



Rate Your Telephone Greeting

Telephone answering practices vary widely among organizations. To the extent that interactions with customers drive customer loyalty, automatic answer applications can assume roles of critical importance in image building and maintenance of good customer relations. Just as importantly, these greetings, as the source of many customers' first impressions of an organization, can play critical roles in how customers perceive organizations in relation to competitors.

Dozens of principles apply to the design and execution of scripts for automatic answering systems. Here is a simple list of categories I use as basis for judging the design integrity of an automated greeting.

Script Rating Categories

1. Set-Up
2. Branding
3. Ambiguity
4. Pace
5. Retention
6. Tone
7. Clutter
8. Flexibility
9. Format
10. Diction

Notes on Categories

Set-Up – Audibility; clarity of instructions; absence of information irrelevant to primary call purpose.

Branding – Consistency of script style and format with organization's public image and any marketing theme(s).

Ambiguity – Absence of multiple interpretation of instructions.

Pace – Suitability of rate of speaking to purpose of call.

Retention – Appropriateness of number of prompts

Tone – Balance of amiability, efficiency and warmth of recorded prompts.

Clutter – Logical ordering of instructions; no unnecessary prompt levels; absence of wordiness.

Flexibility – Ease of skipping ahead, repeating instructions, redirecting call, as necessary.

Format – Appropriateness of DTMF and ASR use.

Diction – Appropriate choice of scripted words in relation to typical caller.