

MANAGING YOUR 1-800 TOLL-FREE SERVICE

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Aside from cost, or the fact that having an outside answer your business calls, there are some smart rules regarding 800-lines and how you should handle them.

Keep 800 lines in-house when the product is technical or when consumers are likely to ask a lot of questions.

Only hire a service bureau when the volume of calls is moderate, less, or comes in cyclical pattern. Personnel and space needs for an in-house operation may be greater than what your business can currently afford. One advantage of using an independent service bureau to handle your calls is that it is a fixed cost tied in to the call itself. Unlike having an operator sit in the office 8 hours a day, the amount you pay a service bureau is limited only to the number of calls they handle for you.

If you were to establish an in-house operation, your phone clerks should use a video-terminal that displays information about the product as well as the customer.

Your 800-lines should be staffed until 5pm Pacific Time, three hours later than many companies in the East Coast have closed. Also, think of offering promotional call days to help boost sales and direct sales during certain hours or certain days of the week.