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Less than a quarter (24 per cent) of Americans who use a public accountant are satisfied with the way their accounting firms handle their phone calls, according to a new study.

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“Companies who provide a top-class call handling experience can distinguish themselves from the competition and create new positive perceptions of waiting on hold. But the research results suggest accountants still have a lot of work to do in this respect.

“There is perhaps a tendency among companies to focus their attention and budgets on visual marketing and internet presence but the telephone remains a crucial aspect of branding, marketing and sales.”

The study, which is the largest of its kind conducted in America, also discovered males are more satisfied (26 per cent) with the way accountants answer their calls, compared to their female counterparts (23 per cent).

In terms of location, people in the Northeast were found to be the happiest with their telephone experience (27 per cent), closely followed by the South (26 per cent), the Midwest (24 per cent) and the West (21 per cent).

Williamson added: “Regardless of demographic breakdowns, the statistics demonstrate a gap between current perceptions and desired standards across the board.

“Establishing a clear tone and procedure for answering the phone represents a good start but true best practice can be achieved by implementing tools such as on-hold marketing – bespoke voice and music messages that are played on hold – to improve service and deliver a congruent brand across all touchpoints with customers.”

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