



**Your Phone**

**Friend or Foe?**

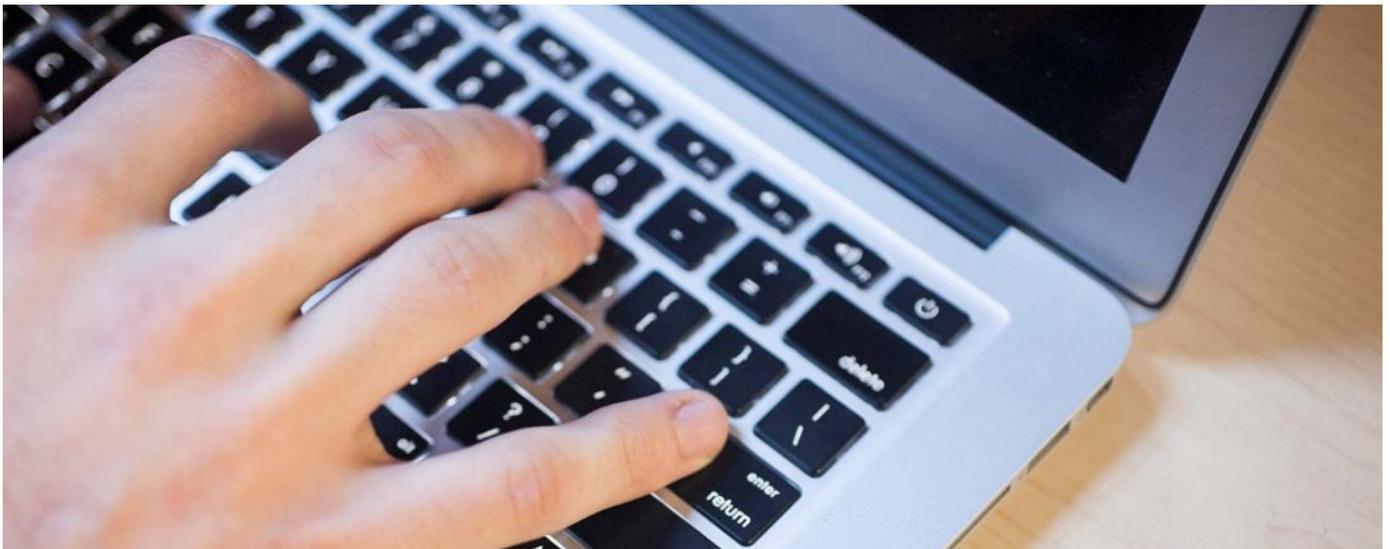
# In Search of the 5 Star Review



**You wake up and find out your company received another review last night.**

**Immediately you get that shot of adrenaline as you read it...  
WONDERING if it's a 5-star or 1.**

- What's your confidence level in your customer service?
- Is it your greatest strength or nagging weakness?
- Pride or embarrassment?



*“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently.”*

- Warren Buffett

Whether you're just starting out or already have hundreds of doors, the key to effective customer service is answering the calls that really matter - and doing so as quickly as possible.

In this book, you'll see how highly rated companies actually make the customer journey enjoyable for their owners and tenants - by making their phones an asset instead of a liability.

You'll learn easy-to-implement changes that will make the vast majority of your callers actually GLAD they are doing business with you.

Providing outstanding customer service shouldn't be complicated and using it to drive positive online reviews *is* possible. It's time to do things differently!

The solutions are simple and can be put in place as quickly as two weeks. Once implemented, you will notice the following benefits:

- Improved staff morale
- Better customer satisfaction
- Newfound capacity for growth
- More positive online reviews
- Labor cost savings



# Who is Calling Your Phone?

After joining the NARPM community, I quickly learned that the phone is not the most pleasant topic for most property managers. It used to be that you had to be in an office to receive a phone call, but thanks to mobile phones - that's no longer the case.



Phone calls can be very disruptive to our workday. While some calls can make us money, a whole lot of them don't and may even be costing us money.

Let's talk about who calls a property management company...

## The biggest chunk goes to leasing.

### Who Calls a PM Company?

**63%** Leasing inquiries – yet only 2% end up with a lease!

**15%** Maintenance calls – best answered 24/7

**16%** Owners/Tenants – require timely help

**3%** Applicants – “Are we there yet?”

**3%** Management Leads – win business with immediate or fast response



On top of all the things you have to do in a day... you also have to pick up the phone! **What happens when you're not able to answer the phone?** One or more of these three things can happen:



## The Silent Scream

These are your current owners and tenants who get frustrated by the lack of customer service and how difficult it is to get ahold of you for help... they decide to leave your business first chance they get.



## The Passive Aggressive

Potential tenants and landlords who called your business, got voicemail, so they went with the next business they found online who did one thing right - picked up their phone.



## The \*Bleep\* You!

People who decide to use their free speech online to hurt your business with nasty reviews. And as much as negative reviews are bad, some may argue that missing a lead could be just as bad or worse.

# Response Time Matters

In 2013 Lead Simple came out with a Property Management Lead Response study. It's a long insightful report, and I'm sure they would love to share it with you if you ask.

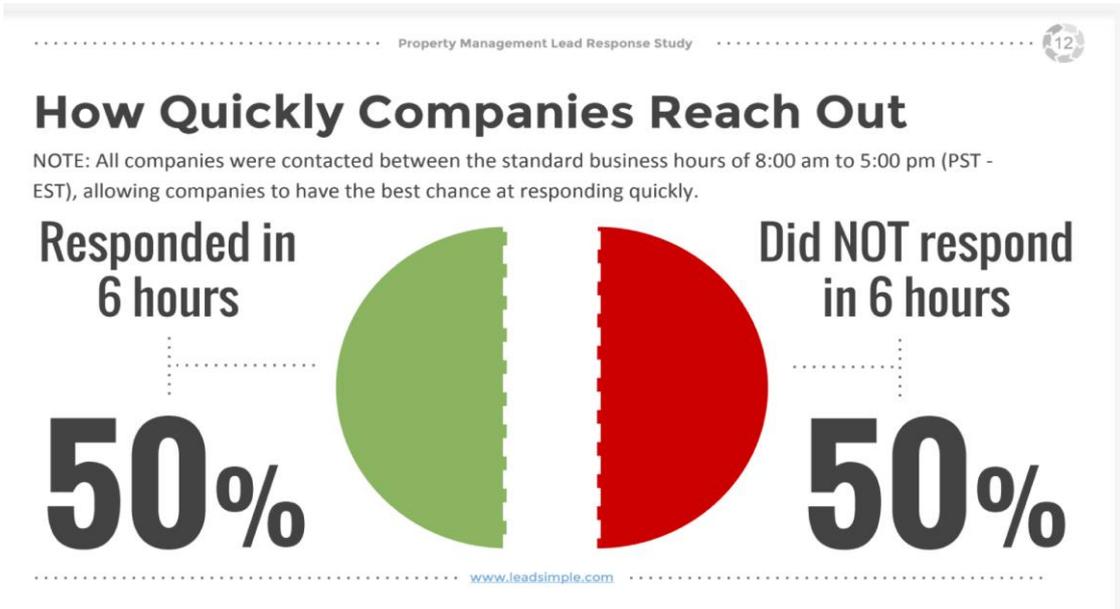


Property Management Lead Response Study by Lead Simple, 2013



That's 1 in 2 chances you'll lose the business for missing the call altogether, or for responding too late.

**In the same study where 3000 property management companies were audited:**



**Calling within the first 5 minutes of that lead being generated is 21x more effective than calling after 30 minutes.**

We've done this... but go try it yourself, too. Mystery shop PM companies and you'll find the same is true for leasing calls. It is hard to find a company that picks up.

**How's your lead response time?**



At VirtuallyinCredible we strive to meet strict standards with our call center. We also track abandonment rates or the percentage of calls that are abandoned before speaking to someone - usually people who hang up because of the wait time.

## Call Center Standards

### 80/20 Service Level Goal

80% of calls must be answered live within the first 20 seconds

### 4% Abandonment Rate

Percentage of calls that are abandoned before speaking to someone

Those are the **highest call center standards** because it works, across all industries

finance, utility, health services, retail, you name it.  
Calls are answered live by someone who can help them,  
NOT to be transferred.

Yet here we are in property management struggling to respond to a lead within 6 hours, let alone answer the phone in 20 seconds.

Could it be because we're too busy taking care of calls like this?

***“How much for the house with the blue door?”***

# When auto attendants first came out, we thought that was great, right?

When was the last time you called a business and got an auto attendant? How was that like?

I don't know about you but I don't like listening to a long menu and pressing a bunch of numbers before reaching someone... or someone's voicemail.

## Do People Still Want to “Press 1”?

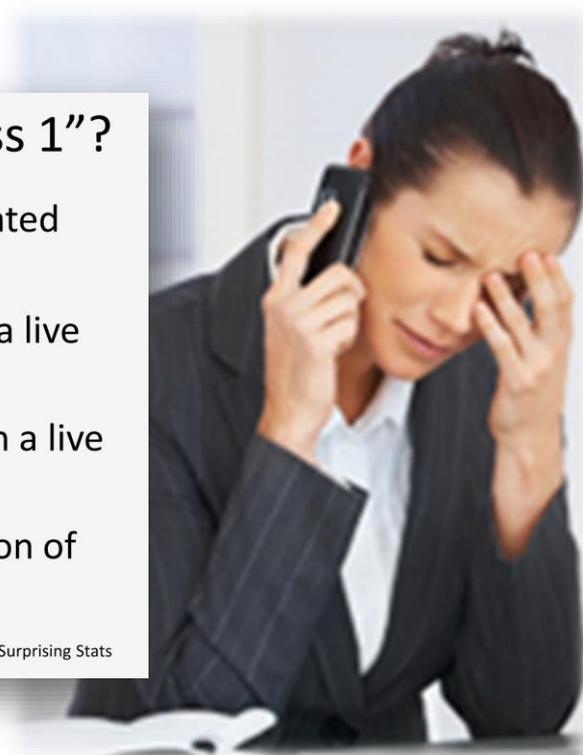
**72%** of callers hang up on an automated phone system.

**67%** hang up when they can't reach a live person.

**75%** believe it takes too long to reach a live person.

Customers generally form an impression of any business within **7 seconds**.

Business and Communication 2017: The Surprising Stats



I don't even leave a voicemail. I'm not going to get a return call anyway, so what's the point? I just call the next business I find online who cares to answer my call at first contact.

In this age of instant gratification, I think the glorious days of the auto attendant's come to an end.

**Just think of your own experience with it.**

So now let's take a look at some old school ways... and some new school ways phone systems are set up in progressive property management companies.



Traditionally, the auto attendant is used as the main line, but as we now know, that's no longer popular with callers. Old school method is to use a front desk person for your main line.

## **The new school method is to live answer calls.**

Sounds expensive but not really - you'd be surprised.

New school uses an offsite receptionist like a **virtual assistant** or assistants based on your call volume. For the amount of money you spend to hire a full-time receptionist, you can now afford to hire multiple call centers and/or virtual assistants.

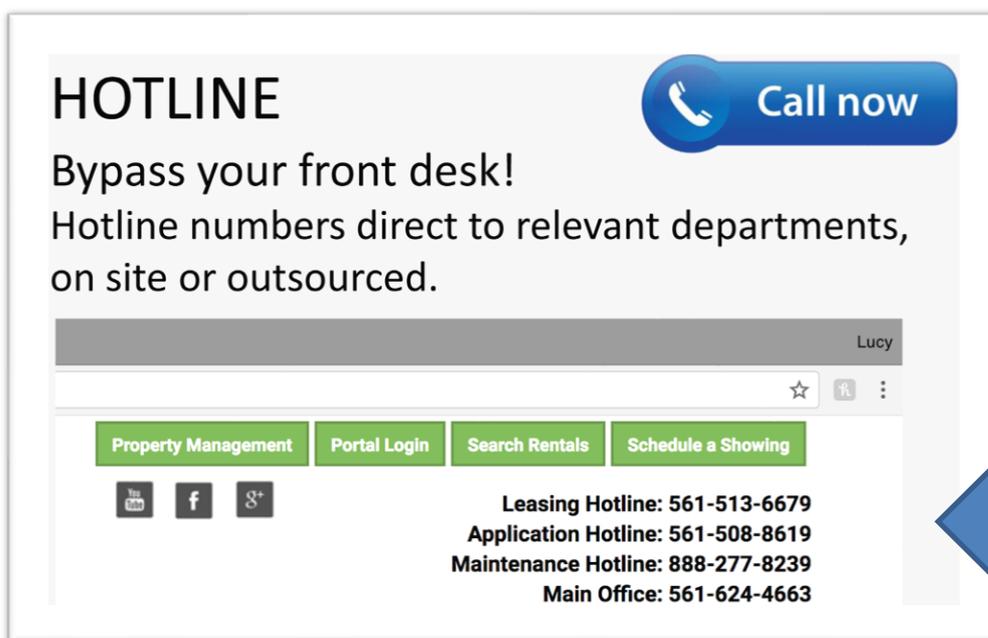
Now if you want to truly rehab your phone system, in fact revolutionize it, **say no to voicemail**. If you have virtual staff answering your phones, they can take messages and follow up with people for you.

Also, if you have a virtual assistant answering your mainline, you can consider using an auto attendant but only as a backup... so that most of your inbound calls are answered live... and if that person is already on a call, the auto attendant can kick in.

**So how do we get rid of the auto attendant and get calls answered live by the person they need to talk to?**

## Hotlines!

This is the top corner of our family's property management website.



Our leasing hotline calls go straight to the leasing call center we operate. Our application hotline rings directly to the tenant screening service we operate.

At \$6/door/month we hired a NARPM vendor to take care of our maintenance calls 24/7, and the main line is answered by our virtual assistant. The management hotline goes directly to our BDM so the chances of missing a lead is slim to none.



## **The results are exciting!**

The office is quiet with about a 70 to 80% reduction in phones ringing. The customer's experience is more pleasant because at every stage people are being handled directly by specialists who are ready, willing and able to help them. Better customer service leads to more positive reviews.

## **People are excited to deal with someone who answers their leasing line!**

We help them, and then send them a link to where they can write us a positive review.

## **Yes it's possible to get a positive review by just answering your phone!**



## Results

Improved staff morale

- ↳ Better customer service and experience
  - ↳ More positive reviews
    - ↳ More new sign ups
      - ↳ Longer client retention
        - ↳ Reduced labor cost = higher profits
          - ↳ **Peace of mind!**

## **This helps get us more signups!**

The happier our customers are, the longer they stay with us. Better client retention rates means we maintain our profits. Outsourcing reduces our labor costs which means higher profits. Many of these call centers are affordable because you pay as you go, by the minute, instead of paying for the excess capacity of staff who sit idle. Virtual assistants are qualified and trained professionals for half what you would pay a full-time front desk person.

**Finally... peace of mind from all of the above!  
You can't really put a price tag on that.**

Ready to experience the increased efficiency of your team?  
Learn more about our [Leasing Line Service](#)

*VirtuallyinCredible.com*