

LOUD & CLEAR

An IP Telephony / Unified Communications Newsletter for All Industries

After the Beep

The key to a perfect outgoing voicemail message

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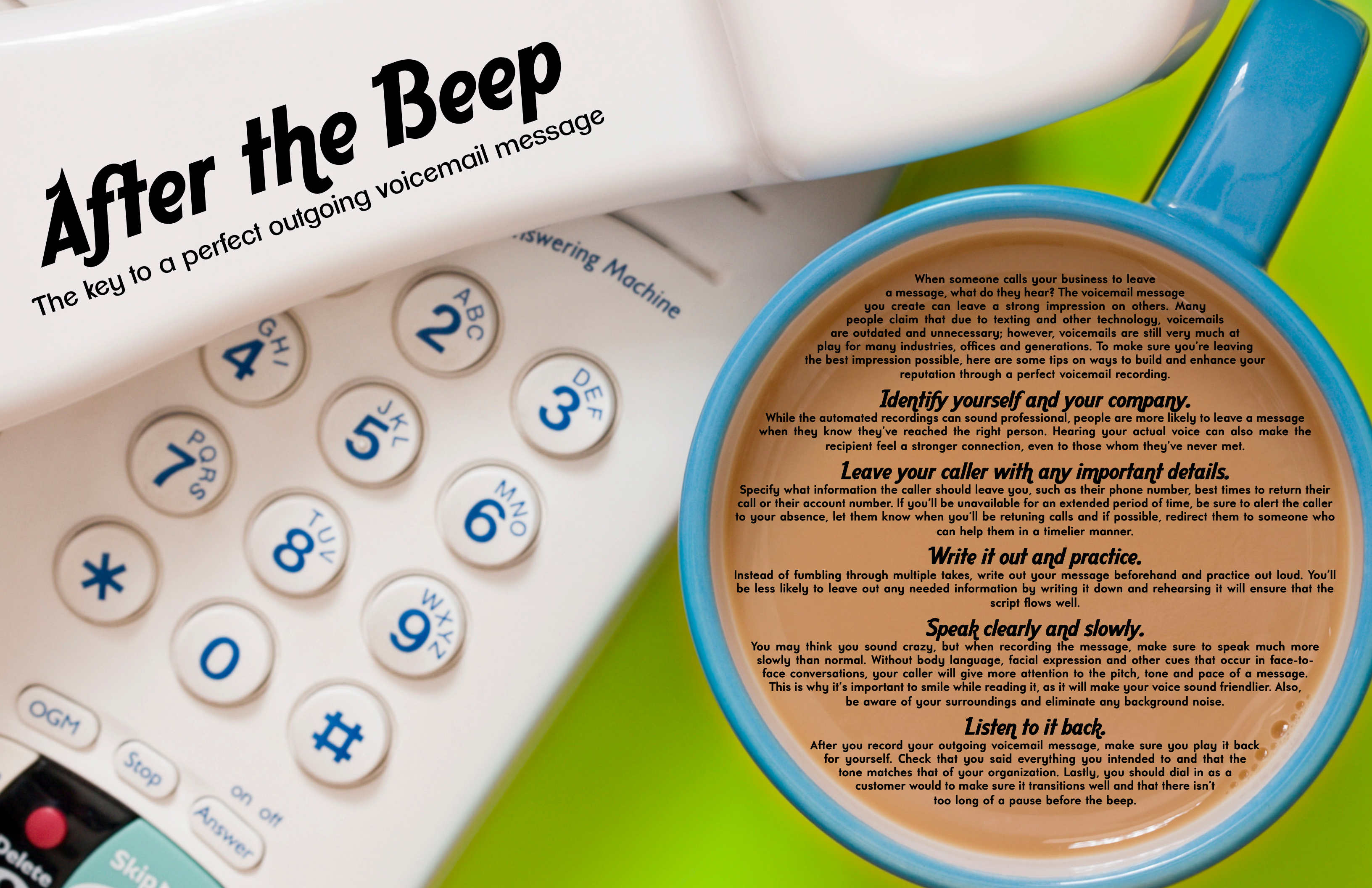
LYNC

Microsoft Lync takes center stage

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

Telecommunication for law firms





After the Beep

The key to a perfect outgoing voicemail message

Answering Machine

When someone calls your business to leave a message, what do they hear? The voicemail message you create can leave a strong impression on others. Many people claim that due to texting and other technology, voicemails are outdated and unnecessary; however, voicemails are still very much at play for many industries, offices and generations. To make sure you're leaving the best impression possible, here are some tips on ways to build and enhance your reputation through a perfect voicemail recording.

Identify yourself and your company.

While the automated recordings can sound professional, people are more likely to leave a message when they know they've reached the right person. Hearing your actual voice can also make the recipient feel a stronger connection, even to those whom they've never met.

Leave your caller with any important details.

Specify what information the caller should leave you, such as their phone number, best times to return their call or their account number. If you'll be unavailable for an extended period of time, be sure to alert the caller to your absence, let them know when you'll be returning calls and if possible, redirect them to someone who can help them in a timelier manner.

Write it out and practice.

Instead of fumbling through multiple takes, write out your message beforehand and practice out loud. You'll be less likely to leave out any needed information by writing it down and rehearsing it will ensure that the script flows well.

Speak clearly and slowly.

You may think you sound crazy, but when recording the message, make sure to speak much more slowly than normal. Without body language, facial expression and other cues that occur in face-to-face conversations, your caller will give more attention to the pitch, tone and pace of a message.

This is why it's important to smile while reading it, as it will make your voice sound friendlier. Also, be aware of your surroundings and eliminate any background noise.

Listen to it back.

After you record your outgoing voicemail message, make sure you play it back for yourself. Check that you said everything you intended to and that the tone matches that of your organization. Lastly, you should dial in as a customer would to make sure it transitions well and that there isn't too long of a pause before the beep.

OGM

Stop

on off
Answer

Delete

Skip

Last week, news broke of a recently discovered flaw in OpenSSL. Heartbleed, as its being called, may have left approximately two-thirds of the web at risk for the past two years. Here's what else you need to know.

Heartbleed is a vulnerability in the way that your browser communicates over an encrypted channel. A hacker could take advantage of the bug and translate the encrypted language used by banks, e-commerce sites and additional sensitive locations to steal passwords and other personal information. OpenSSL is the default cryptographic library in the Apache and nginx Web servers, which together power almost two-thirds of all active websites.

Heartbleed's official name is CVE-2014-0160 and was disclosed Monday, April 7. The bug affects an OpenSSL extension called "heartbeat" that works to keep a secure communication channel open without constantly re-negotiating security protocols. The appropriately named Heartbleed lets a hacker access up to 64 kilobytes of server memory, but can perform the attack over and over again. This means that hackers could request data from the web server's memory, which would include the site's encryption keys, passwords, financial information and more. In other words, the bug gives users the ability to eavesdrop on communications and then steal data directly from services.

Unfortunately, there's no way to tell if you've been affected since the attack leaves no trace behind. If you have your own website, you can test to see if it's vulnerable through LastPass or Qualys. If it is, OpenSSL recommends that you upgrade to version 1.0.1g, which patches the bug. As an Internet user, you should immediately change your passwords, especially those to sites that were proven vulnerable. Sites that were affected include Gmail, Facebook, Dropbox and Amazon. You can get a full list of popular websites and their statuses [here](#).

If you have any more questions or concerns regarding Heartbleed or Internet safety in general, contact an expert at Converged Systems today at 877-598-3999, Support@ConvergedSystems.com.

The Heartbleed Bug

Wake-Up Call

5 signs you need a phone system upgrade

1 Your employees can't access calls outside the office.

In today's world, much of the work is conducted out of the office. For the employees who are not always present in the office, how are they still able to communicate with customers, potential clients or fellow employees? If they're simply using their personal cell phone or one supplied by your company, are those cell phones able to be integrated into your business phone system? When a customer calls into your business line, you want to be able to transfer directly to your employee's phone. Having to recite their cell phone number for the customer to dial themselves is not only time consuming and inefficient, but looks unprofessional. So if you can't integrate mobile phones into your phone system, it might be time for an upgrade.

2 You can't handle the call volume.

As your company grows, your phone traffic is bound to increase as well. Is your current phone system equipped to effectively handle all of the incoming and outgoing calls? Are there often times when every phone line is in use and you have difficulties returning customers' calls immediately? If your phone system is having problems keeping up with your communication needs, you should strongly consider finding a new one- one that can easily grow with your company.

3 You have multiple locations with multiple systems.

If your business has multiple locations around the world or just a few remote offices, do they all use a separate phone system? Using one phone system for multiple locations can save money, increase productivity and improve communication between team members and customers. It's important that your business' phone system can support all of your locations in an effective way. If that's not the case, think about upgrading your business' phones to a system that works in tangent with separate offices.

4 Your phone system has no or few scalability options.

As a business grows, your phone system should be able to adjust accordingly. Do you find the task of adding additional phone extensions or users too expensive to be worth the investment? Adding and managing phone line extensions should be an easy and inexpensive task. If this isn't the case for your company, it's a great time to look into better options.

5 Your system cannot accommodate new technology.

Technology becomes more advanced every day, so you should want your phone system to be able to keep up. Are you able to conduct phone and video conferences? Is your current system compatible with VoIP telephony? All of these technologies are cost-efficient ways to improve many aspects of your business. If your current system is holding your company back, a new system should be in your near future.

If any of these signs apply to you, contact a Converged Communication representative at 877-598-3999.





Microsoft Lync Takes Center Stage in Telecommunications

This past February, the Microsoft Lync Conference took place in Las Vegas with the greatest takeaway being the surge of Lync as customers are moving from the voice pilot to the full implementation stage and taking advantage of the software's full potential.

Microsoft Lync is a unified communication platform for businesses that allows users to connect everywhere on Windows 8 and operating systems including mobile devices. It provides a single system for real-time communications, including voice calls, video calls, meetings, presence, instant messaging and persistent chat.

Carol Spowart, CEO of House of Lync, explained that the first 12 to 18 months were filled with explaining how to correctly pronounce the software to the few brave CIO and CEOs pilots. Around September/October, something changed. "The skies opened. And by November and December we were taking calls through the entire holiday season and it hasn't stopped," Spowart said.

According to Giovanni Mezgec, general manager of product marketing, Lync's revenue has passed the \$1 billion-a-year territory in the fiscal year that ended July 2013 and has continued to grow. For the past five of six quarters, sales have grown by double digits and in the last quarter they've grown 29 percent year-over-year.

The reason for the sudden increase is due to a number of reasons. Microsoft has used their marketing influence to familiarize customers with the product and larger deployments that show what Lync can perform. Another contribution is the improvements that were made in the 2013 version. One of those features is Lync's ability to serve as the core PBX to route calls to other PBXes in branch offices. There were also improvements made to conferencing, which now allows users to see multiple attendees' videos. Customers are also more interested in voice, with many of the Lync's on-premise deals involving some aspect of voice.

Lync plans to continue its momentum through the rebranding from "unified communications" to "universal communications." This new "universal communications" will include support for Android tablets, Skype-Lync video integration, videoconferencing interoperability between Lync and Cisco Systems and the ability to make and receive PSTN calls from Lync Online.

As Gurdeep Sigh Pall, Microsoft corporate vice president for Lync and Skype Engineering, said during his kickoff keynote: "The era of universal communications is here to stay. That's what the next decade is going to be about. It's going to change your and my life."

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT:

HOW THE RIGHT TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM CAN BENEFIT SMALL LAW FIRMS

From getting into law school, taking the Bar exam and working in a practice, a lawyer is used to competition. In 2012 there were 1,245,205 licensed lawyers in the United States. A majority of those lawyers work in a private practice and a majority of those law firms have less than 50 people. With that amount of competitors, having the best communication system available can make all of the difference. Discussed in this article are just a few benefits of upgrading from a simple phone line to a new communication system for your small law firm.

RELIABILITY

As a lawyer, it's necessary to have an open line of communications to your clients at all times. With a person's freedom at stake at any moment, you need your phones running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 52 weeks a year. This is especially true since gaining a new client can cost the law firm as much as 10 times more money than retaining an existing one. That's why it's crucial that your clients trust that you'll be available whenever they need you. If your phone system is experiencing an issue, it's important to have a support team that can diagnose the problem and fix it immediately. Your clients depend on you, so you should be able to depend on your phone system.

PRIVACY

While you want your clients to be able to contact you at any time, you might be hesitant to give them the numbers to your personal mobile or your home phone. Telecommunication systems have features that make it possible to easily keep in touch with clients while out of the office. Calls to the office can be automatically forwarded to a cell or home phone without the client knowing. This is also important when it comes to personal safety, as an angry or embittered client won't have access to your personal information.

CONVENIENCE

Lawyers conduct business in many ways, but meetings are universal for almost all. While some can be done over the phone, videoconferencing can be a very useful tool. Videoconference can eliminate the travel expenses involved in cases where the client is far away or depositions of witnesses are taken all of the country. It could also be beneficial in certain cases where the two parties have difficulties residing in the same room. Conducting these meetings over videoconferencing can lessen the animosity and allow the settlement to go much smoother. Having a communication system that allows for videoconferencing can ensure versatility and convenience for yourself, your staff and your clients.



Questions? Call Us Today!

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Converged Communication Systems (CCS), an IP Telephony / Unified Communications provider and BBB Accredited Business, has been delivering best-in-class solutions for its clients for over a decade. CCS has been recognized as a Channel Partners 360° Award winner, listed on the CRN Fast Growth 150 and named to Inc. 500|5000's list of fastest growing companies in America for the second year in a row. CCS offers a portfolio of cloud and premise solutions including IP telephony (VoIP/SIP), network services (MPLS/Fiber), collaboration/video, mobility, call centers, and more. Our team of IT experts works collaboratively leveraging our unparalleled \$2.5 Million Network Operations Center to provide world class service.

