



Where world class communications meet superior customer service

# D&M Communicator

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

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## From The Desk Of The President

As the end of a tumultuous year comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to focus on what D&M can do to help you and your company navigate the treacherous waters we call our economy.

As a business owner I have to contend with many of the same challenges as our clients. As a result, not only can I empathize, I can sympathize. So when I write that D&M can save you money by making your company more efficient and can

reduce expenses by finding superior suppliers at a lower cost, I am simply doing for you what I have done for my own business. And with the



Steven Gerhardt, President, D&M Enterprise Group

new year only weeks away, I can't think of a better time to allow your D&M Project Manager to review your account to see if you can benefit from the services we offer. Perhaps you downsized and no longer need the bandwidth you required only months ago, or even better, you have expanded and require additional services. Regardless of the scenario, D&M is here to help.

Finally, on behalf of the staff of D&M, I want to wish you and yours a happy and healthy season, and a prosperous 2009.

steve

## How To Save Money On Almost Everything

Most of us would like for our money to go a little farther each month. Not only do we want the money needed to pay our bills and provide for the essentials of life, but we would also like a few extras along the way. Tough economic times have resulted in an avalanche of bankruptcies and foreclosures. More than ever the typical person is looking for ways to save money on almost everything imaginable.

Fortunately it is possible to save on most purchases. Savvy consumers have learned how to stretch their funds as far as possible. This article will cover some of their secrets.

Let us begin with the basics. **Credit cards** are a necessary evil that can drain our wallets. Paying the monthly payment before the due date will save you money each month. This is because the interest charges are based on your average daily balance. Paying bills online can save you in postage fees as well as

on checks and associated fees.

Consider buying **movie theater tickets** in bulk to save money. Most theaters require a minimum purchase of 50 tickets to get a discounted rate, but that purchase would cover your movie tickets for months or even an entire year.

When it comes to **medications**, always use the generic form when available. When you need medical testing done, shop around for a good price. Surprisingly not all facilities charge the same. You may find that getting a test done in an **outpatient clinic** will save you lots of money when compared to having it done at a hospital.

When you are traveling long distances by automobile you may find that you can save money on **gasoline** by driving a little ways

from you exit to fill up. As you get farther from the interstate you will likely find lower gas prices.

As for **household purchases** it is often wise to buy during the off-season. For example, air



Little changes in your purchasing behavior can add up to big savings.

conditioners are less expensive during cooler months and so are gas grills. As stores are preparing to receive new merchandise they usually reduce the prices on in-store items. Just before the fall line of clothing arrives you may want to stock up on summer clothes.

By **carefully planning your purchases** and really managing your finances you will be able to stretch your dollars farther. It takes time to incorporate all the little ways to save into your life but once you do you will feel better when you do spend money.

## Quote Of The Month

"I like thinking big...if you're going to be thinking anyway, you might as well think big."

Donald Trump  
(1946 – )  
Real estate developer

# Tips That Are Guaranteed To Improve Your Professional Phone Skills

It happens all the time—you hear someone over the telephone and you make a generalization about that person. It may not be fair and it is akin to judging a book by its cover, but it's true nevertheless.

Within 60 seconds, people will make assumptions about one's education, background, ability and personality based on voice alone.

What type of impression is your "phone" voice making? Indeed there are two areas you should be aware of when speaking. One is "what" you say, the other is "how" you say it. Studies show that as much as 87% of the listener's opinion of you is based on your voice alone. That leaves only 13% allocated to what we are saying to other factors to make a positive impression. With numbers like these it is easy to see why your voice is so important in your career and personal life.

Today we live in a "voice mail" environment. We play "phone tag," leaving messages and listening to voice mails left by others. It may take as many as 3-4 tries before actual contact is made and you have a conversation. By the time you do connect, you can be assured that the other party already has formed an impression about you.

The following are some tips that will help you improve your phone voice and technique.

**1. THIRD RING RULE:** Always answer the phone by the third ring or make sure your voice mail is set to pick up by the third ring. Today people are not inclined to wait much longer and will assume you are not available and hang up. Remember, as much as we think we don't like voice mail, we like the option of leaving a message.

**2. PROFESSIONAL GREETING:** Remember the 87% rule above and make a good impression. When you record the greeting

on your own voicemail, plan what you are going to say. Then practice and rehearse BEFORE you leave the greeting on your answering machine. Be short and to the point. Don't drag out the greeting. It is obvious that you are "out of the office" or "away" from your desk - otherwise you would answer your phone. Consider leaving such statements out of your greeting unless you are actually away from the office, then say so and leave a date for your return.

87% of the listener's opinion of you is based on your voice

I recommend that you leave clear instructions as to what information you need from the caller.

Remind the caller to leave their phone number, best time to return the call and a brief message.

**3. PREPARE THEN ANSWER:** Have a note pad and pen by your phone at all times. Write down the caller's name and use it during the conversation.

**4. BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER:** Take notes, ask for correct spelling.

**5. PROMPTLY RETURN CALLS:** Make it your personal goal to be the one who returns phone calls. This may very well be the most professional characteristic of all you can develop. Set a goal to return phone calls within 4 hours; it will make a positive statement about you and your professionalism.

**6. CHECK YOUR MESSAGES:** Check your messages several times a day. Learn how to dial in from a remote phone to get your voice mails. Many times the caller is facing a deadline and your information may be crucial for them to complete their assignment.

**IT'S A TWO-WAY STREET** When you leave messages for others remember these tips:

**1. SLOW DOWN:** Don't speak too fast. Slow down when you are leaving a message, especially if you have an accent. If you make your message hard to understand or if the listener has to replay it several times to get your message, your reputation is slipping in their mind.

**2. CLEARLY SAY YOUR NAME:** Make absolutely sure the caller will understand your name. Consider spelling your name if it is hard to pronounce or is not a common name.

**3. HOW TO LEAVE YOUR PHONE NUMBER:** When leaving your phone number, speak slowly. Most likely the listener is writing down your number, make it easy for them to do so. Repeat the number. Consider saying your number at the beginning and end of your voice mail. People will appreciate this.

**4. LEAVE YOUR NAME, COMPANY NAME, AND REASON:** Give the listener all the information they will need to know about you. Don't make them guess. Always leave the reason you are calling. It is very unprofessional to just leave a message simply saying "give me a call."

**5. MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM TO RETURN YOUR CALL:** Tell them a good time to return your call. Give them a date, time, and phone number.

**6. BE PROFESSIONAL:** People judge you by the tone of your voice. Increase your image by sounding professional in everything you do over the phone. Remember that you won't be able to avoid phone tag, but you can definitely put things in your favor by doing several small things that will make a BIG difference in your image.

# How To Connect Better To Increase Your Closing Ratio

Have you ever wanted to increase your closing ratios? The **first thing** that will improve the number of prospects most salespeople ever close is to actually have enough contacts in the pipeline. I'm not talking about just more advertising, I mean actually picking up the phone and making contact. Most of us spend time coming up with the next idea and we think our way out of work. If you don't have the contact taking place, first and foremost don't even study what you may be doing wrong. **DO ENOUGH** wrong and eventually you will get some right!

The **second thing** you have to understand is why are you looking to connect with people. Really what is your why? It has to be deeper than the money. It has to be more or it's just a job. Your why has to be deep! Do you believe in your product or service enough that you know it will make a difference in your client's life in some way? Do you know for a fact that you are marketing a better way to accomplish X? Do you know that it will be a benefit to your client and IF you can get your client to see that you will make a sale? That will put you one step closer to your goal!

**Third**, are you expecting to make solid connections or do you just wait and hope they happen? When you pick up the phone to talk to a prospective client if you are expecting to connect with that client versus hoping to connect your posture and tonality will be completely different. One says "I know what you need and I can help." The other says "I hope you let me help and

please don't say no." Closing is a game of posture and it starts with that first connection.

**Fourth**, are you responding or reacting to your clients when you connect? Responding means you are in control of the conversation; reacting means your client has control. Look at it this way: who's asking the questions? You should not feel fearful or intimidated when your client questions you. You smoothly handle the question and objection and confidently start leading the conversation again. Reacting shows your client they are in control and you are not confident. It will certainly slow the closing process if the closing even takes place.



**Before you can close the sale, you first need to make contact with your prospect. The more prospects you contact, the better your odds of closing sales!**

**Finally**, are you confident that the product or service you are providing to your clients will get you to your final goal? You work for a reason, whether you are self-employed or employed by someone else. Will marketing your product or service get you out of debt? Will it give you the time and freedom you are looking for? If

what we are doing leads us to where we want to go, then we naturally work with a spirit of excellence. The confidence that comes from that spirit of excellence is attractive in the market place and will help to build stronger connections with our clients.

If you want to increase your closing ratios, you must first cultivate connections in the first place. Then do you feel confident that your product or service will fill whatever need your client has? Are you expecting to connect

with your clients or are you just making random sales calls? If you expect to connect and you are responding versus reacting, you will be more productive. Your time will stay productive and your closing ratios will stay up if you are confident in your career. Does your career lead you to an outcome you are looking for? If so, you just got another step closer to better results.

## Sales Tip Of The Month

After resolving a customer's problem, follow up. Make sure they are satisfied. If they are, ask for referrals.

## “Did You Hear About...”

### Who am I?

I am your constant companion.

I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden.

I will push you onward or drag you down to failure.

I am completely at your command.

Half the things you do might just as well be turned over to me and I will be able to do them quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed--you must merely be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done and after a few lessons I will do it automatically.

I am the servant of all great people and, alas, of all failures, as well.

Those who are great, I have made great.

Those who are failures, I have made failures.

I am not a machine, though I work with all the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a person. You may run me for profit or run me for ruin -- if makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet. Be easy with me and I will destroy you.

Who am I? **I am habit!**



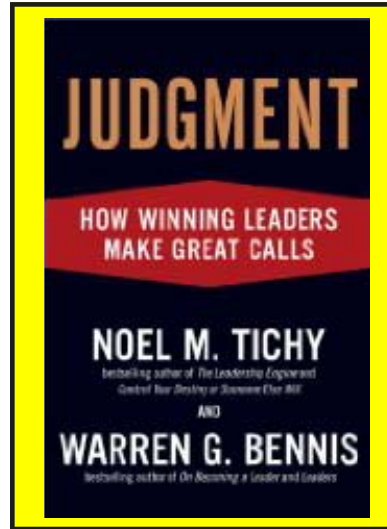
# How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls

**Book Review:** Now you can be an insider. In a couple of hours, you can know the facts about how great leaders turned troubled companies around and led them to success.

Sometimes you will be surprised, sometimes impressed, and at other times, you'll think their decisions were exactly what you would have made yourself. In their new book *Judgment: How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls*, Noel Tichy and Warren Bennis give new insight into the art of making great decisions. They don't come by accident, and they're not isolated events. Rather, they come as part of a process including the present situation and how it should evolve in the near and distant future.

Both Tichy and Bennis are prolific authors who have many business and leadership books to their credit. This one could be their best.

They tell what steps to take when the stakes are high, information is limited, and the right call is far from obvious. They say leaders add most of their value by the quality of their judgments. Every other aspect of leadership is secondary.



Many people assume that making good judgments is an inborn trait. Tichy and Bennis show that it's a skill that can be developed and refined over time, especially when nurtured by an organization. The authors have spent many years studying decision-making and advising CEOs of major corporations.

They conclude that there are three judgment domains. The first is people, the domain with most potential for good or ill. The right people must be chosen.

The second domain is strategy. When the current road isn't leading to success, the leader must find a new path.

The third is crisis. Disastrous consequences of bad decisions come quickly. A new plan must be forthcoming including a great decision.

*Judgment: How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls*, by Noel Tichy and Warren Bennis, Portfolio Hardcover, 288 pages, \$26.95

## About D&M

Founded in 2001, D&M Enterprise Group has thousands of satisfied clients. D&M utilizes a consultative approach to thoroughly examine every aspect of each client's telecommunications needs and then recommend specific cost-saving and performance-enhancing solutions. We specialize in medium to large-scale applications that include DS3, T1, as well as phone equipment installations.

As independent telecommunications experts, we have the luxury of offering our clients objective advice that truly serves their best interests. Once our clients' telecommunications needs are identified, we match these needs with the services offered by more than 20 of the nation's leading carriers and equipment manufacturers we represent. Because we have the ability to select from a wide variety of carriers and equipment, we can guarantee our clients that they are getting the **best solution** available at the **lowest possible cost**.

**HOW WE DO IT:** D&M does all the comparison shopping for you! Using proprietary software, D&M analyzes your existing communication, Internet, and data transfer usage. Once this analysis is complete, a comprehensive, customized proposal is prepared that shows the savings you can expect from competing carriers who can provide the same, or in some cases, superior service, at a lower price. Based on your needs, D&M will also recommend service and equipment changes that will save you money too.

In addition, D&M uses proprietary software, which we call our COMMauditor system, to analyze every invoice to ensure you are being charged at the contracted rate and that you are not charged for equipment or services that were canceled or never ordered. We also track all your telephony assets and vendor agreements.

The combination of increasing the efficiency of your business by ensuring you are using the proper services and equipment, along with monitoring your bills for accuracy, guarantees your company will be performing at maximum efficiency without overspending.

As your single point of contact, D&M makes it easy for you to spend your valuable time running your business while we make sure your telecommunications, Internet and data transfer needs are being supplied by the highest quality providers at the lowest possible cost.



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