

# COVID-19 Impact on Phone Calls

---

How To Help Your Team Help Others

ServiceScore<sup>®</sup>



# Business Phone Calls are **Changing**

**In response to COVID-19, brands are adapting services, offering different products, and implementing new safety processes.**

Business owners are working fast to implement changes, but finding time to train their teams for phone calls from stressed consumers is challenging.

In these uncertain times, preparing frontline team members with the skills they need to make trusting connections on phone calls is more important than ever.





**ServiceScore is sharing performance insight from thousands of phone calls to businesses across the country. We have unlocked five trends and the skills that frontline team members need to build trusting connections with callers.**

Our goal is to help you with specific tactics to support frontline staff to build trusted and long lasting connections in these uncertain times.

Based on the trends we see, even if a business isn't fully open today, understanding these changes in consumer behavior and expectations can help you be better prepared as the recovery begins.

Training for the new normal will require abandoning assumptions while building new skills to meet changing caller needs.



# 1. Call volume is lower, but quality is high

---



**In this time of COVID-19 uncertainty, if someone is calling a business, they have an urgent need.**

With companies changing hours, services and ways of doing business, many consumers find themselves seeking new providers, which can be the start of a new customer relationship.

## **How to help:**

- Ask the caller about their needs to understand what they value most. With first-time callers, take a moment to explain how your business serves customers. Let them know what information you need to best help them (contact info, product need).
- It's more important than ever to ASK the caller to take the next step. Frontline team members can't assume that callers know how the business works with customers if they're calling for the first time.



## 2. Price sensitivity is higher

---

**With family budgets strained by the economic effects of COVID-19, callers are more concerned about price.**

They're asking about fees and trying to negotiate those away. They're usually under pressure – they want to postpone the purchase and hassle, but if they're calling today they have an urgent need that they probably can't delay.

### **How to help:**

- Share how your business is adding more value at this time. Some brands are suspending certain fees and offering financing. Services are being added such as phone/virtual diagnostics and pick up and drop off.
- More than ever, it's important to share the unique value of what you do. This is especially true if your differentiators have changed as your products and service delivery have changed due to COVID. All of this adds value for callers.



### 3. Health and safety is top of mind

---

**Callers are asking how they can safely do what they need to do.**

They want to know that if they take time to carefully conduct necessary business that they're not putting their health, or the health of others, at risk.

#### **How to help:**

- Brands that are having the most success are sharing what they're doing for customer safety by weaving this into phone calls. Quotes or estimates might be conducted virtually vs. in-person.
- The important thing is to make sure to mention it. It helps callers understand how they might have to plan differently and it shows that your business cares about its customers.



## 4. People are stressed

---



**There is a wider variance in the length of calls – some calls are much shorter and some are much longer.**

Shorter calls typically involve someone looking to move quickly – a fast quote or a quick question. Longer calls are often from someone who finds new value in being able to talk to someone. Often a call to a business might be the only person they get to interact with all day – and they suddenly find a bit of joy in human connection as part of taking care of their business.

### **How to help:**

- Be ready to adapt the call length and tone to the caller's style. If your team has embraced DiSC profiling in selling, they'll know that one's adapted style changes based on situation or environment. DiSC is all about how people approach tasks and people and at what speed. Today, there are new opportunities to connect using these skills.
- Kindness and courtesy are more important than ever. Answering the phone with a name and sincere offer to help, asking how the caller is doing today and being sure to say thank you all go a very long way, especially when many of us feel a bit fragile.



## 5. “Phone First” is back

---

**The slogan harkens back to the days of Yellow Page advertising.**

It was all about calling a business before jumping in the car to check on store hours, directions or product availability, to avoid unpleasant surprises. Google changed this, of course, but in this time of COVID-19, with many businesses changing hours, services and inventory without updating their websites or Google listings, cautious customers are learning that calling a business before leaving home is a smart move. Consumers also have a new reason to call – to make sure they’re going to be safe by learning what precautions they and the business should be taking in order to ensure their health.

### **How to help:**

- It’s critical that team members have the most up-to-date information to share with callers. Having to change hours, services and procedures can be hard to keep up for management – and doubly hard on the staff taking customer calls.
- If someone is calling for hours, go beyond just answering the question to truly engaging – and securing an appointment or purchase.







**There's no doubt that the way we interact with our favorite brands has dramatically changed as a result of COVID-19.**

As part of long-term concern for health and safety in our society, new technology and processes will change the way we do business. But our experience shows that what won't change – and might increase – is the value of a knowledgeable, sincere human connection to help us get done what we need.

Businesses that understand these trends and help their teams thrive in this time of change will build more trust with callers - at a time where it is valued most.

# We're here for you

---

We work with your teams to implement new skills for success in these changing times. Call us if we can help with phone call performance.



ServiceScore®



[sales@servicescore.net](mailto:sales@servicescore.net)



414.436.0040



[servicescore.net](https://servicescore.net)

