



MEMORANDUM

To: Community Relations Committee

From: Scott Gargano, Customer Service Systems Manager

Date: August 7, 2019

Subject: Request to Test Automated Attendant with Main Telephone Number

Automated Attendant

With the recent request of residents, businesses, committees and the Board of Trustees to move to a monthly water bill, the Customer Service and Water Billing departments will need to rearrange its staff in order to meet the demands of incoming inquiries. An Auto Attendant will allow the staff to become more flexible and efficient in their current position which will help meet said demands.

A study performed from 1/8/19 to 2/1/19 tracked every call that came in on the main line and where the call was routed. We received 1075 calls to our main line and of those calls 870 were directly transferred. That means that someone called 630-620-5700 and when we answered, they asked to be transferred to Public Work, Community Development or another department.

An auto attendant will allow residents that know which department they need to speak with to route directly to that department without having to discuss their call with multiple people. It will allow for an updated front end message in response to an event such as a storm or pipe break. The auto attendant can be completely disabled to be able to respond to a hot topic similar to the recent bike race.

Other municipalities that use auto attendants include Woodridge, Clarendon Hills, Oakbrook Terrace, Glen Ellyn, Naperville, Wood Dale, Downers Grove.

We are seeking to test an Auto Attendant for 60 days from November 1, 2019 through December 2019. We will report the results of the test to the Community Relations Committee. If the system works well and adoption for incoming calls goes smoothly, we will then request to implement the Auto Attendant permanently after the test.

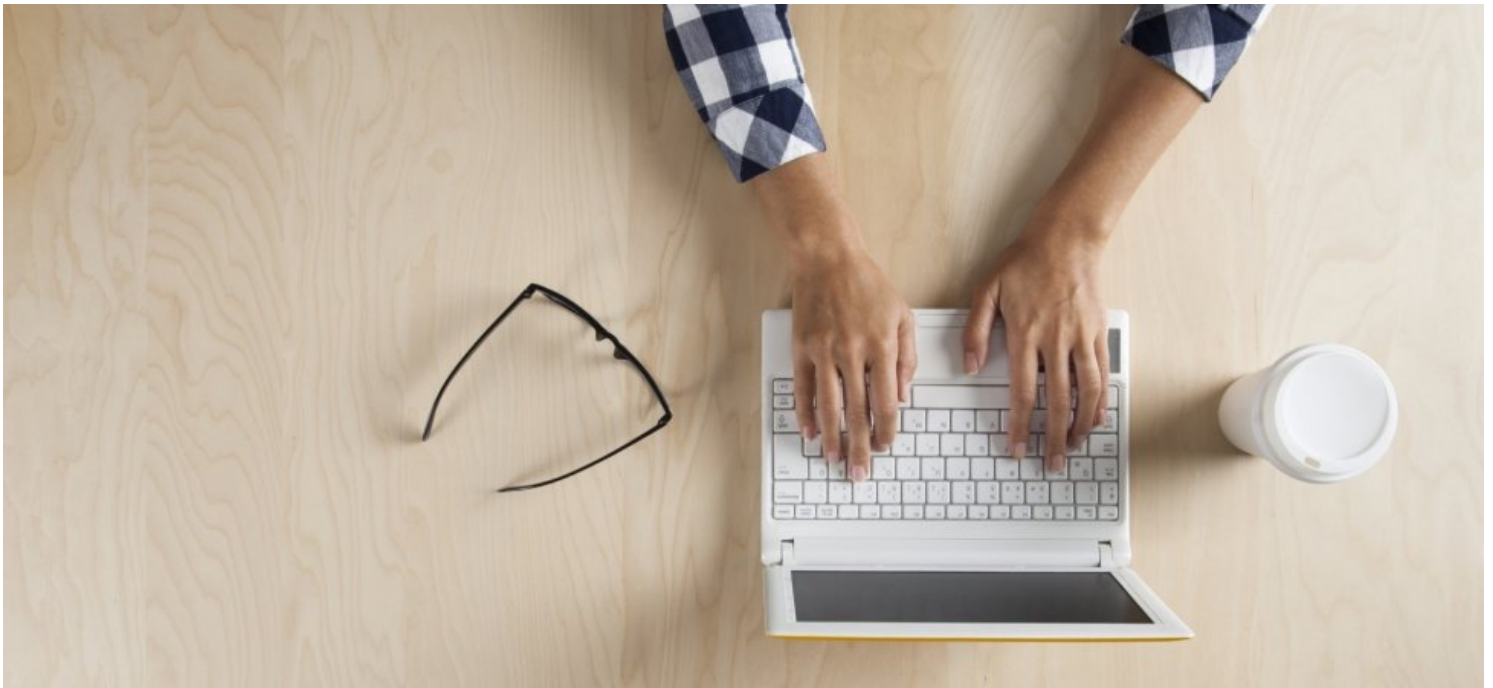
We will use our current phone systems auto attendant at no additional cost to the Village.

Why Millennials Don't Like to Make Phone Calls

To this age group, there's a reason making a call is a bit like traveling by train.

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This isn't one of those [Millennial](#)-bashing articles, a diatribe against an entire generation. The truth is, the age group usually defined as anyone between 18-34 in the year 2015 is hard to pin down. Yet, the one characteristic they all seem to share is a pure hatred of making phone calls. To anyone. At anytime. For any reason.

Which is a bit ironic, because Millennials are constantly using their phone.

The problem started around 2010.

That's the year WhatsApp emerged as one of the most common messaging apps. The very next year, in 2011, was when Facebook launched the Messenger app and Snapchat debuted. Suddenly there was a way to communicate with people without having to talk.

Why do they avoid making calls?

The biggest reason has to do with time. We might not like to admit this, but as we get older, we stop forming as many new brain cells. (The myth is that we lose a lot of brain cells each day.) Millennials think faster than anyone older than 34. Millennials process information faster than most of us. They don't have time for outdated technology.

In my informal survey, Millennials said they want to communicate faster and get better answers. To me, it's the difference between asking a question on Twitter or trying to find an expert on a topic. Maybe the quality of the answer is different, but you can post on Twitter in about five second. (Believe me, I've tested this.) When I asked a question about parking in Las Vegas recently, about three people answered within seconds.

Making a call is not that efficient, and it will keep getting less and less efficient in the next few years. Chatbots became a major trend last year, allowing you to order a pizza by talking to a bot instead of a person. AI is improving so much that, in a few months, one smart home company plans to adjust the lights, the heating, and the locks for you automatically. You don't need to use an app. In the near future, robotic "butlers" will talk to us about recipes and travel plans.

This might all sound too futuristic, but Millennials already know the benefits of digital communication better than some of us. They want results, not a lengthy discussion.

Many of the Millennials I know will set the phone down in person when there is an interesting conversation taking place (and then group up in circles to text if they are bored). But making a call is a bit like sending a telegram or jumping on the train to take a vacation. For most Millennials, the goal is to place an order for a pizza, or book a trip on Expedia, or resolve a cell phone dispute. All of those things take time, and if you use the phone, they take even more time.

Another reason has to do with conflict avoidance. In a phone call, there's a chance the person on the other end of the line might have an opinion. With messaging and other forms of digital communication, you say what you need to say and move on. It's harder to have a conflict--at least one that causes stress--by text.

Of course, the phone is not dying. There are entire industries that employ younger people to make phone calls and answer customer service issues. You can't really sell a product by text, and complex issues (like an unusual pizza order) require conversation.