



The Telephone Guru Newsletter

Issue no 14 – August 2005

The Telephone Guru is a monthly newsletter full of sound advice and tips on how to get the most out of your business telephone lines ... and a wine pick that you can use to impress your clients or yourself.

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What's new:

In last month's newsletter we were lamenting the heatwave that struck Southern Ontario in July. What a difference a month makes, in August we have seen a rash of wet weather ... nothing like what they are experiencing in the Southern U.S., but our wet weather has also brought it's share of flooding. Here at Custom Sound Impressions we're doing our best to keep our heads above water in preparation for the busy fall ahead. Now it's time for you to enjoy this edition of the Guru.

Canadian Prognosticators of the Week ...

It would seem that the Tragically Hip were ahead of their time in 1989 when they sang "New Orleans is Sinking". Tragic? You've got that right.

Feature: Picking a Phone Company

Ah the phone company, we all have stories to tell, especially about the one that rhymes with Hell (and makes you say it more than once when you deal with them) ... they always seem to have the worst customer service. Here at the office we just finished a month long ordeal with static-filled lines, bad internet service and even worse customer service. It was only when I was finally at the end of my rope that I was lucky enough to latch onto a woman who knew her stuff, cared enough to call me back when promised, and followed up at all the right times. This incident got me thinking about those other phone-folk: installers.

If you own a business or have a telephone you've dealt with an installer ... these guys come in, quiz you like you're taking out a fourth mortgage and in the end they still recommend the most expensive phone system because it will be fully upgradeable well into the next century – of course, let's not forget you have to purchase the expansion chip that costs an extra four-hundred bucks. In the business we're in (on-hold messaging – just to refresh your memory) we have dealt with a number of these jokers: ones that couldn't do the job right, were never on time, or never had the right parts when they were at a job site.

As with my most recent experience with that giant aforementioned phone company, sooner or later, somebody comes along that surprises you and changes your whole outlook on a profession or a company. I can't give you the definitive answer on how to pick a phone installer but here are a few tips to help you find a good one:

- Ask around ... find out who your buddies or other business owners are using - referrals are the best method to getting somebody reliable.

- Go see them ... interview them like you would a potential employee – after-all that is what they are going to be. Meeting them on their “turf” will make you feel more prepared when they come to yours.
- Don't fall for tech talk ... you need somebody who's going to give you the straight goods – if they're talking above your head without stopping for an explanation, move on, they're not a company you want to deal with.
- Get it in writing ... any quote or promises should be made in writing – too many “trust me”; “you have my word on it” or hand shake deals will usually come back to bit you in the ...
- Feel comfortable talking with them ... you should not feel you are being talked down to. They want your business, you want their expertise - a good company sees the relationship as win win.

Remember: installers are like any other salesman, they want as much of your money as possible, you're looking for the guy that doesn't want it all at once: somebody that takes the time to understand his job and your business - who'll get you what you need, not what he wants to sell you. He understands that when you're satisfied with his work you'll keep him around and he'll get more of your business, and of course, those all important referrals.

Shameless Plug

When installing your on-hold messaging we take great care to make sure our installers are qualified and adhere to our high standards of quality and service.

Signs that you have grown up ...

You would prefer to watch CNN than Saturday morning cartoons

Mike's Wine pick: Stonehedge 2001 Merlot (California) - \$12.95

A business associate of mine recommended this wine to me. He liked it well enough but was not thrilled, in fact he recommended I lie down for another year or so. Since value in a wine is important to me, and a California Merlot at this price seemed rather reasonable I decided to try it myself. Now, I have to admit that I cheated a little on my tasting. Instead of using the standard glasses I always use I sampled this one in my Spiegelau variety specific glasses ... and the verdict: I would have to say I thoroughly enjoyed this wine. Firm tannins that did not detract from the wine's taste; great berry flavours and a bit of sediment in the bottom of the glass, near the end of the bottle, which suggested my associate was right – this one has aging potential.

For those who like a nice California Merlot I would suggest this value priced red – I would also suggest decanting.

As you might already be aware our president writes a wine newsletter which can be viewed at www.ontariowinereview.com, about Ontario wines and wineries. In The Guru newsletter, which you are now perusing, he writes reviews about wines from other parts of the world. We invite you to check out www.ontariowinereview.com and sign up for his much lauded and ultimately very readable newsletter.

Final Thought

Seems that summer is coming to a close, much to the dismay of my staff and I ... but with the fall comes the rebirth of the business world – the people you want to talk with are in their office after a summer of lounging, long-weekends, and lazy Friday afternoons. It's not just back to school but back to the grindstone. Hope you all had a great summer and we look forward to hearing from you in the fall. Next issue we'll be talking about the newest trend in on-hold messaging: annoying repetition (hint: we're not happy about it, and nor should you be).

Feedback ...

We invite your comments and feedback on the highlight article or any other part of this newsletter. Send to guru@customvoicing.com

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