



# Love/Hate Voice Mail

By Susan Brooks

*Column originally published in the Phoenix Business Journal*

I love voice mail. Leaving voice mail messages provide the opportunity to deliver a message with style, a personal way to express who you are. Unlike a pink slip with no more than a scribbled name and phone number, voice mail can create relationship, giving the receiver information without requiring an immediate response. Voice mail is show time, a great way to make a first impression, an even better way to prompt more interest and further connection.

I hate voice mail. Receiving voice mail messages can be a chore, yet another line item on my 'to do' list. Why do people ramble on and on, yet hurry through their name and phone number? Just because they know who they are, just because they have bored themselves repeating their phone number a gazillion times in the last hour, their call is wasted if I have to repeat the message while pressing the phone closer to my ear to be sure I get the return number right. It's hard enough to listen to disorganized, mumbled messages the first time, so the call must be of terrific value for me to plod through this process a second time!

Whether you are making the call or receiving a voice mail, you are your message. Organized word choice, energized voice tone, clearly spoken information all offer the best statement of you . . . why not use it to the fullest? Seems like an obvious and easy way to stand out from all the rest.

Oh, and what about those voice mails marked urgent? Tension immediately takes over my body, the hairs on the back of my neck stand up at attention, and everything else around me fades away as I give my total and undivided attention to this 'urgent call.' Beware: if you say it's urgent, boy, oh, boy, it better be!





SERVES YOU RIGHT!

Susan Brooks

Service Enthusiast

I believe in karma, so one of my codes of business etiquette is to return all calls. I am so connected to the phone as a communication vehicle, sometimes I wonder if it isn't a permanent appendage glued to my ear. So because I make a lot of calls and I appreciate when they are returned, I know I've got to walk the talk, right? Returning calls, even if it's to say no, not interested at this time, or never will I ever be interested, it's a courtesy that I hope I receive in return.

Because voice mail is a hard core reality in our lives, both personally and professionally, why not recognize it as the powerful tool that it is by claiming it as our 'minute to shine.' No need to hurry it through once you are clear on your call's objective. No need to mumble and swallow your message. You've got their ear for a second or two, speak to be understood. Voice mail is here to stay . . . our job is to let it work for us instead of against us. Guaranteed: it will serve you right!

**Susan Brooks is a Service Enthusiast. With 30 years of business experience as co- owner of the Tempe-based, multi-million dollar gift company, Cookies From Home, and through her consulting firm, Serves You Right!, she provides keynotes, workshops, and corporate trainings. Her customized programs focus on, customer service, leadership development, and teambuilding. Contact her at [Susan@ServesYouRight.net](mailto:Susan@ServesYouRight.net).**

6105 East Osborn Road ~ Scottsdale, Arizona 85251  
480-994-1918 phone ~ 480-994-5966 fax  
e-mail: [Susan@ServesYouRight.net](mailto:Susan@ServesYouRight.net)  
[www.ServesYouRight.net](http://www.ServesYouRight.net)

