Tax Services
Industry Analysis

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SAS Knows that **Growth Depends on Availability.**

Even for established tax professionals, using voicemail to field missed calls can damage your bottom line. And for people who are just starting out, losing one prospective customer can easily become a make-or-break situation. That's why many tax professionals look to Specialty Answering Service to provide exceptional 24/7 live-operator customer support.

If you've never used a call center, or if you are using a service and want to do a side-by-side comparison, then this tax service industry analysis of a few of our valued clients will point you in the right direction.
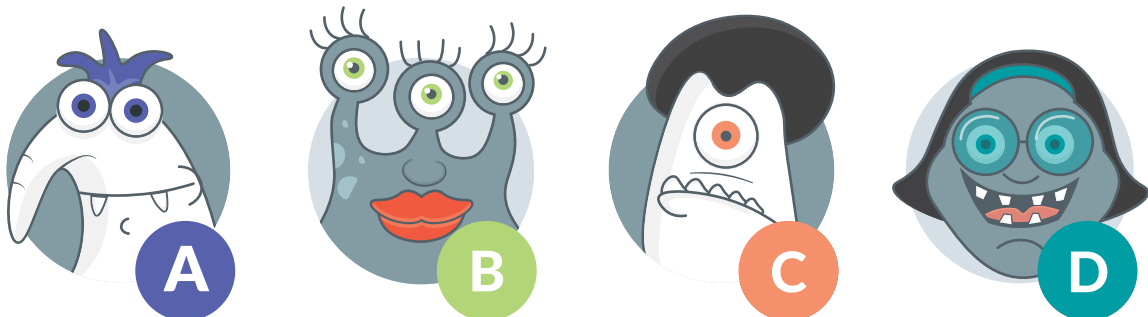
Start with **Programming Basics.**

Succinct, straightforward scripts are the key ingredient to a successful phone call. Whether you're using SAS as an answering service or virtual receptionist, guiding the operators by way of frequently asked questions or specific language to employ will ensure that calls flow smoothly for the customer and operator alike.

We've broken programming down into two parts.

Part 1

Frequently Asked Questions

Part 2

Call Handling Cross Section
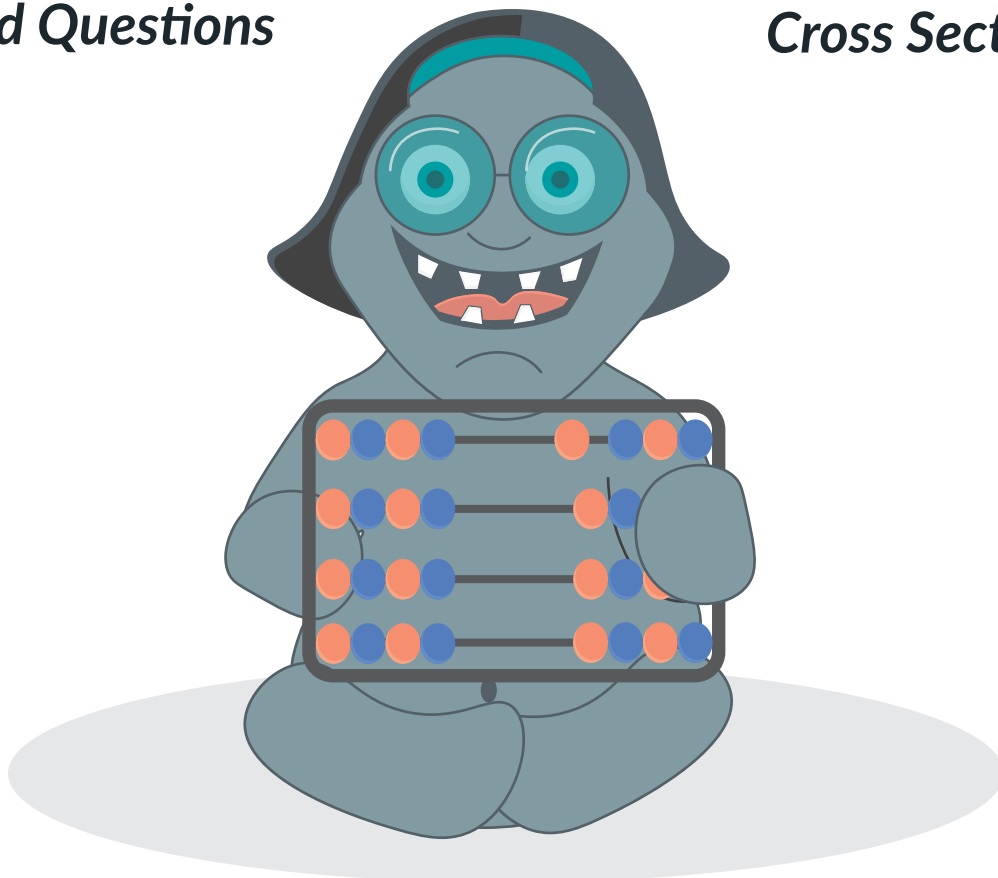
Part 1: *Frequently Asked Questions*

FAQs allow our receptionists to provide general knowledge via phone rather than take a message. The majority of accounts contain details such as location, business hours, phone number, and website. Additional questions are formatted with concise, uncomplicated language.

Here's how four of our tax service clients personalized their FAQs.

A
- What is your pricing for tax returns?
- Are there any additional fees involved?

C
- Do you offer phone consultations?
- Do you handle business and state taxes?

B
- Do you have a Tax Attorney that works for you?
- Do you offer Tax Refund Advances?

D
- Do you take walk-ins?
- Do you offer same day turnaround time?

Charging for Tax Consulting: Pricing is usually the first thing that comes to mind when customers call for tax services. While price will vary depending on the extensiveness of the tax return or type of accounting professional, it can be beneficial to include all of your pricing and fees, if possible, in your FAQs.

Part 2: *Call Handling Cross Section*

Call handling, or scripting, is what the operators use to interact with your customers. You might have different instructions based on the caller's question or issue, or maybe you want a basic message for all calls.

As you can see below, scripts run from simple lead capture to more involved scenarios.

ARE YOU CALLING TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT?

Yes (Calling to schedule an appointment)
↓
Access Calendar to Schedule Appointment
- Set Appointment
- Text and email the message

Locked Out
- Gather Name, Phone Number, and Appointment Time
- Attempt to Warm Transfer twice, 24/7
- Text and email the message

All Other Calls
↓
Are you a New or Existing Client?
↓
New Client?
- Gather Name, Company Name, Phone Number, and Regarding
- Text and email the message
↓
Existing Client
- Gather Name, Company Name, Phone Number, and Regarding
- Text and email the message
↓
Other
- Gather Name, Company Name, Phone Number, and Regarding
- Text and email the message

Calling for Owner

- Gather Name, Phone Number, and Regarding
- Text and email the message

B

ARE YOU CALLING TO SCHEDULE A TAX PREP APPOINTMENT?

Yes (Calling to Schedule an Appointment)

↓

Did we do your return last year?

↓ ↓

YES **NO**

↓ ↓

Is this for an individual or a company?

Is this for an individual or a company?

↓ ↘ ↙ ↓

Individual/Couple

Company

Access Calendar to Schedule Appointment
- Set Appointment
- Email the office

Access Calendar to Schedule Appointment
- Set Appointment
- Email the office

No (All Other Calls)

↙ ↘

Caller has Questions

All Other Calls
- Gather Name, Number, Email, and Regarding
- Email the office

↓

Would you like to schedule an appointment?

↓ ↘

YES **NO**
- Gather Name, Number, Email, and Regarding
- Email the office

↓

Did we do your return last year?

↓ ↘

YES **NO**

↙ ↙

Is this for an individual or a company?

↙ ↘

Individual/Couple Company

↘ ↙

Access Calendar to Schedule Appointment
- Set Appointment
- Email the office

ARE YOU CALLING TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT?

Yes (Calling to Schedule an Appointment)

↓

Appointment Calls (Scheduling, Canceling or Rescheduling)

All Other Calls

- Gather Name, Number, Email, and Regarding
- Email the accountant

Schedule Appointment

In Person   Over the Phone

- Gather Name, Number, Email, and Tax Issue
- Access Google Calendar to Schedule Appointment

  ↓

  Appointment Scheduled
- Email the accountant

Cancel Appointment

Yes (Reschedule)   **No** (Cancel)

Yes (Reschedule)	No (Cancel)
Gather Name, Number, Email, and Date of Original Appointment	Gather Name, Number, Email, and Date of Original Appointment
• Access Google Calendar to Reschedule Appointment	• Access Google Calendar to Cancel Appointment

Reschedule Appointment

- Gather Name, Number, Email, and Date of Original Appointment
- Access Google Calendar to Cancel Appointment

Appointment Rescheduled   Keeping Original Appointment

↓

Do you need a call back before your appointment?   ↓ Email the accountant

↓

Yes   No

↘ ↙

Email the accountant

Appointment Rescheduled   Keeping Original Appointment

↓

Do you need a call back before your appointment?   • Email the accountant

↓

Yes   No

•

Email the accountant   Email the accountant

Appointment Canceled   Decided to Keep Appointment

↓

Do you need a call back before your appointment?   • Email the accountant

↓

Yes   No

•

Email the accountant   Email the accountant

ALL CALLS

Gather Amount Owed, Name, and Phone Number

Are you a current client or looking to become a potential client?

Current Client

- Go to a closing that gives the caller the correct number for the department handling the case

- Text the message and email all accountants

Potential Client

Attempt to Warm Transfer the Call

No Answer

- Ask the caller if he/she will be available in 10-15 minutes for a call back

↓	↓
Yes	No
↓	↓
Text the message and email all accountants	Gather best time to reach caller
	•
	Text the message and email all accountants

After Hours

- Text the message and email all accountants

Answered

- Transfer the Call

The details above are just the tip of the iceberg. There are all kinds of things that you can add to your script, such as Reach On-Call, Warm Transfers, Appointment Setting, and more!

Evaluating Statistics **by Call Type.**

Depending on the type of tax services you provide, inbound call statistics can vary. For example, tax professionals will be busiest during tax season compared to the rest of the year.

Understanding your call traffic helps SAS staff accordingly, and the data trend will give you a solid reference point for when you may need to step up your advertising to draw more clients.

You'll also have an indication of which months might cost you a bit more or a bit less so that you can plan ahead from a financial standpoint.

Check out the 2018 call volume breakdown for these four clients.

Whether you're looking for the total number of calls or calls segmented by type, we have you covered. Knowing peak hours will help you determine whether to use SAS 24 hours a day or just for after-hours or overflow support.

January 2017 — 52 calls
- 14%
- 12%
- 12%
- 10%
- 8%
- 2%
- 42%

February 2017 — 84 calls
- 26%
- 11%
- 7%
- 5%
- 5%
- 4%
- 1%
- 41%

March 2017 — 92 calls
- 14%
- 10%
- 7%
- 4%
- 4%
- 3%
- 2%
- 56%

April 2017 — 176 calls
- 15%
- 14%
- 8%
- 6%
- 3%
- 3%
- 2%
- 1%
- 1%
- 47%

May 2017 — 85 calls
- 13%
- 11%
- 7%
- 1%
- 1%
- 67%

June 2017 — 53 calls
- 15%
- 11%
- 2%
- 2%
- 70%

July 2017 — 76 calls
- 16%
- 12%
- 12%
- 5%
- 3%
- 52%

August 2017 — 110 calls
- 12%
- 10%
- 6%
- 5%
- 2%
- 65%

September 2017 — 71 calls
- 16%
- 7%
- 6%
- 4%
- 3%
- 64%

October 2017 — 62 calls
- 16%
- 15%
- 8%
- 7%
- 2%
- 52%

November 2017 — 32 calls
- 13%
- 9%
- 9%
- 69%

December 2017 — 67 calls
- 10%
- 9%
- 8%
- 3%
- 70%

LEGEND:

- All Other Calls
- Existing Client
- Calling for Owner
- General Message
- New Client
- Appointment Scheduled
- Call Transferred
- Refused Appointment
- Message Ticket
- Info Only - Answered Question, Solicitor, Wrong Number

January 2017 — 101 calls
36% · 19% · 17% · 8% · 8% · 4% · 3% · 3% · 1% · 1%

February 2017 — 139 calls
48% · 20% · 14% · 7% · 4% · 3% · 2% · 1% · 1%

March 2017 — 151 calls
27% · 60% · 5% · 5% · 1% · 1% · 1%

April 2017 — 193 calls
26% · 72% · 1% · 1%

May 2017 — 76 calls
48% · 51% · 1%

June 2017 — 64 calls
52% · 48%

July 2017 — 69 calls
66% · 30% · 2% · 2%

August 2017 — 63 calls
41% · 57% · 2%

September 2017 — 79 calls
35% · 61% · 3% · 1%

October 2017 — 84 calls
56% · 44%

November 2017 — 75 calls
69% · 28% · 1% · 1% · 1%

December 2017 — 53 calls
51% · 43% · 2% · 2% · 2%

LEGEND:

- General Message
- Wants Call Back
- Existing Client – General Message
- Submitted on Website – New Client
- Appointment Set – Existing Client
- Message Ticket
- Appointment Set – New Client
- Received Notice
- Appointment Set – Company
- Appointment Refused
- Wants Copy of Tax Return
- Info Only – Answered Question, Solicitor, Wrong Number
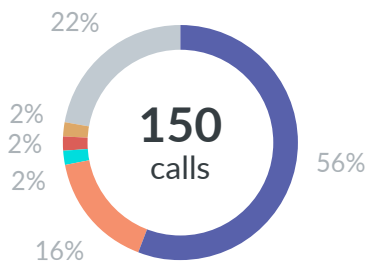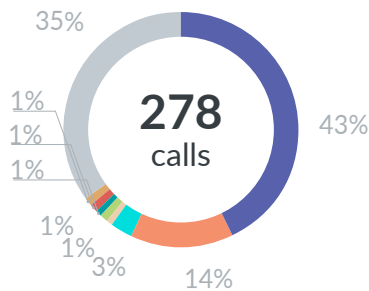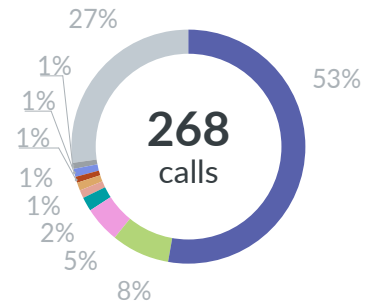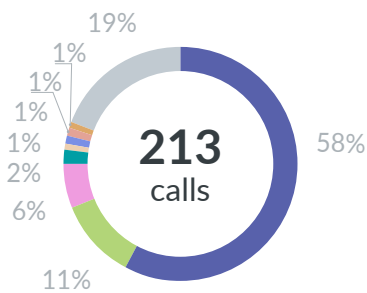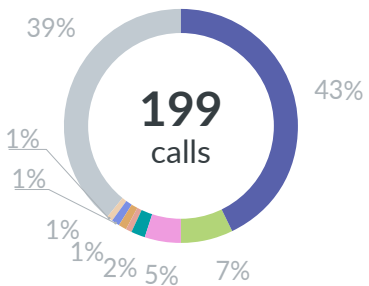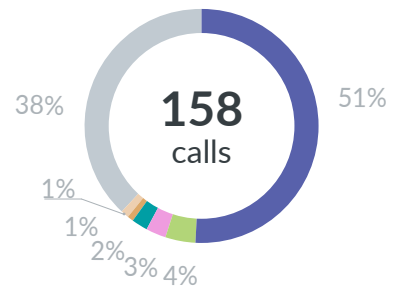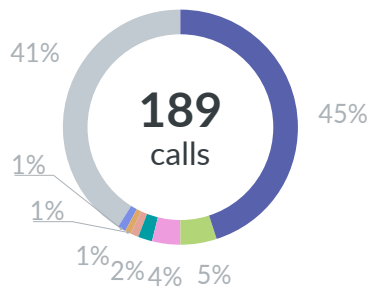
January 2017 — 150 calls
22% · 2% · 2% · 2% · 16% · 56%

February 2017 — 278 calls
35% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 3% · 14% · 43%

March 2017 — 268 calls
27% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 2% · 5% · 8% · 53%

April 2017 — 213 calls
19% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 2% · 6% · 11% · 58%

May 2017 — 199 calls
39% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 2% · 5% · 7% · 43%

June 2017 — 158 calls
38% · 1% · 1% · 2% · 3% · 4% · 51%

July 2017 — 189 calls
41% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 2% · 4% · 5% · 45%

August 2017 — 147 calls
37% · 1% · 1% · 2% · 4% · 8% · 47%

September 2017 — 179 calls
30% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 3% · 8% · 13% · 42%

October 2017 — 182 calls
29% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 8% · 10% · 50%

November 2017 — 202 calls
37% · 1% · 1% · 2% · 3% · 6% · 7% · 43%
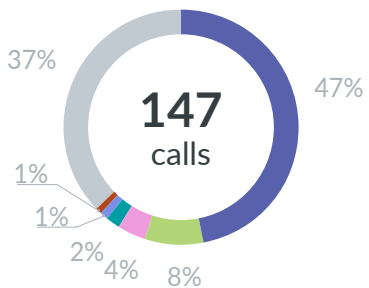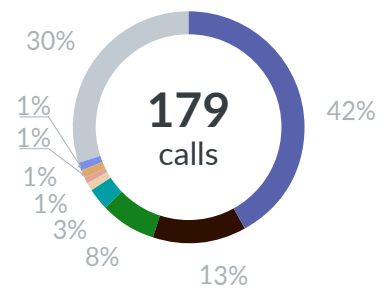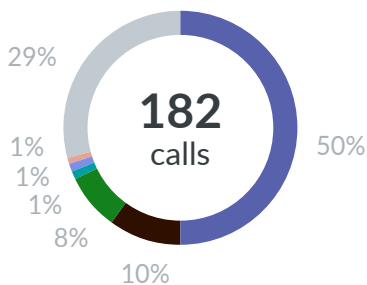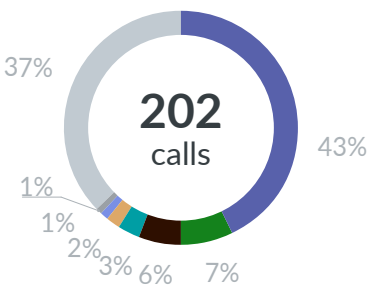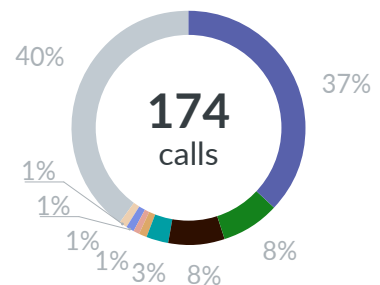
December 2017 — 174 calls
40% · 1% · 1% · 1% · 3% · 8% · 8% · 37%

LEGEND:

- General Message
- Appointment Rescheduled
- Appointment Set
- Appointment Canceled
- Appointment Refused
- Message Ticket
- Appointment Set – Call Back Needed
- Appointment Rescheduled – No call Back
- Appointment Set – No Call Back Needed
- Appointment Canceled – Call Back Needed
- Appointment Rescheduled – Call Back Needed
- Appointment Set – Phone
- Appointment Set – In Person
- Info Only – Answered Question, Solicitor, Wrong #
- Keeping Original Appointment
- Appointment Canceled – No Call Back Needed

January 2017 — 245 calls
- 39%
- 19%
- 15%
- 1%
- 26%

February 2017 — 241 calls
- 49%
- 17%
- 12%
- 4%
- 18%

March 2017 — 244 calls
- 42%
- 18%
- 11%
- 2%
- 27%

April 2017 — 162 calls
- 52%
- 13%
- 4%
- 2%
- 29%

May 2017 — 218 calls
- 37%
- 14%
- 13%
- 9%
- 27%

June 2017 — 310 calls
- 28%
- 20%
- 16%
- 5%
- 31%

July 2017 — 358 calls
- 27%
- 19%
- 16%
- 3%
- 35%

August 2017 — 396 calls
- 25%
- 21%
- 14%
- 3%
- 37%

September 2017 — 389 calls
- 23%
- 20%
- 18%
- 2%
- 37%

October 2017 — 473 calls
- 30%
- 22%
- 18%
- 2%
- 28%

November 2017 — 421 calls
- 28%
- 21%
- 17%
- 1%
- 33%

December 2017 — 362 calls
- 47%
- 13%
- 7%
- 1%
- 32%

LEGEND:
- ● Existing Client
- ● Message Ticket
- ● General message
- ● Call Transferred
- ● Info Only – Answered Question, Solicitor, Wrong Number

Putting it All Together
Call Volume Statistics.

Taking an average of the data for all four tax service clients, in 2018, we answered approximately

2,028	totaling **5,022**	with a typical length of **2.31**
CALLS	MINUTES	MINUTES PER CALL

Client	A	B	C	D
Answered calls	960	1,147	2,339	3,667
A total minutes	1,714.04	2,643.91	5,586.10	10,145.65
Average call length minutes	1.79	2.31	2.39	2.77

The Cost for **Amazing Service.**

At SAS, we strive to provide cost-effective service that is designed to improve your day-to-day operations and make your life easier.
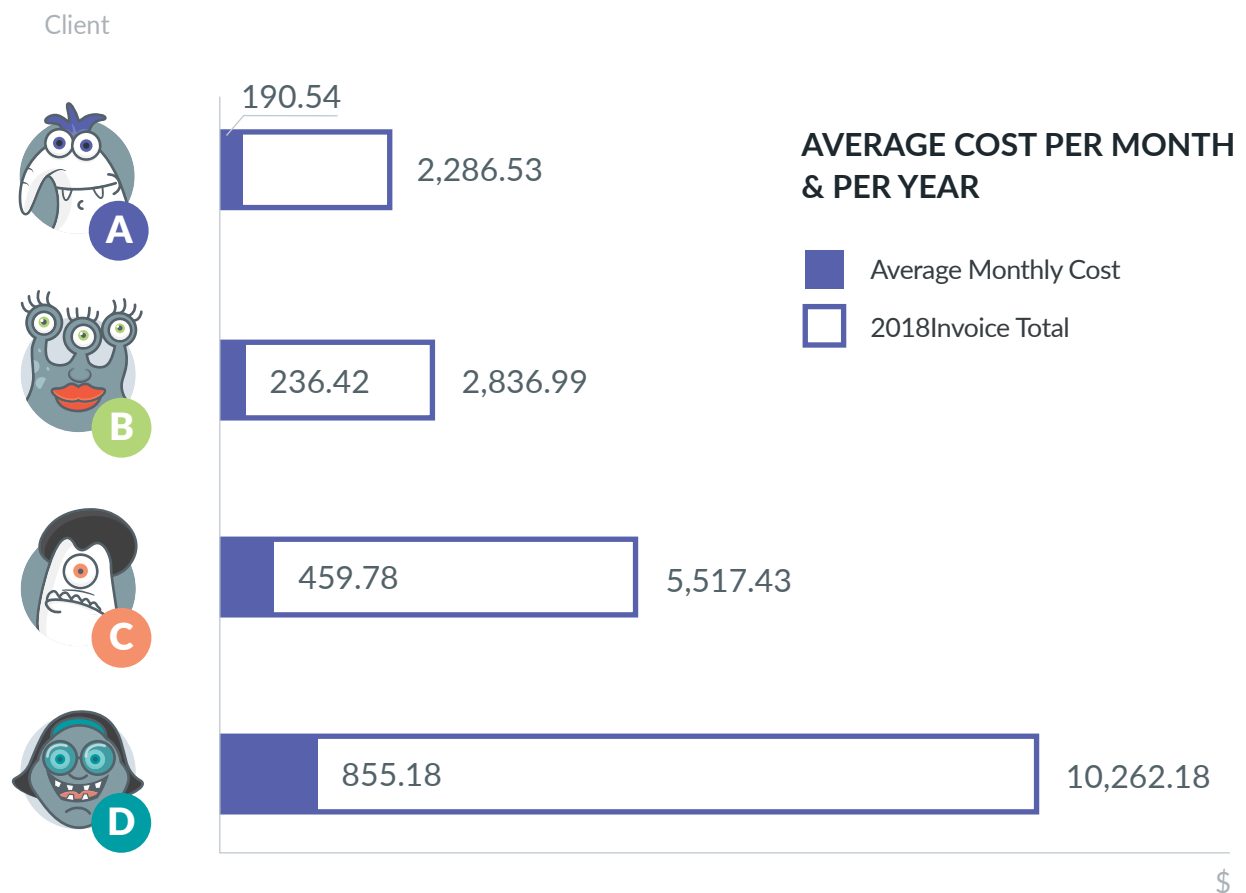
Based on our data, the average tax services company can expect to pay around:

$435
PER MONTH

&

$5,226
PER YEAR

Consider this. According to Glassdoor.com, the average salary for a full-time receptionist is around $29,000. That's more than twice the annual invoice total for our busiest tax service clients, and it doesn't take into account overhead costs such as insurance and equipment!

Client

AVERAGE COST PER MONTH & PER YEAR

■ Average Monthly Cost
☐ 2018 Invoice Total

A — 190.54 — 2,286.53
B — 236.42 — 2,836.99
C — 459.78 — 5,517.43
D — 855.18 — 10,262.18

$

Gaining **Perspective.**

Ultimately, what are the benefits of using Specialty Answering Service over having an answering machine manage your missed calls? Reviewing the call and cost data as a whole, the answer is clear.

If you're looking for ways to justify cost, this generalization will do the trick:

- You receive 2,028 calls per year.

- As a result of your busy schedule, you miss 345 of these calls, or about 17%.

- Instead of leaving you a voicemail, callers just dial the next tax service office in the phone book.

- We'll guesstimate that 200 calls would have resulted in new business.

- According to Thumbtack, the average cost for a tax professional is between $75 and $225 per hour. So, we'll go with $150.

- The average cost of having SAS capture the missed calls might be somewhere around Client C's invoice total. We'll round it up to $5,600.
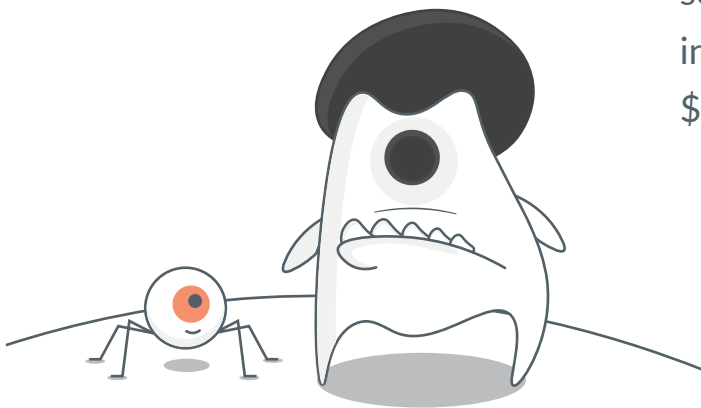
Now, let's imagine two scenarios:

Appointment lasts – 1 hour

- 200 appointments x $150 = **$30,000**

- $30,000 - $5,600 **=** $24,400

Appointment lasts – 2 hours

- $150 x 2 = **$300**

- 200 appointments x $300 = **$60,000**
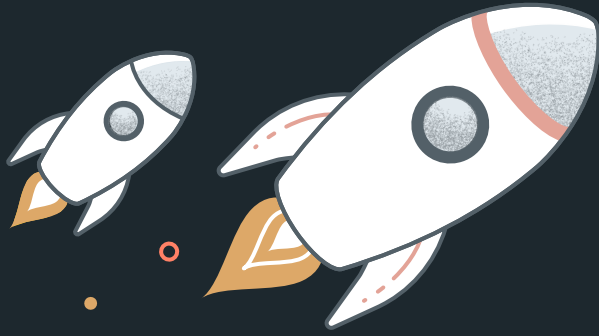
- $60,000 - $5,600 = $54,400

Without SAS:

You lose $**30,000** per year.

You lose $**60,000** per year.

With SAS:

You gain back $**24,400** of the revenue that blew out the window when your answering machine picked up.

You'll have $**54,400** net revenue.

Taking You **Farther, Faster.**

With Specialty Answering Service on your side, you will have the freedom to worry less about what you're missing and the time to focus on paving the road ahead.

Contact SAS today, and get ready to open the door to more business, happier customers, and a healthier bottom line!