



AUTO ATTENDANT / RESEARCH & PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Make Phone Number Clickable: Website and Email Test Sheet

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 · make phone number clickable · tel link html example · click to call link · clickable phone number email signature · tel link not working on iphone · click to call button small business · rfc 3966 · business phone number website

Original article: <https://autoattendant.io/articles/clickable-business-phone-number-website-email-test-sheet>



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Executive Summary

To make a phone number clickable, publish it as a link whose destination is a `tel:` address, such as `tel:+14155550132`, and show the same number as readable text beside it. The syntax comes from the telephone-URI standard, RFC 3966, which MDN names as the reference for `tel:` syntax (developer.mozilla.org). The standard describes a number, not a dialing script: it says a tel URI "does not describe the steps necessary to reach a particular number" (www.rfc-editor.org). It also tells publishers to use the global form (leading plus sign and country code) unless a number cannot be written that way (www.rfc-editor.org).

A correct link is not a completed call. MDN states that `tel:` behavior varies with device capabilities: cellular devices autodial, while other systems may hand the number to a program such as Skype or FaceTime, save it to contacts, or send it to another device (developer.mozilla.org). Apple documents that an iPhone asks for confirmation before dialing a tapped link (developer.apple.com), and that a Mac relays the call through a paired iPhone only when both devices share an Apple Account and a Wi-Fi network (support.apple.com). A desktop without a configured calling app is therefore an unknown until tested, and a copyable plain number should sit next to every link.

The first decision is what "click to call" means for the business. A plain `tel:` link only opens the customer's own calling app; it is not a browser calling service. A real browser call needs a provider's developer toolkit, an access-token server and microphone permission (www.twilio.com) (developer.mozilla.org), and a callback form needs a service that dials the visitor (www.twilio.com). These are separate capabilities with their own cost and consent questions. In the United States, the FCC describes the Telephone Consumer Protection Act as restricting certain automated or prerecorded calls without prior express consent (docs.fcc.gov); consent rules vary by jurisdiction.

Measurement needs the same caution. Google Ads Help says its number-click conversion "only tracks clicks on your phone number, not actual phone calls" (support.google.com). A counted tap does not establish an answered conversation.

For context, Pew Research Center reports that about 91% of U.S. adults own a smartphone (survey of 5,511 adults, fielded January 30 to June 18, 2026, margin of error plus or minus 1.8 points) (www.pewresearch.org). That supports a mobile-first test plan but says nothing about any one firm's customers. This report supplies a handoff sheet (entry-point register, acceptance matrix, symptom-to-owner table and maintenance triggers) so an owner and the person editing the website, signature or invoice can accept the link only after checking the real destination and the caller experience, with consented test calls. Unknown device and client combinations stay marked unknown.

Introduction and Background

Owners and office managers of small trades and service firms usually ask for something modest: "make the phone number clickable." The person who receives the request, a web designer, a bookkeeper or the owner, then has to touch several places: the website header and contact page, the email signature on every sent message, and the invoice template. Each place is built with different software, and each can silently remove or rewrite a link. This guide treats the work as a customer entry-point implementation and acceptance problem. It does not help choose a number, pick a tracking number or diagnose what happens after a call connects.

A note on perspective. The publisher of this site, autoattendant.io, sells a flat-rate business phone number with an auto attendant menu that rings each team member's existing mobile. That is an inbound-routing product. It is not an answering service, an AI receptionist or a contact-centre suite, and nobody answers on a customer's behalf. A `tel:` link works with a number from any provider, so the link instructions below do not depend on the publisher's product. Where a business needs browser calling or a callback form, the guide says plainly that a different kind of provider is needed.

No device or client tests were run for this report. Every behavior stated is attributed to a platform's documentation or a standards text, and every other combination is marked untested. There is no public figure for the share of customers' devices that will complete a `tel:` call, and this report does not estimate one.

Dates matter. This report is anchored to October 27, 2026. The Litmus email guide cited later is dated October 13, 2022 and carries its own notice that it may be out of date (www.litmus.com), so its client claims are treated as leads to retest rather than current facts.

What "Click to Call" Can Mean: Three Different Jobs

The three variants

Vendors use "click to call" for more than one mechanism. Twilio's glossary defines click-to-call as a way to let people connect with a company representative by phone (www.twilio.com), and separates a browser or app variant, in which the user starts a voice call from the browser or app (www.twilio.com), from a callback variant in which the visitor enters a number and requests an immediate call back (www.twilio.com). A third mechanism, the one most small-business sites actually use, is the plain telephone link: the page hands a number to whatever calling software the visitor's device has.

Table 1 below sets out the three jobs side by side so the owner can say which one is being bought or built.

Job	What the tap does	What must exist outside the page	Open questions for the owner
Plain tel: link	Passes the number to the visitor's device, which decides what to do. MDN lists autodial on cellular devices, a call program such as Skype or FaceTime, saving to contacts, or sending the number to another device (developer.mozilla.org).	Nothing from a provider. The link points to the business's own public number.	Does the customer's device have a calling app? What is shown before the call is placed? Is a copyable number visible?
Browser call	The call starts in the web page; the visitor speaks through the device microphone. Twilio's SDK page describes making and receiving voice calls with a web browser (www.twilio.com).	A calling service, a server that issues access tokens (www.twilio.com), and visitor permission for microphone use (developer.mozilla.org). Webex documents a widget that needs a particular add-on license (help.webex.com).	Who pays for minutes? What if the visitor denies the microphone (www.twilio.com)? Who maintains the code?
Callback request	The visitor types their own number and the service calls them. RingCentral describes its service calling the customer and connecting the call to the business (www.ringcentral.com).	An existing phone service that supports the feature; RingCentral says placements carry no separate charge on its page (www.ringcentral.com).	Is consent captured? Which number is shown to the visitor when their phone rings? Who follows up on misses?
Plain number only	Nothing is linked; a visitor copies or retypes it. On iOS, Safari detects telephone numbers by default even without markup (developer.apple.com).	Nothing.	Is the auto-detected number the one the owner intended?

The table shows that only the first row can be done by an editor alone. The second and third rows are services with their own billing, consent and maintenance questions. The detection note in the last row matters because an unlinked number may still become tappable on some phones, with a destination the editor never inspected.

A plain telephone link is not a free browser calling service

A frequent mistake is describing a `tel:` link as "free calling from your website." It is not. MDN's own description is that behavior varies with device capabilities and that websites can only make calls through a handler they register with `registerProtocolHandler` (developer.mozilla.org). That method lets a website register its ability to handle particular URL schemes, requires a secure (HTTPS) context, and is marked by MDN as not Baseline because it does not work in some of the most widely used browsers (developer.mozilla.org). Even where available, the browser may ask the user to confirm (developer.mozilla.org). A small-business owner should not assume the visitor's computer has a configured phone app.

Decision rule for the owner

Use this rule, which is this guide's recommendation rather than a finding from any source:

- **Choose the plain link** when mobile visitors should place a normal call to the public number, and a copyable number plus an email address or form is acceptable for desktop visitors.

- **Ask a calling-service provider** when the goal is a call that starts inside the page, a scheduled or immediate callback, or call recording. Treat these as separate quotes covering minutes, consent wording and support.
- **Keep the owner's main business number public** in every case. A team member's personal receiving mobile should not replace it in a link, signature or invoice.

The Link Itself: Display Text, Telephone URI and What the Standard Says

The two things an editor must keep apart

Every clickable number has two parts that can disagree: the text a customer reads and the address the link carries. The HTML standard requires an href value to be a valid URL (html.spec.whatwg.org), and says that hyperlinks lead to resources that user agents generally expose to the user (html.spec.whatwg.org). Nothing in HTML forces the visible text to match the address, which is why acceptance testing compares them.

A minimal, standards-based example uses a number from the block reserved for fiction. The ATIS 555 line-number reference, published through the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA), reserves 555-0100 through 555-0199 as fictitious, non-working numbers for entertainment and advertising use (www.nanpa.com). The 2025 NANPA annual report restates the same reserved range (www.nanpa.com). The example below therefore uses a fictional number and must be replaced with the business's real number:

```
<a href="tel:+14155550132">(415) 555-0132</a>
```

The visible text uses familiar North American punctuation; the underlying address uses the global form. NANP numbers are ten digits in length (cnac.ca), and the Canadian Numbering Administrator notes that countries assigned ITU Country Code 1 are NANP members, which is why a US or Canadian number begins +1 (cnac.ca). Other countries use other formats; examples here are limited to the United States and Canada.

What RFC 3966 requires and permits

RFC 3966 defines the tel: scheme and obsoletes the earlier RFC 2806 (www.rfc-editor.org). The points that matter for an owner handoff are these:

- **Global form first.** The standard says all phone numbers must use the global form unless they cannot be represented that way (www.rfc-editor.org). It discourages local numbers, which depend on a context parameter, unless there is no way to represent the number globally (www.rfc-editor.org).
- **Visual separators are allowed but optional.** Hyphens, dots and parentheses merely aid readability and are not used for URI comparison or placing a call (www.rfc-editor.org). MDN's own examples include a tel: address written with dots and one with parentheses and hyphens (developer.mozilla.org). Separators are therefore not forbidden, but a clean address with only a plus sign and digits is easier to hand off and check.

- **No spaces.** The standard says publishers must not use spaces in visual separators, to avoid excessive escaping (www.rfc-editor.org). A pasted number like +1 415 555 0132 is a common way for an editor to break the address.
- **No vanity letters.** The URI format does not support the letter notation used on keypads (www.rfc-editor.org). The FCC defines a vanity toll-free number as one that spells a name (www.fcc.gov); the link must carry the digits, and the letters can only appear as display text.
- **A number, not a script.** The standard says a tel URI does not describe the steps needed to reach a number and does not imply dialling semantics (www.rfc-editor.org). Dial strings are out of scope (www.rfc-editor.org), outside-line digits are not part of local numbers (www.rfc-editor.org), and the changes from RFC 2806 note that post-dial strings and pause characters were removed (www.rfc-editor.org).
- **No length assumption.** Implementations must not assume numbers have a maximum, minimum or fixed length (www.rfc-editor.org). The 15-digit cap for international numbers comes from the ITU-T E.164 numbering plan, not from RFC 3966 (www.itu.int).

Extensions and menu choices: what not to promise

RFC 3966 has an ext parameter, and describes phone extensions as stations behind a non-ISDN private branch exchange (PBX) (www.rfc-editor.org). That is a statement about identifying an extension number, not a promise that a phone will press a menu key after the call connects. Because the standard removed pause characters and puts dial strings out of scope, a link written to "dial, wait, then press 2" is relying on behavior the standard does not define, and any given phone or app may ignore it. The safe handoff is the main number alone; if the business uses an automated menu, the caller chooses the option after the call connects. Only one of the ISDN-subaddress and extension parameters can appear in an address (datatracker.ietf.org).

Updates and errata

RFC 5341 updates RFC 3966; its header reads "Updates: 3966" (www.rfc-editor.org). Its subject is registration: it creates an IANA (Internet Assigned Numbers Authority) registry for tel URI parameters (www.rfc-editor.org). The RFC Editor errata page for RFC 3966 lists editorial errata, including a corrected example context (errata.rfc-editor.org). None of this changes the plain global-number examples above; anyone adding a parameter beyond the number should read the current registry and test the result.

Link text and touch size

For accessibility, MDN advises that the content of a link should indicate where the link goes (developer.mozilla.org), and the W3C explanation of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 says to provide link text that identifies the link's purpose without needing additional context (www.w3.org). "Click here" fails that test; "Call (415) 555-0132" passes. For size, WCAG success criterion 2.5.8 sets a target of at least 24 by 24 CSS pixels for pointer inputs (www.w3.org), with an exception for targets that sit in a sentence or whose size is otherwise constrained (www.w3.org). A standalone call button in a mobile header is not in a sentence, so check its size. No compliance claim is made here beyond these two checks.

Placing the Link: Website, Email Signature and Invoices

Website: header, contact page and button

On a website the editor needs the same address in every place the number appears. A content management system (CMS) can store a number once and reuse it; if it cannot, each copy is a separate entry in the register described later. Place a linked number in the mobile header, the contact page and the footer, and put a copyable plain-text version beside any call button.

For a "click to call button for small business website," the button is simply an anchor styled as a button. The href is the same tel: address; the label states the action and the number. If the button is hidden at desktop widths, the desktop fallback must still show the number as text; the acceptance sheet records that choice.

Email signature

A sent signature is a different artifact from the editor view. Google's Gmail Help describes a signature as text automatically added at the end of Gmail messages as a footer (support.google.com), and states a limit of 10,000 characters for the signature (support.google.com). WiseStamp's Gmail guide (updated August 25, 2026) tells users to click the Link icon in the signature editor toolbar (www.wisestamp.com) and labels a tel: address the HTML code for click-to-call (www.wisestamp.com). Microsoft's Outlook support page says links and images can be added to an Outlook signature (support.microsoft.com), and notes that a user of both Outlook and Outlook on the web must create a signature in each product (support.microsoft.com). One owner can therefore have several signatures, each needing its own check.

To "make phone number clickable in email" for a one-person-at-a-time signature, the sequence is: type the display number, select it, insert a link with the address tel: followed by the global number, save, send a message to a second account, and inspect the received message on the actual recipient devices. Autolinking by the receiving client is not a substitute, because it is recipient-side behavior the sender does not control.

Email clients are the least predictable entry point. Litmus's 2022 guide (possibly out of date, so retest) explains that a click-to-call link is made by replacing the web address in the href with tel: and the number (www.litmus.com), recommends starting with a mobile click-to-call button (www.litmus.com), and warns that on a Mac the link opens FaceTime (www.litmus.com). It also lists a Gmail limitation for clickable numbers in the header section of an email (www.litmus.com). Because that article is dated 2022, retest each claim. Email service providers state limits too: Klaviyo says tel: links are only supported for certain ISPs and devices (help.klaviyo.com), and Omnisend says some email clients, especially web-based or corporate ones, may not support them (support.omnisend.com). Omnisend advises including the country code and removing spaces, dashes and parentheses (support.omnisend.com), and EmailOctopus says a country prefix must be added (help.emailoctopus.com).

Invoices and PDFs: test the exported file, not the template

An invoice has more than one form: the template in the accounting tool, the emailed message, and the PDF the customer saves. The editor's view proves nothing about the others. Xero's help says to show different contact details on its documents by adding them as static text in a template (central.xero.com), which describes how a number gets onto the page and says nothing about whether it is clickable. FreshBooks tells

recipients to select Print or Download PDF to save an invoice offline (support.freshbooks.com), which is a reminder that the saved file is what many customers keep. Microsoft's PDF conversion page says that, for Excel conversions, external links will be fine while internal links are lost (support.microsoft.com); it does not address `tel` links. Adobe's Acrobat help lists linking to an external website as a link action and describes drawing a rectangle to define the link area (helpx.adobe.com), and the page's action list does not include a telephone action.

None of those pages establishes that a phone link survives export and opens in a given PDF viewer. The rule for invoices and PDFs is therefore conditional: if the number must be clickable in the PDF, export a real invoice, open it in the viewers the customers use, tap the number, and record the result. If it fails, the printed number and a copyable plain-text number are the fallback.

Testing What Customers Actually Receive

Why a valid link is not enough

A syntactically valid link proves only that the markup is well-formed. What a customer experiences depends on the device and client, and the platform documents show how much varies:

- **iPhone.** Apple's reference (archived documentation, so retest on a current iPhone) says the `tel` scheme launches the Phone app and initiates dialing (developer.apple.com), and that iOS asks the user whether they really want to dial the number (developer.apple.com). Apple's documentation does not say what an iPhone-class device without the Phone app shows, so test that case.
- **Android.** Android's developer guide documents two intents. The dial intent opens the phone app with the number and the user must tap the Call button (developer.android.com); the direct call intent needs the `CALL_PHONE` permission in an app's manifest (developer.android.com). Android also says valid telephone numbers are those defined in RFC 3966 (developer.android.com). These are app-developer intents; which one a given browser uses is a test question.
- **Mac.** Apple says a call can start by clicking a phone number in Safari and other apps (support.apple.com), and that a linked number on a webpage or in an email can start a call (support.apple.com). The route needs the same Apple Account on both devices and a shared Wi-Fi network (support.apple.com), and calls use the iPhone's cellular minutes (support.apple.com).
- **Windows.** Microsoft says calling through Phone Link needs Bluetooth on both the PC and the Android phone (support.microsoft.com), and that defaults can be set by protocol (support.microsoft.com); Microsoft's help text does not name `tel`, so test the handoff on a real PC.
- **Chrome and other browsers.** Chrome Help lists a protocol-handlers site setting for sites that handle tasks when certain links are selected (support.google.com), and Chrome Enterprise Help lets administrators allow specific external protocol handlers so that Chrome can open certain apps automatically (support.google.com). This guide does not cover Firefox's handling of `tel` links, so treat a Firefox result as unknown until tested.

The handoff sheet: fields to fill in

The reference asset for this guide is a one-page handoff sheet. The owner fills the first block once; the editor fills the register and the acceptance matrix. The fields are the minimum that lets a later editor repeat the check:

- **Intended public number:** the business's main number in global form, for example +1 followed by ten digits.
- **Human-readable display:** the exact text customers read.
- **Underlying telephone URI:** the exact tel: address, copied from the live page or the sent message, not from the design file.
- **Call purpose and alternative contact:** plain link, browser call or callback; the copyable plain number and the email or form shown to visitors with no calling app.
- **Placement, editor and last change:** page, message or artifact, who edited it, and when.
- **Device, operating system, browser or email client, and test date:** all four, exactly.
- **Observed action:** what happened on tap, in the tester's words.
- **Actual destination:** the number the device displayed before dialing or the number reached.
- **Result and owner sign-off:** pass, fail or unknown, with a name and date.

The register shows intent: which number is where, and who last touched it. The acceptance matrix in *Table 2* shows evidence of what happened on a real device. Both are needed.

Acceptance matrix

Table 2 gives a template with example rows. The rows are (Hypothetical Example) entries to show the format, not results from any test; the real sheet starts with empty result cells, and every untested combination stays "unknown."

Source artifact	Device, OS, browser or client, date	Tap action observed	Number shown before the call	Connected menu and answer or fallback	Unresolved question
Contact page, header link (Hypothetical Example)	iPhone, iOS version noted, Safari, test date	Confirmation alert, then Phone app	Matches the intended number	Consented test call reached the menu; a team member answered	None
Contact page, header link (Hypothetical Example)	Windows laptop, Chrome, test date	Prompt to choose an app, none configured	Not shown	Not placed. Copyable number and email form shown instead	Customer laptops vary; leave desktop result as the fallback
Sent email signature (Hypothetical Example)	Android phone, Gmail app, test date	Opens dialer with number filled in	Matches	Test call reached voicemail after hours	Confirm business-hours message
Exported invoice PDF (Hypothetical Example)	Phone PDF viewer, test date	Number not tappable	Not applicable	Not placed	Printed and copyable number only
Any other combination	Not tested	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

The matrix converts every cell into something observable. The fifth column deliberately separates a connected call from an answered one. A tap that opens the dialer proves the link; a call that reaches the menu proves the number; a person answering, or the voicemail fallback working, proves the business process. The routing check after connection belongs to the business's existing routing test, and this guide does not repeat it.

Running a consented test call

Place test calls from a clean browser profile where possible, so a remembered app choice does not hide a first-time prompt. Tell any team member whose mobile will ring that a test is coming, and record the time and what the caller hears. In the United States the FCC describes the Telephone Consumer Protection Act as restricting calls made with an automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice without the called party's prior express consent ([docs.fcc.gov](https://www.fcc.gov/recordings/privacy)), and says consumers may revoke consent in any reasonable manner ([docs.fcc.gov](https://www.fcc.gov/recordings/privacy)). Whether a particular callback tool is covered is a legal question for the business's own adviser, and other jurisdictions have their own rules.

Diagnosing Failure by Stage

Failures are easier to assign when sorted by the stage at which the customer's experience stops. The order below runs from the page to the connected call, and the last stage hands off to the routing test.

1. **No link exists.** The number is plain text. On some phones it may be auto-detected (developer.apple.com), but the destination was never inspected. Owner: site or email editor.
2. **The target changed or was escaped.** The editor or email tool rewrote the address, inserted spaces, or removed the scheme. Inspect the live href or the received message source. Owner: editor.
3. **No handler.** The device has no calling app, or the browser or email client does not pass the link on. MDN says behavior depends on device capabilities (developer.mozilla.org), and Android tells developers to be ready to catch an `ActivityNotFoundException` when no app can handle an intent (developer.android.com). Owner: customer device; the fix is the fallback number.
4. **Wrong number.** The display and the address disagree, or an auto-detector chose a different string. Owner: editor.
5. **Call not connected.** The dialer opened but the call failed or reached the wrong party. Owner: the originating service or the business phone provider.
6. **Downstream routing.** The call connects but the menu, hours or answering behavior is wrong. Send this to the existing routing test.

Table 3 below turns the same stages into a symptom-to-owner lookup for the "tel link not working on iPhone" case and its neighbors.

Symptom	First check	Likely owner	Evidence to record
Tap does nothing on an iPhone	Is the href a real tel: address with no spaces (www.rfc-editor.org)? Is the link inside an in-app browser or email client that blocks it?	Site or email editor, then customer device	Exact href, app or browser used, iOS version

Symptom	First check	Likely owner	Evidence to record
Number is tappable but dials a different string	Compare the displayed number with the address and with any auto-detected text (developer.apple.com).	Site or email editor	Screenshot of the confirmation alert (Apple documents the alert (developer.apple.com))
Desktop shows an app picker or nothing	Is a calling app configured? On a Mac, are the two devices signed in to one Apple Account (support.apple.com)?	Customer device handler	Browser, OS, and whether the copyable number was visible
Link works in the editor but not in the received email	Resend and open the received message; check whether the client rewrote the link (support.omnisend.com).	Email editor or email provider	Sending client, receiving client, message source
Link missing from exported invoice	Export again and open in the customer viewer; the template view is not the evidence.	Invoice editor, then accounting software provider	Exported file name, viewer, tap result
Dialer opens, call fails or rings wrong place	Dial the same number by hand from the same device.	Business phone provider	Time, number dialed, what was heard
Browser call or callback does not start	Microphone permission denied (www.twilio.com), token expiry or a provider-side limit.	The calling-service provider	Provider error text, browser permission state

The first rows point mostly to markup and the last rows to services outside the page, which is why asking what the device displayed before asking what the editor typed saves rework.

Data Analysis and Evidence

What can and cannot be quantified

Published evidence for this topic is mostly specification text, not measurement. This report offers no conversion-lift calculator or universal call-increase figure. Three kinds of quantitative material are available and are used for context only.

Device context. Pew Research Center's Mobile Fact Sheet reports that about nine in ten (91%) U.S. adults own a smartphone (www.pewresearch.org). The figure comes from a survey of 5,511 U.S. adults with an overall margin of error of plus or minus 1.8 percentage points. It supports putting the mobile tap first in the test plan. It does not tell a plumber how many of their own customers use phones, and it says nothing about desktop behavior. This guide does not quote a desktop-versus-mobile split for any firm's customers, because no verified figure is available; the firm's own site analytics are the right place to look.

Specification limits. The numbers that actually constrain the work are in the standards and help pages: 24 by 24 CSS pixels as the WCAG 2.5.8 minimum target size (www.w3.org); 10,000 characters as the Gmail signature limit (support.google.com); ten digits for a North American number (cnac.ca); and the 15-digit international ceiling in E.164 (www.itu.int).

Billing model. A usage-billed browser calling service charges per minute, which a plain tel: link does not. This is not a recommendation or a price comparison.

The coverage count: a project checklist, not reliability

A test coverage count is useful for sign-off if it is labeled correctly. Define the scenarios first: each combination of entry point and device or client the owner supports. Then count completed scenarios over defined scenarios.

(Hypothetical Example) A firm defines 12 scenarios: three entry points (website header, sent signature, exported invoice) tested on four environments (iPhone Safari, Android Chrome, a Windows desktop browser, a Mac mail client). Nine are completed with a recorded result and three remain untested. Coverage is $9 / 12 = 75\%$. That number says the checklist is three-quarters done. It does not say that 75% of customers can reach the business, and the three untested scenarios stay "unknown," not "pass."

Work estimate from owner and editor hours

The estimate uses only hours and the rates the people involved quote. There is no benchmark rate here. The formula is: editor hours times the editor's quoted rate, plus owner hours times the owner's own quoted or assigned rate.

(Hypothetical Example) The editor quotes \$85 per hour and expects 3 hours for the website, signature and one invoice export, including re-exports: $3 * \$85 = \255 . The owner assigns \$60 per hour to their own time for 1.5 hours of consented test calls and sign-off: $1.5 * \$60 = \90 . Total: \$345. Every figure in that example is invented to show arithmetic; substitute real quotes. A browser-calling or callback service adds provider fees that must come from that provider's own quote.

Maintenance: When to Retest

The register is only as good as the last change. Retest, and update the sheet, after any of these events:

- **A new or edited email signature**, including a switch of email program or a new employee profile. Microsoft notes signatures are created per product (support.microsoft.com).
- **A website redesign or CMS template change**, because the header and footer blocks are usually rebuilt.
- **A provider or number change**. The link, the display text, the invoice template and any saved signatures each carry the old number until edited.
- **An invoice template or accounting software update**, with a fresh PDF export.
- **A new supported device or email client**, added as a new row.
- **A browser or operating system update that changes how links are handled**, since help pages change and this report's dates will age.

Implications and Future Directions

Three implications follow. First, the gap between a valid link and a completed call is a process question, not a syntax question. The standard is stable (RFC 3966 replaced RFC 2806 (www.rfc-editor.org)), and the variable part is the device and client, which no markup can control. The durable defense is a fallback number and a dated test record.

Second, measurement needs to be separated from outcome. Google's help pages state that number-click conversions track clicks and not the calls themselves (support.google.com), and that measured calls use a minimum call length that the advertiser sets, with measured calls requiring Google forwarding numbers (support.google.com). GA4's enhanced-measurement description of outbound clicks speaks of links that lead away from the current domain (support.google.com), so a phone tap is not obviously covered and would need a deliberate event; Google's help page does not mention `tel:`. A report that says "40 taps" has counted taps. Whether the calls were answered is a routing and business-process measure, and it belongs with whoever holds the call records.

Third, the choice of number and the choice of link are independent. A business can publish its main number through a plain `tel:` link whatever provider holds the number. For businesses whose goal is to keep personal mobile numbers off public pages while still being reachable, the publisher's own product rings team members' existing mobiles from one public number with a one-level menu. It does not supply a browser-calling widget, a callback form, analytics or measured caller conversion, and none of the instructions here depend on it.

The open questions are about client behavior, not the standard, which is a reason to keep the acceptance matrix dated.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How is a phone number made clickable on a website?

Wrap the visible number in an anchor whose `href` is `tel:` followed by the global-form number, with no spaces, as in the example above. Use link text that states the purpose (www.w3.org), and test on a phone before sign-off.

What is a good tel link HTML example?

`<a href="tel:+14155550132">Call (415) 555-0132</a>`, where the number is a fictional one from the reserved 555-0100 to 555-0199 block (www.nanpa.com) and must be replaced. The standard allows separators such as hyphens (www.rfc-editor.org), but spaces are not allowed (www.rfc-editor.org).

How is a click-to-call link added to an email signature?

Type the number, select it, use the signature editor's link tool (WiseStamp describes the Link icon for Gmail (www.wisestamp.com)), enter the `tel:` address, save, then send a test to another account and tap the link on the recipient's devices. Outlook and Outlook on the web need separate signatures (support.microsoft.com). For marketing email, support depends on the client (help.klaviyo.com), so keep a plain-text number as the fallback (support.omnisend.com).

Why is a tel link not working on an iPhone?

Check the address first: spaces or a missing scheme break it (www.rfc-editor.org). Apple's archived documentation says iOS asks for confirmation before dialing (developer.apple.com). If the link sits in an app's embedded browser or an email client, test in Safari and the Mail app as separate rows in the matrix.

Does a clickable number work on desktop?

It depends on what is installed. MDN lists calling programs, saving to contacts and sending the number to another device as possible behaviors (developer.mozilla.org). Show the number as copyable text and give an email or form alternative.

Is a tel link the same as a click-to-call service?

No. A browser call or callback needs a calling service (www.twilio.com).

Which business phone number should the website show if calls must reach staff mobiles?

Show the business's main public number, not an employee's personal mobile. A business number whose menu rings team members' mobiles keeps the personal numbers private; the link itself is identical.

Conclusion

Making a phone number clickable is a small markup change wrapped in a larger acceptance task. The markup is a `tel`: address in global form, with a readable display number beside it. The acceptance task is to decide what the tap should mean, to inspect the real destination in the published page, the sent email and the exported invoice, and to record what an actual device did on a dated test call. A plain link opens the customer's own calling app and nothing more. Browser calling and callbacks are different services.

The handoff sheet in this guide, with its register, matrix, symptom table and retest triggers, gives the owner and the person who edits the website, signature or invoice one record to hold. Untested combinations remain unknown, a counted tap is not an answered call, and a copyable number plus an alternative contact method covers devices with no calling app.

Source links

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

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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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