HOW TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR SMART PHONE VOICEMAIL GREETING

Add the familiar SIT tones to convince robocallers not to call you again

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For PATACS/OPCUG
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Agenda

- Voicemail greeting options
- Voicemail greeting storage
- What are SIT tones
- Why robocaller systems pay attention to SIT tones
- How to obtain the SIT tones
- An example of a customized voicemail greeting including SIT tones
- How to transfer a customized greeting from a computer onto a smart phone
- The process for recording a greeting on Verizon Wireless / Android 10
- How to play back a customized greeting on your computer and record it on your smart phone

Voicemail greeting options

There are three general options you can use for Verizon Wireless voicemail greetings:

- Automatically state your phone number

- Play your recording of your name

- Play a custom recording, containing whatever you want to say

Voicemail greeting storage

- Whatever you choose, the audio is stored on phone company computers.

- There is a reason: the computers can provide your voicemail greeting to any caller when your phone is, for instance, turned off, out of range of a cell tower, or in airplane mode.

Note: audio embedded in next slide

Special Information Tones (SIT)

- These are the famous 3 tones that preface almost all automated phone company Intercept messages, such as the Number Not In Service message.
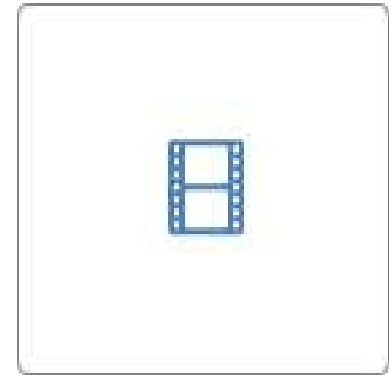
Why robocaller systems pay attention to SIT tones

- Robocaller systems are expensive to obtain and operate

- Robocaller systems want to dial only phone number known to be in service

- Dialing numbers known to be Not in Service is a waste of robocaller system time

Why robocallers pay attention to SIT tones

- When robocaller systems hear the SIT tones, the systems mark the phone number as Not In Service so the systems do not call it again

- *You can take advantage of that behavior*

How to obtain SIT tones

- Various web sites offer free downloads of Intercept messages, for instance:

https://beatriceco.com/bti/porticus/bell/recordedannouncements.html

- OR, call a number known to be Not In Service, and record the call using a call recording app such as **Cube ACR** for Android.

- Use an audio editor, such as **Audacity**, on your computer to remove the announcement words, so you can use the SIT tones in your voicemail greeting.

# An example of a voicemail greeting including SIT tones

- Created using Audacity to record voice through a microphone, and then combining the SIT tones plus that voice recording

Note: audio embedded in next slide

An example of a voicemail greeting including SIT tones

- Transcript:

Hi, this is John. No, my number is not disconnected. Those tones were just meant to convince robocallers not to call me again. You can leave a message after the beep. Thanks.
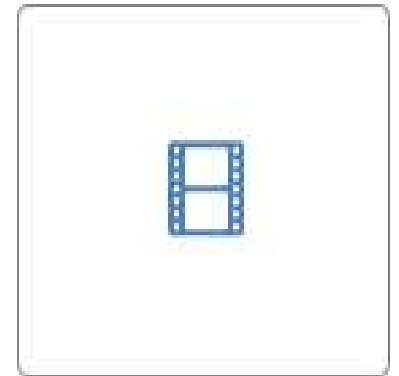
How to transfer a custom voicemail greeting onto your smart phone

TWO METHODS for transferring analog audio from your computer to your phone

1. **The Free Method**: low quality; or

2. **The Cable Method**: costs about $39 for audio cables. Much better audio quality. Much easier to start and stop recording on your smart phone. *May require a mixer.*

How to transfer a custom voicemail greeting onto your smart phone

- Both methods require that you know how to record a voicemail greeting using your smart phone.

- The recording process varies depending on your smart phone carrier company (Verizon Wireless, T-Mobile, et cetera) and your phone OS (Android or IOS)
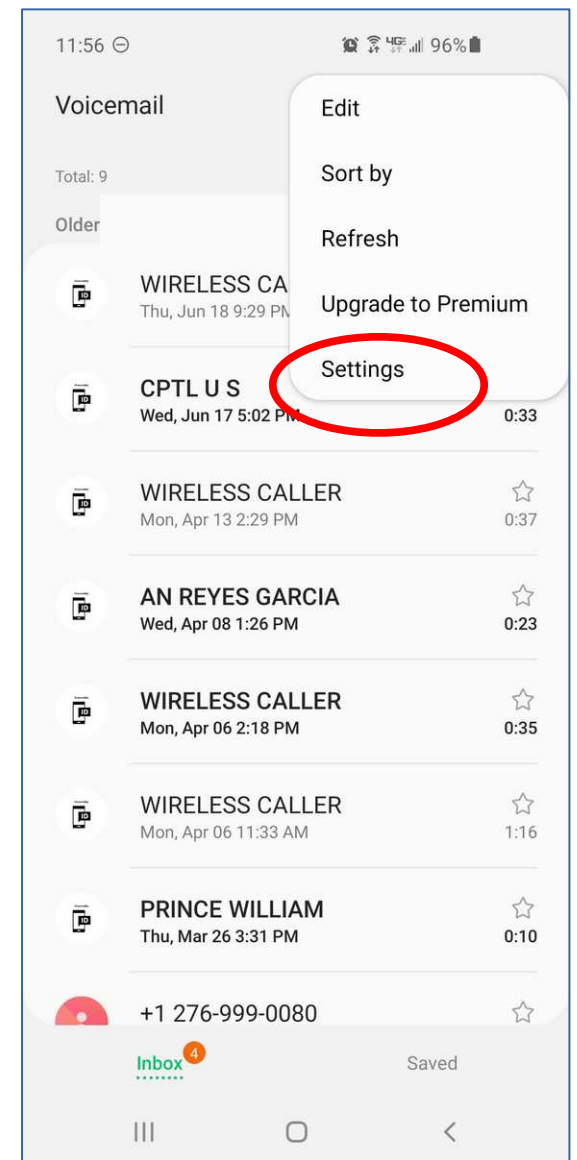
Verizon Wireless / Android 10 greeting recording process

- Open the Voicemail app. As of June 2020, it looks like this.
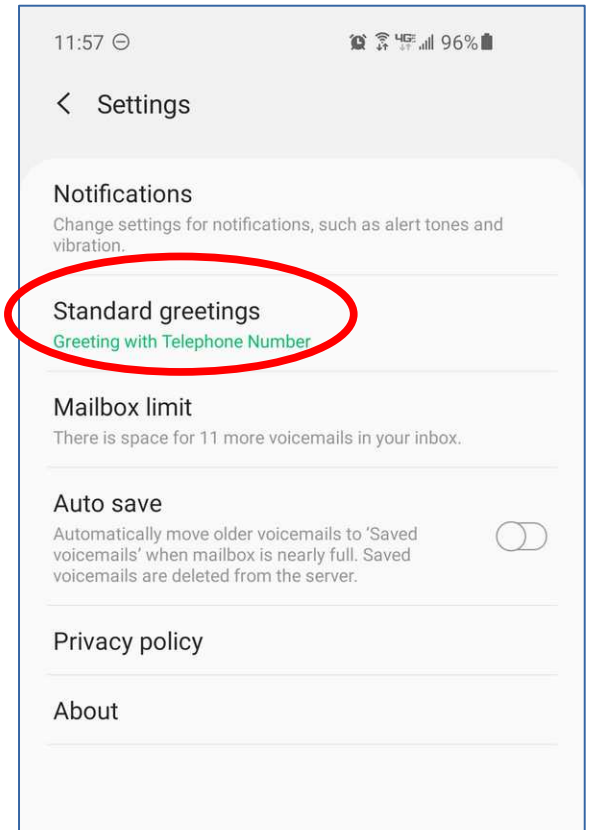
- Tap the three dots in the upper right corner
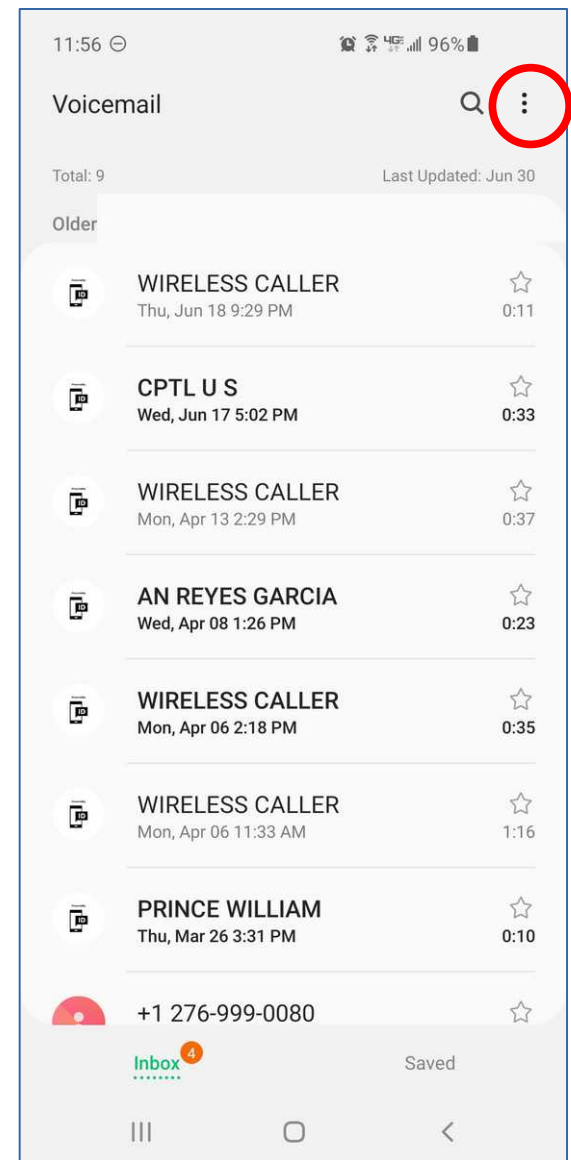
Verizon Wireless / Android 10 greeting recording process

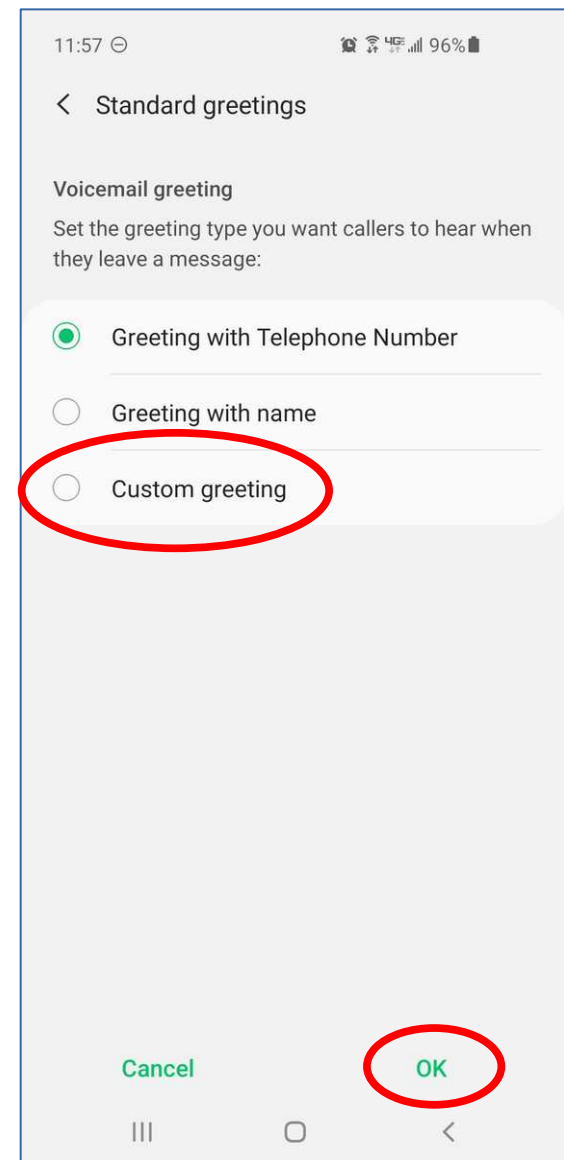A menu appears. In the menu, select **Settings**.

Verizon Wireless / Android 10 greeting recording process

- The Settings screen appears.

- In that screen, tap **Standard greetings**

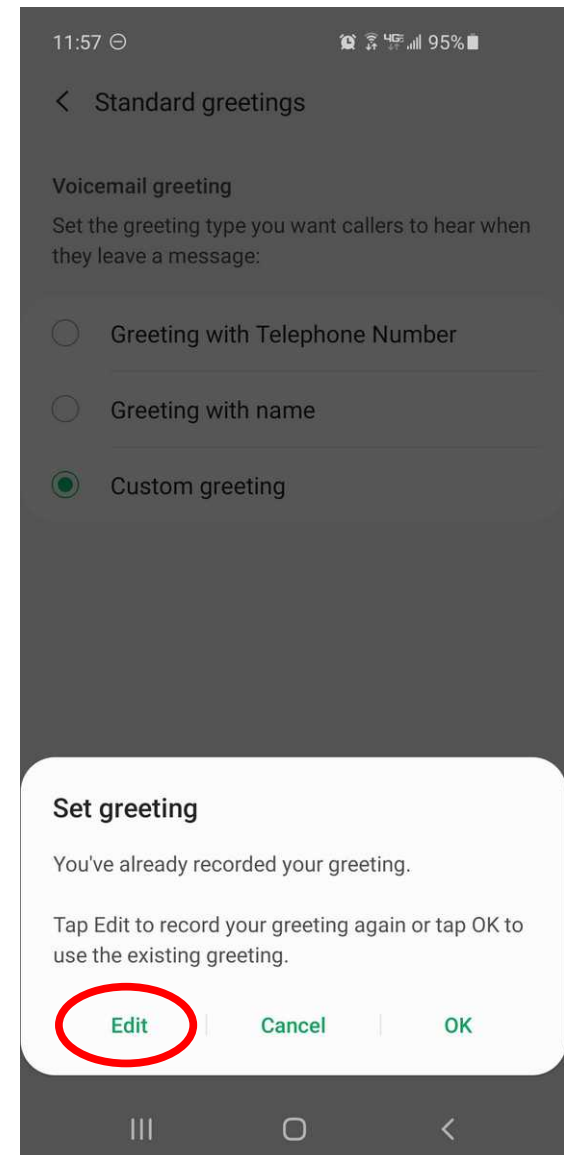# Verizon Wireless / Android 10 greeting recording process

- The Standard Greetings screen appears.

- It includes three options

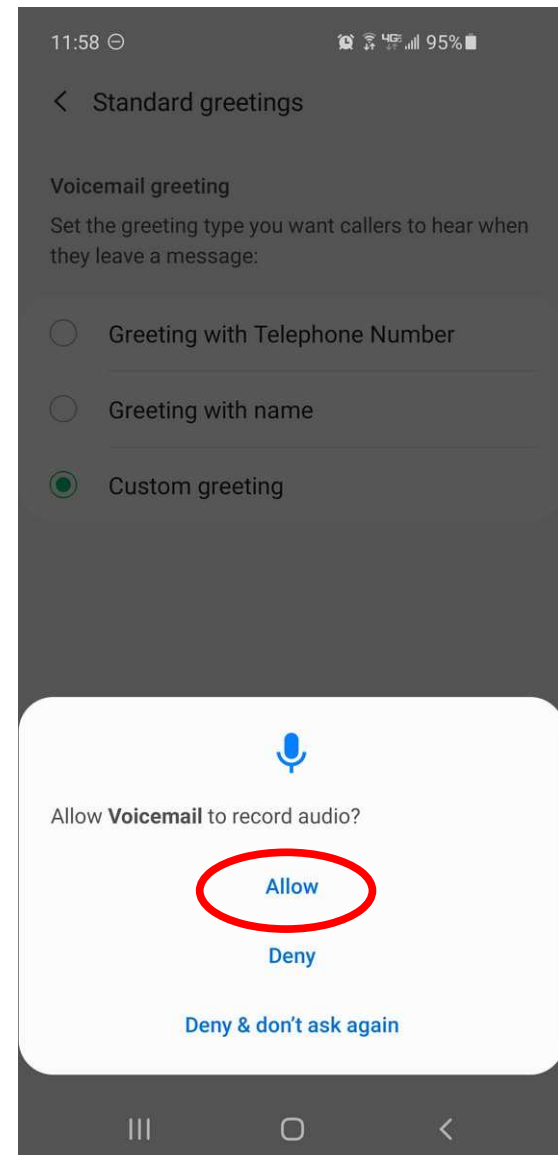- Tap **Custom greeting.**

- Tap the OK button.

Verizon Wireless / Android 10 greeting recording process

- If you previously recorded a custom greeting, then a Set Greeting popup appears.

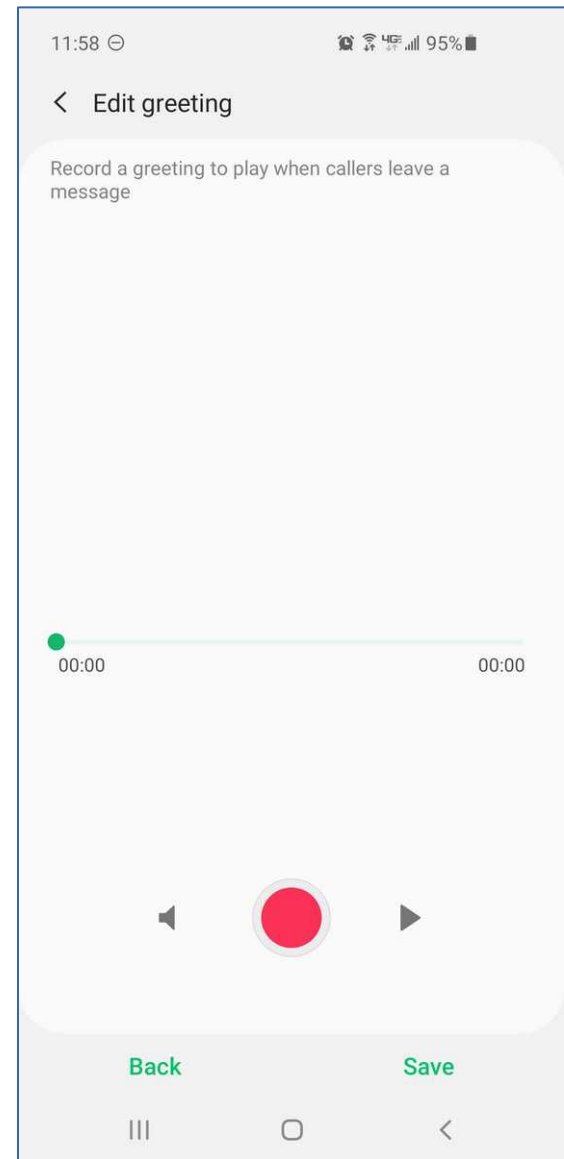- Tap **Edit** to record a new custom greeting.

Verizon Wireless / Android 10 greeting recording process

- If you have not previously used Voicemail to record a custom greeting, then the Permission Request popup appears.

- Tap **Allow** to record a new custom greeting**.**

Verizon Wireless / Android 10 greeting recording process

- The Edit greeting screen appears. It includes recording controls.

- Tap the **big red button** to begin recording.
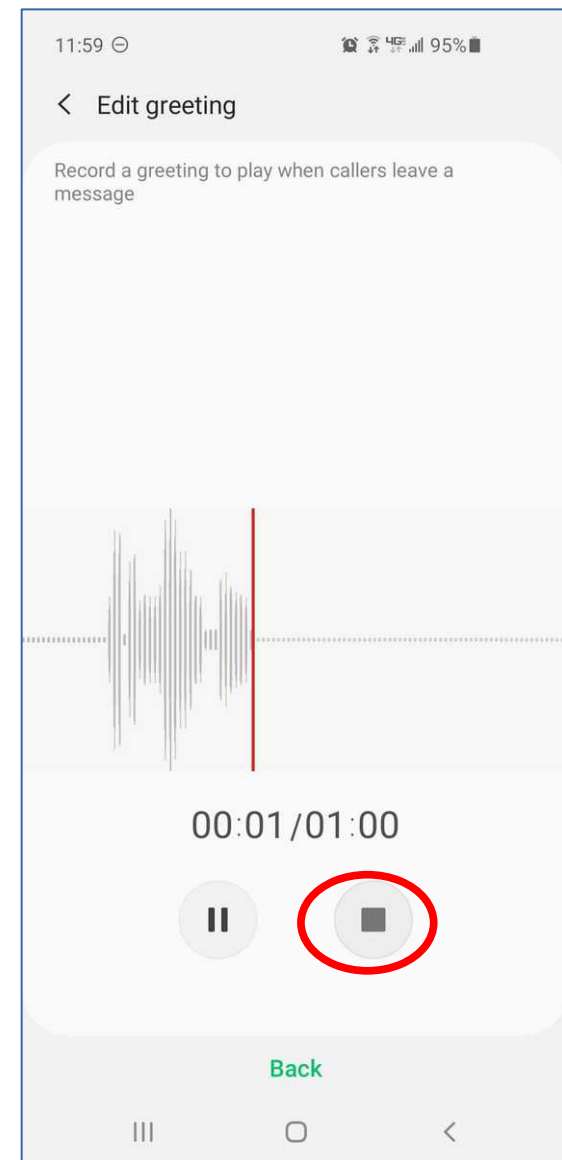
Verizon Wireless / Android 10 greeting recording process

- If you previously recorded a custom greeting, then a Warning popup appears.

- Tap **OK** to record a new custom greeting.
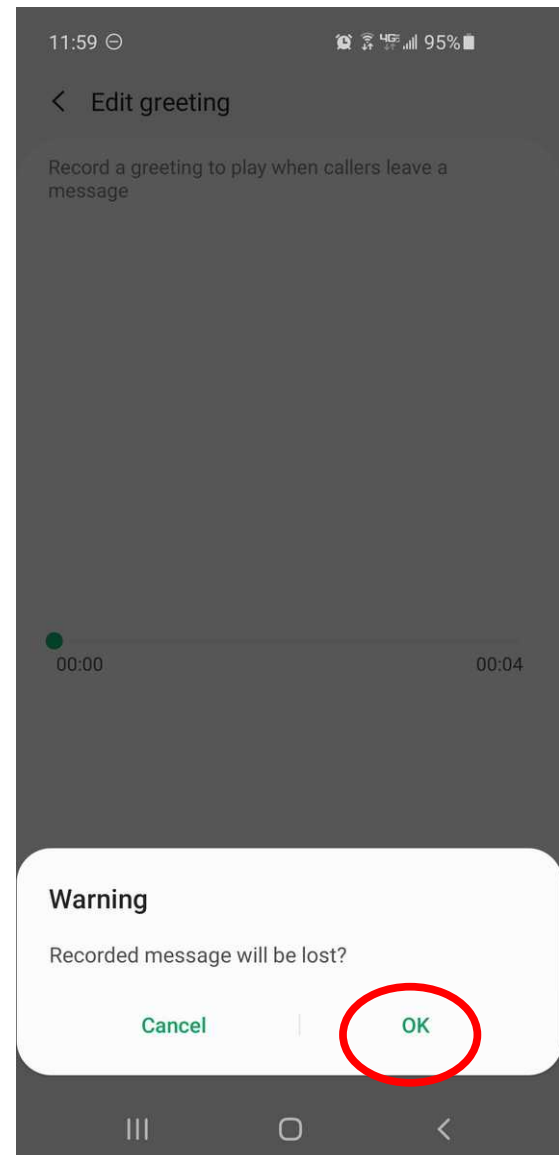
Verizon Wireless / Android 10 greeting recording process

- While you are recording, you will see an oscilloscope-like graph of your audio.

- Tap the square Stop button when you are finished.

Transferring computer audio playback to the smart phone:
the Free Method

- On your computer, load your custom greeting audio file into an audio playback application.

- Hold your smart phone **close to a computer speaker**.

- After you start recording on your smart phone, start playback on your computer.

Transferring computer audio playback to the smart phone:
the Cable Method

Stereo breakout cable

Patch cable

Attenuator cable

Connect plug to computer stereo output socket

Connect to socket on breakout cable and socket on attenuator cable

Connect plug to smart phone headset socket
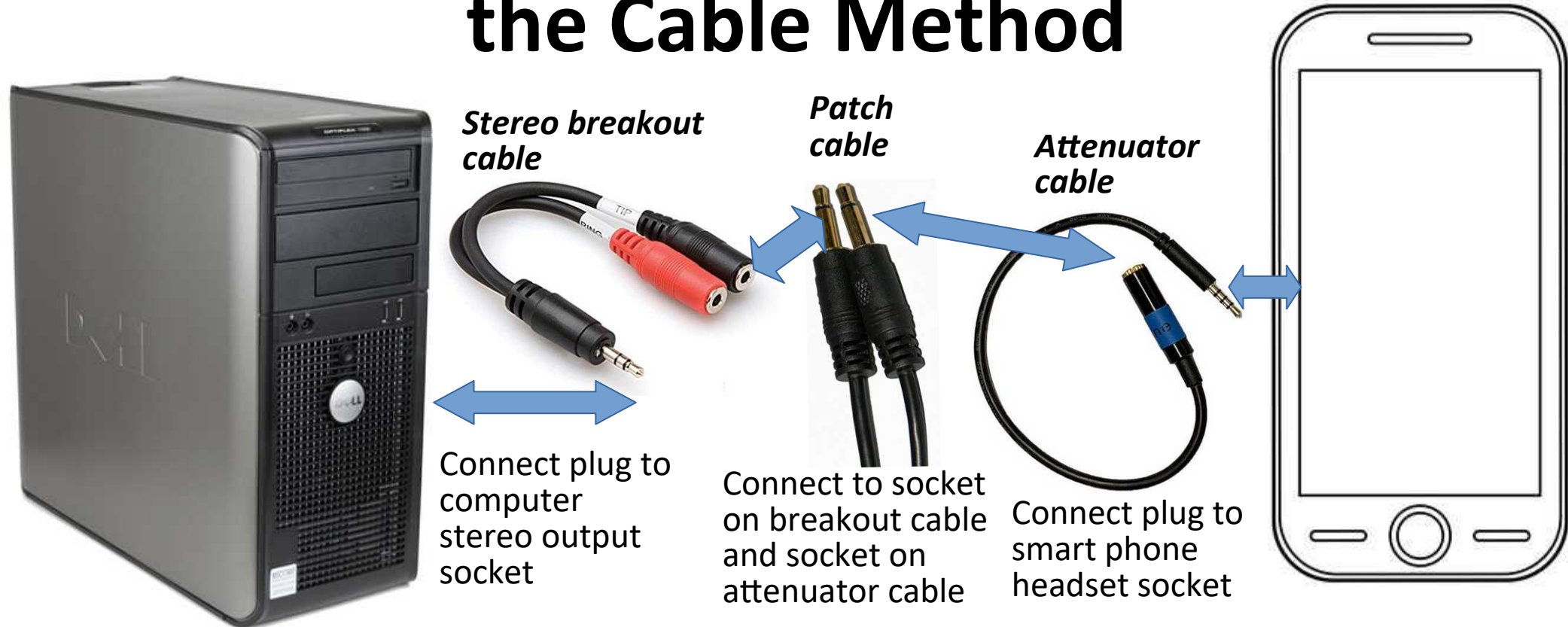
Cable details as of June 2020

- **Stereo breakout:** Hosa YMM-261 3.5 mm TRS to Dual 3.5 mm TSF Stereo Breakout Cable, $5.99 on Amazon

- **Patch cable:** Bargain Cable 3.5mm Mono Male to Male Cable 10 ft Gold Plated, $6.88 on Amazon

- **Attenuator cable:** HeadsetBuddy Line-Level Audio Adapter with Built in Attenuation for iPhone, Smartphones, Soundboards and Mixers, $26.25 on Amazon

Test before recording the greeting

Make sure your cables work and ***your computer audio output level is appropriate***.

iPhone: record using the Apple Voice Memos app

Android: record using for instance the free Sony Audio Recorder app

Advantages of the Cable method

- Place smart phone close to computer keyboard, making it easier to begin phone recording, start computer playback of custom greeting audio, and stop phone recording

- Eliminates phone microphone pickup of ambient noises (computer, airco, pets, doors et cetera)

Test AFTER your voicemail greeting is recorded on Verizon Wireless

- Dial *86 and tap the Dial button
- Enter your password and tap #
- Tap 4, 3, 1, 3
- The server plays your customized greeting
- Tap #

Post recording test review

- If your customized greeting has a problem, then you can record it again!
  - Distorted, or
  - Not recorded in full, or
  - The volume is too low

Transferring computer audio playback to the smart phone:
the Mixer Method

Mixer

Stereo cable

Attenuator cable

Connect plug to computer stereo output socket, mixer line input sockets

Connect line output (one channel) to socket on attenuator cable

Connect plug to smart phone headset socket