

# The Magic Formula When Answering an Inbound Call

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Within the first ten seconds of a call, customers form an impression of the organization and the person on the other end of the line. If the customer doesn't like what he or she hears, sometimes they will disconnect or asked to be switched to another representative. To gain applause and kuddos, reps must do three things.

**First, the customer care representative must sound friendly.** The representative's tone of voice should have warmth and be easy on the ear. This takes real effort, particularly as the day progresses. To bring emotion into the voice, a rep must pause and breathe after each statement of his or her opening. For example: *Good morning. PAUSE. This is Mary Johnson. PAUSE. How can I help you? PAUSE.*

Fast talkers or those who rush their opening statement never sound caring. They sound busy and frazzled. The unstated message to the customer is *Hurry up and say what you want and get off my line.* Reps with monotone voices, or voices lacking highs and lows, also create a negative first impression.

**Secondly, the greeting must make the customer feel a "connection."** Connections or relationships begin with simple things, like stating *"Good afternoon, or good evening* and offering your name. In a face to face conversation, this greeting would typically be followed by offering your hand and with a statement, such as *How are you doing today* or *How can I help you?* Reps who answer the phone with *Billing* or *Accounting* and nothing more are missing a golden opportunity to move the customer to the bucket marked **FRIEND**. Those who interrupt the customer and jump too quickly to accessing information about account numbers, delivery dates, or confirmation numbers also miss the boat. While that information

is important, it comes only after an attempt to build camaraderie.

**Lastly, the rep must offer help.** *How can I help you? What can I do for you today?* The key to this statement being positively received is the way it is said. The voice must sound sincere. An offer that sounds perfunctory will affect the customer's feeling towards you and your company.

Many companies today are seeing customer satisfactory plummet. As customer care representatives, you are the lynch pin to customer loyalty. You can work magic on your customers in your opening remarks. A bad first impression on the phone is almost impossible to reverse.

*Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, [www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com](http://www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com).*