

## Virtual Receptionists

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Listmates,

I know most of you who use this type of service like and recommend Ruby.

Questions:

1. Are there other services, besides Ruby? I'd like more than one to look at.
2. Are these 5-day per week services, or can you have them 2-3 days per week?

Your thoughts and experiences welcome.

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Ruby is great, but they're pricey. I have a high call volume for a solo. They handled 365 calls for me in May at a cost of \$1,161.85, and I'm on a big monthly plan that gives me a low per-minute rate.

Also, they're only Mon to Fri, 8am to 9pm Eastern, which I guess translates to 5am to 6pm Left Coast time.

Given those drawbacks, I've tried out a couple 24/7 services. I get calls all around the clock from new potential clients, and if they get voicemail, they hang up.

I tested Alert Communications about a year ago and wasn't too happy with the quality. Currently I'm trying out The Telephone Secretary. They're dirt cheap (about 1/4 the cost of Ruby), but the quality is a bit lacking. I'm still deciding if they're good enough for my purposes or not.

I might give CBSI a shot and then make a final decision.

It boils down to this: Ruby has spoiled me. I've been a customer for years, and they always treat me right when I call with a question or concern. That gives me comfort that they're treating my callers right.

Any answering service should be able to handle calls on whatever schedule you want. It will be up to you to forward your phone when you want the service to pick up the calls.

When comparing prices, be sure to note whether the service charges per minute or per call. Ruby is per minute of time their person is on the phone. Telephone Secretary is per call. Based on my past call data, a

## SoloSez Popular Threads, July 2014

single Ruby call takes 2.2 minutes. I believe Ruby told me years ago that an average call is 1.5 minutes, but I think they round to the half minute, and I have them gather several pieces of info from callers.

I hope that helps!

Andrew Flusche, Virginia

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And Telephone Secretary just called to patch a client through to me (well done there), and MISPRONOUNCED MY NAME in the process.

Back to Ruby we go, while I talk to CBSI about their pricing.

Andrew Flusche

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Worth checking into local office services outfits.

I found a local service that combined the virtual receptionist with office space, conference rooms, trial equipment rental and other secretarial services. Which is useful here because they are in the city where the federal court and all the defense-side corporate meanies live, whereas I am in a remote town. And it kind of alleviates the weirdness with clients when the 'receptionist' is at least vaguely local and there's more to it than just 'I don't want to answer my phone'. Their pricing was based on a base rate based on number of calls- e.g. under 100/month, and they tack on whatever other services you use in a given month.

Gabriel W. Scott, Alaska

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I used to be a Ruby user but now use CBSI because they are a 24/7 service, and have been (for me) more efficient and less expensive. I am hooked on them and can count several times when calls came in for me after my East Coast hours that they caught which resulted in new clients. Never happened with voicemail. You can reach Becky Van Note or Jeff Anderson at:

CBSI  
2985 Gordy Parkway  
Marietta, GA 30066  
[www.cbsiholdings.com](http://www.cbsiholdings.com)  
Jeff Anderson  
(770)578-2274 (o)  
(404)384-2377 (c)  
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jandersoncpa/>  
[jeff@cbsiholdings.com](mailto:jeff@cbsiholdings.com)

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or Becky at:  
Becky Van Note  
(770) 578-2274  
becky@cbsiholdings.com

Please feel free to mention my name, but I am not affiliated with them.  
Just LOVE their service!

Lyza L. Sandgren, paralegal (not an attorney), Georgia

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CBSI may be local to me physically but they are a very established national outfit that has been around for over 20 they know their business and have succeeded in thawing out one of my regular clients who initially didn't want to leave any information. now he does so they are good at what they do. Just sayin' ...

You won't regret talking to CBSI. I have been very satisfied and their rates and service are the best. Just to know that if one of my West Coast clients calls me late, but I am out of the office, I will get an email update on my cell phone and can respond. Very reassuring!

... and CBSI gets less expensive the more you use it, not more expensive. Sorry, Ruby, but CBSI, with its 24/7, 365 service is better service for less \$\$\$. I've used multiple services and CBSI has by far been the best I've used.

Mark, that's no different than the other services. They pick up after a certain number of rings if you don't pick up first.

Lyza L. Sandgren

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We have been using Ruby for years and absolutely love the service. I don't think anyone answered Greg's original question - you use Ruby when you want to use Ruby, you don't have to use them all the time.

For example, we have our phones set to roll over to Ruby if we don't answer in 4 rings. When we are all in the office, no calls go to Ruby. If my assistant is out, or we are all in court, all of the calls go to Ruby.

I can also change my setup so that I can turn the forwarding on and off, but that is a function of my VOIP phone system, not Ruby.

Mark J. Astarita, NewYork

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I can't seem to find any pricing for CBSI on their website. I've been looking for a phone answering service for a while, but the call volume that I cannot get to is pretty low to justify an expensive monthly service.

Sincerely,

Matthew Callis, Massachusetts

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Thanks. They sent a pricing sheet upon request.

Sincerely,

Matthew Callis

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Yes. Telephone Secretary has had some - no a lot - of quality control problems for us. We are looking elsewhere.

Very truly yours,

Nick A. Ortiz, Florida

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I have used total attorneys and a few other services. Never something as deluxe as Ruby. I now use Answerfirst out of Tampa along with phone tree form Phone.com to direct to receptionist.

[www.answerfirst.com](http://www.answerfirst.com)

I felt compelled to post about this because I use this list all the time to search for providers and practice management info.

P. Jayson Thibodaux, Washington

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<http://www.cbsiholdings.com/pages/answering>

"Our pricing begins at \$35/month for 30 minutes of on-phone time with your customers and clients, utilizing live, friendly, American operators to provide your organization and most importantly - your customers - world-class service."

Pamela Starr, paralegal (not a lawyer)

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I've been very happy with Alert Communications  
<<http://www.alertcommunications.com/attorney-answering-services.php>>. I believe their base plan begins at \$149 for 115 minutes. They are available 24/7 and most of their receptionists speak Spanish, too. Feel free to contact me or Nancy Vallejo at Alert Communications at [nancy.v@alertcommunications.com](mailto:nancy.v@alertcommunications.com). I don't get anything out of it but I do believe they provide a great service.

Paul Perez, New York

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I absolutely loved Ruby, but just switched to CBSI because they were literally 215 dollars cheaper for the same service. Ruby seemed, maybe happier? And if I was raking in the big bucks I would have been happy to stay. But for now, their rates are just too much for me and I was blown away by how cheap CBSI was while including a local telephone number for me.

Ryan Morrison, New York

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