

Open line *to* business

> If there is no way your customers can contact you, it is bye-bye money

HIYA, dear. Just the other day, I was driving to work when I heard a grinding sound. I got down to inspect my tyres and sure enough, one of them was punctured.

The good news was that there was a tyre shop just across the road. The bad news was that it was closed. It was already 10 in the morning and the other shops in the row were bustling with activity.

A check with the neighbours revealed that the tyre shop opens at irregular times. It could be 10-something or even 11 before the owner turns up. I waited for half an hour before getting alternative help.

I rang home for the telephone number of the workshop I'd recently sent my car to. The dispatched mechanic arrived in five minutes.

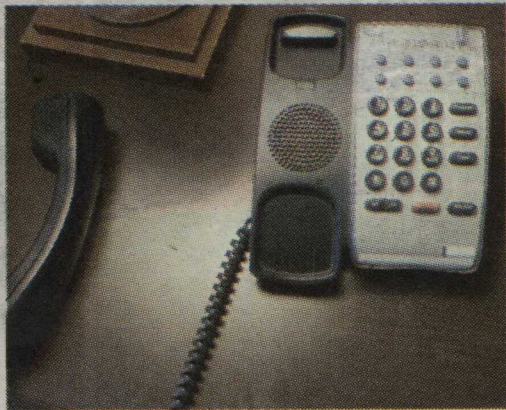
The tardy tyre shop operator finally showed up at 10.45am. As far as I was concerned, there was no worm for this late bird. If he had left a telephone number on his door, I would've rang him and he could've gotten my patronage.

Telephone numbers are one of the lifelines of business. If there is no way your customers can contact you, it is bye-bye money.

This reminds me of another incident. I had gone to a boutique near my workplace to buy an outfit for a function. I had seen something I like in the window display and was desperate to plonk down cold hard cash on the counter.

When I arrived at the boutique, I pressed the doorbell and waited. No response. I peered in through the glass door. Nobody in sight. It was a corner lot, so I walked to the back door.

Perhaps the sales person was in the toilet



and couldn't hear the bell. "Hello?! Anybody in there?" I yelled.

I had half-expected to hear: "Help! I can't move. My foot is stuck in the toilet bowl." But my query was greeted with silence.

I decided to grab lunch while waiting, hoping the shop would reopen when I return. It didn't. Obviously, the sales personnel didn't expect any customers to turn up during lunch time. As far as I was concerned, no telephone number, no show, no business.

One more thing, dear. After you've displayed your contact number, please do answer when the call comes in. If you miss it, return the call.

There is nothing more infuriating to customers than having their calls go unanswered. They would think that you are not interested in them and they will take their business somewhere else.

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