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## The Telephone Guru Newsletter

Issue no 15 – September 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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### In this issue:

- What's new: Enough about the weather
  - **Feature Article: Two Stories about Waiting**
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  - Mike's Wine Pick: Thinking back about Summer
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### What's new:

It always seems that I write something here about the change in the weather, so this time I decided to forego all that and tell you that it's finally Autumn. Who cares about the change in temps, it's the change in attitude that is most prevalent this time of year. The kids are back in school and many people return to their desks full time - between now and December it's all work and no play ... Happy Fall everybody. Betcha wish I had stuck with a weather topic.

#### ***One Way to Maintain a Healthy Level of Insanity...***

Page yourself over the intercom at work, and don't disguise your voice.

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### **Feature:** Two Stories about Waiting

Story 1: Just last week I called a company and was put on hold ... Let me interrupt myself briefly to say I have three reactions to being on hold, and they depend on what I hear: if it's silence I see opportunity; if it's the radio I scoff, because that company is wasting your time and theirs; if it's on-hold messaging I smile because it means somebody got the message (so to speak). The company that I was on hold with had messages, of a sort; but I would have killed for the radio. This company had soft "elevator music" with a recorded message that repeated after 5 seconds "you are listening to On-Hold Radio provided by the On-Hold Radio Network" – after 30 seconds of this I was screaming at the phone and begging for the guy I was talking with to come back. Had this not been a large company that would have stuck me back in cue, forcing me to tell my story all over again – I would have hung up immediately and never dealt with them again.

Story 2: On the Labour day weekend my family gets together for a BBQ ... no sooner had I walked in the door that my father was berating me and my industry, the reason: he had been put on hold by a different large company and they had on hold messaging, of a sort: music in the background with a repetitive "thank you for holding, the next available representative will be with you shortly" repeating after ten seconds of soft music (he gave me the number and I called the following day to verify). I explained to my father that's not the kind of on-hold service I talk about when I pitch on-hold messages to my clients; but he was still ticked about the incident and there was no way I could persuade him otherwise. He had been on hold 5 minutes and 32 seconds according to the timer on his phone ... and that's way too long for callers to be listening to unproductive nonsense.

These two anecdotes reveal plenty about the state of on-hold messaging today, and a growing concern from callers and companies alike: what some large companies have on hold is repetitive and serves no purpose, it's as if they don't care what you listen to while you wait for them – or at least that is the message they're sending out.

It's not enough to have your callers on hold listening to whatever's available; they should be listening to something interesting or beneficial, if not for them at least for you. Remember, these days there are plenty of companies doing what you do, there's lots of competition and if you annoy your customers "enough" they will eventually seek out your competitors. When is enough - you might ask? For each person it's different, but do you really want to find out?

As we all know, most people, by nature, are lazy (heck while I'm writing this article I am lounging about on the couch with a bag of Doritos by my side and the TV on – I don't call it lazy though, I call it multi-tasking ... sounds much better); they will not do the leg-work required to change something that ain't broken unless absolutely necessary. For example – most people will stay with Bell for their long distance needs until they get too many large bills, get harassed too often by telemarketers, or receive lousy service a multitude of times. Then they'll "check out" Sprint or another competitor, but they may never change – heck they may never even "check it out"; they'll usually threaten and curse, but never act. Who really wants to go through the hassle of changing billing procedures, switching over service, or remembering another service number? But who really knows what causes people to say "I've had enough" – are you really willing to risk it all because they detest your on-hold procedure ... an annoying beep or repetitive message might prompt them to stop calling you altogether and force their hand to make a change. Do you really want that to be the final straw in a business relationship? If they find it uncomfortable or annoying to call you – the next call you get just might be their cancellation notice ...

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### **Shameless Plug**

Repetition is at the heart of annoying – that's why we recommend getting at least a minute of original information for your on-hold messages. To calculate how long your messages should be, think about how long your customers are on hold then double that time. At Custom Sound Impressions we like to keep your messages fresh and free from annoying repetition.

#### ***Signs that you have grown up ...***

A \$4.00 bottle of wine is no longer "pretty good stuff".

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### **Mike's Wine pick:** Masi 2003 Soave Classico (Italy) - \$12.00

As summer comes to a close, it's time to make one last gasping grasp to keep it's fading light around ... and this wine'll do the trick nicely. Pure citrus on the palate and on the nose ... dry, tart, firm acidity – with lemons and limes on the tongue. It's perfect for those fall get togethers with a few nibblies like cheese, crackers or fruit. Or, after a hard day at work, just sitting on the patio with a glass and watch the earlier setting sun from the comfort of your own backyard or balcony. This is the wine of reminiscence – kick back, put your feet up on a nearby chair and recall the passing of summer 2005: the heat, the beautiful long days, the occasional storm that brought us the majority of our rain. Summer is passing the baton to Autumn, but there's no reason you can't relive summer one more time. Cheers.

As you might already be aware I also write a wine newsletter, which can be viewed at [www.ontariowinereview.com](http://www.ontariowinereview.com), about Ontario wines and wineries. The newsletter you are currently reading has a review about wine from other parts of the world. If you are interested in learning more about wine I invite you to check out [www.ontariowinereview.com](http://www.ontariowinereview.com) and sign up for the free newsletter containing wine reviews and insights.

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### **Final Thought**

We're starting to fear writing this newsletter due to the proliferation of natural disasters that surround it. Last newsletter Hurricane Katrina had just rolled through New Orleans, and while we were writing this one Hurricane Rita was plotting the same course. Let's hope we have better luck next month when we look at the disaster of bad music and how to avoid it.

**Feedback ...**

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

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