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# Business Phone Outage Recovery Plan and Worksheet

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.

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## Executive Summary

A **business phone outage recovery plan** should answer five questions on one page: what failed, which part of the call path still works, who can change routing, what customers should hear, and what external call proves recovery. Business continuity guidance places communications beside information technology recovery, and treats testing as part of the plan ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)) ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)). The operational unit is the full path from the public number through the hosting provider, **menu or switch**, destination network, staff member, and no-answer mailbox. A fallback that relies on the same unavailable control plane remains an unproved fallback; CISA explicitly asks planners to check the services on which a backup depends ([www.cisa.gov](http://www.cisa.gov)).

For a local power or office internet failure, a previously configured redirect to a reachable mobile may keep inbound calls moving, but the owner should call the public number from outside to verify it. Comcast Business documents remote configuration for certain services, while Verizon Business Digital Voice documents an automatic continuity route to an alternate number. Those statements apply to the specified products and configurations, not every phone number or provider ([business.comcast.com](http://business.comcast.com)) ([businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com](http://businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com)). A cloud-provider outage is different: a setting hosted by that provider may be unavailable. The worksheet therefore records an alternate customer contact path, independent staff coordination method, and the actual provider response confirmed in a drill.

The practical test is a full-path drill. One person declares the drill, another calls the published number from a number outside the routing list, every menu choice and no-answer path is checked, and the operator records the first successful external test time. Talkroute's own testing instruction specifically uses a calling number absent from its forwarding list ([support.talkroute.com](http://support.talkroute.com)). The **recovery interval** in this worksheet is the elapsed time between detection and that first successful call, an internal operating measure rather than an industry benchmark. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reported an average **11 hours** of electricity interruptions per customer in **2024**, with major events accounting for **80%** of interruption hours; those power figures do not predict an individual business's phone outage ([www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov)) ([www.eia.gov](http://www.eia.gov)).

For an actual U.S. emergency, direct people to **911**, not a business menu or on-call route. The federal 911 program says calls should be made to 911 in a true emergency ([www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov)). Keep a printed contact sheet, prewritten customer status message, and a designated activation owner. A mobile-ringing auto attendant can be a regular small-team route, but its mobile destinations and number-hosting service still need to be tested. As of September 2026, **autoattendant.io** lists a price of **\$29 per month** for the company, with **up to nine** menu options ([autoattendant.io](http://autoattendant.io)) ([autoattendant.io](http://autoattendant.io)).

## Introduction and Background

When the office phone stops ringing, the first question is usually framed as “is the phone system down?” That question hides several different faults. The public number may still accept calls while the office router has no power. A mobile may work while the cloud service that hosts the number is unavailable. A phone may receive voice calls but its team's email notification path may be down. The response depends on which link failed and whether somebody can change the route from a functioning connection. FEMA explicitly treats connectivity to a service provider as an information technology recovery dependency ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)).

This report is a **phone-only continuity worksheet** for small U.S. teams. It addresses incoming customer calls, staff coordination, urgent requests, caller messages, restoration, and the test that proves a route works. It does not assume a particular uptime or guarantee failover. The worksheet can be copied into a shared document and printed. The owner should replace every blank with the real number holder, administrator, provider, password recovery method, on-call person, and alternate network before using it.

The plan should be brief enough to use under pressure but detailed enough to survive an absent manager. The American Dental Association's practice guidance emphasizes having a clear sequence of actions, and the U.S. Small Business Administration advises an off-site, current stakeholder contact list ([www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)) ([www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)). Those recommendations fit a trades crew, property office, or small practice as well as a formal business continuity program. A phone plan is one component of that broader program; injury, fire, or other immediate threats follow emergency response procedures.

The crucial constraint is that a redirect setting is useful only if the number can still receive calls, the setting is already active or changeable, and the destination is reachable. The same test applies to voicemail. Email delivery and voicemail retrieval add separate dependencies. The owner should record the observed result for each route, then recheck after a provider or staffing change ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)).

## Definition and Failure Taxonomy

### Map the complete call path

A **business phone outage** is any interruption that prevents a caller from reaching the intended person, hearing a useful recorded message, or leaving a retrievable message through the published business number. The path can fail at the number host, network connection, office power, routing control, destination mobile service, staff availability, or mailbox access. The Federal Communications Commission defines interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service in terms that include a broadband connection at the user's location; that makes local connectivity a material dependency for some office endpoints ([help.bdc.fcc.gov](http://help.bdc.fcc.gov)).

Use these questions to identify the failing layer:

- **Published number:** Who owns or hosts it, and is the account accessible away from the premises?
- **Inbound route:** Which provider receives the call before any forwarding, menu, or ring group?
- **Control plane:** Who can change the route, by what portal or support number, and on which connection?
- **Office endpoint:** Which modem, router, switch, handset, and power supply must operate?
- **Mobile endpoint:** Which staff mobiles and carriers receive forwarded calls, and which are on the same carrier?
- **Message path:** Where does unanswered traffic land, and does retrieval require email, app access, or the provider portal?
- **Customer update path:** Can the business change its website, listing, or recorded greeting when the main number cannot be reached?
- **Proof:** Which external phone will call in and record the actual outcome?

The Australian government's network-outage guidance recommends avoiding a single communications form and considering different phone and internet providers. It is useful design advice, **not a U.S. legal requirement** ([business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au)) ([business.gov.au](https://business.gov.au)). A second carrier is only a candidate route until an on-site test confirms coverage, device power, and account access. Likewise, a Wi-Fi Calling backup depends on working Wi-Fi internet; T-Mobile states that internet access on the Wi-Fi network is required ([www.t-mobile.com](https://www.t-mobile.com)).

## Separate four common failure modes

**Local power loss** may disable an office endpoint and network equipment even if a hosted number still receives calls. A charged mobile and a preconfigured alternate route can be useful, subject to the mobile network and number host. Keep a charging method that works without office power; the American Red Cross recommends communication devices that do not depend on building power ([www.redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)). Do not infer that a battery at the desk protects every modem, router, optical terminal, or upstream network component.

**Office internet loss** can make app, desk phone, and browser administration unavailable on that connection. A cellular data connection may permit remote changes if the provider portal itself works. For example, Comcast Business says certain customers can configure forwarding remotely via My Account or its app, while Verizon Business Digital Voice documents continuity activation when office network connectivity is lost ([business.comcast.com](https://business.comcast.com)) ([businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com](https://businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com)).

**Cloud phone provider loss** is a different boundary. If the same provider both hosts the number and operates the fallback menu, moving an option inside that service is not a proven independent route. Check the provider's exact outage behavior and whether an upstream carrier, support team, or previously provisioned independent destination can alter the route. CISA's dependency prompt asks whether the backup relies on another service, precisely the question to ask here ([www.cisa.gov](https://www.cisa.gov)).

**Mobile-carrier loss** can interrupt the destination phone even while the published number and menu work. AT&T says a mobile network outage can affect voice calls; its guidance recommends configuring Wi-Fi Calling before it is needed. Wi-Fi Calling itself requires a suitable internet connection ([www.att.com](https://www.att.com)) ([www.att.com](https://www.att.com)) ([www.t-mobile.com](https://www.t-mobile.com)). A second mobile carrier may improve diversity, but shared geography, power and backhaul can still matter. Record actual local test results rather than a coverage promise.

## Inventory, Routing Options, and Owners

### Make the dependency matrix editable

*Table 1* compares the route choices that a small team might place behind one public number. Fill the final column with the actual account owner and a dated test result. The published number still needs a functioning upstream host for every row.

| Route or product                                 | What it can do, according to its source                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Dependency to verify in the worksheet                                                                                                                 | Owner and last external test         |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Existing office VoIP or hosted phone</b>      | Local endpoint uses broadband; product-specific continuity may redirect unreachable users ( <a href="https://help.bdc.fcc.gov">help.bdc.fcc.gov</a> ) ( <a href="https://businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com">businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com</a> ). | Office power, router, provider ingress, admin access, destination line.                                                                               | Owner: _____;<br>date/result: _____. |
| <b>autoattendant.io</b>                          | Menu routes callers to team mobiles; listed as of September 2026 at <b>\$29/month</b> company-wide ( <a href="https://autoattendant.io">autoattendant.io</a> ) ( <a href="https://autoattendant.io">autoattendant.io</a> ).                        | Its number/menu service, each destination mobile carrier, staff answer, and no-answer mailbox.                                                        | Owner: _____;<br>date/result: _____. |
| <b>Comcast Business VoiceEdge continuity</b>     | Documented remote forwarding configuration for the covered service ( <a href="https://business.comcast.com">business.comcast.com</a> ).                                                                                                            | Exact subscription and advance settings, provider service, separate route to the destination.                                                         | Owner: _____;<br>date/result: _____. |
| <b>Verizon Business Digital Voice continuity</b> | Documented automatic forwarding to an alternate number when the phone has no internet connectivity ( <a href="https://businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com">businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com</a> ).                                                    | Correct feature configuration, number host, alternate destination, admin portal.                                                                      | Owner: _____;<br>date/result: _____. |
| <b>Talkroute forwarding destination</b>          | A forwarding phone can be a separately serviced cell, landline, or VoIP number ( <a href="https://support.talkroute.com">support.talkroute.com</a> ).                                                                                              | Destination service and assignment to actual routing, which is a separate step ( <a href="https://support.talkroute.com">support.talkroute.com</a> ). | Owner: _____;<br>date/result: _____. |
| <b>Managed answering service</b>                 | Human agents may answer and record requests if contracted for that work.                                                                                                                                                                           | Separate provider, hours, escalation script, number handoff, data handling.                                                                           | Owner: _____;<br>date/result: _____. |

The table is a route comparison, not a performance ranking. A provider's documented feature establishes what a configuration may do, not that the particular business has activated it or that it will survive every upstream fault. The direct-provider row for autoattendant.io is included because the worksheet compares ways to route a business number to a team. The row describes team call routing, with staff still responsible for answering. If urgent calls require a person who is not on the team to answer, contract a managed answering service and test that handoff separately.

Make the inventory as specific as the table. Put these fields on the worksheet:

- **Published number:** The exact number customers dial and its account identifier.
- **Account owner:** The legal account holder and a reachable backup decision maker.
- **Inbound provider:** The number host, service name, and support contact.
- **Routing controls:** The current menu, ring group, forwarding rule, and remote change method.
- **Destinations:** Every mobile number, carrier, **on-call schedule**, and last tested location.
- **Office dependencies:** Internet provider, modem, router, phone equipment, and power source.
- **No-answer path:** Voicemail location, retrieval method, notification inbox, and access owner.
- **Customer updates:** The person who can change the website, listing, or recorded status.

- **Secure access:** Where an authorized backup finds credentials without printing passwords.

Keep a secure access procedure and an emergency contact method beside the printed worksheet. FEMA recommends compiling contact information in advance and updating and securing lists ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)) ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)).

## Assign one activation owner and one backup

*Table 2* is a compact responsibility and contact sheet. “Accountable” means the person who makes the call to activate or stand down the alternate route; “does” means the person who performs or verifies it. Replace the role labels with names and contact methods that work off-site. OSHA's emergency-plan guidance recommends selecting a responsible coordinator ([www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)).

| Action                                 | Accountable owner | Person who does or checks it | Printed contact and alternate channel                          |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Detect failure and time-stamp it       | _____             | _____                        | External test phone: _____; alternate text/email: _____        |
| Decide which layer failed              | _____             | _____                        | Number host support: _____; office internet support: _____     |
| Activate or request alternate route    | _____             | _____                        | Admin login location: _____; provider support number: _____    |
| Answer urgent customer calls           | _____             | _____                        | Primary mobile/carrier: _____; alternate mobile/carrier: _____ |
| Update customers                       | _____             | _____                        | Website/listing owner: _____; status-message approver: _____   |
| Test menu, no-answer, and mailbox      | _____             | _____                        | Caller outside route list: _____; mailbox access: _____        |
| Restore usual route and close incident | _____             | _____                        | Change approver: _____; final test caller: _____               |

The point of the table is to remove a single-person dependency. The backup owner should be able to reach a printed provider contact and understand whether activation can happen without office internet. A phone tree or alternative staff channel gives the crew a way to coordinate if the normal business number is unavailable; the American Red Cross lists phone trees, email lists, and mass notification systems as workplace options ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)). Keep an off-site copy and a paper copy of critical contacts ([www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)) ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)).

## Activation, Customer Updates, and a Call-Recovery Drill

### Use the failure-mode drill log

Table 3 is both an activation checklist and a log for a short scenario drill. The symptom narrows the likely layer; it does not diagnose the cause on its own. In every row, the first safe action is an **external test call** and a check of provider status or support information. Enter the timestamp of detection, the route chosen, the first successful outside call, and the limitation observed.

| Scenario and observable symptom                                                                         | First safe action and alternate route                                                                                                                                                                  | Limitation to test                                                                                                                                                                                                | Detection / external success / result |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Local power:</b> office handsets and router are dark; mobiles may work.                              | Call public number from off-site. If hosted ingress works, use preconfigured mobile destination or provider-assisted redirect.                                                                         | Router, modem, and upstream equipment may lack power; mobile needs charge and service ( <a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a> ).                                                                 | ____ /<br>____ /<br>____              |
| <b>Office internet:</b> app or desk phone offline; published number may still answer.                   | Test public number, then use cellular data or provider support to activate the documented continuity route ( <a href="http://businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com">businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com</a> ). | Portal access and the destination line must still work.                                                                                                                                                           | ____ /<br>____ /<br>____              |
| <b>Cloud provider:</b> published number fails or menu cannot be changed from an independent connection. | Confirm provider status; publish the preapproved alternate contact number and message through a separate channel.                                                                                      | A reroute inside that provider is unverified until an external call succeeds ( <a href="http://www.cisa.gov">www.cisa.gov</a> ).                                                                                  | ____ /<br>____ /<br>____              |
| <b>Mobile carrier:</b> menu works, but one destination cannot receive voice.                            | Send calls to an already tested phone on another working path; notify staff through a separate channel.                                                                                                | Wi-Fi Calling requires usable internet; forwarding settings may require the affected handset ( <a href="http://www.t-mobile.com">www.t-mobile.com</a> ) ( <a href="http://www.verizon.com">www.verizon.com</a> ). | ____ /<br>____ /<br>____              |
| <b>Staff unavailable:</b> calls ring, but nobody answers.                                               | Test no-answer behavior, voicemail retrieval, and the on-call successor.                                                                                                                               | Voicemail notification email may have a distinct dependency; message must be retrievable.                                                                                                                         | ____ /<br>____ /<br>____              |

The log's value lies in the **observed** result. A green provider dashboard or a successful portal change is not the customer experience. If the public number cannot be recovered quickly, the owner needs a separate place to publish an alternate number and should tell callers or customers when the next update will appear. FEMA recommends preparing adaptable message templates in advance, and SBA recommends phone, text, and social media updates during recovery ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)) ([www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)).

Run the proposed **call-recovery drill** in this order:

1. **Declare the scenario.** The owner names the failed layer and notes detection time in Table 3.
2. **Call from outside.** Use a phone number that is not on the forwarding list; Talkroute specifically requires that approach for its own routing test ([support.talkroute.com](http://support.talkroute.com)).
3. **Listen to the first impression.** Record whether the public number rings, plays the **intended greeting**, or returns a network announcement.

4. **Test each menu option and accessible call path.** Confirm it reaches the named person or ring group, and ask the recipient what caller identification appears. For a public accommodation, check that relay and TTY callers can use the active automated menu and reach a person or usable message path; repeat that check for any automated menu or message path on the alternate route ([U.S. Department of Justice, Title III regulations](#)).
5. **Test no answer.** Let the call time out, leave a harmless test message, then retrieve it by the exact channel the team will use.
6. **Check staff notification and relay-call handling.** Confirm that the activation owner, answering staff, and backup owner received the same status and instructions. For a public accommodation, train answering staff to accept relay calls and handle them like other calls ([U.S. Department of Justice, effective communication guidance](#)).
7. **Check the alternate.** Call the independent published contact path from a separate device, rather than assuming the change worked.
8. **Log first success.** Write the timestamp of the first completed external call that reaches a person or usable mailbox.
9. **Restore the ordinary route.** Reverse temporary settings only after the business confirms ordinary service from outside.
10. **Repeat critical paths.** Recheck the main number, each menu branch, no-answer behavior, and status message after restoration.

This sequence is a proposed small-team drill; its duration depends on the menu branches, no-answer timeout, and restoration checks. Some provider controls require preparation before an outage. Zoom's Local Survivability instructions, for example, say administrators should set forwarding logic in advance and may need web-portal access during an outage; Zoom also states that its main company number cannot use that particular Local Survivability forwarding feature ([support.zoom.com](#)) ([support.zoom.com](#)) ([support.zoom.com](#)). Those details show why an owner should ask about the exact number and service, not assume every forwarding toggle is interchangeable.

## Prewrite the customer message and stand-down note

A useful status message gives customers a working path, scope, and next update time without promising an unverified restoration time. A template is: "Our published phone line is temporarily unavailable. For existing appointments, contact [tested alternate number or channel]. For new requests, use [tested channel]. We will post an update at [time]. If someone needs immediate emergency assistance, call 911." Before publishing, the owner must check that both bracketed channels work and that the right staff member can monitor them. FEMA explicitly recommends pre-scripted messages with blanks ([www.ready.gov](#)).

For U.S. businesses, the distinction between urgent business requests and public emergencies is essential. The federal 911 program directs true emergencies to **911**; the business menu is not an emergency-service route ([www.911.gov](#)). Do not place a routine test call to 911 to validate this worksheet. The 911 program says such calls can be scheduled with the local call center through its non-emergency contact ([www.911.gov](#)). Staff should also preserve a usable path for customers with communication disabilities; U.S. Department of Justice guidance addresses effective communication and says public-serving businesses must treat relay calls like other calls ([www.ada.gov](#)) ([www.ada.gov](#)).

After the route is restored, note the restoration time, the outside test result, any messages that landed in a different mailbox, and any customer requests that need a callback. Update the customer notice with the confirmed operating state. The owner should keep the incident log with the revised worksheet, then change any weak contact, missing access, or untested destination discovered in the drill.

## Data Analysis and Evidence

### Measure recovery with the business's own timestamps

There is no defensible universal statistic for how long a small business phone outage lasts or how many calls this specific firm will miss. For this plan, the useful quantity is **time to first successful external test**. Record the detection timestamp and the first time an independent caller reaches a person or a usable mailbox on the designated route. Subtract the first from the second. For example, if detection is **09:05** and success is **09:17**, the illustrative recovery interval is **12 minutes**. Those values are example inputs, **not a benchmark** or a service-level promise.

Pair that measure with four counts taken from the drill or real incident:

- **Successful external calls:** Number of test calls that reached the intended person or usable mailbox, by branch.
- **Failed options:** Number of menu branches that did not reach the intended destination.
- **Unretrieved messages:** Number of test or customer messages that could not be accessed by the assigned owner.
- **Unanswered urgent requests:** Number of requests requiring follow-up, using the business's own definition of urgent.

A **recovery time objective (RTO)** is the target maximum recovery period a business chooses for a function; the National Institute of Standards and Technology defines it in relation to how long a component can be in recovery before affecting business processes ([csrc.nist.gov](https://csrc.nist.gov)). FEMA's business continuity template asks planners to identify RTOs for business processes and information technology, and its recovery guidance says the resource recovery time should match the dependent business function ([www.ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)) ([www.ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)). A firm may set separate targets for an existing customer's urgent service call and a routine billing question. The worksheet measures actual call reachability against those chosen targets; it does not import a generic number.

Power risk is real but must be read carefully. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reported that customers experienced **11 hours** of electricity interruptions on average in **2024**, and that major events accounted for **80%** of interruption hours ([www.eia.gov](https://www.eia.gov)) ([www.eia.gov](https://www.eia.gov)). This is a national, annual electricity measure, not a telephone outage duration, a local forecast, or a probability that a particular office will be unreachable. It supports testing the power scenario, not buying a specific failover promise. FEMA's risk worksheet likewise asks organizations to consider both likely lower-impact and unlikely higher-impact scenarios ([www.ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)).

A short drill may reveal more than a vendor feature sheet. Test results can show that an admin portal requires the office connection, that the alternate staff mobile lacks coverage in a service area, or that messages arrive in an inbox the on-call person cannot access. Each observation should become a dated entry with the route, caller number, destination, and result. SBA recommends staff drills as a way to find what works and what needs improvement ([www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)). Repeating the test after routing or staff changes is a practical control, while its frequency should reflect the business's risk tolerance and operations.

## Implications and Future Directions

The main purchasing question is **which dependency is removed** by each proposed backup. A second mobile on the same carrier may create a second handset but not a second network path. A forwarding rule inside the same cloud provider may help with an office outage, but its behavior during a provider outage requires direct confirmation. A voicemail-to-email feature can preserve a message only if the number host, mailbox, delivery, and reader's email access all function. CISA's dependency questions are a useful way to interrogate each apparent redundancy ([www.cisa.gov](http://www.cisa.gov)).

For a team choosing a regular routing product, the **expected daily call pattern** matters. A menu that rings employees' existing mobiles can place calls with the responsible person without desk hardware. The route comparison above includes this category and separates it from outside human answering. A business that needs trained outside staff to take messages, triage requests, or book appointments should evaluate a managed answering service. A business that needs deep queues, recording, analytics, or many integrated endpoints should evaluate a fuller phone platform. The choice should follow actual coverage and operational requirements, not a generic promise of "disaster recovery."

Provider features can be useful when scoped correctly. As of September 2026, Google Voice documents ringing verified linked phones and permits **up to six** linked numbers on the cited setup page; Talkroute documents independently serviced forwarding destinations, but warns that adding a destination does not automatically assign it to routing ([support.google.com](http://support.google.com)) ([support.google.com](http://support.google.com)) ([support.talkroute.com](http://support.talkroute.com)) ([support.talkroute.com](http://support.talkroute.com)). Verizon's mobile forwarding FAQ says changes cannot be managed without the mobile handset, which makes an already affected phone a poor activation control for that feature ([www.verizon.com](http://www.verizon.com)). These are different products and account settings, so the owner must test the configuration actually purchased.

Keep the plan portable. The printed page should identify support numbers, an alternate public update channel, the decision owner, the external tester, and the last test date. The Australian government's printed-contact recommendation and the American Red Cross paper-copy recommendation both address the simplest failure: the digital contact list is inaccessible at the moment it is needed ([business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au)) ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)). Future provider changes should trigger a fresh call-path map and a full external drill before the old route is removed.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### What should a small business do first when its phone system goes down?

Call the published number from an independent phone, record the time and exact result, and determine whether the office endpoint, number host, mobile destination, or admin path is affected. Ask the assigned owner to activate only a documented alternate route, then test that route from outside. If the main number itself cannot complete a call, publish a preapproved alternate contact through a separate working channel. FEMA's communications guidance supports preparing contact lists and message templates before the disruption ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)) ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)).

### How can a team keep customer calls coming during an outage?

If the public number still receives calls, a provider-supported continuity route or previously configured mobile destination may work. Verizon Business Digital Voice documents a specific continuity feature, but the owner must confirm the subscription, settings, and actual test result for the business ([businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com](http://businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com)). If the number host is unavailable, a second customer contact path must be communicated independently; an untested reroute on that same provider is not a guarantee.

### Can a business route calls to staff mobile phones?

Yes, where the selected number service supports verified or configured destinations. Google Voice describes ringing linked phones, Talkroute requires a forwarding destination with independent service ([support.google.com](http://support.google.com)) ([support.talkroute.com](http://support.talkroute.com)). In each case the staff phone must be charged, reachable, and answered; the caller should be tested through the published number. Routing a call to a mobile does not establish that the mobile's carrier will remain available during a broader outage ([www.t-mobile.com](http://www.t-mobile.com)).

### Is call forwarding a complete backup plan?

No single forwarding switch describes the whole recovery path. The owner needs to know whether the number host is still receiving calls, whether the forwarding control can be reached, whether the destination network works, and what happens on no answer. AT&T describes Safe Call Forwarding for its Phone for Business in a network or power outage after battery exhaustion; that is a product-specific feature, not a universal behavior ([www.att.com](http://www.att.com)). Verizon's mobile forwarding FAQ says its own mobile feature cannot be managed without the handset and does not forward text messages ([www.verizon.com](http://www.verizon.com)) ([www.verizon.com](http://www.verizon.com)).

### What belongs in a business phone disaster recovery plan template?

At minimum: the public number and host; office internet and power dependencies; admin owner and backup; provider support contacts; current destinations and carriers; the alternate customer path; an approved status message; the no-answer and voicemail route; a scenario drill log; restoration owner; and the timestamp of the first successful external test. This is a narrow communications supplement to a broader continuity plan. FEMA's emergency planning guidance covers communications, technology recovery, and continuity together ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)).

## How are missed calls handled after service returns?

The owner should compare the provider's call records and voicemail against staff notes, identify messages that went to alternate locations, assign callbacks, and confirm that no urgent request remains without an owner. The precise records available depend on the provider and plan. A test voicemail is important because a route can ring correctly yet fail at no answer. In the customer update, state only the contact paths and service status that have passed an external test; FEMA emphasizes telling customers how they are affected ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)).

## Should an auto attendant replace an answering service?

An auto attendant can direct a caller to an employee and offer a no-answer message path. It does not provide a human outside the business to take the call. [autoattendant.io](http://autoattendant.io) explicitly says its team members, not outside receptionists, answer calls ([autoattendant.io](http://autoattendant.io)). If no employee can cover urgent hours or if a practice needs intake staff to triage and book requests, an answering service or broader platform is the better operational category. Whatever product is selected, emergency assistance remains separate from the business number ([www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov)).

## Conclusion

A small business can turn a vague “phone outage plan” into a usable worksheet by mapping the public number all the way to a person or retrievable mailbox, naming an activation owner, and proving an alternate path with an external call. The tables above make the dependencies, owner contacts, failure scenarios, and drill results visible on a single operating record. They also make the limits visible: an office-internet workaround may still depend on the cloud number host, and a mobile destination may still depend on its carrier.

The plan is ready only when the team can explain what happens under local power loss, office internet loss, provider loss, and mobile-carrier loss; publish a tested customer update; and restore the normal route without losing messages. Set recovery objectives from the business's own call priorities, use the detection-to-success interval as an internal measure, and repeat the drill when people, providers, or routes change. Keep urgent business routing distinct from public emergency response: in the United States, a true emergency goes to **911** ([www.911.gov](http://www.911.gov)).

## Source links

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

1. <https://www.ready.gov/business/emergency-plans>
2. <https://www.ready.gov/business/emergency-plans/continuity-planning>
3. <https://autoattendant.io/articles/call-queue-ring-group-auto-attendant>
4. <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/critical-infrastructure-security-and-resilience/resilience-services/infrastructure-dependency-primer/implement>
5. <https://business.comcast.com/storm-ready>
6. [https://businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com/business\\_digital\\_voice\\_features/](https://businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com/business_digital_voice_features/)
7. <https://support.talkroute.com/hc/en-us/articles/213858798-How-to-Add-a-Forwarding-Phone-Number>

8. <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=66744>
9. <https://www.911.gov/calling-911/frequently-asked-questions/>
10. <https://autoattendant.io/>
11. <https://www.ready.gov/business/emergency-plans/recovery-plan>
12. <https://www.ada.org/resources/practice/practice-management/managing-natural-and-man-made-disasters>
13. <https://www.sba.gov/blog/2021/2021-05/protect-your-small-business-hurricane-season/>
14. <https://help.bdc.fcc.gov/hc/en-us/articles/5296999815579-Fixed-Voice-Subscription-Definitions>
15. <https://business.gov.au/news/keep-your-business-connected-in-a-network-outage>
16. <https://www.t-mobile.com/support/coverage/wi-fi-calling-from-t-mobile>
17. <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/power-outage.html>
18. <https://businessdigitalvoice.verizon.com/admin-portal-support-call-forwarding/>
19. <https://www.att.com/wireless/stay-connected-during-network-outages/>
20. <https://support.talkroute.com/hc/en-us/articles/26911332244627-Understanding-Talkroute-Requirements-and-Limitations>
21. <https://autoattendant.io/articles/after-hours-on-call-plan-small-trade-team>
22. <https://www.ready.gov/business/emergency-plans/crisis-communications-plans>
23. <https://www.osha.gov/etools/evacuation-plans-procedures/eap/develop-implement>
24. <https://www.redcross.org/local/florida/south-florida/about-us/news-and-events/news/preparing-your-workplace-for-hurricane-season.html>
25. <https://www.verizon.com/support/call-forwarding-faqs/>
26. <https://www.sba.gov/blog/2019/2019-03/seven-ways-start-your-business-continuity-plan/>
27. <https://autoattendant.io/articles/phone-menu-scripts-small-business>
28. <https://www.ada.gov/law-and-regs/regulations/title-iii-regulations/>
29. <https://www.ada.gov/resources/effective-communication/>
30. [https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm\\_kb&sysparm\\_article=KB0085766](https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0085766)
31. <https://www.ada.gov/resources/title-iii-primer/>
32. [https://csrc.nist.gov/glossary/term/Recovery\\_Time\\_Objective](https://csrc.nist.gov/glossary/term/Recovery_Time_Objective)
33. <https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/business-continuity-plan.pdf>
34. [https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/ready-gov\\_business\\_risk-assessment-table.pdf](https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/ready-gov_business_risk-assessment-table.pdf)
35. <https://autoattendant.io/articles/small-business-phone-lines-needed>
36. <https://support.google.com/voice/answer/165221?hl=en-IE>
37. <https://www.t-mobile.com/responsibility/consumer-info/safety/9-1-1>
38. <https://www.att.com/support/smallbusiness/article-modal/smb-local-long-distance/KM1181691/>

## 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>

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