



Not Returning Phone Calls

This is a phenomena that is all too prevalent across most industries, but particularly in the HR and Recruitment industry. The sad thing is that this permeates from top to bottom in organizations.

I may be old fashioned, but this behavior is down right rude at best, and disrespectful at worst. It maybe alright to hide behind the statement that I am a busy person, however, it still does not excuse the behavior. How does this affect your personal brand and the company engagement brand? What effects does this behavior indicate about you and your organization?

When people call you they have taken time out of their day, for whatever reason to try and engage with you. Now some maybe trying to sell some product or service, some maybe seeking information about a job, some maybe seeking some advice or whatever. The fact is that they have made an effort to contact and engage you. And it beats receiving all these spam emails that have become so prevalent and easy to send.

Not returning phone calls for whatever reason in a timely manner is disrespectful. Yes, we are all busy trying to make a living, trying to deliver a project or working on an important strategy paper.

Returning telephone calls can and should be prioritized. It is a good idea to create 3 groups to prioritize these calls, and to establish time frames around reply levels.

Important – within 2-3 hours

Active – within 24-48 hours

Others – within 3-5 days. These others might include calls about sales of products or services. Depending upon the type of call you receive – cold, current supplier, unsuitable candidate. These calls can reduce the frequency of similar; and more regular calls by you taking control and spending some time to engage with the caller and setting the boundaries around further contact points for the future.

When returning calls it is also useful to set boundaries around the call. At the start of the call you simply need to state the time you have available to discuss the issue or topic. The caller will appreciate this guidance, and for returning sales calls will keep the conversation focused and reduce the chance of this escalating into a full sales pitch.

It also pays to listen more than you talk so you can gain a better understanding of the situation. This allows you more control, as at any stage you have the right to bring the call to a close. You are therefore able to allow permission for the call to continue, if you believe there is further value to be gained.

However, by not returning calls for whatever reason you are conveying an air of unprofessionalism which damages your own brand identity and that of your organization. This attitude is not so prevalent the higher up the organization someone is operating, but it does occur.

Remember the Law of Unintended Consequences as you just never know who is connected to who. You also never know when you might need that persons help in the future.

