

## Should a Business Own the Cell Phones Employees Must Use?

Written by Steve Marr  
Monday, 19 August 2019 13:31

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Many businesses have staff who use a mobile phone for business purposes. A company may be tempted to allow the employee to use their own phone and give them a small allowance to cover the business expense. Generally, businesses do this to reduce cost to the business or to prevent a staff person from needing to carry another phone.

My perspective is that the business should own the phone. Here's why. First, in today's environment the cost of an additional phone is not significant. You don't have to provide the newest or expensive upgraded phone, just a phone that meets the need.

Second, you can use a dedicated telephone number of your choosing. Then, you can redirect calls to another number if the staff member isn't available to take business calls. You can't do that with a personal number.

Third, if you believe there is a problem with telephone usage; you can check call history because the phone belongs to you. You can find out if there have been lengthy personal calls multiple times a week by monitoring *your* phone periodically.

Fourth, and most important, you get the phone back when the staff person leaves. This gives you access to the information stored on the phone.

Some employees may push back against this policy. If so, simply respond by saying, "This is how we do things." Then, assign the phone and move on.

Business information belongs to the business, whether it comes through a cell phone, phone call records, texts or in other ways. If an employee does not want to make personal information accessible to the employer, they should use their personal cell for personal communication.

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The Lord said, "You shall not steal." (Exodus 20:15, NIV) As a business owner, it is my responsibility to check business data on a business phone. I only check the data if there is a significant business reason. Again, the information belongs to the business. If you allow an employee to leave a business with business information on their personal phone, it is a form of theft.

To keep from losing business information that belongs to the business, own the phones that employees use for business.