



HOLD THAT HOLD...PLEASE!

It never fails. Whether ordering a pizza or making a doctor's appointment, I hear it almost every time. "Can I put you on hold?", they ask. Before I have a chance to even answer...I am on hold! What just happened? Was it a rhetorical question? Why even give me the option? Why not just say, "Welcome to XYZ, where we promptly put you on hold!"

Some people hate automated phone systems, but not me. I like to be informed of where I stand in any given situation. I would rather have an honest computerized voice telling me I will have to wait (and also likely telling me for approximately how long), than to encounter a real life human being who will tease me with a choice and then make the decision on my behalf in a split second. Imagine if everyone you encountered operated this way. You might be standing in line at a fast food restaurant and be asked if you'd like to try a new item on the menu they are trying to push. Before you have time to think, you're being charged for it while it stares at you from your tray. You might be at the theatre seeing a play or musical. Instead of, "Would you like to buy a program?", you get the same question followed by a hand in your wallet or purse rabidly searching for your billfold.

I guess the real aggravation is that I really don't want to hold, and businesses know that. "Can I put you on hold?" is a nice way of saying, "Do you want to hold, or just hang up and try back later?". Have you ever met anyone who wants to hold? Has anyone ever asked you if they could call you and have you put the phone down for an hour or two as a birthday present?

I just want a little more honesty, that's all. If you can't automate your phone system, at least hire enough people during peak business times to facilitate your customers and have the necessary phone equipment to handle the call volume. I think either of those are welcome alternatives to asking me if I'll hold. If not, I may be forced to simply "hold" onto my money and go elsewhere.

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