

Best Practices for Voice Network Utilization

The telecommunications industry continues to change, offering new services, lowered rates, and improved quality. However, as customer equipment becomes more sophisticated, telecom carriers are adjusting to ensure the safety, stability, and availability of their networks.

To make certain that your company complies with modern standards for call completion and minimum call duration dialing patterns, we have created this useful guide to assist you in updating your calling policies. By taking a close look at your current calling statistics you will be able to not only increase your own productivity, but ensure your compliance with new standards within the telecommunications industry as well.



TELEMARKETING/OUTBOUND DIALING LIST MAINTENANCE

Start with a fresh list and perform regular list hygiene to keep your lists up to date and free of potential bad numbers. Stay compliant with Federal and State Do Not Call (DNC) Legislation. AireSpring offers DNC compliance via Teleblock®, but many other options exist to help you comply with DNC requirements as well as perform automated list maintenance.

The keys to good list hygiene:

- a) **Remove disconnected numbers.** Remove disconnected numbers immediately. Many companies do not bother to remove disconnected numbers immediately. As a result, they call the same disconnected numbers over and over, lowering their call completion rates, polluting their phone lists, and reducing their own customer contact rates.
- b) **Remove busy numbers.** Remove numbers which are consistently busy when you call them. If a number is consistently busy when you call it, remove it from your list at your earliest convenience to increase your contact rates and call completion.
- c) **Remove ring no answer.** Remove numbers which consistently ring with no answer. Almost all customers have an answering machine or voice mail. Ring no answer is, more often than not, a bad number (intentionally ignoring you and/or it is an unused number) and should be removed from your lists after two or three missed contacts.
- d) **Remove non-standard numbers.** Numbers such as toll-free numbers (800, 888, 866, 877), 900 & 700 numbers and information numbers such as numbers with 555 in the prefix (ex. 213-555-xxxx) are often erroneously included on calling lists and generate failed call attempts. Make sure to remove all such numbers from any calling lists.

AUTOMATIC DIALING TIPS

For those customers who do heavy outbound dialing via automated dialers or predictive dialers, the risk of low call completion rates and below threshold minimum call lengths are significant. Improved calling metrics are possible by applying the following tips and by checking your call completion rates and average call length daily.

- a) **Speed to hang up.** Make sure your equipment is not set to hang up before the 4th ring. Programming your equipment to hang up before the called party or their answering device has answered is a top reason why many companies have low call completion rates.

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- b) Sequential dialing.** Avoid dialing numbers sequentially. Companies who dial phone numbers in sequential order risk breaking the rules of their network carriers. It is always a good idea to adjust the calling pattern of your lists to mix up the phone numbers so that you are not calling the same geographic area over and over in rapid succession. It is never advisable to make up phone numbers in sequential order in the hope that you are reaching all phone numbers in an area. This practice not only increases the chance that you'll dial a disconnected number, but it can often overwhelm the call switching equipment of the area in which you are dialing - especially in smaller towns and rural areas.
- c) Minimum call lengths.** To avoid short duration call penalties, set your equipment to remain connected for at least 7 seconds of a completed call. Leaving an answering machine message will usually serve your business needs AND keep you within the acceptable minimum call length.
- d) Dialing Speed.** Do not set the number of calls dialed per second to a number that your available staff cannot easily handle. Doing so can overload your phone lines and can increase the number of abandoned call attempts. This can result in not meeting your minimum call completion ratio.
- e) Delay reattempt for Busy.** Use "User Busy" or "Busy here" code as a screening factor. If your dialer is reattempting the same number <busy> after "one second", you are only increasing your incomplete call attempts. By setting your reattempt after five or more minutes, you will increase your call completion rates.

USING ISDN/PRI AND SIP CODES

- a) Manage response codes.** On ISDN/PRI or SIP Trunk Groups, the "ISDN/PRI Cause Value" or "SIP Response" codes can be used to manage (remove) unwanted numbers and improve your dialing patterns. The table below displays some commonly used codes.

ISDN/PRI Cause Value

1 unallocated number
 2 no route to network
 3 no route to destination
 16 normal call clearing
 17 user busy
 18 no user responding
 19 no answer from the user
 20 subscriber absent
 21 call rejected
 22 number changed (w/o diagnostic)
 22 number changed (w/ diagnostic)
 23 redirection to new destination
 26 non-selected user clearing
 27 destination out of order
 28 address incomplete
 29 facility rejected
 31 normal unspecified

SIP Response

404 Not Found
 404 Not found
 404 Not found
 -- (*)
 486 Busy here
 408 Request Timeout
 480 Temporarily unavailable
 480 Temporarily unavailable
 403 Forbidden (+)
 410 Gone
 301 Moved Permanently
 410 Gone
 404 Not Found (=)
 502 Bad Gateway
 484 Address incomplete
 501 Not implemented
 480 Temporarily unavailable



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OPTIMIZATION TECHNIQUES FOR NON-ISDN/SIP TRUNK GROUPS

- a) **Wink vs. Immediate Signaling.** On non-ISDN/PRI Trunk Groups, it is preferable to use "E&M Wink" instead of "E&M Immediate" signaling. Using "E&M Immediate" can cause DTMF digits to be lost at the beginning of the dialing stream as the call enters the carrier switch, thereby resulting in a failed call attempt. Using "E&M Wink" ensures the carrier is ready to receive the digits for each call attempt.
- b) **Setting the guard timer.** Many customers create locked channels by setting the Guard Timer at too low of a value, thereby attempting to seize a channel for the next call before the carrier switch is ready. A Guard Timer setting of 800ms is recommended to avoid this problem.
- c) **SIT Tones.** Ensure your dialing equipment is set to receive and interpret SIT Tones so you can remove disconnected numbers from your dialing lists. Many equipment manufacturers do not have this turned on as a default setting and so this must be manually turned on by a technician.



By following the simple tips above, any company can increase their internal call completion rates, which is also good for your bottom line. Check your phone system stats frequently to make sure that you remain in compliance and seek help immediately if you notice that you are completing fewer than 55% of your calls or are seeing more than 10% of your completed calls of 6 second duration or less.

***For additional help and information, please contact your AireSpring consultant
or call your assigned AireSpring Account Manager.***