

Fun with Phone Solicitors: 50 Ways to Get Even

Robert Harris

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Robert Harris : Fun with Phone Solicitors: 50 Ways to Get Even before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fun with Phone Solicitors: 50 Ways to Get Even:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy J P LandahlI was very impressed with this book. Thanks.0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. DON'T BOTHERBy ToymakerAfter becoming very frustrated with all of the unsolicited phone calls I receive that I can't stop even with the national "no call list", I bought this book hoping to find some messages I could put on my phone that would at least give the callers a chuckle. Unfortunately I found these options in this book not only not useful, but also not very funny. I've found much better ones just searching on the internet.Fun with Phone Solicitors: 50 Ways to Get Even7 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Scripts and Directions for Aspiring Actresses and Actors!By Donald MitchellMr. Harris has taken something unpleasant, receiving an unsolicited telephone call to sell something, and turned it into a source of humor and acting practice! As I read this book, I found myself laughing out loud on almost every example. These are very funny suggestions!"A solicitor! Yuk! What to do, what to do? Be polite? Get angry? Meekly hang up?" "No, no, no! Be creative and enjoy yourself!"If you are like me, you would probably never do any of these things, but just reading about them is a lot of fun. The 50 funny ideas are rated by how difficult they are to implement. You also get tips for variations, ways to have even more fun, and extra credit suggestions. At the end of the book is also some practical advice for steps you can take to stop getting these telephone calls in the first place.Reading these scripts made me feel like I was watching a vaudeville act.In many of the variations, you pretend to be someone you are not, such as . . . the order line for a telephone sex service, the telephone operator at a big company, an uncaring 14 year-old, someone who sssstttuuuuutttttteerrrrrrsssss!!!!, a hard of hearing person (what did you say?), a security person (what's your password?), or someone who doesn't get it.The more hilarious ones for me were the ones where you pretend to be the music on hold, recorded messages from the telephone company, and your own answering machine!"Although not 100 percent reliable, they are humanity's best hope for combating obnoxious phone solicitors."I could see turning this into a parlor game for parties. One person could pretend to be the obnoxious solicitor, and the other person could practice describing how the person being called had just dropped dead. I wonder . . . do you think Regis is available to do this

on television? After you enjoy lots of good laughs with this fine humor book, I suggest that you do think about what defenses you might use that you feel comfortable with. I find having the Internet on our main phone line at key times does a fine job of blocking out these calls, easily and effortlessly! Where else could a frustrating occurrence be a source of invention and humor for you? How about filling out humorous replies to solicitations from direct mail companies? Or leaving ridiculous messages when the receptionist at the doctor's office puts you on hold for 20 minutes? Then, turn it around. How could you make the solicitations that you need to make fun for the people who receive the solicitations (whether for charity, volunteer work, or whatever)?

In the bestselling tradition of "Letters From a Nut" comes a hilarious guide to dealing with one of life's top annoyances: the phone solicitor.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. **The Receptionist Ruse TECHNIQUE:** Elude the solicitor's pitch by transferring him via an imaginary inter-office telephone system. **EXAMPLE SOLICITOR:** "Good afternoon-I'm calling for Ms. Beale." **FUNSTER:** "One moment please-I'll connect you." [Press two buttons in sequence on your phone.] After about five seconds, expect the solicitor to say something like "Hello-is anyone there?" Ask for whom he's holding, then press the phone buttons again. At this point the game will probably be over. It's highly unlikely that it will go to a third round-but one can dream, can't one? **The Middleman Misdirection TECHNIQUE:** Disrupt the solicitor's rhythm by relaying his offer to an imaginary friend in another room. **EXAMPLE SOLICITOR:** "Good evening-have I reached Mrs. McCormick?" **FUNSTER:** "Yes." **S:** "I represent the Acme Hotel and Spa in Orlando, and I-" **F:** [Very loudly aside] "HUH?...[Pause]...HE SAYS HE REPRESENTS THE ACME HOTEL AND SPA!" **S:** "I'm calling tonight to make you a special offer." **F:** "HE SAYS HE'S CALLING TO MAKE A SPECIAL OFFER!" **S:** "Uh, well, we'd like you to be our guest for a weekend, and-" **F:** "HE WANTS ME TO BE HIS GUEST FOR A WEEKEND!" **S:** "Ma'am, is this a bad time?" **F:** "HE WANTS TO KNOW IF IT'S A BAD TIME!" **S:** [Solicitor hangs up.] **BONUS POINTS:** If the solicitor refuses to give in after a few rounds, you can end the conversation by saying "I really have to go. I'm getting tired of yelling." This one will be more effective if you can get some of the facts slightly wrong as you relay them. Doing so will keep the solicitor engaged, and he'll try harder. **The Put-Down Ploy TECHNIQUE:** Avoid the solicitor by just putting the phone down and walking away. **EXAMPLE SOLICITOR:** "Good afternoon-is this Mr. Roger Davis?" **FUNSTER:** "Yes." **S:** "My name is Sally, and I'm calling-" **F:** [Quietly put the phone down and continue with your life.] **S:** [Solicitor hangs up.] At first you'll probably listen for the solicitor's attempts to get a response from you. Although this can be amusing, it really defeats the purpose of the technique. So just try to continue with what you were doing before you were so rudely interrupted. For full credit, it's essential that you get the solicitor to end the "conversation." So be sure to wait at least thirty seconds before you come back and hang up. **The Answering-Machine Antic TECHNIQUE:** Sidestep a conversation with the solicitor by simulating an answering machine greeting. **EXAMPLE SOLICITOR:** "Hello, this is Darnell with The Acme Group. May I speak with Mr. or Mrs.?" **FUNSTER:** "Hello, you've reached the Franklin residence. At the tone, please leave a brief message, and we'll get back to you." [Make a beep sound or press a button on your phone and hold it down for a couple of seconds.] **S:** [Solicitor hangs up.] Chances are good that the solicitor will hang up before you can finish. But if he does try to leave a message, cut him off after a few seconds with a beep-beep, and then hang up. **The Order-Line Obfuscation TECHNIQUE:** Dodge the solicitor's pitch by guiding her to the correct department within your organization. **EXAMPLE SOLICITOR:** "Good evening-is this, uh, Mr. Pruitt?" **FUNSTER:** "Speaking-go ahead with your order." **S:** "Uh-well, Mr. Pruitt, I'm Yvonne at Acme Business Solutions. We're conducting a survey of-" **F:** "No, no, lady-this line is for orders only. I think you want Customer Service. Do you want Customer Service?" **S:** "I'm sorry. I must have dialed the wrong number." **F:** "Yeah, like I said, this line is for orders only...." If the solicitor asks what company she's reached, make up some official-sounding name, like "Consolidated Import and Export" or "Worldwide Amalgamated." And if she tries to be difficult by requesting the Customer Service number, just give her your number with the last two digits reversed, or your number with a 1-800 in front of it. **The Teenager Transfer TECHNIQUE:** Nettle the solicitor by calling his intended victim in the manner of a typical self-absorbed fourteen-year-old. **EXAMPLE SOLICITOR:** "Hello-may I please speak with Mrs. Ruskin?" **FUNSTER:** "Hang on." [As loudly as possible] "MOMMMMM!" [Toss the phone down and walk away.] After seven or eight seconds, pick up the phone and say "Hello?" If the solicitor is still on the line, he will probably say "Yes, I was holding for Mrs. Ruskin." At this point you might feel a bit of guilt for taking advantage of the solicitor's naïveté, but do not weaken-press onward nevertheless. Yell "Mom!" at the top of your lungs once again. **The Is-Anyone-There Initiative TECHNIQUE:** Head off interaction with the solicitor by simply not being able to hear him. **EXAMPLE SOLICITOR:** "Good evening. May I speak to, uh, Mr. or Mrs. Brown?" **FUNSTER:** "Hello?" **S:** "Yes, I'm Mr. Ramirez calling from Acme-" **F:** "Hel-lo? Is anyone there?" **S:** "Yes sir, I'm calling about-" **F:** [Impatiently] "Is-any-one-there?" **S:** "Yes sir, can you hear-" **F:** [Angrily] "Now look, whoever you are, I'm not playing your little game. What's next? Heavy breathing?" **S:** [Solicitor hangs up.] To make this technique work, be sure to talk over the solicitor to give the impression that you can't hear him. And since this one probably won't last for very long, it's important to get ticked off pretty early in the encounter.

But if the solicitor does persist, you can start speculating about who the crank caller is. (For example: "Uncle Frank-is that you again? It's not funny anymore!") Copyright (c) 2001 by Robert Harris