Phone Tree Wizard

Phone Tree Wizard is a computerized automated dialing system. You record a single message for your members and Phone Tree Wizard will dial all the numbers in your calling list and attempt to deliver your recorded message. It doesn't matter if you have 50, 150, or 5,000 numbers to call, they will all get called. More than 90% will hear your message exactly as you recorded it either personally or on their answering machine or voicemail.

If you have a list of 100 numbers, you can deliver your message to more than 90% of them in a couple minutes for about $6.00.

There will always be a few who don't get the message. With a little understanding of how computerized dialers work and some cooperation from those who truly want to receive your messages, we can come close to 100% delivery.

How the Phone Tree Wizard Computerized Dialer Works (Technical)

While the programming for dialing thousands of numbers is very complex, the logic used in message delivery is straightforward.

The system dials a number and waits for the phone to be picked up.

After detecting a pick-up, it waits for sound, which we assume will be either a person or answering machine.

After detecting sound, it waits for silence, indicating the person is finished saying hello or the answering machine has finished its outgoing greeting. After first hearing sound and then detecting silence the system pauses to be sure you are finished before starting delivery of your message.

So, if you answer the phone and say "hello" there will be a pause and then your message will begin. The pause is necessary as you'll see.

If an answering machine picks up and the outgoing greeting is "hi, thank you for calling Jack and Sharon…..sorry we can't take your call right now…..but please leave a message and we'll call you back as soon as we can" the computer assumes, because of the message length, it's an answering machine or voicemail and pauses a bit longer to allow for the answering system to prepare to accept the message, send out a "beep", and switch to record mode.

If we only want to deliver calls to a live person, there would be no need to pause before starting the message. But starting the message immediately for an answering machine would mean that most, if not all, of your message would be played while the answering machine is making its greeting announcement. It's because of answering machines and voicemail that we need the pause.

How to Fool the Phone Tree Wizard Dialer

If you answer your phone in a noisy environment, the Phone Tree Wizard will be unable to detect silence so it will not deliver your message. Loud television, radio or stereo, children having fun or a party going on are typical. You might be running a blender or other electrical appliance. There could be loud static. All of these situations will prevent starting your message.

If your answering machine has a long pause before starting the outgoing greeting, it will fool Phone Tree Wizard into starting your message too soon. In this case the beginning of your message will not be recorded. The same is true if there are long pauses during the outgoing greeting. Also, some greetings are just far too long and the Phone Tree Wizard moves on to the next call. All of these problems can be corrected if the answering machine greeting is recorded properly.

You have a Tele-zapper, or similar product, installed. These devices answer your telephone and deliver a tri tone telephone company beep. This beep most often precedes an announcement that the phone number has been disconnected. A computerized telemarketing call will move on immediately. Phone Tree Wizard will not be fooled by most of these devices, but some may prevent you from getting your message.

A service offered by many telephone companies may cause a problem for Phone Tree Wizard. Bell South calls this service Privacy Director. It goes by various names from other phone companies, but works like this:

A call comes to your phone with a caller ID of "unknown caller" "out of area" "private number" or is from a toll free number. Your Privacy Director answers the call and invites the caller to announce their name. Your phone does not ring. After receiving a response from the caller, Privacy Director calls your number and announces the call and plays the caller's name to you. You then have the option to press one to take the call, press two to send a "we don't take telemarketing calls" recording or three to not answer the call. When you get the call, your caller ID shows the Privacy Director's phone number, not the real caller's phone number. Phone Tree Wizard calls are sent out with the name PHONE TREE WIZ and the telephone number 704-821-3348. So, theoretically, we should never be affected by a Privacy Director type of service. But, because of the way local phone companies handle calls, some of our calls are labeled "out of area". There is nothing we can do about that. It's random and totally at the mercy of the local carrier. If you are not getting calls from Phone Tree Wizard, ask your local phone company if they have any call screening device on your line. Find out how it works and decide if you want to de-activate it, which usually involves pressing a few keys on your telephone pad.

Cell phones seem to work fine if you have a strong signal and you answer the call. Cell phone voicemail is notoriously difficult for Phone Tree Wizard because of the numerous options and pauses between sentences. Also, cell phone calls tend to be noisy and Phone Tree Wizard never detects the silence it requires before starting your message.

If you answer the phone and say "hello", "hello", "hello" Phone Tree Wizard will not detect silence and thus not deliver your message.

Less Technical Examples

A call intended for one household member gets answered by a different household member. The person who answered the call forgets to tell the person for whom the call was intend. One spouse says "I didn't get the call". Perhaps the other spouse did or even one of the children. If the call was left on an answering machine, one spouse may have listened to the message and deleted it. These situations are common.

The answering machine may be set for too many rings. Four rings is an ideal setting, but six rings works too. More rings than that and Phone Tree Wizard treats it as an unanswered call.

Some people don't have answering machines and others have machines that need to be replaced because they do not function properly. As inexpensive as they are, why not get a new one.

Some people have fax machines in their home and when the fax function is active your message will not be received.

The number you are sending your messages to may not be a proper number. Dialing lists have to be maintained regularly.

Didn't Get Your Message? Do this! (The nearly 100% solution)

We have tweaked our system to deliver as many complete messages as possible. Hopefully, this document will help some of you tweak things at your end too. But, we understand that no matter what, there will be times you will not get your message.

We have a phone number you can call to hear your most recent message. So if you see the caller ID number that tells you we called, but you missed the message FOR WHATEVER REASON just dial the replay line and listen to it. The replay number is the same as our caller ID number, but you will need your group's extension number to access it.

Using this free service will bring message delivery to over 98% based on our experience. There's really no reason it should not be 100%.

Finally

The Phone Tree Wizard will deliver your messages to more people consistently than email, the postal service or any human phone tree and do it for a tiny fraction of the cost and effort. As we've shown, there are ways to get your Phone Tree Message communicated with more than 98% effectiveness.

Celebrate this wonderful communication tool and salute your leaders who are using it to communicate timely and accurate information to all.