



Automated Attendant

Main Resource offers Auto Attendant from Inter -tel, Premier and Toshiba. If you are interested in purchasing equipment, you can order on-line or by phone at 800 362 -6740.

Is your Auto Attendant User-Friendly?

“Thank you for calling Main Resource. If you know the extension of the person you are calling, you may dial it at any time. For sales press 1, for purchasing press 2. Press 0 for the operator or 4 for the company directory.”

If your company uses an automated attendant that sounds like this, it is important to make sure that the system is easy to use and that people can easily reach the party they wish to talk to. If your system is difficult to use and leaves a caller frustrated that indicates that your company itself will be difficult to deal with. You will want to consider three types of people when reviewing your auto attendant: people who call you regularly and want to be able to move through your system quickly, people who are used to other auto attendants and assume they all work the same, and people who are not used to auto attendants.

Try out your system (during the day and again after hours), testing it from the perspective of all three “types” of callers. First of all, check to see if those calling in who know your system and the extension they are trying to reach can dial without having to wait for the entire announcement to play. Call in to your system and enter an individual extension immediately. Call in again and enter the number for a hunt group (“press 1 for sales”). Do you have an extension that provides a recorded message that will give callers your fax number, address, directions, etc? Are the departments with the highest call volumes listed first in the menu?

Next, make sure the “0” key gets callers to a live attendant immediately. Some people will not use your auto attendant no matter how easy it is to use. Also, try not following the instructions properly. What happens if you enter too few numbers in the directory or do nothing at all? Your system should send you to the live attendant. It should not hang up on you!

Are any critical instructions left to the end of the announcement? For example, if your system requires callers to press the “#” key after making a selection, make sure that requirement is stated in the beginning of the announcement. Try entering an extension number without pressing the “#” sign.

Test the company directory. If you have an option to hear the names of all the people in the company, are the most frequently called people listed first. In a “dial by name directory, the system may direct you to enter the first 4 letters of the person’s last name (dial by first name directories are confusing). What happens if a caller enters more than 4 digits? More advanced systems will use the additional numbers entered to narrow your selection. Let callers know what



to do in order to make a selection from the directory. Do they have to press the extension number or the “#” sign, or will the system dial it for them automatically?

If your company employs two or more persons with the same last name, put the name of the most frequently called person first in the list. If you include your extension number when you record your name for your mailbox, the when the selection is made callers can record it for future reference. Another note about mailbox administration: be sure you password protect your mailbox, or you may find that someone has changed all your greetings to offensive messages!

It is likely that in the process of your investigations you will find other features of your auto attendant that need a little fine-tuning. Keep good notes so you can review your findings with the system administrator or the company that provides your service.



Main Resource, Inc.
74 Evergreen Drive
Portland, ME 04103-1066
800 397-8417

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