UP A CORPORATE ACCOUNT? For larger corporations, yes. The requirement is that the company be publicly traded with a Dun and Bradstreet rating of "A" or "B", assuming approval of financial statements and corporate filing information.

However, for many small or mid-sized corporations, it's somewhat difficult for us to do. The problem is that there is no reasonable way to obtain a credit history of the corporation, as there is for an individual. True, Dun & Bradstreet will provide (at a very high price) a report, but usually such reports have almost no useful vendor credit history information.

Our policy is to set up an individual account for the person in the corporation who wishes it. We are then just happy as a clam to accept payments from the corporation.

Add-Ons and Other Services

After choosing one of our 'Basic Services' to address your primary need, you can often enhance it with some of our 'Add-Ons and Other Services.'

"Group Features" -- Networking Multiple Mailboxes

If you are part of a group (such as a sales department, a Multi-Level-Marketing group, etc.), you may wish to obtain several voice mailboxes and request 'Group Features.'

Just call Customer Service and request a "Group Code" for the people in your group. We'll then program each voice mailbox in your group so that you can send messages back and forth.

While you are checking your messages you can send a voice message to anyone in your group. Or you can send a copy of any message you find in your own box to somebody else in your group. If they have sent you a message, you can answer it just by pressing "A". It's that easy.

In fact, you can even broadcast memos to the whole group (or to sub-groups which you define).

See detailed description of operating Group Features below.

Message Relay Service

If you would like to be immediately notified when you have messages waiting, it's easy to do, and costs very little.

We'll program your voice mailbox to call your pre-designated home or business phone (anywhere in the country) automatically.

When you answer, the system requests your passcode to ensure that only you can receive your messages!

Now you can work at home or at your office, and be notified immediately when messages have come in!

Automatic Paging Service

If you're always on the go, and you would like to be immediately paged when you have messages, that's easy too.

First, get any kind of display pager that will display a caller's phone number. Then call Customer Service to arrange to be paged.

We'll program your voice mailbox to call your pager (anywhere in the country) whenever you have a message waiting. The voice mailbox will display your 'VoiceMail Number' to identify itself, so you can use your pager in other ways as well. For example, to allow your family, friends, or business associates page you directly without going through voicemail.

Now you can wander the wide world, and still be notified the moment important messages arrive!

Free Reports

Action800 is the original internet-based 800 VoiceMail company offering powerful free support materials.

You are sincerely requested to download these materials (free) from the Action800 website.

You should have, at the very least, two of these reports especially written to assist you with creating and recording the sales message for your voice mailbox.

The material in these reports has been developed by our staff and clients over several years, and we invite you to contribute your useful information and suggestions for our periodic updates of these Reports.

If you have discovered a specific technique or phrase which works well for you, please let us know. And if you have developed a marketing script which works well for you, in some cases we'd might wish to include your text in our "Sample Scripts" section. (In this case, we will footnote your name and address in case a reader wishes to order your product!)

The "Action Bookshelf"

From time to time, Action 800 offers books of exceptional value to marketers. These offerings are often not widely available in bookstores in many cities. You will be notified by mail from time to time when we have marketing books to offer you.

Referral Fee — Free Money!

If you refer a new customer to sign up with Action 800, we'll say "Thank You!" with a service credit on your account.

After all, it's only fair. Our service is specialized, and it costs us considerable time and money to advertise and recruit clients. When you send us a new client, we save time and we save money. This is our way to share the benefit with you!

Using Two or More Mailboxes to Measure Ad Response

Many Action 800 customers find it efficient to use two (or more) 800 voice mailboxes as a way to test ad response.

Testing is the heart of direct response marketing. All successful direct marketers are constant testers. This ad against that ad, this magazine against that magazine, this headline against that headline, this offer against that offer, this letter against that letter. Which one pulls the best?

Direct response marketing can be scientific. The key is accurate testing.

And using one 800 number in one ad, and a different 800 number in a different ad is certainly a low-cost, simple way to keep the response separate. Measuring the response to see which ad to renew couldn't be simpler!

The minutes don't cost any more for being split between two voice mailboxes. The monthly base rate is probably a trivial cost in your advertising budget. And the Set-Up fee is only paid once, then you can use the two 800 numbers over and over again in different tests.

Local California VoiceMail Service

We also offer local service in Northern California, under the business name "Abe's SuperBudget VoiceMail." Please see our website at www.abesvoicemail.com for services and rates, or call our recorded info-line at **(415) 435-7501** in San Francisco, Marin County, Richmond, Pinole, Berkeley, Albany, Emeryville, Alameda, Oakland and the East Bay; **(707) 793-2100** in Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Petaluma, Novato, Penngrrove, Cotati, Rohnert Park, and Sonoma County; **(408) 882-5000** in San Jose and surrounding cities.

Success in Marketing

The Small Business Administration tells us many new businesses close within a short time. When asked why, the SBA can say only that new businesspeople often make some sort of mistake through lack of experience.

Although it's more admirable to make an attempt and fall short than to never make an attempt and fade away into gray obscurity ... most of us would agree it's lots better to make an attempt and then to *succeed!*

In his best-selling marketing manual "Guerrilla Marketing" sales expert Jay Levinson outlines the key points to a successful marketing business.

It happens that our company has had many years of experience dealing with marketers large and small, new entrepreneurs and old hands, with simple ideas and wide-ranging complex plans. And we have observed that the most successful businesses are those which follow the simple principles outlined in "Guerrilla Marketing", especially in Chapter Three.

What are these Key Principles?

Chapter Three — "The Three Most Important Marketing Secrets of All" — speaks of three key words:

1. Commitment ... you must be committed to your program.
2. Investment ... you must think of marketing as an investment.
3. Consistent ... you must be sure your program is consistent.

We believe that the biggest mistake most marketers make is to run a small ad campaign briefly, see a small result, say "It's not working", and give up far too soon.

Commitment

What approach succeeds? To quote Chapter Three:

"You evolve a marketing plan, revise and rerevise it until it is a powerful plan for your purposes. You put it to work, and then you stay with it, no matter what (in most cases). You watch it slowly take effect, rise and falter, take a bit more effect, slide back a bit, start taking hold even more, stumble, then finally grab on and soar, taking you with it. Your plan is working. Your cash register is ringing. Your bank balance is swelling. And it all happened because you were committed to your marketing program."

Successful marketers need to be a little bull-headed. You must be convinced that you've got a good plan, because you designed your plan carefully in the first place. You have to have stubborn faith. The commonest initial result we usually see for a new marketing attempt is neither terrible failure or raging success. The most common result for a first attempt? It "sort of works".

What then leads to greater success? Fiddling with it, learning what works best, and doing more of that. Trying new angles, learning what flops and abandoning that experiment.

Success only comes with commitment. Sometimes that means

pouring some money into an experiment that flops, just so you can learn to do it a different way. Sometimes that means fiddling and fiddling with various approaches, measuring the results over and over.

Success only comes with commitment.

Investment

Levinson's second point is to regard marketing and advertising as a “conservative investment”. What he means is that you shouldn't have unrealistic expectations about razing success in one week.

Sometimes we get a misleading idea from hearing about some “overnight success”. (Kind of like a rock star who's an “overnight success” after busting his tail for twenty years!) There are ads in any magazine telling about some fellow who started a mail-order business and in the first week got a hernia from carrying all the checks home!

Humbug, quite often.

Of the thousands of people who have made fortunes in mail-order, most started like everybody else. Their plan “sort of worked”, and they just kept investing in advertising, measuring the results, dropping the ads that pulled poorly, and increasing the ads that pulled better.

Over time, this conservative and consistent investment pays off. And if it suddenly takes off and makes you rich, well great! That does sometimes happen. Then someday they can interview you for a magazine article and tell how you too became an “overnight success”.

Consistent

To again quote Chapter Three:

“The third major marketing secret is to make your marketing consistent. Don't change media. Don't change messages. Don't drop out of the public eye for long periods. When you are ready to market your product or service, be prepared to put the word out consistently. Consistently means regularly — and for a goodly period of time. It means that instead of running a couple of large newspaper ads once every few months, you'll run smaller newspaper ads, and run them frequently.

“Consistency equates with familiarity. Familiarity equates with confidence. And confidence equates with sales. Provided that your products or services are of sufficient quality, confidence in yourself and your offering will attract buyers more than any other attribute. Confidence will be your ally. And consistent marketing will breed confidence.”

Here's what we have seen with our clients: If you, for example, place a small classified in one or more monthly magazines. The first month you might get, for example, twelve responses.

But for every person who responded, there were several more who almost responded. But they delayed for one reason or another.

Next month, maybe you get 22 responses.

The next month, perhaps 36 responses.

Assuming that your ad is pulling at all, it will generally increase over four to nine months. What is happening is that some of the readers see it a few times, and then — maybe after seeing it nine times — the guy suddenly says to himself, “Oh yeah, *those guys*. I've seen them around. I think I'll call them.”

Many customers are like that. That's why it is common to see your response from a given ad grow over the months.

And that's why you have to have commitment, and think of it as a conservative investment. And make the ad before this guy's eyes appear consistent long enough so that he can feel confidence in you.

Because where marketers most often fail is in not sticking around long enough for their plan to pay off.

Moving On

Mr. Levinson then goes on to discuss, in Chapter Four, how you can develop your marketing plan to be a powerful plan for your purposes. (And by the way, does Action 800 have a marketing plan such as he describes? You bet we do. One of the most helpful things we've ever done.)

We would add only one key principle to his discussion. The key to greatest success in direct response marketing — where you want the customer to respond directly right now to your ad — is continuous measurement and testing.

Usually this means that you try each step two different ways.

For example, perhaps you place your classified ad in TWO magazines. Then you measure which one gets more responses, more orders. (Maybe you use two 800 number to keep responses separate. Or maybe you ask each buyer where they saw your ad.)

You never, never, never just run ads without a plan to compare one against the other.

Perhaps you run the same ad in two magazines. Or perhaps you run two different version of your ad in the same magazine. Or perhaps you run one ad in one magazine long enough to allow response to rise and level off. Then you try it a different way and let it rise and level again.

You have to run each version long enough to get a good measure-

ment. You have to test one ad against another ad, or one magazine against another magazine, or one direct mailing against another direct mailing. Then you know what works the best.

Then you just keep doing that.

And if there are too many checks in your mailbox, take a wheelbarrow to the post office!

Here's to your success.

To Contact our Company

If you wish to contact us, you can contact either Abe's VoiceMail or Action 800:

Abe's SuperBudget VoiceMail™

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Action 800 Audio Brochure

How to Create a 24-Hour “Talking Brochure” to SuperCharge your Advertising

Introduction

If you would be interested in a new advertising tool that is sweeping the nation -- to give you an advertising edge for the nineties -- then you may want to consider using an “Audio Brochure.”

An Audio Brochure is a talking brochure on the telephone, available 24-hours a day for your prospects (or customers) to call. They'll hear your desired material, in your own voice, just as if you were speaking to them one-to-one.

This can be a simple structure, such as a 3-minute or a 7-minute “Announce-Only” box, or it could be a more elaborate structure where the caller hears your introductory message and then can select this-subject and that-subject by pressing touch-tones on his phone.

The purpose of this section is to show you how you can use an Audio Brochure to make your advertising more powerful, or to give new and powerful services to your customers — and to show you how easy and inexpensive this power can be.

VoiceMail Demonstration

Here you'll find two useful audio demonstrations. Below you'll find two telephone numbers, so you can call up and hear the actual voice-mail machine over your phone line -- just as your callers would hear

your voice mailbox. (One phone number gives a single box 'Announce-Only' type of presentation, and the other phone number gives a 'Caller-Choice' box with sub-boxes.)

To hear the sample Audio Brochures

Just use your telephone and dial the following numbers. The first example is a "marketing giveaway," where we've recorded 24 marketing tips for you. The second is our own multi-page Audio Brochure which we use in presenting Action800 services to the public in Northern California. Just give them a call. This is a machine identical to the one you'll use for your 800 VoiceMail —

**A single-box
Audio Brochure** (415) 789-7300

**A multi-page
Audio Brochure** (415) 789-7200

What is an "Audio Brochure"?

An Audio Brochure is a brochure for your business, but instead of spending a fortune on printing and postage, you just set it up once on a special voice mailbox. You could have a "single-page" voice mailbox (with a 3 or a 7 minute presentation depending upon your package selection) ... or you could have a multi-page voice mailbox (where the caller can navigate just by pressing touch-tones).

If you've not yet listened, give a call to the samples above.

And while you're listening, remember that the purpose of our samples is for you to imagine how it might boost *your own business*.

An "Audio Brochure" means "spoken information that is selected by the caller." And perhaps in your business, your customers could be given information with an audio brochure. It's a good way to let your customer select what he wants to know, it's very complete, and it's low in cost.

How an Audio Brochure can work for you

An Audio Brochure can save your company time and money. In your business you probably spend a lot of time just explaining what you do. By pre-recording key information, that your customer retrieves by phone, your information is available to customers around the clock.

If it's advertising, it's advertising working around the clock. And it costs a heck of a lot less than printed brochures and postage. (And it costs far less than hiring a worker to say the same things over and over and over to each new caller.) Plus, it's available to several callers simultaneously. No busy signals. No wasted time. No missed opportunities.

Some Examples

- A local organization offered lots of meetings for its members. It was costing mucho just to answer the phone and tell when the meetings were, and printed schedules had not solved the problem. So they got an Audio Brochure, with a mailbox for Monday's events, one for Tuesday's events, and so on. End of problem.
- An Audio Brochure could be used by a specialized weather-reporting service such as for small craft, gliding, or surfing conditions. Or a political hotline, a specialized news-reporting service, or use it to announce your latest product!
- Any of these could be free advertising devices ... or a part of your paid-for services ... or a system saving you money internally. For example, a company was rapidly expanding and needed to hire many employees. But whenever they listed the jobs, they were swamped with hundreds of applicants ... unfortunately mostly unqualified!
- Attempting to call these applicants back took days. So they got smart. In their job listings they now list the 800 VoiceMail number, which then gives information about the job. It also stresses the important qualifications, and then gives a phone number to callers who wish to apply. And it works. The curiosity-seekers get the info they want, and the company can concentrate on the qualified callers.

Use it for Scheduling

An airline was being swamped with calls from employees (in all time zones) needing up-to-date work schedule information. So they put the information on an 800-Number Audio Brochure. No more waiting by employees. No more interruption for flight dispatchers. Freedom!

Your own 'Newsletter'

Any group can easily publish information for its members. And nearly all businesses possess specialized information that would be useful to the public. Publishing this information with an Audio Brochure gives your company the position of an expert. And long-term, it adds sales. Almost any information can find an audience. It's like publishing a high-quality newsletter, except that it takes less time and money!

Why an Audio Brochure can Pay Off Big

These are a few of the reasons why we suggest you consider using an Audio Brochure -- your advertising edge for the nineties. And if you visit our 'Library' section, you can download (for free) our extensive business and marketing manuals for how to write an effective sales script, how to easily make a professional-sounding recording, and more. It's just another door to open ... and when you do, more customers walk in!

Although an Audio Brochure is a powerful business tool, it's quite easy to do!

To Contact our Company

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Action 800 Group Commands

How to Send Messages and Broadcast Memos to Group Members

Introduction

If you (or you and your associates) have several Voice Mailboxes on the Action 800 system, you have access to additional useful message services. You can use these services to help your group members communicate more easily, even from different cities and time-zones.

You might have our 'Caller-Choice' system where a caller dials a main number and then can select sub-boxes. Each of these sub-boxes is then the message-taking box for one of the folks in your company. We would call this approach a 'Company Message Center.'

Or you might have a single message-taking voice mailbox (using either the 'Professional' or 'High-Capacity' package), so you've got your own individual 800-number. And maybe Bill in your company also has the same service with his own 800-number.

With either structure, you can add the 'Group Features' described in this section so that you can pass messages back and forth, broadcast memos to many folks at once, and more. Here's how ...

About your "Voice Mailbox Number"

There are two kinds of "voice mailbox numbers."

- If you have an 800-Number which offers callers a choice of "Extension", such as on our 'Caller-Choice' package, your

callers may select you as 'Extension 1', but there's actually a different "voice mailbox number" to use when passing messages back and forth (for example, it might be voice mailbox number 2024) and this number will not be known to the public. But everyone in your group will know it.

- However, if you have an *individual* 800-Number, such as on our 'Professional' or 'High-Capacity' packages, the "voice mailbox number" will be the same as the number of your Action 800 Account Number. For example, if your account is "N8901", your voice mailbox number would be "8901."

For the purpose of sending messages from your voice mailbox to your associates' voice mailboxes, you start by knowing the "voice mailbox numbers" of people in your group.

If you do not know these numbers, contact your "Group Leader."

About your "Group Code" and "Group Leader"

Before you can use the group message services described in these instructions, you and the members of your group must have had your voice mailboxes programmed with a special "Group Code", which activates the additional services within the Action 800 computer system, thus making the computer recognize your commands as valid.

Action 800 Customer Service will perform this programming service for you when the system is set up, and it can be reprogrammed by us from time to time if you need to make changes.

However, to avoid confusion from conflicting requests from different group members, we request that your group designate a "Group Leader" so that we have a single person with whom to coordinate these services.

Once set up, here's how you operate the commands ...

How to Use the Group Message Commands

HOW TO GIVE A MESSAGE TO ANOTHER USER

After you play a message, you may want to give it to another user in your group.

 Press [G] to GIVE, then their Voice Mailbox Number.

The message will be time-stamped and you'll be asked to add your comments. Then the entire message, along with the date and your comments will be duplicated in the recipient's Voice Mailbox. You can then either [K]eep or [D]iscard the message in your own box.

HOW TO MAKE A MESSAGE FOR ANOTHER USER

You can create a message to another user from within your Voice Mailbox. For example, while you're playing some of your messages, you think of something to ask Jack. Right then and there you can make a message for Jack, who's a member of your group.

The advantage of making such a message while checked into your own voice mailbox is that your message is stamped with your name automatically, and the system will remember your return Voice Mailbox Number, so the recipient can [A]nswer your message easily.

How to do it ...

 Press [M] to MAKE, then their Voice Mailbox Number.

HOW TO ANSWER A MESSAGE FROM ANOTHER USER

The reason to [M]ake a message from *within* the system is to make it simple to answer it. When you hear a message from someone in your group, you will hear the sender's name, then you'll have the option to [A]nswer it.

 Press [A] to ANSWER ... that's it!

The original sender can answer you again by pressing [A], then you can answer him/her the same way. Back and forth!

ABOUT MEMOS AND DISTRIBUTION LISTS

You can [M]ake or [G]ive a message to a GROUP of people all at the same time, but you have to make up a distribution list FIRST. It's easy. You can have up to 9 lists on standby at all times.

 Press [U] to enter USER OPTIONS.

 Enter a Distribution List Number (01 through 09).

 Press [N] to NAME the list (such as "salesmen").

 Press [X] to save the name, etc.

 Press [A] to ADD, then the Voice Mailbox Number.

 Press [P] to PLAY the last box, if you lose your place.

 Press [X] to SAVE the whole thing and EXIT User Options.

You can now [G]ive or [M]ake a message to the list. Just use the List Number — 01, or 02, or whatever — instead of a Voice Mailbox Number.

You will also get an automatic "receipt" message telling you who has played your message and who has not. Be sure to [K]eep this receipt each time until everyone has heard your Memo, since the receipt

will be updated whenever someone plays your Memo. Whenever you call in you can check on the progress of your Memo.

Enjoy better Group Communication with your Action 800 Service!

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