

Tips for choosing the best on hold music for business



Choosing on **hold music for business** may not seem like an overly important part of marketing. However, it could be the first point of contact a potential new customer has with your business, and first impressions are everything. That's why it's important to choose the **best on hold music** for your business that suitably represents your company, brand and identity to create the best impression and connection to your audience.

Why Have On Hold Music?

The larger the business, the greater the influx of calls from customers and potential new customers. Many callers will ultimately have to wait to speak with someone, and are put on hold. The main reason telephone systems have hold music is to avoid silence. Studies show that customers put on hold with no music, and simply greeted with silence often hang up after a minute. This is because they feel either forgotten, or don't feel their call will be answered. Silence is a dead end. For all the customer knows, they're out of the system and just hanging on for nothing. At least if music is playing, it reinforces the idea that you're in a queue and will be answered at some point.

Different Uses for On Hold Music

Aside from breaking the silence, using [on hold music for business](#) can be effective for several reasons:

Offer options to customers

While being placed on hold and listening to music, recorded messages can be played over the music that informs customers of specific departments they can reach by pressing specific buttons, or informing them of further information, waiting times and more. Sometimes, a customer query can be dealt with during the hold process itself. For example, a customer be calling to update their account. A message informing them they can do this via a website or app could be all they need to do this, and handle their query without even being answered, and freeing up the queue.

Helping time pass

Studies show that when being placed on hold, time goes by much faster when there's music playing. Similarly, if you're placed on hold with no music, the wait feels even longer. So if you're playing music to your customers while they wait, they may feel like they were answered quicker.

Establishing a brand identity

The type of on hold music implemented by a business is important. Again, it's potentially the first point of contact a customer has with a business and first impressions are everything. If you're a company that provides over 50s life insurance, it wouldn't make sense to play the latest chart pop music as your audience wouldn't associate with it and immediately feel as if the business doesn't 'get their audience'.

The right music can be used to maximise your company's first impression with callers. If a hotel/spa has an on hold system that uses relaxing, tranquil music it not only provides a soothing on hold experience, but it's making the connection between the caller and what the hotel/spa is all about. A relaxing, soothing experience. Instead of being frustrated and being put on hold, the caller is already picturing the pool and treatment facilities. We have an article that goes into this more, [here](#).

Managing the caller

As previously outlined, the right music choice makes all the difference. The wrong choice can irritate your caller so when they are put through to speak with someone, they're already unhappy. For many, making a call to a business can create anxiety. If you offer relaxing music that doesn't sound cheesy or repetitive, you can improve their experience.

Include On Hold Messages

As mentioned previously, including messages can be effective for directing customers to the most suitable department without having to wait for a transfer. It can also inform them of waiting times and particular services you offer. So if you're a Spa, you can include messages that detail specific treatments and costs that inform the caller who may be calling to book a Spa related experience.

Do Not

Repeatedly apologise to the caller for putting them on hold. "We're sorry to you're waiting so long. Your call is important to us and we will answer your call as soon as possible." After hearing the message for the twentieth time waiting on hold for half an hour, it loses its appeal. It also has an impersonal feel to it because it's an automated message, on repeat. It also interrupts the music and callers think their call is being answered which becomes increasingly frustrating.

Bombard the customer with sales ads during on hold. Having a customer waiting on the line is not an excuse to advertise to them. Not answering the phone but trying to sell to someone who may already be unhappy with your product or service will not work and angers the caller.

Classical Music, Pop Music, Royalty Free Music

There are 3 main forms of music that are considered for use as on hold music for business:

Classical Music

Familiar tunes like Beethoven's Fur Elise are commonly used in telephone on-hold systems. It's fairly relaxing and doesn't sound too bad over the phone. However, the drawback to using classical music is that it doesn't sit well with a wide audience (the younger callers won't appreciate it) Also, it can sound quite distorted or full of static during quiet sections. Because classical music is quite dynamic

in nature, having very loud and very quiet sections throughout a piece, when used in telephone on hold systems it's impossible to get a good medium level. Therefore, either loud sections are overly loud (to compensate for quiet sections) or the quiet sections are too quiet and effectively just fuzzy noise.

Pop Music

Firstly, to use pop music in your hold system you will first need a [PRS](#) or [PPL](#) license. Depending on the size of your business and offices, the price will vary. Secondly, listening to a pop song over the phone with low quality vocals is awful. Thirdly, you cannot overlay pop songs with on hold messages. Lastly, a pop song that was top of the charts one month could be forgotten about a few months later and immediately makes your business sound dated.

Royalty Free Music

This music has been composed and recorded specifically for use as [on hold music for business](#). The type of music is produced with the sole intention to be played in the background (over the phone) where voice messages can be layered over the top. It's also not too complex so that instruments and samples are not lost in the encoding process when converted to the on hold format. Royalty free on hold music offers tracks in a wide range of curated collections so businesses can choose the **best on hold music** for their callers. Hotels can choose from [Lounge](#) or [Soft Jazz](#) music, whereas a Spa can choose from a variety of [Gentle Moods](#) and [Relaxation](#) music.

Limited Sound Quality

Due to the limitations of telephone lines, the amount of data they can carry is restricted. Therefore, whatever music you choose, needs to be compressed to be played down the line. This type of compression is what gives you the typical telephone sound. You can hear this clearly when listening to a caller on a radio station. The presenter is crystal clear, but the caller has a very low quality sound. The same applies to music.

When music is encoded for use in a telephone on hold system, the bit-rate is compressed down to just 8kbps. Music streaming services like Spotify typically offer music at 128kbps for their low end quality, and 320kbps for their high end quality. As you can see, that's a huge reduction in quality for on hold music.

This factor is important to consider as dynamic, complex music tracks just won't sound very good over the phone. Various guitars and drums will be lost and replaced with a muddy, fuzzy static sound. That's why the [best on hold music](#) is typically simple in structure and instrumentation so that it can sound as clear as possible when encoded to the lower quality format.

Update Your On Hold Music Regularly

Calling a business and being put on hold isn't something anyone looks forward to. If people need to call a business a few times over the course of a year, hearing the same on hold music will make the experience all the more laborious. Some callers may dread calling a business because they can already hear the music that will be stuck in their head for the rest of the day.

If you update your music for seasonal times, such as Christmas it's a great way to relate with callers during the season, but make sure you change it to something different after Christmas Day! The last thing people want to hear when calling a business is Christmas music outside of the season.

Royalty free hold music is very cost effective. If you don't have a managed system you can pay a one-time fee for a new piece of music that is perfect for your audience. You can choose the most suitable style/genre of music, and it's encoded, ready for use in your system for you to choose.

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