

Missed Call Recovery Playbook

How to build a follow-up system that captures leads even when you can't pick up the phone.



[→ TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Table of Contents

01	Executive Summary	3
02	The Cost of a Missed Call	4
03	A Simple Benchmark for Your Business	4
04	Building an After-Hours Coverage Strategy	5
05	What's the Right Approach	6
06	A Simple Missed Call Follow-Up Sequence	7
07	When to Switch From Automated to Personal Outreach	8
08	Your Action Plan	8
09	How Signpost Can Fit in Your Missed Call Tech Stack	9

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

You're good at your job, but that's not why you're losing leads.

You're losing them in the minutes after a call goes unanswered, at the time when a customer hits voicemail, hangs up, and calls the next contractor on their list.

This playbook is about fixing the missed call problem. It walks through how to build an after-hours coverage strategy, how to set up a follow-up sequence that runs without you, and which tools handle the gap between when a call comes in and when you're available to respond.

Consider implementing some, or all, of the strategies we suggest throughout.



02 THE COST OF A MISSED CALL

Home service pros miss 27%–62% of their calls.

That number is broad on purpose – it's hard to generalize just how many leads pros are losing after hours or on a job site, by industry. But even on the low end, missing $\frac{1}{3}$ of your leads can carry a significant cost. Let's break it down:

- If you're spending \$1,000 on Google Ads and missing 1 in 3 calls, you're throwing away **\$330 in marketing spend** before a single conversation happens.
- The average home service job is worth **\$300 to \$1,000**. Miss enough calls in a month and that's a full week of revenue completely gone.
- The lifetime value of a home service customer runs between **\$5,000 and \$15,000**. Each lost customer typically takes two or three referrals with them.

One missed call, when you factor in the job, the repeat work, and the referrals, can represent up to \$45,000 in lost opportunity.

03 A SIMPLE BENCHMARK FOR YOUR BUSINESS

You don't need sophisticated tracking to get a baseline read on where you stand.

Most pros we talk to already have a good sense of how many calls they're missing.

Pull up your call log from the last 30 days. For every missed call, check the timestamp and the time of your first outbound attempt. If you can't find a callback for some of them, those leads weren't just slow. They were probably never followed up on at all.

You're looking for patterns here, and we'll share more about how to address these patterns later on in the playbook. If a large share of your missed calls have no callback attempt, that's a gap in your system. If your average response time to leads is measured in hours, not minutes, that's a conversion problem. And if the majority of your missed calls are happening outside of business hours, that's a coverage problem.

The good news? Each of those problems is fixable.

04 BUILDING AN AFTER-HOURS COVERAGE STRATEGY

After-hours calls and requests make up 20–40% of inbound calls in home services.

There are several different options to implement coverage, and the right setup depends on your call volume, your budget, and how much live interaction your customers expect. Here are five options, from lowest lift to highest:

01	Offer Self-Service WHAT IT IS An online booking link that lets customers schedule on their own, usually via your website or social media.	BEST FOR Low-volume businesses (or a fallback layer for other strategies)	THE HONEST TRADE-OFF There's a lot of friction to this method. A customer calls you, reaches no one, and is then expected to find your site and book themselves.
02	Use Instant Responders WHAT IT IS An automated message that a customer receives immediately after a call, during or after hours.	BEST FOR Businesses that want a low-cost strategy that still makes their customer feel seen	THE HONEST TRADE-OFF This strategy keeps the lead warm, but it's just a single touch. If a customer doesn't respond and the conversation stalls, you may still lose the lead.
03	Set Up Automated Text Messaging WHAT IT IS A triggered SMS sequence that begins after a missed call. This short follow-up cadence nudges the caller back towards booking.	BEST FOR Businesses with moderate call volume who want to recover missed leads without manual follow-up	THE HONEST TRADE-OFF It may take some time to dial in the right message, timing, and ask. A generic follow-up still beats nothing.
04	Use AI Voice WHAT IT IS An AI-powered phone agent that answers calls, collects job details, and can book appointments, without a human on the line.	BEST FOR Businesses with high after-hours call volume, or those whose customers expect to speak to someone	THE HONEST TRADE-OFF It answers every call and never misses a lead. An AI agent is only as good as its prompts — leaving feedback is important.
05	Use Live Reception WHAT IT IS A human answering service that handles calls on your behalf. It can be a dedicated hire or a third-party service, like Signpost.	BEST FOR Businesses with high-ticket jobs and complex calls, where customers need to talk through details before they commit to booking	THE HONEST TRADE-OFF This strategy typically carries the highest cost. For most contractors, live reception makes sense as a premium layer or backup.

05 WHAT'S THE RIGHT APPROACH

LOW CALL VOLUME + TIGHT BUDGET

Start with an instant responder. It's low cost, high impact, and you can be up and running fast. Layer in automated follow-up sequences once you've got the basics in place.

MODERATE CALL VOLUME + SOME BUDGET

Combine automated text messaging with a self-service booking link. You're capturing intent and giving customers a clear path without adding to your headcount.

HIGH CALL VOLUME + GROWTH FOCUS

Add AI voice to handle the calls that come in when your team is unavailable. Pair it with automated SMS follow-up for callers who hang up before the agent answers.

HIGH-TICKET WORK + PREMIUM POSITIONING

Consider live reception, either full-time or just as a backup for AI voice. When each job is worth several thousand dollars, the cost of a missed call makes it simple.

Generally, every coverage layer you add should be designed to either book the job or keep the conversation going. If your after-hours system just takes a message and hopes for the best, you're leaving money in your voicemail inbox.

06 A SIMPLE MISSED CALL FOLLOW-UP SEQUENCE

A baseline sequence built for home service pros.

Adjust the copy and voice, but don't change the timing logic. It's designed to match how customers behave after a missed call.

1

MESSAGE ONE: SENT WITHIN 5 MINUTES OF THE MISSED CALL

"Hey, this is [Business Name] -- looks like we just missed your call. We want to make sure we get back to you. Can you give us some more information about your issue? Reply here or call us back at [number]."

PURPOSE

Acknowledge the call before they move on.

WHY THIS TIMING

Speed is the whole game at touch 1. Research consistently shows that lead response rates drop sharply after the first five minutes. You're not trying to close anything here, you're just letting the customer know you got their call.

2

MESSAGE TWO: SENT AFTER AN HOUR

"Still here if you need us. Happy to give you a quick call back. Just let us know a good time, or reply with what you're dealing with and we'll get right back to you."

PURPOSE

Keep the door open without being aggressive.

WHY THIS TIMING

An hour gives them time to respond on their own terms. If they haven't by now, a short nudge is appropriate. There's no urgency, or pressure, in the tone of the message.

3

MESSAGE THREE: SENT NEXT DAY, DURING BUSINESS HOURS

"Good morning – [Business Name] here. We tried reaching you yesterday and wanted to make sure you got the help you were looking for. Still available if you need us. [booking link or phone number]"

PURPOSE

A fresh-start attempt when they're back in decision mode.

WHY THIS TIMING

Evening calls often come from people who are home and thinking about the problem, but not necessarily ready to book. Morning is when they shift back into action mode, and this text meets them there.

4

MESSAGE FOUR: SENT AFTER 72 HOURS

"Last check-in from [Business Name] – we don't want to keep buzzing you if you've already sorted things out. If you still need help with [service type], we'd love to chat more."

PURPOSE

A low-pressure close to the sequence.

WHY THIS TIMING

Three days is long enough that the lead has either found someone else or is still sitting on the problem. This message gives them an easy out while leaving the door open. It also closes the loop on your end.

07 WHEN TO SWITCH FROM AUTOMATED TO PERSONAL OUTREACH

Automated sequences handle call volume, but some leads still need a human touch.

Make the switch to personal outreach when:

They responded but didn't book.

If someone replied to your automated message and the conversation stalled, that's a warm lead that needs a real person to close it. Pick up the phone.

The job is high-ticket.

For roofing, HVAC replacements, major plumbing work, or anything north of a few hundred dollars, a personal call is worth the time. The conversion lift on high-value jobs justifies stepping out of the automated flow.

They gave you details about the problem.

If someone texted back and described their situation, like "water heater is out," "pipe burst in the basement", they're engaged. Don't let an automated sequence respond to that. A person should take it from here.

08 YOUR ACTION PLAN

Here's some things you can implement this week, this month, and this quarter to stop losing leads to missed calls.

Quick Wins

- Update your voicemail greeting if it's stale. Give callers a clear next step and a realistic timeframe for when you'll get back to them.
- Set up an instant responder for one channel. Write one message that ends with a question or booking link, and turn it on.
- Save a follow-up text as a template in your phone so you can send a personal reply to a missed call in just two steps.

Long Term Plays

- Activate an AI voice agent and configure it for after-hours call handling.
- Build a four-touch SMS follow-up sequence, using the copy from earlier in this playbook.
- Set a recurring 15-minute monthly review to leave call feedback, and check how many missed calls converted.

09 HOW SIGNPOST CAN FIT IN YOUR MISSED CALL TECH STACK

The most common tech stack for missed call recovery involves three tools.

A voice agent, an instant responder, and an automated SMS sequence. Together, they cover most of the scenarios that would otherwise mean a lost lead.

Voice Agent

An AI voice agent picks up every call, automatically, so you never miss another lead. They'll greet the caller, ask what they're dealing with, and collect the details your team needs to book the appointment.

[LEARN MORE →](#)

Instant Responder

An instant responder is a message that goes out automatically when you miss a call, or receive an inquiry on a website like Facebook or Angi. It's a short, human-sounding acknowledgement that lets your potential customer know that you can help them with their service, and it's useful to have set up for after-hours.

[LEARN MORE →](#)

SMS Follow-Up

Once an instant responder has done its job, an automated SMS cadence can take over. This is the four-touch cadence from [PAGE 7](#). It's the sequence that keeps reaching back out to unclosed leads at the right intervals until they respond or the window closes.

[LEARN MORE →](#)

How They Work Together

These aren't three separate tools you pick between. They're a stack that covers the same customer, but from different angles.

The AI voice agent catches the callers who want to talk to someone. The instant responder catches the ones who contact your business on a platform like Facebook or Angi. And the automated SMS sequence catches the ones who weren't quite ready to book. Together, they cover most of the scenarios that would otherwise mean a lost lead.



See how Signpost helps home service businesses never miss a lead again.

[Book a Demo →](#)