

Ten Tips for Reducing Reception Overload from Alan Kaye

Tip 1 Analysis - Take a detailed look at why so many calls are being made to your reception. If available, call management statistics can help you to establish where the root of the problem lies. It will also provide specific information against which you can measure improvements. What gets measured gets done!

Tip 2 Give staff a direct number - If you allow staff to receive personal calls give them a direct number (a DDI number) and make it a company policy that spouses, partners, children and friends can **ONLY** use this number to contact them. Personal callers should **NOT** ring reception unless it is an emergency. You may have to make it clear what you consider an emergency to be!

Tip 3 Effectively Market Direct Numbers - Effective marketing and promotion of DDI numbers reduces calls to reception and enables your customers to get a fast, effective service. So always encourage clients to ring DDI numbers first.

Tip 4 Change greeting daily using the 5 KAYE magic points™ as explained in Tip Sheet 1- If callers don't get the member of staff but do obtain basic information, such as the whereabouts and availability of the person they called, they are less inclined to phone reception if they already have the information they require.

Tip 5. Where possible, programme 'opt outs' to go to others within the same department - This is because they are usually better equipped to handle the call. Reception can rarely do more than take a name, number and generate a 'call me back' message. This is time consuming and best avoided.

Tip 6. 'Do not disturb' and 'divert to voice mail' - Programme each phone so the 'do not disturb' and 'divert to voice mail' can be easily used and make sure all staff know how to use these so that when people are away from their desk, reception is not wasting time trying to find them.

Tip 7 Review reception staff training - Consult your supplier and select one or two features that your reception staff could start using to have an immediate impact on the efficiency of the business. For example, many reception staff are unaware that callers can be transferred, at all times, directly to an individual's voice mail box without ringing their phone, irrespective of whether the individual has left their voice mail 'off' or 'on'.

Tip 8 – Set up standard E mails that give out frequently asked for information - This helps to save time for reception personnel. For example, if you are frequently being asked for your exact address or directions from the nearest railway station, set up a standard e mail for this. It's a sure fire way of enabling your staff to answer calls quicker further reducing the average time it takes for them to answer incoming calls.

Tip 9– No E mail or written messages - Have a policy of no written messages on reception. They are time consuming to write. They divert the attention of reception staff from their main purpose of welcoming callers to your business promptly.

Tip 10 - To enable people, who are away from the office, to collect their messages ensure your voice mail system has a ‘back door’ facility - This stops secretaries being disturbed and further reduces unnecessary calls to reception.

These tips will ensure incoming callers are dealt with quickly and efficiently, which is good for business!

“Upon Alan’s advice I now alter my voicemail on both my mobile and landline office ‘phones on a daily basis, sometimes more often if required. This not only helps my clients and media representatives understand where I am and when I shall deal with their enquiry, but it also takes away some of the pressure of always requiring somebody to be in my office at the other end of the ‘phone.”

Anna Addison, Anna Addison Associates, PR Consultant

For more information and help look at www.kaye.co.uk or call Alan Kaye now on 0800 840 2454