

# Voice Mail vs. Text Messaging

Over the last few years I've been told voice mail is outdated and text messaging is the way to go. Both are tools to maintain contact with your customers, and both have advantages and disadvantages for sales professionals.

Regarding texting, one business owner put it this way: "I'd rather get almost any other type of message than voice mail." Does this individual represent to norm? The short answer is – it depends.

Most of what I'm reading claims people who are tech savvy may not even listen to voice mail and recommend sending a text message to follow up if the call goes unanswered. For some people checking voice mail is more of a nuisance than a convenience, and voice mails go unchecked unless it's a call from an unknown number.

What this means to me is you have taken the time to assess your customer and understand their preferred method for communications not requiring a conversation.

Research shows 8-in-10 Americans now own cellphones and three quarters (and growing) of them are using text messaging. Additionally, some research indicates as many as one-third of adults prefer to receive a text to talking on the phone.

The same research shows a business contact is more likely to be an SMS power user if aged 18-29 (87.7 messages per month) or have an income of less than \$30,000 (58.7 messages per month).

Why do people prefer texting?

- Text messages force the person to be brief; they need to carefully consider the message due to character constraints.

- A text message can be read faster than listening to a voice mail.

Additionally, the research suggests the more important the message, the more important it is to follow up with some kind of explanation of the missed call. For example, if an answer is needed immediately, sending a short text explaining the nature of the call is warranted. Don't assume the person receiving the call is going to call you. Texting, "Call me back" is already implied (the missed call) but this text doesn't provide any information and doesn't invite immediate action from the business contact.

If texting a business contact, stick to text messaging whenever the message is short and would be better communicated in text rather than a conversation. For example, calling to say, "I am on my way" or confirming an appointment is not worth a conversation or a voice mail.

So when should you leave a voice mail?

- If your message is long and would require more than one text to explain. E.g., the order is incomplete or the product is out of stock.
- If you have several questions to ask or you need clarification on an action.
- Also, never assume the number you are calling is a cellphone. If there is a single phone number on the business card assume it may be an office phone.
- Also, if you've left a voice mail and you know the person rarely checks voice mail you may want to leave a text saying you've left a voice mail message.

**For more information on training in this area or other sales training curriculum, visit: [www.ats-solutions.net](http://www.ats-solutions.net) or contact Mike Biggins at [mike.biggins@ats-solutions.net](mailto:mike.biggins@ats-solutions.net)**

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