

Voicemail Etiquette:
At the tone...please leave a voice mail that gets your message across

Psychologists say that acquaintances decide whether they will like you in the first 15 seconds after meeting you. Telephone message etiquette is essential. You can dress your voicemail professionally using tone and appropriate language.

Typical phone faux pas

- Leaving a rambling message or irrelevant personal information
- Messages containing too much information
- Excessive background noise that makes your message difficult to listen to or discern useful information
- Omitting vital information, such as caller's name or contact number
- Delivering complex information too slowly or too quickly

In the professional environment people appreciate a voicemail message that is short, direct and begins by stating the purpose (e.g., I am returning your call regarding...) Remember to speak clearly and at a pace that allows someone to write down your information.

Some tips for using voicemail effectively at work:

1. Organize your thoughts in advance. Don't just pick up the phone and decide what you need to say as soon as you hear the beep. That leaves you sounding disorganized and unprepared.
2. Leave all of the vital information – full name, company name at the beginning and end of your call. State the reason for your call, the most direct number where you can be reached and the best time of day. If you need the caller's information by a certain time, state it and allow yourself the "cheaters" window. This means that if you need the information by Wednesday noon, you will give the caller a false deadline to save yourself from scrambling for the information against an impossible deadline.
3. Make the subject meaningful and appropriate. Refrain from using voicemail for a message that needs to be in writing, such as the explanation of a lengthy procedure or formal approval for a project.
4. Be considerate. Spell out any personal or organizational names that may be unique or unfamiliar to your audience