

CONVERT CUSTOMERS DON'T TORTURE THEM

Tinny digital tunes or even worse silence – if you don't have a professional hold message you can alienate customers and you're missing out on selling your business say Messages on Hold.

"I'LL JUST FIND out for you; hang on a sec.' And that's when it started: a 20-second piece of appalling music, repeated six times while I waited."

Business today is more competitive than ever, so treating a business caller like this is one sure way to get them quickly off-side.

Callers will judge your business by the way you sound. In the instance above, this business clearly has little regard for their callers. If you wouldn't annoy a customer in your premises by playing a tacky piece of music over and over, why would you consider it okay to do it to a caller?

Many business owners feel that because they don't have to listen to their welcome announcement or on-hold music/audio, it doesn't matter what these recordings sound like. Businesses like these are under pressure from savvy competitors – competitors who go out of their way to make every interaction a positive one.

So what's the experience like for your callers? If you've upgraded your phone system in the past three years, it will almost certainly have the ability to automatically answer calls and play a welcome announcement.

This is the very first thing your customers and prospects hear, so it has to be impressive.

A tacky voice reading a poorly scripted message and recorded in a noisy office screams "We don't care!" Instead, consider having your welcome announcement professionally scripted to include a subtle plug for your business, recorded using voices that complement your brand and mixed with high quality music. The end result should be, "Wow, these guys sound switched-on!"

After the caller has heard the welcome message, they'll be transferred to a member of your team. It's important that all team members sound professional on the phone and let's be honest, that requires some level of training.

Most business owners don't have time for ongoing staff training, and it's expensive. Well it used to be, but there are a number of new online training platforms, like www.canity.com, that offer quality training in bite-sized chunks, viewable on any device, anywhere in the world and for just a few dollars per day.

Phone skills is just one of many training modules available via the Canity platform and it's fair to say that every team member who picks up the phone in your business should at least view this training module if you're serious about wowing customers.

Assuming the first person they speak to sounds polished and professional, chances are they'll then have to spend some time on hold while information is sourced or the right person is found. This 15-60 second period is of paramount importance. What you serve your callers then, has the potential to a) further enhance your

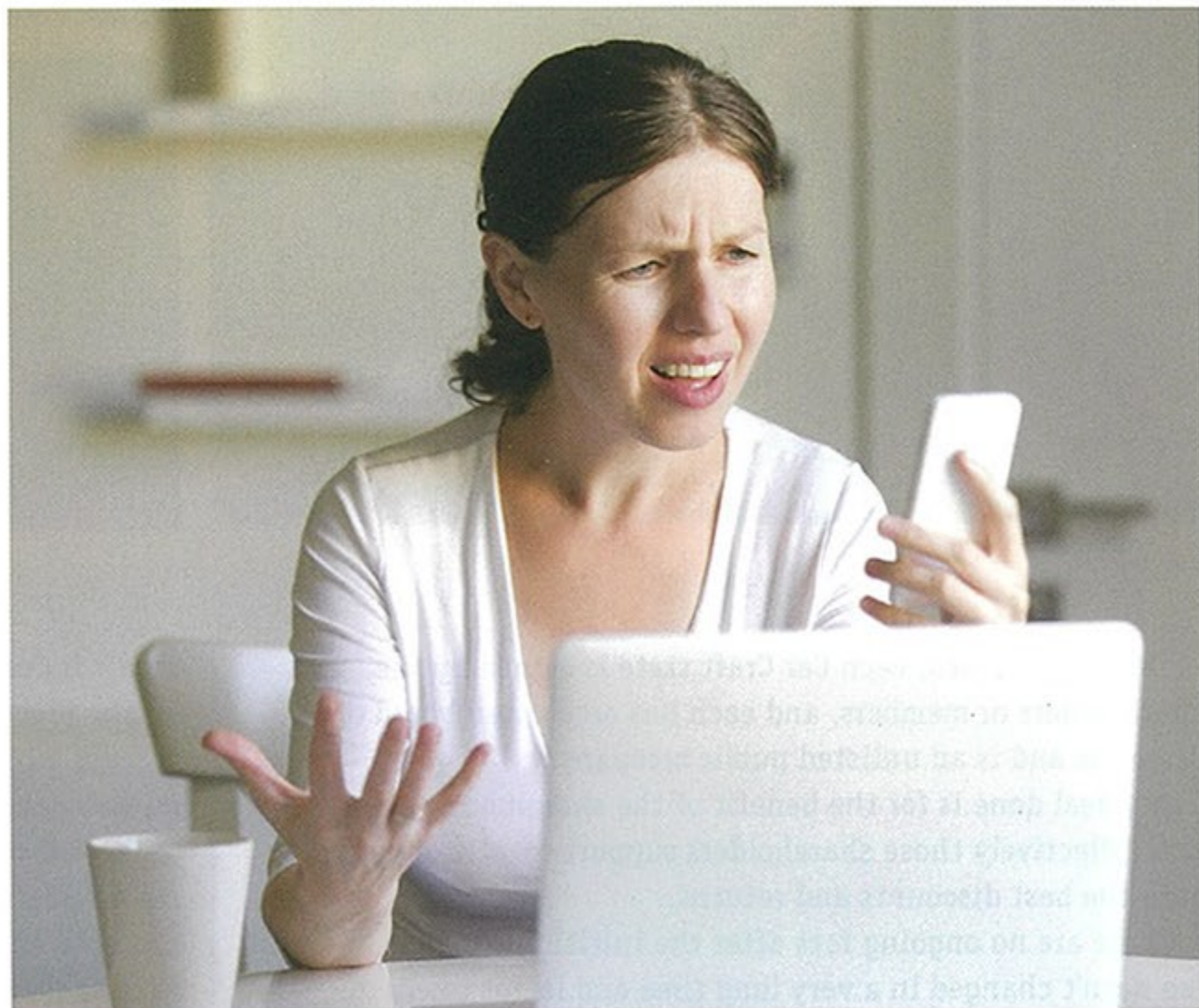


image or b) destroy it, like the example set out at the onset of this article.

Understand that when you hit the Hold button, you have your customer's/prospect's total attention at what is virtually point of sale.

You could waste their time and serve them up a 20-second loop of tacky music, force feed them radio ads for every business except yours (and pay the compulsory ARIA license fee for the privilege) or plunge them into silence which will surely result in at least 50% hanging up after 30 seconds.

Instead, tell them something interesting, something that enhances your chances of securing their business.

Even if your callers know what you do, remind them why you stand out from the crowd and focus them on the real benefits of doing business with you. Failure to reinforce your branding could well cost you a fortune.

"FACT: More than 70% of your callers will be placed on hold."

MESSAGES ON HOLD

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