



AUTO ATTENDANT / RESEARCH & PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Business Calls While Traveling Abroad: Roaming vs Forwarding

Get a business phone number with a simple auto attendant menu from Auto Attendant. A caller picks who they need and the call rings that person's own mobile, so nobody on your team has to publish a personal number.

Published by Auto Attendant · 2026-10-27 · business calls while traveling abroad · call forwarding internationally · international roaming incoming calls · forward business calls to mobile abroad · virtual business number · auto attendant · roaming vs forwarding · business phone for traveling employees

Original article: <https://autoattendant.io/articles/business-calls-abroad-roaming-forwarding-local-number>



In this article

1. [Executive Summary](#)
 2. [Introduction and Background](#)
 3. [Route A: Keep the U.S. Mobile Roaming](#)
 4. [Route B: Forward to a Permitted Foreign Number](#)
 5. [Route C: Business App Over Data](#)
 6. [Route D: U.S.-Based Colleague or Live Answering Backup](#)
 7. [Feature Comparison](#)
 8. [Data Analysis and Evidence](#)
 9. [Pre-Departure Decision Worksheet and Consented Test Plan](#)
 10. [Implications and Future Directions](#)
 11. [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
 12. [Conclusion](#)
-

Executive Summary

A business number that rings a mobile phone has three separate properties that travel does not change together: the **number** callers dial, the **provider route** that carries the call, and the **physical location** of the person who answers. Business calls while traveling abroad fail or cost more when owners treat these as one fact. This report separates four delivery routes: keeping a U.S. mobile roaming, forwarding to a permitted foreign number, answering in an app over data, and assigning a U.S.-based colleague or live answering service.

The evidence from carrier and vendor documents is consistent on direction and inconsistent on detail. Verizon's mobile Call Forwarding feature cannot forward to an international number and should be set up before roaming starts (www.verizon.com). AT&T's wireless forwarding page says calls cannot be forwarded to an international number (att.com). T-Mobile states that a person overseas who answers a call from a U.S. number is subject to international roaming rates (www.t-mobile.com), and bills one minute for an incoming call to a powered-on roaming phone even when it goes to voicemail (www.t-mobile.com). Other vendors take different positions: Quo's forwarding supports only U.S. and Canadian numbers (support.quo.com), while Dialpad allows an international forwarding number and charges for personal calls forwarded there (help.dialpad.com).

The cost of a route cannot be read from one price. Verizon's business TravelPass is listed at \$12 per day in most TravelPass countries (www.verizon.com) and is charged only on days of use. AT&T's consumer Day Pass (which excludes business and government customers; a separate business product exists) is \$12 per 24-hour period of use in over 210 destinations (att.com), with a cap of 10 daily fees per line per bill. T-Mobile's business page lists calling at \$0.20 per minute in 215+ countries (www.t-mobile.com). These are plan examples, not market averages, and each depends on the account type.

Demand context is modest but real: U.S. residents made 107.7 million outbound trips in 2024 (www.trade.gov), and 36.2 million U.S. small businesses exist (advocacy.sba.gov). The practical conclusion is a pre-departure worksheet: draw each call leg, name who pays it, obtain written number-specific answers from the provider,

run consented tests in the visited country, and name a backup who is in the U.S. time zone. Emergency calling is a separate matter: a business number does not supply it, and U.S. FCC guidance tells travelers to learn the emergency number of the country they visit (docs.fcc.gov).

Introduction and Background

This report is written for owners and operators of U.S. firms with roughly 2 to 20 people whose business number rings a mobile phone, and who must decide how calls will reach someone when the owner travels or when a colleague outside the United States must cover. The U.S. small-business population is large (the U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy counts 36.2 million small businesses) (advocacy.sba.gov). The Census Bureau counted 8,361,342 U.S. business establishments in 2023 (www.census.gov), so even a small share of firms with a traveling owner is a large absolute number. No public statistic isolates firms of 2 to 20 people with a traveling owner, and this report does not estimate one.

The question has four distinct situations that are often conflated into "international calling":

- **A customer calls the published business number.** The number's country, the caller's country and the provider's termination rules decide whether the call connects. This is the subject of an [existing toll-free guide](#) on this site and is not repeated here.
- **A service forwards to the employee's U.S. number while that employee is roaming.** The employee's mobile carrier now sees an incoming call to a handset on a visited network.
- **A service forwards directly to a foreign-number destination.** The provider, not the employee's carrier, dials a number in another country, and its own destination rules and rates apply.
- **An app receives the call over data.** The number, the app's country support and the data connection decide delivery, and the carrier's voice network may not be involved at all.

Three facts are separate and should be recorded separately: the **number's country**, the employee's **physical location**, and the **visited network** or data connection. A 3GPP (the mobile-standards partnership) specification for call forwarding says a forwarded-to number in another country is entered in international format "independent of her actual location" of the subscriber, which illustrates the principle that a forwarding destination is a dialed number, not a position (etsi.org).

Context on the traveling population: the National Travel and Tourism Office reports 107.7 million U.S. outbound travelers in 2024 (www.trade.gov), and overseas visits rose 9.8 percent (www.trade.gov). These cover all purposes, not business travelers. Pew Research Center reports that 98 percent of U.S. adults own a cellphone of some kind (www.pewresearch.org), and the Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes telework status for persons at work (www.bls.gov).

The publisher of this report, autoattendant.io, sells a flat-rate business number with an auto attendant menu that rings each person's existing mobile. It is a direct provider of one of the routes compared below, so it appears in the comparison table. It is not a staffed answering service, an AI receptionist or an outbound platform, and no international destination policy or roaming guarantee has been confirmed in writing for this report. The brand is not used as evidence anywhere in this article.

Scope and method. Facts come from carrier support pages, vendor documentation, regulators and standards bodies read in October 2026. Every price is a plan example, not a universal tariff, and no travel route was tested.

Route A: Keep the U.S. Mobile Roaming

Capabilities

In this route nothing changes. Callers reach the published number, the provider rings the employee's U.S. mobile number, and the employee's carrier delivers the call to the handset on a visited network. The employee answers on the cellular voice network, usually on international roaming.

Carrier documents describe two cost mechanisms. The first is an **included or passed roaming product**. Verizon's TravelPass terms say calling within the visited country and back to the U.S. is included (www.verizon.com), and a session starts automatically when the device is used in a TravelPass country (www.verizon.com). AT&T's Day Pass says to "use your domestic talk plan to receive calls" (www.att.com), and its terms list calls received in covered destinations as included (att.com). T-Mobile's business page says all International Passes come with unlimited calling (www.t-mobile.com).

The second is **pay-per-use**. T-Mobile's consumer roaming page applies its pay-per-use rates to "calls made or received while traveling internationally" (www.t-mobile.com). The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) consumer tip sheet, a dated 2012 document, says higher rates abroad may apply to "making or receiving voice calls, receiving or checking voice mail" (docs.fcc.gov), and that a domestic plan described as unlimited may still be billed per minute, text or kilobyte abroad (docs.fcc.gov).

Incoming calls and what the carrier sees

The central question is whether answering, or merely ringing, creates a charge. The answer is carrier-specific. T-Mobile's roaming checklist says an incoming call to a powered-on roaming phone is "charged one minute" even when it goes unanswered to voicemail (www.t-mobile.com), and says there are no charges if the phone is turned off (www.t-mobile.com). Its stateside guide says the U.S. caller is not the one exposed: "the person overseas is subject to international roaming rates if they answer the call" (www.t-mobile.com). These statements describe T-Mobile's consumer terms under the pages cited. They do not describe other carriers, business accounts on other contracts, or older plans.

A pass can cover an incoming call that a per-minute plan would bill, and powering the handset off or relying on Wi-Fi changes both the charge and the route.

Strengths and limitations

- **Strength: nothing to reconfigure**, so it is the fastest route to adopt for a short trip.
- **Strength: predictable for pass-covered days.** Verizon's business TravelPass is charged only on days the device is used in a TravelPass country (www.verizon.com), and AT&T caps Day Pass fees at 10 per line per bill.

- **Limitation: eligibility is account-specific.** AT&T's consumer Day Pass terms say business and government customers are not eligible for that product (att.com); AT&T lists a separate International Day Pass for Business (www.business.att.com). T-Mobile's terms require U.S. residency and primarily U.S. network use (www.t-mobile.com).
- **Limitation: carrier cannot guarantee features.** T-Mobile states it cannot guarantee features will function while roaming on another partner's network (www.t-mobile.com).
- **Limitation: Wi-Fi calling is a separate rate treatment.** Verizon's Wi-Fi calling page says calls originate in the U.S. even when the customer is outside it (www.verizon.com), while calls to international numbers follow the account's international long distance plan (www.verizon.com); Verizon TravelPass terms say Wi-Fi calling to a non-U.S. country is charged international long distance rates (www.verizon.com). AT&T charges no additional amount for Wi-Fi calls to the U.S. (www.att.com). These are carrier Wi-Fi calling rules and should not be applied to third-party apps.

Route B: Forward to a Permitted Foreign Number

Capabilities and who can do it

Here the provider or carrier forwards the public number's calls to a telephone number in the visited country, or to a number belonging to an employee based abroad. Whether this is possible depends on **who does the forwarding** and **which destinations that party permits**.

Mobile-carrier forwarding. Verizon's Call Forwarding FAQ says calls cannot be forwarded to an international number (www.verizon.com), that the feature cannot be set up outside coverage or while traveling internationally, and that forwarding set up before roaming begins should keep working (www.verizon.com). Forwarded calls are billed as though the line owner answered (www.verizon.com). AT&T's page says calls cannot be forwarded to an international number (att.com), that long distance or roaming charges may apply (att.com), and that settings can be changed only from the wireless handset (att.com). T-Mobile's short-code page lists conditional forwarding for a device that is off or out of signal range (www.t-mobile.com), but the pages read for this report did not address foreign destinations. This is a documentation gap, not a finding that T-Mobile forbids them.

Provider-level forwarding. Business phone vendors vary. Quo's documentation says its call forwarding currently supports only U.S. and Canadian numbers (support.quo.com) and that each forwarded call uses two call legs and counts double toward usage (support.quo.com). Dialpad allows an international number as a forwarding number but says personal calls forwarded to it are charged (help.dialpad.com). RingCentral's Australian features page says calls can be forwarded to up to 10 numbers (ringcentral.com), and its U.S. administrator documentation lets an administrator block a specific country or area code from being called (support.ringcentral.com). Sonetel documents forwarding of a U.S. number to "your regular mobile phone number or to a landline number" (sonetel.com) and says forwarding worldwide costs like a regular local call (sonetel.com). That is a vendor statement, and its rate table has to be read for the destination. Google Voice allows a user to link up to 6 numbers for ringing (support.google.com), but the page read did not say whether linked numbers may be outside the U.S.

Gorgias documents forwarding to an external device such as a mobile phone or landline (docs.gorgias.com) and warns that the existing provider may charge an additional fee (docs.gorgias.com). Grasshopper describes sending business calls to a personal phone or another team member (grasshopper.com).

The standards view

Forwarding is a standardized network feature, which is why the same pattern appears across carriers. The 3GPP specification TS 22.082 (Release 17, 2022) says the forwarding subscriber "may be charged for the forwarded part of the call" (etsi.org). The standard permits charging and operators decide. The same document says the forwarded-to party may receive the served subscriber's number depending on subscription options (etsi.org), which is why caller ID on forwarded legs varies by operator, and that conditional forwarding is not allowed when barring of incoming calls while roaming is active (etsi.org).

Strengths and limitations

- **Strength: a local answering number.** The employee can answer on a local SIM or local landline. The FCC notes that an unlocked phone can use a local SIM card (www.fcc.gov).
- **Limitation: destination permission is vendor- and plan-specific.** Across the provider documents cited, two carriers say no international destination, one business vendor limits to the U.S. and Canada, and others allow it with charges.
- **Limitation: the forwarding party usually pays the second leg.** Twilio's documentation describes an application forwarding an inbound call as having two legs, one inbound to Twilio and one outbound to the forwarding number (support.twilio.com), and prices are charged per leg (support.twilio.com). That describes Twilio's own billing, but the two-leg structure is the general reason forwarding costs more than the first leg suggests.
- **Limitation: destination whitelists and verification.** Twilio's geographic permissions apply to both Programmable Voice and Elastic SIP Trunking (www.twilio.com), and Telnyx says many destinations require Level 2 verification before they can be activated (support.telnyx.com). Developer platforms are not the small-business default, but they show that destination approval is normal, not exceptional.

Route C: Business App Over Data

Capabilities

In this route the call arrives in an app and rides a Wi-Fi or mobile data connection. The number remains a U.S. number, and the carrier's voice roaming may not be involved. The FCC's consumer guidance says calling apps over free Wi-Fi may avoid or reduce voice roaming charges (www.fcc.gov), and the older tip sheet says the same of mobile VoIP (voice over internet protocol) calls over Wi-Fi (docs.fcc.gov). Google Voice says that to make calls without roaming one can use Wi-Fi or mobile data (support.google.com), and that Wi-Fi calling starts from the Voice app (support.google.com).

Sonetel describes two modes on one price page: answering in the app at no forwarding cost, or forwarding at the cost of a local call (sonetel.com), and says users can make calls with free Android and iOS apps or a laptop (sonetel.com).

Data and connectivity as separate facts

Data use is small but not zero. Google Voice says calls use about 0.2 MB of data per minute (support.google.com). Zoom lists voice calls at 60 to 100 kbps (support.zoom.com), which converts to roughly 0.45 to 0.75 MB per minute by simple arithmetic (kilobits per second times 60 seconds, divided by 8,000). Treat both as vendor figures under their own conditions, not measured quality.

The harder constraint is availability. Zoom's documentation says Zoom Phone requires a data connection to make and receive calls from a mobile device (library.zoom.com), and that users cannot make a cellular-signal-based phone call without an existing data connection (library.zoom.com). A Zoom feature in early release switches to the carrier voice channel when data or Wi-Fi is weak (library.zoom.com). An app that is offline is not answering the public number, so the fallback route must be defined. Roaming data on the traveler's own SIM is itself a charge.

Jurisdiction limits

App-based calling is regulated differently by country. The United Arab Emirates telecommunications regulator, as one example, says VoIP services must be provided by licensed providers or in collaboration with them (tdra.gov.ae), and publishes a list of VoIP applications currently allowed in the UAE (tdra.gov.ae). This is one jurisdiction, cited only to show why app availability in the visited country must be checked.

Strengths and limitations

- **Strength: avoids voice roaming on the carrier side.** The cost moves to data.
- **Limitation: depends on app-country support and signal.** Offline means unreachable.
- **Limitation: emergency calling.** The FCC says that for some nomadic VoIP services the location of the caller cannot automatically be determined for 911 (transition.fcc.gov). A business number does not supply emergency calling abroad, so use the visited jurisdiction's emergency number. The European Commission notes that in most EU member states 112 operates alongside existing national emergency numbers (ec.europa.eu); that source is dated and should be checked against current guidance.

Route D: U.S.-Based Colleague or Live Answering Backup

Two different backups

This route changes who answers, not how a traveling owner is reached. There are two versions.

- **A U.S.-based colleague.** The business number rings a team member in the U.S. The cost is internal, and time zone and availability matter more than telephony.
- **A live answering service.** A person employed by a third party answers. Ruby's FAQ says calls are answered live by a virtual receptionist with the customer's custom greeting (www.ruby.com) and that receptionists can transfer calls to any phone number the customer wishes (www.ruby.com). Smith.ai describes around-the-clock live call answering (smith.ai). Moneypenny prices by call or minute tiers

(www.money Penny.com), and AnswerConnect rounds up to the nearest minute and bills in one-minute increments (www.answerconnect.com). Plan dollar amounts are omitted because those pages did not state a currency or an effective date.

An auto attendant with menus is not this category. It routes a caller to a person on the customer's team and does not converse, book or triage on the customer's behalf. When someone must converse with, qualify or book callers while the owner is away, a live answering category is the appropriate comparison, and the reader should evaluate those providers directly.

Time zones and hours

Staff availability and time zone belong in the decision. The U.S. Department of Transportation lists nine time zones established by the Standard Time Act as amended (www.transportation.gov), and says a state observing daylight saving time must begin and end on federally mandated dates (www.transportation.gov). The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) states that U.S. daylight saving time ends at 2:00 a.m. on the first Sunday of November (www.nist.gov). The European Commission says EU member states switch to summer time on the last Sunday of March (transport.ec.europa.eu) (and back on the last Sunday of October). In 2026 that means the EU returned to standard time on October 25 while the U.S. returns on November 1, so offsets between the two regions are one hour smaller for that week. This is derived from the cited rules and should be confirmed in a clock tool for the actual dates.

Business-hours routing needs a named zone. Google Workspace's ring-group documentation lets an administrator set working hours for when a group can receive calls (knowledge.workspace.google.com), and Zoom Phone call handling can send calls straight to voicemail during closed hours (support.zoom.com). RingCentral's incoming call rules apply around the clock by default (support.ringcentral.com), and unanswered calls can be forwarded to any extension or phone number (support.ringcentral.com). Microsoft Teams documents a default ring time before forwarding that can be set up to 60 seconds in increments of 10 (support.microsoft.com). A voicemail recipient also needs a route: RingCentral says its voicemail email includes an audio attachment and a transcription (www.ringcentral.com).

Strengths and limitations

- **Strength: independent of the traveler's connectivity**, with a clear owner for a defined window.
- **Limitation: cost and handoff quality**. Live answering is billed by calls or minutes, and the receptionist only knows what the owner scripts. A colleague's hours and zone must be written down.

Feature Comparison

Table 1 below summarizes the four routes plus the publisher's own route, with the call legs, payer and the facts that must be verified in writing. The publisher row is shown at its real model and is not independent evidence.

Route	Call legs	Who pays what (examples)	Key restrictions in sources read	Backup if it fails
A. U.S. mobile roaming	Caller → public number provider → employee's U.S. mobile number → visited network → handset	Pass or per-minute roaming on the employee's line. Verizon business TravelPass \$12/day in other TravelPass countries (www.verizon.com); T-Mobile business calling \$0.20/min (www.t-mobile.com)	Account type and eligibility vary; T-Mobile bills one minute for an unanswered incoming call to a roaming handset	Voicemail, or U.S. colleague
B. Forward to foreign number	Caller → public number provider → foreign destination number → local network → handset	Forwarding party may pay the second leg; vendor example: worldwide forwarding at local-call cost	Verizon and AT&T cannot forward to international numbers; Quo supports U.S. and Canada only; Dialpad allows it with charges (help.dialpad.com)	Second forwarding number, voicemail, or U.S. colleague
C. App over data	Caller → public number provider → app delivery → Wi-Fi or data → handset	Data charges on the traveler's connection; Google Voice about 0.2 MB/min (support.google.com)	Needs data connection (library.zoom.com); country VoIP rules vary (tdra.gov.ae)	Carrier voice fallback if configured (library.zoom.com)
D. U.S. colleague or live answering	Caller → public number provider → U.S. colleague's mobile, or answering service agent	Internal time, or call/minute tiers (www.moneypenny.com)	Hours and time zone; the service must be able to converse, book or triage	Voicemail to email
Publisher: autoattendant.io (auto attendant ringing each person's own mobile)	Caller → one number with a menu → the chosen team member's own mobile	Pricing not compared here; confirm current pricing and terms on the vendor's page. Roaming or data costs on each mobile are the owner's	U.S. and Canada numbers listed; no international destination policy confirmed in writing; one-level menu; not an answering service	A U.S.-based teammate as a menu option

No route is free of a payer. Route A shifts cost to the employee's roaming product, route B to whoever forwards and the destination rate, route C to data, and route D to a salary or a service tier. The publisher's row inherits Route A's roaming exposure when the receiving mobile is a U.S. mobile abroad.

Data Analysis and Evidence

What can be quantified and what cannot

The only verified quantities are plan prices, units and statistical context. No call-quality benchmark, connection-time measurement or latency figure is reported because none was tested or found in an independent primary source.

Table 2 below shows charge components by payer, drawn from the carrier pages, with the unit and the condition.

Component	Example from a named page	Unit and condition	Payer
Verizon business TravelPass	\$12/day in other TravelPass countries (www.verizon.com); Mexico and Canada included on Unlimited plans (www.verizon.com)	Per day, only on days used	Account owner
AT&T International Day Pass	\$12 per 24 hours in over 210 destinations; max 10 daily fees per line per bill (att.com)	Per 24-hour period of use	Account owner (business accounts differ)
T-Mobile International Pass	10-day pass with 15GB and unlimited calling for \$50 (www.t-mobile.com)	Per pass	Account owner
T-Mobile pay-per-use	Calls made or received while traveling (www.t-mobile.com); business page lists \$0.20/min (www.t-mobile.com)	Per minute; differs by page	Account owner
Forwarding second leg	Vendor example: worldwide forwarding costs like a local call; Quo double usage	Per vendor	Forwarding party
Live answering	Call or minute tiers (www.money Penny.com); one-minute rounding (www.answerconnect.com)	Per call or minute	Business

The first conclusion is that components do not stack automatically. A pass and an included per-minute allowance cover the same minutes, so the worksheet enters only the component that applies on a given day. The second is that terms differ by account type: AT&T's consumer Day Pass terms exclude business customers (att.com), and a separate business product exists (www.business.att.com), which is why the worksheet needs the account's own plan page.

The third point concerns currency and date discipline. This report quotes no Sonetel per-minute rate; confirm the currency and date on the provider's own price page before relying on any figure. Any rate in the worksheet should be copied with its currency and on-page date, and distinguished as a subscription, annual commitment or usage charge. Sonetel also states that unused numbers may be reclaimed (sonetel.com), a subscription condition rather than a usage rate.

Example calculation (Hypothetical Example)

A five-person firm sends its owner abroad for 7 days. The owner's line uses a pass-style product at the Verizon business rate listed above, \$12 per day, and uses the phone on 6 of 7 days. The pass component is 6 days times \$12 = \$72, because charges apply only on days of use. The firm also sets a Google Voice-style app route for two 10-minute calls over Wi-Fi: 20 minutes times 0.2 MB = 4 MB of data (support.google.com). Those two lines are non-overlapping only if the calls are not also covered by the pass. A separate return call placed by the owner is not part of the inbound figures. This is illustrative arithmetic, not a quote, and the \$12 figure applies only to eligible accounts and countries.

Blank inputs (taxes, fees, overage, forwarding usage, subscription allocation) stay blank until billed.

Pre-Departure Decision Worksheet and Consented Test Plan

Draw the actual route

Before the trip, write one line per leg: caller → public number/provider → destination number or app → physical employee → backup. The diagram below is the minimal version.

```

Caller (any country)
|
v
Published business number (number country: ____ )
|
v
Forwarding provider (permits destination? yes / no / unknown)
|
| \
| \----> Foreign destination number (country/prefix: ____ ) -> employee abroad
|
+----> Employee's U.S. mobile (roaming on: ____ ) -> employee abroad
|
+----> App over data (app country supported: ____ ) -> employee abroad
|
+----> U.S. colleague or answering service (hours + zone: ____ )

```

Predeparture decision tree

1. **Is a U.S.-based colleague available during the stated hours and zone?** If yes, route D is the lowest-friction fallback and the owner can be a secondary destination.
2. **Is the foreign destination permitted by the forwarding provider?** Ask in writing, naming the number, the destination country, the prefix and the number type.
3. **Is the roaming quote acceptable?** Obtain the pass or per-minute terms for the actual account, and note whether incoming calls and voicemail retrieval are included. T-Mobile, for example, says a voicemail call from the handset abroad is charged at the international roaming rate (www.t-mobile.com), so checking voicemail from another phone changes the cost.
4. **Is there a supported app and data path?** Confirm app availability in the visited country and a data plan or Wi-Fi.
5. **Does someone need to converse, book or triage for the owner?** Then evaluate a live answering category instead of a menu.

Ask for written, number-specific answers

"International calling supported" is not a precise statement. Ask the provider to confirm, in writing, each of the following for the actual number:

- **Allowed source country** for callers, and whether callers from the visited country can reach the number.
- **Destination country, prefix and type** (mobile, fixed, non-geographic).
- **Forwarding permissions** on the account, including who may change them remotely. AT&T, for example, says settings change only from the wireless handset (att.com).

- **Data access and app-country support.**
- **Caller ID behavior** on the forwarded leg. Quo says forwarded calls keep the original caller's number (support.quo.com), while 3GPP leaves the forwarded-to party's display to subscription options.
- **Usage billing:** increments, minimums, rounding, taxes, bundles and whether voicemail drops are billed.

Prepare before departure

- Name the **configuration owner and a backup** with access to the provider's account.
- **Approve the route change** and record it with a restore date.
- **Set opening hours in a named zone**, and note any daylight saving offset change on the travel dates.
- **Choose a voicemail recipient** who is not the traveler.
- **Set billing alerts** if the carrier or provider offers them.
- **Name a test number** that colleagues will call.
- **Do not change real settings as part of research.** Test on a non-customer line.

Consented tests and the test log

Run tests with the consent of every person on the call, and check billed usage when available. Mark billing unknown until settled.

- **Before travel**, from a U.S. origin, to confirm the baseline.
- **In the visited country**, from a local number and a U.S. number.
- **When the U.S. SIM is unavailable**, to test the fallback.
- **On the approved app and data path.**
- **When the recipient does not answer**, to test the no-answer route.
- **When the backup takes over.**

Table 3 below is the test log format.

Field	Entry
Origin number and network	
Receiving number and country	
Visited carrier	
Date, time and zone	
Connection (voice, Wi-Fi, data)	
Menu choice	
Recipient display	
No-answer route	
Callback result	
Provider quote	

Field	Entry
Settled charge	blank until billed

Fill one row per test. A blank "settled charge" is correct until the bill arrives. The log supports a decision, not a quality benchmark.

Return calls and restoring the route

Caller ID and outgoing tariffs do not follow automatically from inbound forwarding. A call the traveler places back to a customer is a separate leg with its own tariff, and which number the customer sees depends on the app or provider. [A separate caller-ID guide](#) on this site covers incoming display and mailbox tests. The STIR/SHAKEN framework, an FCC-described caller ID attestation system, allows providers to verify that transmitted caller ID information matches the caller's number (docs.fcc.gov), but the document read does not address forwarded calls specifically.

On return, restore the normal route, test it, and record the configuration owner and next review date.

Implications and Future Directions

Three implications follow from the evidence.

First, **the public number is not the delivery route**. A number can stay constant while its receiving route changes, but that does not guarantee cross-border support. Carriers and vendors document destination limits, and two large U.S. carriers say their mobile forwarding cannot go to an international number. A reader who needs a foreign destination must pick a provider whose documentation permits it and confirm it for the specific number.

Second, **cost documentation is fragmented and dated**. The FCC tip sheet most directly about roaming charges is from 2012, and the newer FCC roaming document is dated 2020 and offers general advice (use calling apps, consider a local SIM). Carrier pages in this report carried no effective date. A worksheet that records the date a quote was obtained is therefore more reliable than a remembered price.

Third, **jurisdiction matters at every layer**. The EU "roam like at home" rule charges eligible EU and EEA roamers domestic rates (europa.eu), and is not a rule for a U.S. SIM. The UAE publishes a VoIP application list (tdra.gov.ae). Neither generalizes to a third country.

Local SIM and eSIM options, which the FCC already mentions, help only if the business number can ring that SIM, which returns to the forwarding permission question. This report does not forecast carrier policy changes.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the difference between call forwarding and international roaming?

With roaming, the employee's own U.S. mobile line is used on a visited network, and the carrier's roaming terms apply. With forwarding, a provider or carrier dials another number, and the forwarding party may pay the second leg (etsi.org). They are different mechanisms with different payers.

How to receive business calls while traveling internationally

Choose among the four routes above. The choice depends on destination permissions, the roaming quote, app availability and who is on duty.

Can business calls be forwarded to a mobile abroad?

It depends on who forwards. Verizon and AT&T mobile forwarding documents say no international destination. Some business vendors allow international forwarding numbers with charges (help.dialpad.com), and others limit to the U.S. and Canada. Obtain written confirmation for the destination country and prefix.

Do incoming calls cost money while roaming?

Under T-Mobile's consumer roaming checklist an incoming call to a powered-on roaming phone is billed one minute, even if unanswered. Under Verizon TravelPass, calling within the country and back to the U.S. is included (www.verizon.com).

What business phone number works for traveling employees?

A number with a menu that rings each employee's own mobile keeps the public number stable. The publisher offers one such option; confirm its current pricing and cross-border terms with the vendor before relying on it, and see the caveats in Table 1. A staffed answering service is a different category.

Is there an auto attendant that forwards calls to cell phones?

Yes, several vendors provide menus that route to external numbers. For example, Quo documents call forwarding to U.S. and Canadian numbers (support.quo.com), and RingCentral documents forwarding to up to 10 numbers (ringcentral.com). Check the destination country for each.

How does a virtual business number work for international travel?

A virtual number is a number not tied to a particular handset. Nextiva describes country-specific numbers that give a business a local presence in other countries (www.nextiva.com). Sonetel documents forwarding of a U.S. virtual number and answering in an app (sonetel.com). Country support and any usage rules must be confirmed per number.

How to avoid roaming fees on business calls

The documented options are a roaming pass priced for the days of use, Wi-Fi calling where the carrier's rate treatment allows it (www.att.com), an app over Wi-Fi or data, or a local SIM in an unlocked phone. Each moves the cost rather than removing it.

Does a business number provide emergency calling abroad?

No. A business number should not be relied on for emergency calls abroad; dial the local emergency number of the country being visited. The FCC tells travelers to know the emergency number of the country they visit (docs.fcc.gov), and notes that VoIP services often lack some emergency calling features. Use the visited jurisdiction's current regulator or service guidance.

Conclusion

Business calls while traveling abroad are best planned as a set of call legs with named payers, not as a single "international" setting. The four routes (roaming, forwarding to a permitted foreign number, an app over data, and a U.S.-based backup) differ in who pays, what the provider permits, and what happens when the traveler is offline. The carrier documents cited above show that mobile forwarding can be restricted to domestic destinations, that roaming can bill incoming calls under some terms and include them under others, and that apps need data and country support.

The decision is therefore a pre-departure checklist: draw the route, obtain written number-specific answers, enter only non-overlapping charges in the cost sheet, test with consent in the visited country and with the backup, leave unknown billing unknown, and restore the normal route on return with a named owner and review date. Where a person must converse, book or triage for the owner, a staffed answering service is the right category and should be evaluated on its own terms. Readers who want a flat-rate business number whose menu rings each team member's own mobile can compare it with these routes at autoattendant.io, after confirming in writing any cross-border use.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. <https://www.verizon.com/support/call-forwarding-faqs>
2. <https://att.com/support/article/wireless/KM1011513>
3. <https://www.t-mobile.com/support/coverage/stateside-international-calling-and-texting-services>
4. <https://www.t-mobile.com/support/coverage/international-roaming-checklist>
5. <https://support.quo.com/core-concepts/administration/call-flows/call-forwarding>
6. <https://help.dialpad.com/docs/forwarding-number-faqs.md>
7. <https://www.verizon.com/business/products/plans/international/travel>
8. <https://att.com/international/day-pass/terms-conditions>
9. <https://www.t-mobile.com/business/plans/international-business-plan>
10. <https://www.trade.gov/feature-article/us-outbound-travelers-characteristics-2024>
11. <https://advocacy.sba.gov?p=30239>
12. <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-298907A1.pdf>
13. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/susb/news-and-updates/news.All.List_488140413.html
14. https://etsi.org/deliver/etsi_TS/122000_122099/122082/17.00.00_60/ts_122082v170000p.pdf
15. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile>
16. <https://www.bls.gov/lau/state-telework-table-2025.htm>
17. <https://www.verizon.com/support/travelpass-faqs>
18. <https://www.att.com/support/article/wireless/KM1175103>
19. <https://www.t-mobile.com/cell-phone-plans/international-roaming-plans>
20. <https://www.business.att.com/categories/international-add-ons.html>

21. <https://www.t-mobile.com/support/coverage/international-roaming-services>
22. <https://www.verizon.com/support/knowledge-base-14069>
23. <https://www.t-mobile.com/support/plans-features/self-service-short-codes>
24. <https://ringcentral.com/au/en/office/features/call-forwarding/overview.html>
25. https://support.ringcentral.com/article-v2/Enable-Disable-International-Calling-Feature.html?brand=RC_US&product=RingEX&language=en_US
26. <https://sonetel.com/en/help/help-topics/telephony/countries-supported/us-phone-number>
27. <https://support.google.com/voice/answer/165221?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop>
28. <https://docs.gorgias.com/en-US/forward-calls-into-or-out-of-gorgias-296976>
29. <https://grasshopper.com/callforwarding>
30. https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/international_roaming_-_using_your_mobile_phone_in_other_countries.pdf
31. <https://support.twilio.com/hc/en-us/articles/223179868-How-Much-Will-My-Voice-Application-Cost-per-Minute>
32. <https://www.twilio.com/docs/voice/tutorials/voice-dialing-geographic-permissions>
33. <https://support.telnyx.com/en/articles/4320411-outbound-voice-profiles>
34. <https://support.google.com/voice/answer/3379129?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform%3DAndroid>
35. <https://support.google.com/voice/answer/7649189>
36. <https://sonetel.com/en/prices/international-calls>
37. https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0060748
38. <https://library.zoom.com/zoom-workplace/zoom-phone/zoom-phone-bluepaper/things-to-note>
39. <https://library.zoom.com/zoom-workplace/zoom-phone/expert-insights/zoom-phone-mobile-options>
40. <https://tdra.gov.ae/en/About/tdra-sectors/information-and-digital-government/departments/policy-and-programs-department/internet-guidelines>
41. <https://transition.fcc.gov/pshs/services/911-services/voip/challenges.html>
42. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/memo_10_35/MEMO_10_35_EN.pdf
43. <https://www.ruby.com/faqs>
44. <https://smith.ai/pricing>
45. <https://www.moneypenny.com/us/pricing>
46. <https://www.answerconnect.com/plans-direct>
47. <https://www.transportation.gov/regulations/time-act>
48. <https://www.nist.gov/pml/time-and-frequency-division/popular-links/daylight-saving-time-dst>
49. https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/summertime_en
50. <https://knowledge.workspace.google.com/admin/voice/edit-ring-groups>
51. https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0069180
52. <https://support.ringcentral.com/s/article/4618>
53. <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/call-forwarding-call-groups-and-simultaneous-ring-in-teams-a88da9e8-1343-4d3c-9bda-4b9615e4183e>
54. <https://www.ringcentral.com/us/en/office/features/voicemail/overview.html>
55. <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-407144A1.pdf>

56. https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/consumers/internet-telecoms/mobile-roaming-costs/index_en.htm
57. <https://www.nextiva.com/blog/what-is-a-virtual-phone-number.html>

THE PUBLISHER

About Auto Attendant

Auto Attendant gives a small business one phone number and a recorded menu that sends each caller to the right person. The call rings the mobile that person already carries, using their normal dialler and their normal mobile plan. Pricing is a single flat monthly fee for the whole company rather than a charge for each user, and there is no app, desk phone or hardware to install.

One number, one menu, the phones you already own

A caller dials the business number, hears a short greeting and chooses an option. Each option can ring one mobile, ring several at once so whoever is free answers first, or try people one after another in a set order. There is no limit on how many people sit on the receiving end, because nobody is billed per seat. Setup is done by the owner in a few minutes: pick a number, write the greeting, and point each option at a mobile.

What it deliberately is not

An auto attendant routes a call; it does not answer one. Nobody at Auto Attendant speaks to callers, and no AI stands in for a receptionist. A business that wants its calls handled, messages taken and appointments booked wants an answering service, which is a different product at a different price. A business that needs call recording, queues, agent dashboards or CRM integration wants a contact centre platform. Auto Attendant is for the case where the call should simply reach the right pocket.

Keeping personal numbers off the internet

The business number is the only number a caller ever sees. Personal mobile numbers are never displayed and never given out, which is what lets an owner put a number on a website, an invoice, a van or a Google Business Profile without handing a personal line to everyone who finds it. An existing advertised number can be ported across and kept, and the old line keeps working while the port is in progress.

Work with Auto Attendant

Visit [Auto Attendant](#) to see [how it works](#), [how it compares](#) to a personal mobile, Google Voice and a full phone platform, and the current [pricing](#).

Telephone number portability, emergency calling and caller-ID rules differ by country and change over time. Articles published here describe general practice and cite primary regulator and carrier sources; they are not a guarantee of any timeline, and they are not legal or regulatory advice for a specific business.

Website: <https://autoattendant.io>

This article is educational. Verify consequential medical, legal, financial, regulatory and technical decisions with appropriate professionals and the cited primary sources. Company services are described separately from the article's research findings.