

Wonder if you are using voicemail effectively? Try our strategies for quick and effective changes that will help eliminate frustration for those trying to reach you.

Figure 1: Yes-No Voicemail Checklist

<i>Voicemail:</i>	YES	NO
✓ Do you check your greeting at least weekly to make sure the information is current?		
✓ Does your greeting clearly state your name and your department?		
✓ Have you spoken slowly and clearly and used a friendly tone that invites the caller to leave a message?		
✓ Does your away message include a day, date, and time to indicate that the information is current? (<i>"Today is Wednesday, and I will be out of the office until Monday, March 4th."</i>)		
✓ Have you given the caller an idea of when they can expect a return phone call?		
✓ Have you kept your message brief while giving necessary information?		
✓ Do you reply to your voicemail messages promptly upon return to your office?		

If you answered **YES** to all of these questions, your voicemail greeting is on the right track! Feeling like you need a voicemail makeover? Try one of our suggested greetings on p. 2 below.

Sample Short-Term Personal Greetings

- Hello, this is _____. I'm sorry I missed your call, but if you will leave your name, telephone number, and a detailed message, I will get back to you as soon as possible. If you need immediate assistance, please call _____ (department) at _____ (number).
- Hi, this is _____. I'm in the office today but not available to talk right now. Please leave your name, phone number, and a detailed message indicating how I can help you. I will call you back as soon as I can. If you need to speak to someone now, please call _____.
- Hi, this is _____. It's day/date. I'll be out of the office until two o'clock. I will be checking my mailbox throughout the day, so please leave your name, phone number, and a detailed message and I will return your call as soon as I can.

Sample Extended Absence Greetings

- Hello, this is _____. I will be out of the office until _____ and will not be checking messages. If your request can wait until I return, please leave a message; otherwise, please dial _____ and someone else will help you.

Internal Greeting

- Hi, this is _____. I'm on vacation for two weeks and will return on _____. Please call _____ in my absence and she/he will be pleased to help you.

External Greeting

- Hello, this is _____. Thank you for calling. I am unable to take your call at this time. Please leave me a message and I will return your call as soon as I can. If you need immediate assistance, please call _____.