
Power Tips of the Radio Pros

How to Make Professional Phone Recordings in Five Simple Steps

Overview

This material was developed at Action 800 Nation-Wide VoiceMail between 1987 and 1989, by staff (and clients) who had the task of producing persuasive telephone presentations.

Although our 800 VoiceMail(tm) service can be used in many different ways, the most profitable is often advertising response. Our client, often a direct marketer, advertises in nation-wide or state-wide media (such as national magazines, newspapers in different cities, di-



The Five Simple Steps given in this report can enhance your recording skill with very little effort. And after you record your script, our order-taking system will deliver your sales message to every caller just the same way, day after day, round-the-clock. And the result? Better sales for you!

rect mailings, multi-city radio, etc.). His customer, responding to the ad, becomes interested in learning more or wants to place an order. The customer dials the marketer's toll-free 800 Number.

- We assume in this report that you are the client doing direct marketing and that your customer is calling.

Your customer hears an outgoing sales message, called the “Greeting.” Your Greeting can have several purposes. You, as a marketer, need to convey certain information. For example, your address, product cost, your sales terms, etc.

- But your primary purpose is to sell your product.

The purpose of this Report is to provide you with simple, helpful information about how to record an outgoing sales message which will be effective in getting sales.*

How to Use ONE-STEP Ads

By “One-Step” we mean the classic direct mail offer where the customer sees, for example, a display ad in a magazine offering a relatively inexpensive product.** For discussion, say it is a pocket-knife with 78 blades for \$15, or a written “manual” about how to obtain low-cost loans for \$12.95.

The ad might say “Mail your Check to This Address”.

Or your ad might say “Call this Number to place your order!” and then you either give your own phone number (if you expect to answer it day and night), or you give out an answering service or voicemail number. (An answering service costs more, but the human operators are sometimes better at obtaining credit-card numbers if that’s how you sell. On the other hand, a voicemail number is much cheaper, and you’ll never get nailed with an answering service charge on a call that contained no order.)

Or your ad might say “Call this 800 Number NOW to place your order!” Since most people enjoy immediate gratification of their wants, they find it satisfying to order this minute. Somehow, this is almost like getting the product immediately.

Usually a larger number of people will respond to your ad when you make it easier and quicker, as long as it sounds safe to them. The important point is that they can respond *right now* while they have the impulse. Later on, they might forget or run into some barrier or think of a reason to balk.

* For information about writing effective ad-response scripts, see our report: “Profitable Phone Persuasion — How to Write Telephone Scripts that Grab More Dollars”.

** Famous mail-order wizard Joseph Karbo, author of the best-selling “Lazy Man’s Guide to Riches” needed at least a quarter-page of text to sell his \$10 Guide via One-Step. Usually such a direct sale can only be accomplished for lower-cost items, and by using more words than are available in classified advertisements.

- But right this minute they'll call a phone number (local or 800#) without blinking an eye. For example, when you call a toll-free number, how long do you hesitate? Probably you don't hesitate at all. Because it's free. No barrier.

So if you sell nationally, you can get better response when you use an 800 Number, but then what?

When your customer calls to place his order, you could simply ask him to record his address and phone so you can ship their order, and charge it on his Visa/MasterCard, or ship COD, or send it for a "10-Day Trial" with invoice.

This works because now it's DONE. You've quickly obtained a commitment, it's completed and, assuming only that your product is satisfying, most sales go through with no problem.

In classic One-Step direct marketing, the original ad asks them to purchase right now. The rest is a mechanical process of obtaining their address and shipping. The point here is that the original ad did all the sales work. (And it may have to be a hardworking ad to successfully accomplish the sale in one step.)

You simply used the local number or 800 Number order-recording to permit their impulse buying to get you more orders.

How to Use TWO-STEP Ads

"Two-Step" ads are used when more selling is necessary than your single original ad can do. For example, if your product is expensive or complex, customers usually won't read one ad and immediately buy. They're intrigued, but they want to hear more.

Or, for example, if you use a small classified ad and the product needs lots of description because it's unknown or explanation is required, you won't be able to economically put all the details into the ad. These small ads can't do the complete selling job.

In these cases you use a Two-Step ad. Your original ad will hook their interest and get them to respond for more information. Here you're using your advertising money to get all the interested people to raise their hands so you can see them. Then you'll use your more detailed sales material to accomplish the sale.

More detailed material could include a visit or call from a salesman, a brochure with letter, and/or your outgoing sales message (the Greeting) on your local voicemail or 800 VoiceMail(tm).

For example, your ad might be a small classified ad in the national newspaper Grit, advertising the pocketknife or the How to Get Loans Manual. Your short ad has only a few words to hook their interest, and then they can call, toll-free, for more information. People who

are in the market for a knife or manual will call, and you sell them during your recorded Greeting.

- You could then tell them to mail their check. In this case you've used the Two-Step sales method to keep your expense down on the ad and then you've given a detailed recorded sales presentation to interested prospects. In this way you're using the voicemail to expand your sales message (for cheap or for free) off your paid-for advertising (the original ad)! This expansion of sales message almost always works, but you must test to be sure.
- You could take even greater advantage of their impulse (and give them fewer barriers) by allowing them to record their information so you can bill to Visa/MasterCard or ship COD or ship with invoice. Note that this doesn't always work. Sometimes they'll need to see printed material, or talk to a human. You'll have to test to see, because products and target customers vary considerably one from another.

Variations of Two-Step ads include sending an elaborate brochure or calling the prospect to make a phone presentation, or to offer a free "needs analysis." etc. You test different approaches, and keep careful records to see which approach gives the most return for the least cost in time and money.

The point of Two-Step selling is that many products can't be sold in one ad, or can't be sold economically in one ad. So use the ad to find the prospects, then focus your detailed sales materials on the interested prospects.

Most Ads can use 800 VoiceMail to Increase Sales!

Here's what's true:

Sales increase when customers can call an 800 Number because more customers will act now.

Sales increase when customers can record information now, since their alternative is to struggle to write a letter, write a check, find an envelope and a stamp, go to the postbox, and wait. More people are more likely to buy when it's easier.

Sales increase when customers hear a convincing sales message. And you can deliver your spoken sales message to every prospect who calls.

Does it always pay off? No, not always, because the 800 number has a cost. If you get more money flowing in because of the 800 number, then it paid off. You'll have to run a measured test to know for sure.

Important point: measured experiments reveal that the average buyer will often see an ad for *nine times* before buying, so your test must be long enough. The commonest mistake of new marketers is running the ad a couple of times, not seeing much results (yet), and giving up too soon. *Typically you won't see much result immediately*, but the result will grow slowly with each appearance of your ad, and will usually level off after 8-12 appearances. *Only then* do you know the measured result of your ad. Also, bear in mind that whatever the measured result is, something like 30% to 100% of that amount will probably trickle in later during the next year.*)

The Ear is Convincing

Psychologists and researchers tell us that some people are better convinced by what they SEE. And some people are better convinced by what they HEAR.

But nearly everybody is better convinced by what they see AND hear. First your customer sees your ad and thinks maybe it might be a good thing. ("Looks pretty good.")

Then he calls and hears your presentation. ("Sounds good.") Somehow in his head, this becomes two experiences about your offer.

A Peculiar Fact about People's Ears

Ask any successful salesman, especially a telephone salesman, and he'll probably tell you an astounding truth:

The sound of your voice may do more to make the sale than the words you use!

You want to sound confident and knowledgeable. Your callers will hear this in your voice, and it makes them feel confident too!

But I'm not a Radio Announcer!

Luckily, you don't have to be.

Many direct marketers are bold individuals who feel just fine leaping into something new to see what it's like.

That's why we sometimes get our noses skinned.

(And why we sometimes make a lot of money.)

However, over the last several years, some clients have felt hesitant about making recordings, even though it's pretty simple.

So based on our own experiments, and those of our clients, we've analyzed what you can do to make your recordings communicate better. It turns out that you only need a few guidelines, all of them ex-

* You'll find a complete and concise explanation of this phenomenon and how to use it to advantage in J. Conrad Levinson's classic "Guerilla Marketing". If you only purchased one book for your business education, this would be a good choice.

tremely simple. But taken as a group, they make a dramatic improvement.

Over 90% of those hesitant clients who have tried these five simple tips have discovered that they can make an excellent recording which increases sales.

You're not competing with IBM radio commercials which seem to speak with the Voice of God. You want a spoken sales presentation on the phone to increase your sales.

And this is easy to do.

The Five Tips

The biggest problem with these five tips is that they sound too simple. Because they are simple. But they work. Each one adds a little, and together they will make your sales message stronger.

Plan to spend a little time getting your sales message just right. After all, you set it up only once, but it will be working Round-The-Clock, call after call. You want it to work as hard as possible!

Tip #1: **Type it Up**

After you write your script and boil it down and find "ear" words, you're probably going to have a scribbled piece of paper.

Take the time to type it up, double spaced, with wide margins so the text is only about 5 inches wide. If you've got text changes, ensure that they are just right BEFORE you type up the clean copy.

This may sound simple-minded and obvious to some folks; it may sound picky and time-wasting to others. But it *will* help you make a good recording.

While you are recording your voice, you want to concentrate on the sound of your voice — after all, the sound of your voice is what convinces the caller and it's through the sound of your voice that you deliver your sales points so the caller can understand them.

You do NOT want your attention distracted by figuring out scribbles, or words that go over there, or notes that take you to the bottom of the page and back up. All these things will lose your place, distract you enough to mispronounce your own text, and make you stumble.

By having the type arranged clearly and in correct order, you will be able to use your natural ability to speak clearly. When you speak clearly, your customer can understand clearly.

The reason for narrow text is that your eyes can grab the whole line at once and it makes reading easier. The reason for double-spacing is

that it makes it easier for your eyes to move correctly to the next line without getting the wrong one.

Please realize that highly-paid radio announcers at the major networks work from a correctly-typed script, double-spaced, about 5 inches wide. When you hear a radio commercial with the Voice of God, that guy's not winging it from scribbled paper.

Give yourself a correct, highly-readable script so you don't have to struggle with it.

Tip #2: **Read it and Time it**

Most of us write with pencil or on a computer. Before you try to record your script, do two things.

First, practice reading it out loud. You may find parts that looked good written down but sound flimsy when you hear them. It may be a clumsy rhythm, certain sounds that just sound wrong, or certain word combinations difficult to say smoothly. Your ear will tell you.

Make notes in the margin where the most important sales points fall. At these points speak more slowly and emphatically, even slowing in the middle of a phrase. And for less-important points, like repeating an address, speak extra quickly. The emphasized parts then stand out, to tell your prospect to pay extra attention.

Pronounce the word "the" as "thuh" before a word beginning with a consonant; pronounce it "the" before a word starting with a vowel. Pronounce the word "a" as "uh" before a word beginning with a consonant. The old guy on the famous Bartles and James Wine Cooler ads intentionally violates this rule so as to attain a clumsy, "hick" sound.

Second, keep an eye on the clock. It's easy to wrongly estimate how long a script will take. It's a bummer to give that perfect delivery and discover that you've run out of recording time. Make sure your script fits in your desired time-span.

Tip #3: **Sit Up Very Straight**

You may think we're being silly.

You may be reminded of your second grade teacher.

Sorry about that.

Sitting up very straight affects your voice, your breathing, and your mood, and it comes across.

The pros do it, because it works. You should do it too.

If you feel silly, make your recording when nobody is around.

Tip #4:**Talk Louder than is Reasonable**

You are recording over a telephone line, and you want the strongest possible signal to get from your phone into our equipment.

Strong signal means that the signal is strong compared to the background noise, which is always present on any telephone line (because telephones are not high-fidelity devices).

If you speak weakly (or even normally), the recording equipment hears your voice surrounded by the phone line hiss, and accurately records what it hears.

When your customer calls (over another phone line), he hears your voice and any background noise as well. Do you see what happens here?

Your voice clarity has been reduced.

But there's something simple you can do so that your voice clarity remains high.

It just so happens that telephone company circuits include "limiter" circuits, which reduce overly-loud signals. (Without limiter circuits, overloud signals would not travel through the wires as too-loud, but would become distorted like an electric guitar tuned way up.)

So you can speak too loudly, and the phone company will lower the signal a little, and your voice arriving at our equipment will be maximum strength, which means that your voice is strong compared to telephone line hiss and noise.

The result, when played back, is that your voice sounds strong, but the background hiss is *less!*

Major Tip: Speak across the mouthpiece — not directly into it, which causes "pops" — a little louder than you feel is reasonable.

This makes a recording with strong signal to noise ratio.

Which helps your caller hear your voice clearly.

Which helps him understand you clearly.

Which helps him buy your product. Neat.

Tip #5**Imitate a Radio Announcer**

Because the telephone lines are not a high-fidelity system, when you record, much of the emphasis in your voice is lost. When your voice is played back (over telephone lines), more emphasis is lost.

Emphasis is what gives much of the meaning to our words. Words without emphasis seem dry and pointless. Oops. But it's simple to fix:

If you exaggerate your emphasis while recording, it will sound right on playback.

The easy way to exaggerate emphasis is to speak in a “radio announcer” voice. This may feel silly the first time you try it, and will probably sound just awful to your ear as you record. You would never talk to somebody who was in the same room this way.

But when you play it back, it will probably sound about right. It will communicate your offer more clearly and result in a better sales presentation.

Although most of us would be a little timid to try to be a radio announcer, most people find it easy to imitate a radio announcer. Try it. You'll see. By the way, why do radio announcers talk that way?

Because it works.

Wrapping It Up

We told you these five tips were simple. Don't you agree? Try them.

As you experiment, we think you'll have the same successful experience as hundreds of Action800 clients. These five simple steps make a BIG improvement in almost any recording. They will enhance your sales message.

Now here is a *Bonus Tip*: A Columbia University study shows that over-all listener attention to your message is *greater* for *faster* speech rates. Why? We don't know. But it's true. So as long as your words are clear, don't be afraid to rip right on along.

Here's to better recordings, greater sales, and Prosperity in all your Endeavors!

About our Company

If you require information about our voicemail services, contact either Abe's VoiceMail or Action 800:

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