

Calls not answered and annoying 'on hold' music are top customer phone gripes

Submitted by: Moneypenny

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A new survey (<https://moneypenny.com/uk/calltrends/>) shows that companies still aren't answering their phones, messages aren't being passed on, phone numbers aren't being listed on websites, and annoying 'on hold' music continues to drive people round the bend.

The survey* conducted by global communications company Moneypenny, showed that the top gripe from consumers trying to call businesses, at 43%, was phone calls not being answered, followed by annoying hold music at 35%.

An additional Moneypenny survey showed that classical music was the most annoying type of music to listen to while on hold.

Further phone annoyances revealed by the survey were:

Complex automated phone messages 30%

Being told to check the website 30%

Having to leave a voicemail 23%

Feeling rushed and not listened to 21%

Background call centre noise 19%

The degree of irritation experienced by the caller seems to increase with age, as the survey showed that calls not being answered is the most annoying factor for older people: more than 52% of all over 56 years reported this, compared with 30% of 16-24s, and 36% of 25-40 year olds. Older people are also most irritated by annoying hold music – reported by 44% of over 66 year olds, compared with 39% of 57-66 year olds and only 26% of 16-24 year olds.

Another huge bugbear revealed by the survey is that 89% of those surveyed said they get frustrated when businesses don't include a phone number on their website.

However, despite consumer irritation with company calling experience, the phone is still king when it comes to the preferred method of communicating with a business, voted for by 28% of those surveyed.

While the phone remains the most popular communication method, the survey showed the number of calls to companies is declining, but the calls themselves are lasting longer. Almost 30% of those surveyed said they are making fewer calls to businesses than they did three years ago, yet 44% said their calls are longer.

Businesses ignore the importance of good call handling at their peril, and managing calls properly is more important than ever, as the survey suggests consumers call up when it's really important:

38% if it was an urgent matter

33% if it was a complicated matter

17% if it was sensitive

15% if short on time

Perhaps not surprisingly, older people are more likely to call a company than younger: 43% of Baby Boomers (57-66 years) and 48% of over 66 year olds, compared to 21% of 16-24 year olds and 25% of 25-40

year olds.

In contrast, Younger people are more likely to use social media to contact a company: 15% of 16-24s compared to 2% of 57-66 year olds.

The survey suggests women are more likely to call a company if it's important, with 46% saying they'd call if they need to discuss an urgent matter, compared to 36% of men who would do so.

The power of a phone call in delivering excellent customer service is also shown in the fact that 77% of those surveyed said a great call experience is a positive differentiator for a company.

Similarly, a bad call experience could have repercussions on customer loyalty:

36% would take their business elsewhere

35% would complain to the business

26% would spread the word to friends and family

22% would call again and ask to speak to someone else

24% would write a negative review

Older generations seem to be far more likely to take their business elsewhere as a result of poor call handling: 44% of over 66 year olds and over 42% of 57-66 year olds, compared with 27% of 16-24 year olds.

Joanna Swash Group CEO of Money Penny commented: "The results of our survey demonstrate the enduring popularity of the phone, despite the plethora of communication channels now available to us. Customers use the phone when they have an urgent or sensitive issue to discuss, so companies cannot afford to provide a poor call experience, or business will be taken elsewhere. By mastering the art of call handling, businesses can keep their customers happy and loyal and boost the bottom-line in the process."

For the full report visit:

<https://moneypenny.com/uk/calltrends/>

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For more info pls contact Mary Jane Greenhalgh – maryjane.greenhalgh@moneypenny.co.uk/ 07866 722051 or 0333 2021005

Note to editors:

*Money Penny survey conducted by Censuswide among 2000 UK/US consumers, from 27 May to 6 June 2022.

As the call answering and live chat experts, Money Penny supports over 21,000 businesses of all shapes and sizes across the UK and US.

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