

Music & Message On Hold Guide

How to use music and messages
on hold to build a better business.



Human to human.

It's still our favorite way of interacting with a brand.

With our expertise in caller experience technology and content, Easy On Hold® is here to help you shape those interactions into meaningful, memorable experiences.

Welcome

NICE TO MEET YOU

Since inception, Easy On Hold® has focused on innovation in an industry that had become stale.

We have replaced repetitive, unimaginative phone-on-hold messages with dynamically generated content. Our cutting-edge software is designed to enhance customer experiences, making interactions more seamless and engaging.

We are leveraging advanced artificial intelligence to create convenient text-to-speech solutions that sound remarkably lifelike and natural.

Additionally, we have made significant investments in new music and established strategic partnerships with top music and licensing organizations.

These innovations empower businesses and contact centers, helping them operate with cutting-edge efficiency and success.

I invite you to explore all the ways our team of **music on hold experts™** can help your business thrive.



Julie Brown, CEO



P.S.: Look for this icon to find links to online articles with more helpful information!

<https://easonhold.com>

+1 269-342-4653

support@easonhold.com

In this guide

“Companies really don’t give that much thought to what we listen to as we wait. They should start paying more attention,” the Wall Street Journal implored in June of 2024. The article, ‘Hold Music Is Annoying. It Doesn’t Have To Be That Way’ featured quotes and concepts from the founder of Easy On Hold®. We can help.

The telephone is still your customers’ preferred way to reach you, and your music on hold messages can do much more than simply fill the silence.

In this guide we’ll get you started on a strategy, provide content options and help you begin to shape a solution that fits your brand and your callers.



Customer Experience

Your music and message on hold strategy is a crucial element of your overall **customer experience**. It serves as a significant touchpoint in the customer journey. Step one is to understand your callers with the goal of improving their experience.



Music & Sound

Music is powerful! It can calm frustrated callers waiting on hold. Or, as a marketing tool, it can enhance a promotional, informational, or branding message. Discover the best ways to use music and sound to win over those impatient callers.



Words & Voices

The voices we hear can be very influential. The words behind the voice can be transformational. In this section we explore ideas for making callers happy. You can say a lot in just 30 seconds.



How It Works

Navigating the complexities of phone systems and communications platforms, such as UCaaS, can be challenging, especially when it comes to handling on-hold audio. There is no single standard for integrating music and messages on hold. Our experts are here to guide you through the various options available.



Auto Attendant/IVR

The efficiency of having your phones answered by an automated attendant or IVR (interactive voice response) system is attractive. After all, it is cost effective, but irrelevant options, long menus, and having to enter information more than once can reflect poorly on your company. Explore some options with us.



Learn how to take your “on-hold” to the next level:

<https://easyonhold.com/blog/your-call-is-not-important-to-us-please-hold/>



Customer Experience

How important is customer experience?

Customers who are loyal to your brand give you a competitive edge. They lower your marketing costs and always improve sales over time.

THE FIRST STEP

But before customers make you their preferred choice, they must enjoy consistent, repeated positive experiences with your brand. That's why the first step in developing an effective music and message on hold plan is to embrace the importance of the phone queue as a key component of your overall customer experience blueprint.

THE PHONE AS A FRICTION POINT

In a recent client meeting, an Easy On Hold® customer said, "I think I speak for all of humanity when I

say I do not like being on hold!" We laughed because it's so obvious and true. Yet even the biggest brands with the smartest marketing teams leave their treasured customers on hold, listening to a meaningless, repetitive music file.

When you consider why customers call, and anticipate their questions and objectives, you'll be on your way to developing a better customer experience.



Learn more about customer experience:
<https://easynhold.com/blog/improve-customer-experience-2023-report/>

Customer Experience Stats

78%

of customers who interact with chatbots say that they end up needing to connect with a human agent anyway (Zendesk study)

61%

of your customers would switch brands after ONE bad experience (PwC study)

85%

of American customers will recommend a company whose service they rate as "very good" (Qualtrix)



I think I speak for all of humanity when I say I do not like being on hold! — Easy On Hold® Customer



Music & Sound

Do you have a **sound strategy**?

“You have an audio identity—whether you are managing it or not,” say the authors of the book *Audio Branding, Using Sound To Build Your Brand**. What is your brand’s audio identity?

THE AUDIO OPPORTUNITY

Audio is a big part of our daily digital lives. We chat with Siri and Alexa, choose ringtones, and create playlists as our personal soundtracks. For businesses, audio offers a chance to grab attention and build customer loyalty.

SAY NO TO DEFAULT HOLD MUSIC

The phone is still the most popular way for customers to contact you. However, most calls involve waiting on hold. This is your

opportunity to stand out. Use music and voice to establish or reinforce your brand. If you play your phone system’s default hold music, you run the risk of being associated with other companies using that same music.

THE MUSICAL SHAPE OF YOUR BRAND

Just as an artist uses different colors and techniques to create a unique visual logo for your brand, musical genres, instruments, tempos, and melodies to craft distinctive sounds and evoke specific emotions. Each element of music is a different “color” or “brushstroke” that contributes to the overall picture.



Book: *Audio Branding*

*<https://www.amazon.com/Audio-Branding-Using-Sound-Build/dp/0749478578>

Music Options

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Background music tracks with no singing, in a variety of tempos, styles, and instrumentation licensed for use on telephone systems. 188,000 licensed songs from Universal Production Music Libraries, including 11 great-sounding holiday music genres.

STREAMING MUSIC BY THE ORIGINAL ARTISTS

Easy On Hold® offers a legal way to stream hit music on your hold queue, similar to your personal music service. We provide licensed music streams for various telephone systems and platforms, available only as a live stream due to licensing requirements.

LICENSED RE-RECORDS OF POPULAR SONGS

These sound-alike versions of previously released hit songs can be distributed to phone systems in a file format. Original artist recordings require streaming, but these tracks sound true and can be used in various file formats.



**You have an audio identity—
whether you’re managing it or not.**

— Laurence Minsky, Colleen Fahey, authors of *Audio Branding*



Words & Voices

Never underestimate the power of the **human voice**.

Music on hold reassures callers that their connection is active during wait times. The choice of music can enhance brand identity, and incorporating voice messages can provide additional benefits. Research indicates that messages on hold can reduce hang-ups by up to 75%. Since customers call to speak with a human, it makes sense to engage them with informative messages while they wait.

VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Voice-on-hold recordings are recommended because phones are designed to prioritize voice and minimize noise. Since music isn't classified as voice, phones often suppress it, resulting in an "other-worldly" sound.



AI Text-To-Speech

<https://learn.easyonhold.com/knowledge-base/ai-voice-text-to-speech-ivr/>

QUICK MESSAGE ON HOLD TIPS

Be brief. Concise on-hold messages show callers that their time is valued.

Avoid clichés like 'your call is important.' There's no need to remind callers they're on hold.

Provide information callers can use. After all, when callers are being helped, they don't hang up.

Don't forget a call-to-action with a sense of urgency.



Voice Options

STAFF VOICES

In-house human voice talent is included in many standard Easy On Hold plans. There's no substitute for a real person on a microphone to capture the nuances that bring your brand to life. You can choose between male and female voices, or alternate for added variety. Plus, with our staff talent, all messages are recorded within three days or less for your convenience.

AI TEXT-TO-SPEECH

Easy On Hold® now offers a natural-sounding AI voice prompt generator to help businesses instantly update phone prompts and greetings. The available voices include clones of our in-house talent, ensuring consistent voice quality across your phone system. Simply type the text and quickly generate three versions. Select one and download the recording in any audio format.

CONSISTENT VOICE

Using a consistent voice for both automated attendants (IVR) and hold messages reassures callers that they haven't been transferred to a different system. This practice creates a cohesive and seamless experience.

As an added convenience, we have AI clones of our in-house talent for rapid deployment.



Through our voices, we create nuances of meaning, convey our emotions, and find the secret to communicating our executive presence. — Harvard Business Review



How It Works

We can **make this happen!**

Let's look under the hood and understand what it takes to build a better caller experience.

YOUR VOICE PLATFORM

Voice platform? You mean phone system? Yes. Over the last decade, businesses have transitioned from physical phone equipment to internet-based systems and unified communications platforms. Whether your system is simple or complex, Easy On Hold® collaborates with you to find the perfect solution.

ON-PREMISE SYSTEM

If all of your phone equipment is at your business location (site or premise) you can likely use an audio player like our [2-Channel Business Audio System](#). The player can take in audio files or play your Easy On Hold® stream.

OFF-PREMISE (HOSTED)

If your phones connect to the internet (VoIP), you are on a hosted platform. Popular platforms like Nextiva, TPX, FreePBX, FreeSWITCH, Bicom Systems, Vodia, and Voneto can play your Easy On Hold® stream. However, platforms such as Ring Central, 8X8, 3CX, and Five9 require you to upload audio files to their cloud-based systems. Contact Easy On Hold® to determine whether you can use a stream or need to upload audio files.

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM

Larger organizations and contact centers operate integrated voice and data platforms for customer service. Unified (UCaaS) platforms tie together voice (phone), chat, texts, email, etc. Easy On Hold® can stream your hold music and messaging into the large Cisco, Avaya, Genesys, Broadsoft, Mitel, and Microsoft Teams Phone platforms. Easy On Hold® is a Cisco, Avaya, Genesys and Microsoft Partner.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR COMMUNICATIONS PROVIDER

Can I play a live audio stream for music on hold? Streams play content on a schedule by day, week, month, etc. You never have to change files.

If my hold music can only be an uploaded file, will it play from the beginning of the file every time a caller is placed on hold? If the answer is yes, learn how Easy On Hold® file management tools can help you avoid excessive repetition.



New phone platform? Read this first!

<https://easonhold.com/blog/new-business-phone-system-read-this-first/>



We love working with Easy On Hold®!
They are extremely helpful with all our questions. — Easy On Hold Customer Sheri Potter



IVR/Auto-Attendant

Your front door: the inbound voice channel.

The term inbound voice channel refers to the typical customer phone interaction. Your customer needs help with sales, service, support, etc.

WHAT IS AUTO-ATTENDANT?

An auto-attendant is a recording that greets callers and directs their calls to the appropriate destination. It serves as the first point of contact for incoming calls, eliminating the need for a human operator.

AUTO-ATTENDANT TIPS

Use a Professional Voice: Opt for professional voice services, like those provided by Easy On Hold®. High-quality sound and professionalism make a noticeable difference to callers.

Prioritize Common Choices: Place the most frequently selected option first to minimize caller wait times through irrelevant choices.

Clearly Identify Your Company: Always state your company, location, or department clearly. This simple step is often overlooked but crucial for effective communication.

WHAT IS IVR?

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) is a technology that allows a computer to interact with humans through voice commands or tones from a telephone keypad. IVR systems can be complex, incorporating voice recognition technology and advanced call routing.

IVR TIPS

Reduce Caller Anxiety: Use professional voices to make the experience smoother. Easy On Hold® voice-over artists are real people who understand the frustrations of navigating IVR systems. Conveniently update greetings using Easy On Hold's® AI text-to-speech generator, which offers voices that match your human recordings.

Keep Menus Short: Limit menu options to a total of 20-30 seconds to avoid overwhelming callers.

Offer Self-Help Options: Provide alternatives like web, social media, or chat resources for self-service.



Learn more about Auto-Attendant and IVR best practices:

<https://easonhold.com/blog/auto-attendant-ivr-on-hold-messages/>



How callers experience the IVR will have a bearing on all kinds of critical outcomes, like whether they use it again, whether they stay loyal, and what they say about your brand in conversation and on social media.

Let's meet on Teams!

Contact Business Development Director Amy O'Boyle: amy.oboyle@easonhold.com

