

## **Pick up the Phone**

Could it get any more frustrating? Making a call these days is about as annoying as it gets. There is never anyone on the other side, and getting to a real human being requires not only the patience of a saint, but the skill of a NASCAR driver maneuvering the trickiest of curves.

What happened? Why has customer service disintegrated so drastically and why is it that companies are afraid to talk to their customers? It is more than a nightmare, it is a tactical error and the companies that bring back the good old receptionist will be those companies rewarded with customer loyalty.

And somehow that isn't the whole ugly story. The fear of the phone is actually a much larger phenomenon than mere lousy customer service. It has infested the very way we do business.

An attempt at business development these days results in your phone call being left on the answering machine of the person you are trying to reach, never to be returned. The notion that the intended recipient doesn't bother to return the call is only half the offense. The other half is that the communication system in place negated all possibility that the party seeking to establish a relationship actually present their proposal. So what might have been an excellent, mutually beneficial business opportunity evolves into nothing at all because one side was unable to get through to the other.

Is this how we want to do business? Do we want to miss out on possible opportunities because we construct walls in our communications systems that disable those seeking to reach out to us? The answer needs to be an aggressive no.

Pick up your phone. Let the world back in and you might find that many of your business objectives are easier to achieve as some of what you hope to accomplish can be achieved through working with others. Those others are calling you....but you are ignoring them.

We need to stop barricading ourselves behind technologies that make getting in touch with us all but impossible.

Pick up your phone, and get back to work.