

# Evaluating a Virtual Reception Service?

## THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

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The right virtual reception service will set your business apart, create connections with your clients, and give you peace of mind. Start with these questions to ensure you hire the best virtual receptionist for your business.

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### 1 Will 100% of my calls be answered live during business hours?

Many virtual receptionist services only answer live 70-80% of the time, often taking up to a minute to answer the call, or sending callers straight to an automated greeting. To ensure each of your callers receive a great experience, ask if each call will be answered live by a receptionist during your business hours, and the average ring time for each call.

### 2 Where are your receptionists based?

When evaluating virtual reception services, think about your average customer. Where are they calling from? What is their primary language? Receptionists with similar accents and speech patterns to your callers are better able to express empathy, understand colloquialisms, and build connections—leaving current and potential customers with a great impression of your business.



### 3 Does your service include these features?

Answering calls is only one small piece of what a virtual receptionist can offer your company. Some key features you will want to evaluate include:

**Live Transfers:** The virtual receptionist is able to transfer calls to you wherever and whenever you prefer—your office, your cell, or your home.

**Custom Greeting:** Personalizing a greeting is the perfect opportunity to connect with callers right off the bat.

**Call Preferences:** New clients, current customers, family members, solicitors—each of your callers has a different need, and you'll want a virtual receptionist that adapts to provide the best experience for each, with special call instructions determined by you.

**FAQs:** Can the receptionist answer basic questions about your business (hours, location, etc.)? Delegating this responsibility saves you valuable time each day, time that can be spent focusing on clients.

**Messages:** What information can be collected? Can messages be sent to you via email and/or text? How quickly are messages sent? Ruby can collect any information you'd like, including a short intake form, and send written messages to you by email, text, or both. Voice messages are delivered to your email as a .wav file, and you can access your message history at any time via our iPhone and Android mobile apps.

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## How are the receptionists monitored?

Unhappy receptionists equal unhappy customers. What steps does the company take to ensure call quality? For example, are receptionists located in a central facility, or working from home? Home-based receptionists are not only isolated, your callers risk hearing background noise—dogs barking, kids yelling, etc. If receptionists are located in one facility, how is call quality monitored? Ruby Receptionists are divided into groups, each with a leader who walks the floor to monitor quality, as well as meets with receptionists individually to discuss performance.

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## How will I be charged for services?

There are a number of ways virtual reception companies charge for service; some charge per minute, while others charge a flat fee for a pre-set number of minutes. When evaluating virtual receptionists, think about how you're planning to use the service. Will all your calls be routed through the virtual receptionist, or only those callers who select the "speak with operator" option? How often you plan to forward calls to the virtual receptionist will impact the number of minutes you use. Beware of hidden fees, such as:

- ➔ Live transfers, or call patching
- ➔ "Talk-time fees," or being billed for the time you are speaking with the caller
- ➔ Long-distance calls
- ➔ Taking messages
- ➔ Adding employees to the account

Be sure you're only paying for when you actually use the service.

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## Are you able to provide references?

Ask the companies you are evaluating for references from current clients that are of a similar size or industry to your business. Not only will speaking with current clients give you an opportunity to learn more about the service, you'll be able to experience it firsthand when you call their office.

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## Is there a money back guarantee?

Ask the virtual reception services you are considering if you are able to use the product risk free for a certain period of time. A money back guarantee allows you to become familiar with each company's features; if you're not happy, you get your money back! For example, Ruby provides a 21-day money back guarantee to give our clients peace of mind.

In addition to the asking about a guarantee, call the company's main line. Is the person you reach pleasant and upbeat, or mumbling and monotone? Maybe you don't get a live person at all. Chances are if you aren't impressed with how the company answers their own phones, you won't be pleased with how they will answer yours.

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## How will I be supported?

You hire a company not only for the service they provide, but the expertise they bring to the table. When assessing virtual reception companies, the setup process can provide insights into their service. A few questions to consider:

- ➔ Will a staff member be available to walk you through the process and help customize features to best fit your company's needs?
- ➔ How does the company work with telephone or VoIP providers? Are they willing to provide assistance when communicating with the phone provider?
- ➔ What is the support process should you have questions or concerns?

Hire a virtual reception company that understands the different telephone systems and setups, so they can assist you when establishing service.



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### How can I update my call preferences?

When you're on the go, you'll want to be able to update your call instructions quickly and easily. Ask each provider:

- ➔ Is there a desktop and/or mobile app available?
- ➔ If I'm temporarily unavailable, how can I update my call instructions so the virtual receptionist always knows the best time and method to reach me?

Ruby clients can update their preferences online, or through our iPhone and Android applications. Plus, our support team is only one phone call away!

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### What is your cancellation process?

Stay with a provider because you want to, not because you have to. When evaluating reception services, ask about the cancellation process, including if you are allowed to keep your phone number if you discontinue service. Not being able to take your number with you can mean costly changes to your website, business cards, and other public facing materials.

Ask each provider about contract length and cancellation fees. Long-term contracts can lock you into a costly relationship, particularly if your minutes vary from month to month.

Ask these 10 questions and you're sure to hire a virtual receptionist you can trust to deliver a great first impression of your business.



## Learn More

Interested to learn more about how a virtual receptionist can help your business thrive?

Check out our [infographic](#), or visit [www.callruby.com](http://www.callruby.com) to learn more about our service.

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- Will 100% of my calls be answered live during business hours?
- Does your service include these features?:
  - Live transfers
  - Custom greetings
  - Call Preferences
  - FAQs
  - Messages
- How will I be charged for services?
  - Fees for: live transfers (i.e. call patching), talk-time, long-distance calls, taking messages, adding employees to the account
- Is there a money back guarantee?
- How can I update my call preferences?
  - Desktop and/or mobile app
- Where are your receptionists located?
- How are the receptionist's monitored?
  - Do receptionists work from home?
  - How do you ensure quality?
- How will I be supported?
  - Someone to walk you through the process and help customize features
  - Who do I contact for questions or concerns?
- Are you able to provide references?
- What is your cancellation process?

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## NOTES: