



**CAPRICORN**

*...it's just easier!*

**Resources:**

- There are no additional resources

## The benefits of call recording

Despite the inroads of messaging or texting in this new digital world of communication, it turns out that the humble telephone is still the most preferred method for first-time customers looking for a good workshop to look after their vehicle.

A phone call allows them to interact with your workshop, and that first communication will tell them a lot about how your workshop operates.

Everyone assumes answering a phone is easy and most handle phone calls with conversational skill.

That might be OK for a simple booking for an existing customer. No sales involved, just agree on the date and enter it in the book.

However, handling complex inquiries by a new customer is not so simple. This is where poor techniques will be found out.

New customers rarely just ring up and ask for the first available spot. Naturally they will want to engage and check you out first. They will ask things like 'my BMW X5 has a running issue', or 'how much to service my Toyota Hilux?', or 'how much to get my brakes done?'

A natural reaction to a price question is usually negative. Subconsciously you think you're dealing with a time-wasting price shopper. But this could be a totally wrong conclusion.

Would you ring up a plumber for the first time and book them in without asking how much their call-out fee is? Absolutely not. So when a customer asks 'how much?' in 90% of cases they just want to make sure the price is within their expectations.

While it's true that humans learn from their mistakes, it does not apply to all mistakes. Get a timing belt wrong on a late model vehicle and you are unlikely to make that mistake again. The problem with phone call is that you don't often realise that you have made a mistake. A new customer might have just slipped through your hands, and you might be none the wiser.

So how do you know if your business is handling phone calls, especially from potential customers, efficiently. Unless you are riding shotgun on every phone call made by all staff, how do you know if new customers are being turned away, simply on the strength of a poor phone experience.

There's hardly a business today that doesn't advise every caller 'Your call may be monitored for training purposes'. Doesn't that say it all. Companies have long since realised that the only way to keep control on calls handled by multiple staff members is to record them.

Take a leaf out of their book. Record all phone calls and play them back later. Trust me – this can be a real eye opener.

You will very quickly realise that dealing with existing and new customers require different skills. You will hear the simple things that can turn off new customers. Even the basics are often missed. Like failing to give your name and business name in the introduction, failing to use the customer's name, failing to be enthusiastic and failing to ask the customer more questions. To the customer's ears, some calls sound like the workshop doesn't really need the work. The staff member on the phone may be pre-occupied with a customer already standing at the counter, so they are not really listening and paying full attention. And worst of all, you will hear a lot of potential sales drift away through failing to close the sale.

Before you start listening to the recorded phone calls, you need to understand the correct way to handle new customer enquiries. This was covered in detail in Step 3A – phone handling which you can find at [www.tatbiz.net.au/capricorn](http://www.tatbiz.net.au/capricorn)

In summary the six steps for correctly handling a phone enquiry are:

1. **The greeting** - *Good morning, Browns Motors, this is John. How can I help you?*
2. **Ask questions, listen and take notes** - *Ok. I can help you with that. I just need to grab some more information from you. You said it's a ....?*
3. **Build value and prescribe course of action** - *Ok Bill, based on what you have just told me I would recommend.....*
4. **Assume the sale and book them in** - *I can squeeze you in right now or we have some time available on Wednesday morning. Which time suits you best?*
5. **Get their details** - *Can I just confirm the spelling of your surname.....? What is your best contact number.....?*
6. **Thanks, and confirm** - *Ok Bill. I have scheduled in for..... at ..... o'clock.*

Listening to recorded phone calls is not the kind of task you must do every month. It's a task you do until you have evidence that everyone does it correctly. That evidence is no longer based on a hunch.

Contact your telco supplier and set up call recording. Lock yourself away and start browsing through the phone calls. Pay attention to new customer enquiries and note those that were handled poorly, or exceptionally well.

You must then sit down as a team and go through the example calls you have selected. You can be told a hundred times to do calls a certain way but when you hear yourself do something wrong the penny suddenly drops. Once everyone understands the difference between good and bad phone handling, make the time to teach the correct way.

Don't think this exercise is only beneficial for business with multiple staff answering the phone. Owners and managers under stress can sometimes do silly things. The only way to realise this is to listen to some of your calls.

Every business is conscious of how they are going to generate the next new customer to replace that one they just lost for whatever reason. Options considered might be to spend more on search engine marketing, or revamping the website, or doing more mail outs.

Before you invest your hard-earned on marketing you need to make sure you aren't turning away new customers through silly phone mistakes. The success of any marketing campaign will come down to how well you convert prospects. And that all depends on how well you answer the phone.

The place to start is [www.tatbiz.net.au/capricorn](http://www.tatbiz.net.au/capricorn)

*Just go for it!*