



How to Leave A Voice Mail Message

Problem

A new challenge for campaigns and phone banks: People refuse to answer their phones. Robo calls are extremely annoying. If the person doesn't recognize a number, they don't answer. Many volunteers experience only a 10% (or less) success rate. Many view the experience as unfulfilling. We don't want volunteers leaving with this feeling.

What to do? The common answer is to leave a voice mail. (Better than nothing?) Campaigns need to consider several important concepts before using voice mails as a campaign strategy. They are:

- A. Volunteers may need some coaching before calling. Always coach new volunteers.
- B. Volunteers need to use a basic script talking points in bullet points notes format. Do not give them full sentences and paragraphs for notes.
- C. Volunteers need to understand a basic goal, message, and desired result.

Voice Mail Notes for Volunteers (Example)

- A. Introduce yourself by name and a positive frame.
- B. I'm calling to speak to: _____
- C. This is an important election because:
- D. The best candidate is: _____.
- E. Join us by voting for _____ on _____ (Date
- F. For more information, call and ask for:
 - a. Name
 - b. Phone Number (Repeat the number two times, different the second time)
 - c. Time frame (If limited to certain hours)

Voicemail Script

Hello, this is [Your Name]. I'm a volunteer and one of your neighbors calling from [campaign]. I'm calling to speak with [Name on the List] because [insert reason for calling]. I'd love to talk with [Name on the List] about [Fill in candidate's name]. This is important because [Fill in a reason and how it can benefit them]. For more information, you can call [insert phone number]. That number once again is [insert phone number; repeat it a little differently. See Dos and Don'ts]. Ask for [Fill in Name of a Contact]. Or you can stop by the office at [Fill in street address]. Join us in voting for [Fill in the name of the candidate] on [Fill in date]!

Key Concepts

- **A gracious phone message is no longer than 30 - 50 seconds.** Be pleasant, but also get right to the point. Get as close to this time limit as possible.
- **Leave a specific message.**
- **End on a high note!** You don't necessarily need to say "Goodbye" at the end of a voice mail, because you didn't really talk to anyone. Instead, try something like, "Join us is voting for (candidate or cause) on (date)."

Dos and Don't

Protect your script from becoming wooden with repetition. Instead, use bullet points on a written script to stay on track while keeping your tone and delivery casual. You can't read it line-for-line, so it's important to work out the kinks before you place your call.



Use the person's name from the list prepared by the campaign. People pay attention when their name is mentioned. They have been conditioned to pay attention to their name their whole life.

If you are new, practice your voice mail with another volunteer. Have the other person provide some feedback and tips for encouragement.

Before you start gather your materials. This includes the script, candidate literature, phone numbers, email addresses, and street addresses. Be ready to give background information.

Leave a call back number twice. The first time might have been garbled. However, don't repeat yourself -- say the same thing in a different way. For example: Call me back at 8-7-7-9-7-7-8-0-8-0. Again, that is 8-7-7-9-77-80-80."

Ask for what you want. Clearly state your purpose and a next step.

Be positive, personable and straightforward.

Be Clear. Drink water clear your throat. Bad reception can distort your voice. Invest in a good headset, phone, etc... Check out ear buds with a microphone. Be aware of your accent or the way you say certain words or numbers.

Use the word "with" instead of "to." It sounds more positive. You want to talk "with" the person, not give them a "talking to." It's a subtle difference, yet it keeps the message positive.

After you hang up

After each voicemail, evaluate your performance. Most voicemail systems provide the option of listening to the voicemail you just left. Option: Record a test voice mail on your iPhone or cell phone. Listen to the recording -- it will not lie. The recording gives you the most specific feedback for improvement. Doing this as much as possible will improve your voicemail performance more than anything else.

Key questions for reflection: Would I save that voicemail? Would I return that call?; Would I return that call right away?; Did you "craft" it or "wing" it?

Based on research from www.chambermaster.com and www.wikihow.com and resources from multiple campaigns.