Auto Attendant

AUTO ATTENDANT / RESEARCH & PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Customers Can't Reach Your Business Number? Triage Guide

> 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

"Customers can't reach my business number" is a different problem from "my phone menu is broken". When the owner's own test calls work but some callers hear silence, a fast busy or a "cannot be completed" recording, the failing leg is usually one the business cannot see: the caller's carrier, a provider in between, the number's routing data, or the mobile phones the call is finally delivered to. The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) describes the pattern: callers "have been unable to reach you at your home or business" ((www.fcc.gov)). This report separates what the business can prove in 15 minutes from what only a carrier can fix, with an intake card, a three-network test log and an escalation order.

The U.S. rural call completion rules are narrower than many owners expect. They apply to a "covered provider", meaning a long-distance provider that makes the initial call path choice for more than 100,000 domestic retail subscriber lines ((www.ecfr.gov)), and interconnected VoIP providers are included ((www.ecfr.gov)). In the electronic Code of Federal Regulations (eCFR) text current to 9 November 2026, section 64.2103 is marked "[Reserved]" ((www.ecfr.gov)), because the FCC eliminated the 2013 reporting requirement in 2018 ((www.federalregister.gov)). What remains includes a duty to monitor intermediate providers ((www.ecfr.gov)) and a published point of contact that must respond within a single business day ((www.ecfr.gov)). These are provider-practice rules, not a service guarantee to a small receiving business. Canada is different: we could identify no Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) call-completion rule equivalent to the U.S. framework, only interconnection policy ((web.archive.org)) and blocking and authentication conditions.

No public failure-rate statistic for inbound calls to small-business numbers was found, and none is invented here. The measurable facts are context: 80.0% of U.S. adults lived in wireless-only households in the second half of 2025 ((www.cdc.gov)), so two different mobile carriers belong in any test plan. Evidence expires quickly, too: one carrier-services vendor's call logs show 30 days of records ((www.bandwidth.com)), and a business phone vendor asks for failure examples less than 24 hours old ((help.nextiva.com)).

The practical order is: rule out the business's own setup, collect five facts from the caller, test from three networks, send the evidence to the business's provider, ask the caller to report it to the caller's own carrier ((www.fcc.gov)), and only then file a regulator complaint ((www.fcc.gov)). A business that cannot tolerate any lost inbound call should ask a larger platform about redundant carrier arrangements rather than expect a small flat-rate service to promise it.

Introduction and Background

The scenario this guide addresses is specific. A trades business, clinic, property firm or professional office hears from some callers that the number "didn't ring", "said it was not in service" or "went to a fast busy". The owner dials the number from their own phone and it works. The provider's dashboard shows no outage, which is why the usual advice (check the menu, check the schedule) stops helping.

This is a diagnosis problem, not a configuration problem. This article focuses on partial call completion, which is distinct from menu-testing after the call connects, call forwarding, whole-line outages and spam labelling. It treats the case "works for me, fails for some callers, no error on our side" as a question of who can see which part of the call.

The publisher of this site, autoattendant.io, sells one flat-rate business number with an auto attendant menu that rings each team member's existing mobile phone. That arrangement has two call legs (the caller to the business number, then the business number to each mobile), so it is exposed to both kinds of failure discussed below: network failures between the caller and the number, and filtering or settings on the receiving mobiles. This report makes no completion-rate, uptime or carrier claim about any product, including that one.

Three conventions apply throughout. U.S. rules are named as U.S. rules and Canadian material as Canadian, with neither assumed to apply elsewhere. A symptom a caller reports is an observation, while its usual cause is a hypothesis until a carrier or log confirms it. Rule text is dated to the version read in November 2026.

Symptoms: What Callers Report and What Each Usually Points To

Callers describe failures in everyday words, and a single phrase can map to several technical causes. The FCC's consumer guidance on calls that fail to reach a rural line lists several symptoms: callers hear nothing for 10 seconds or more after dialing ((www.fcc.gov)), or hear that the number is not in service even though it was dialed correctly ((www.fcc.gov)). The FCC's 2013 order adds one-way audio, where one or both parties cannot hear the other after the call connects ((docs.fcc.gov)).

Table 1 below separates the observation (what the caller says) from the typical-cause hypotheses. The technical code mappings come from the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) standard that translates telephone-network failure causes into Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) response codes, the signalling language most business VoIP (voice over Internet Protocol) systems use.

What the caller reports (observation)	Typical-cause hypotheses (not proven by the symptom alone)	Leg most likely involved	Who can fix it	First action
No ring, silence or dead air	The FCC lists dead air as a rural call completion symptom. Often a route or call-setup problem upstream of the business.	Caller's carrier or an intermediate provider	Caller's carrier first; the business's provider can trace if given times and numbers	Take the five-fact intake; test from a second mobile carrier
Fast busy or reorder tone	A "no circuit available" condition maps to SIP 503 Service Unavailable ((www.rfc-editor.org)). A carrier help page lists "fast busy" among call-failure symptoms ((www.t-mobile.com)). Suggests congestion or a failed route, not a busy line.	Any network on the path	The carrier that generated the tone; hard to tell from the caller's side	Ask the caller to retry from a different network and note the time
"Your call cannot be completed as dialed"	A carrier says this recording plays when the area code was not entered ((www.verizon.com)). After an area code overlay, 7-digit calls may not complete ((www.fcc.gov)).	Caller's dialing habits or the caller's own dial plan	The caller (dial all 10 digits)	Confirm the exact digits dialed, including area code
"Not in service" or "not a working number"	An unallocated number maps to SIP 404 Not Found ((www.rfc-editor.org)). On a new or newly ported number, some carriers may not yet have current routing data ((support.telnyx.com)).	Number routing data, or a carrier with stale data	Your provider and, for ported numbers, the previous carrier	Check how recently the number was activated or ported
Rings but no one answers, or the menu never plays	"No answer from the user" maps to SIP 480 Temporarily Unavailable ((www.rfc-editor.org)).	Your provider's call handling, or the receiving phones	Your provider and your team	Test the menu after the call connects and check the receiving mobiles' forwarding settings
Goes straight to voicemail	A mobile forwarded to carrier voicemail when unreachable ((www.att.com)), or a silenced unknown caller ((support.apple.com)).	The receiving mobile or its carrier settings	Your team member, on their own phone	Check forwarding, Do Not Disturb and unknown-caller settings
Connects, then drops, or one side cannot hear	The FCC has listed one-way audio among call-completion symptoms. Wi-Fi Calling and weak coverage on a receiving phone are other candidates ((www.verizon.com)).	Mixed: media path, Wi-Fi Calling, or the mobile	Your provider with a call ID; the mobile carrier	Note whether the caller or the team member was on Wi-Fi Calling

The table is a map of hypotheses, not a verdict: two different failures can sound identical to a caller. Its most useful column is "first action", because each symptom points to a different first piece of evidence and none can be resolved by changing the business's menu.

First 15 Minutes: Prove It Is Not Your Own Setup

Before involving any carrier, the business should eliminate the causes it controls. This sequence takes about 15 minutes and uses the owner's phone plus one or two others.

1. **Check the provider's status page and notices.** Vendors that publish one ask customers to check for an active incident before opening a ticket ((www.bandwidth.com) (support.twilio.com)).
2. **Place a call from a phone on a different network than the owner's.** One vendor's guidance is to place a test call from a regular phone outside the platform ((help.twilio.com)). Another suggests trying several numbers to see whether a problem is isolated to one destination or carrier ((help.dialpad.com)).
3. **Walk the receiving side.** For a number that rings team mobiles, check each phone for call forwarding, which can send calls to another number before they reach the device ((www.verizon.com)), for conditional forwarding that triggers when a phone is off, in airplane mode or out of signal ((www.att.com)), and for unknown-caller silencing. On an iPhone, with Silence Unknown Callers on, a caller must be in Contacts or Recents for the call to ring ((support.apple.com)). On Android's Phone app, turning on the unknown-number setting blocks private or unidentified numbers ((support.google.com)).
4. **Rule out dialing format.** Callers in an area-code overlay must dial the area code plus seven digits, and a 7-digit attempt is sent to a recorded announcement that remains indefinitely ((www.nanpa.com)). For toll-free numbers, the prefix matters: a 1-800 prefix reaches a different recipient than the same digits with 1-888 ((www.fcc.gov)).
5. **Check what changed recently.** A newly activated or ported number is a period when partial completion is plausible: a vendor help page says failures typically appear when new number blocks are launched, because not every carrier has current routing information ((support.telnyx.com)). A separate vendor page lists "a number that has not yet been ported" as one cause of a SIP 404 from a carrier ((help.twilio.com)).
6. **Ask whether the failing callers share a carrier.** A business phone vendor's inbound-failure article has a scenario for exactly this: calls from one carrier fail to connect while others succeed ((help.nextiva.com)).

If the number was ported recently, the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) sets U.S. timing norms: a simple port must be completed within one business day ((www.ecfr.gov)) and a non-simple port, such as a multi-line business port, within four ((www.ecfr.gov)). These are not a prediction for any specific port. If failures coincide with a port, the previous carrier may need to remove the number from its own switch, and one vendor notes it cannot make that request for the customer ((help.nextiva.com)).

If all six checks come back clean, something outside the building is involved. That is the point to stop adjusting settings and start collecting evidence.

The Caller's Side: Networks a Call Crosses and Who Can See What

A call from a customer's phone to a business number can touch up to three kinds of network: the originating carrier (the customer's own mobile, landline or VoIP service), zero or more intermediate providers that carry traffic between carriers, and the business's provider, which terminates the call. The FCC notes that calls to rural areas are often handled by numerous different providers ((www.federalregister.gov)).

Routing also depends on data, not just wires. For ported or pooled numbers, the telephone network routes on the Location Routing Number (LRN) associated with the number rather than the dialed digits ((www.npac.com)). Toll-free numbers add a layer: the registry operator Somos says each number's call processing record holds its routing information ((www.somos.com)). When any such record is stale at one carrier, the symptom is selective: callers on that carrier fail and everyone else succeeds.

This explains the central diagnostic fact. **The business can see only its own provider's logs and its own test calls.** Vendors state the limit in their own documentation:

- A communications platform says that resolving carrier-specific issues means contacting its support with data ((www.twilio.com)).
- A business phone vendor says it has little to no control over how another carrier routes its calls ((help.nextiva.com)).
- A carrier-services vendor says examples older than 24 hours may not be supportable because many peer carriers cannot look further back ((www.bandwidth.com)).

These statements describe where the visibility boundary sits: the owner sees the last hop, the provider sees that hop and its direct interconnections, and only the originating carrier can see how the call left the caller's network. **The failing leg is often not yours, but you hold the evidence needed to find it.**

The five facts to collect from the caller

Every escalation path, from a provider ticket to a regulator form, asks for the same small set of facts. The FCC's rural call completion guidance asks for the caller's number, the called number and the date of the attempts ((www.fcc.gov)). Provider help pages add the time with time zone ((www.bandwidth.com) (support.telnyx.com)), and the words of any recording the caller heard are worth capturing exactly. The intake card below combines them. It can be pasted into a text message or a web form.

```
CALLER INTAKE CARD (fill in one per failing caller)
1. Caller's carrier and line type: _____ (mobile / landline / VoIP)
2. Approximate time of each attempt, with time zone: _____
3. Exact number dialed, as keyed (digits, 1-800 vs 1-888, area code): _____
4. What they heard (silence, ringing, fast busy, recording words, voicemail): _____
5. Do texts, other business numbers or a retry from another phone work? _____
Also note: caller's own number, Wi-Fi Calling on or off.
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Item 5 narrows the leg: if the same caller can reach other numbers on the business's provider, the number's routing is the better suspect; if none connect, the originating carrier or the interconnection is more likely.

The three-network test

The matrix below uses two different mobile carriers, one landline or VoIP line if available, and one Wi-Fi Calling call. Mobile carriers account for most voice connections: in the FCC's December 2025 data there were 397 million mobile voice subscriptions against 14 million end-user switched access lines (interconnected VoIP is a third category). Subscriptions are only a rough proxy for who calls a business, so test from two mobile carriers

plus a landline or VoIP line ((docs.fcc.gov)). Carrier help pages themselves suggest calling your own number to check whether it rings ((www.t-mobile.com)), and numbering administrators set up test numbers so businesses can verify equipment before an area-code dialing change ((www.nanpa.com)).

Table 2 below is a blank log. Copy it, run each test at a different time of day, and record results immediately, since memory of what was heard is unreliable.

Date and time (with time zone)	Caller network (carrier; mobile, landline or VoIP)	Dial method (10 digits typed, saved contact, Wi-Fi Calling on or off)	Result (rang, busy, recording, voicemail, connected)	Message heard (exact words)
Test 1: ____	Mobile carrier A			
Test 2: ____	Mobile carrier B (a different company)			
Test 3: ____	Landline or VoIP line			
Test 4: ____	Any carrier, Wi-Fi Calling on			
Repeat 1 to 4 at another time of day				

A pattern across rows is the finding. If only one carrier fails, the report goes to that carrier and the business's provider. If every carrier fails, the business's own number or provider is the likely common factor. If only the Wi-Fi Calling row fails, suspect the handset. A single failure on one day is weak evidence; a repeating failure on the same carrier is what a provider or regulator can act on.

What U.S. Rural Call Completion Rules Do and Do Not Do

The U.S. framework is the only formal call-completion regime we could identify, and its scope is easy to overstate. The facts below come from the eCFR text current to 9 November 2026, Federal Register notices and FCC pages. Rule citations are dated because the text has changed since the first rules in 2013.

Who is covered, and what changed

The rules bind a "covered provider": a long-distance voice provider that makes the initial long-distance call path choice for more than 100,000 domestic retail subscriber lines, counted across affiliates ((www.ecfr.gov)). The definition expressly includes interconnected VoIP providers ((www.ecfr.gov)). A small business is therefore not the regulated party; the large originating providers are.

Since 2013 the text has shifted from data collection to path management. The FCC's 2018 Second Report and Order eliminated the reporting requirement established in 2013 ((www.federalregister.gov)), and the 2019 Fourth Report and Order sunset the remaining call data recording and retention rules one year after the intermediate-provider standards took effect ((www.federalregister.gov)). In the current eCFR text, section 64.2103 is marked "[Reserved]" ((www.ecfr.gov)). Descriptions that still mention quarterly reports describe the earlier version, and some mirrors of the CFR may lag the official text. A 2018 order also created a registry and required intermediate providers to register ((www.federalregister.gov)).

What remains

A covered provider may not use an intermediate provider unless conditions, including FCC registration, are met ((www.ecfr.gov)), and it must monitor each contracted intermediate provider's performance in the completion of call attempts to rural telephone companies ((www.ecfr.gov)). It must publish a rural-call-completion point of contact that responds, under ordinary circumstances, within a single business day ((www.ecfr.gov)). A separate rule bars a ringing indication to the caller before the terminating provider has signalled alerting ((www.ecfr.gov)).

What the rules do not do

- **No numeric completion standard.** The FCC declined to adopt a performance-based safe harbor in 2013 ((docs.fcc.gov)), and in 2019 it said that specific performance targets are not useful ((docs.fcc.gov)).
- **No per-business right to a fix.** The text creates duties for providers, not a guarantee for a receiving business. This is an inference from the rule text and the FCC guidance, which routes affected parties to provider-to-provider problem solving ((www.fcc.gov)), not a quoted statement.
- **A rural focus.** The monitoring duty is phrased around calls to rural telephone companies, so a business whose number is hosted by a non-rural provider may fall outside the situation the rules were written for. That depends on facts only a carrier can confirm.
- **Toll-free calls.** This guide draws no conclusion on whether the rural call completion rules or any FCC order treat toll-free calls differently from other calls; check the current rule text and ask your provider.

The FCC's own explanation of the cause is economic and neutral in tone: the problem appears to occur in rural areas where long-distance or wireless carriers normally pay higher-than-average charges ((www.fcc.gov)).

Call blocking is a different rulebook

A call can fail because a provider decided to block it, not because a route failed. Under 47 CFR 64.1200(k), a terminating provider may block calls based on reasonable analytics designed to identify unwanted calls ((www.law.cornell.edu)), and a provider that does must offer a single point of contact on its public website ((www.law.cornell.edu)) and a status update within 24 hours of a dispute ((www.law.cornell.edu)). The FCC describes the behavior from the recipient's side: a blocked call may go to voicemail, produce a single ring, or give the caller no notice at all ((www.fcc.gov)).

This matters in two directions. Calls from the business to customers can be blocked or labelled by the customer's carrier or phone. And calls forwarded by the business's provider to team mobiles can be filtered by the receiving carrier's tools. One mobile carrier's Scam Shield feature, when on, blocks "Scam Likely" calls before they reach the customer's phone ((www.t-mobile.com)). Whether a forwarded call hits such a filter depends on the caller ID the provider presents, which only the provider can say.

Canada: no equivalent rule was found

For Canada, we could not identify a CRTC rule equivalent to the U.S. rural call completion framework. The Canadian material is adjacent:

- **Interconnection policy.** The CRTC's 2012 voice interconnection policy (Telecom Regulatory Policy 2012-24) states that interconnection between networks is necessary so customers of different service providers can communicate with each other ((web.archive.org)). The Telecommunications Act (Canada) lets the CRTC order a carrier to connect its facilities to other facilities ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)), but neither sets a call-completion standard.
- **Blocking and authentication.** In Canada, the CRTC's 2018 blocking policy said legitimate callers, such as private branch exchange (PBX) operators, would need to reconfigure systems so calls are not inadvertently blocked ((web.archive.org)), and that customers should be able to dispute inadvertently blocked calls simply ((web.archive.org)). The CRTC's STIR/SHAKEN caller-ID authentication decision applies to IP networks ((web.archive.org)), and the CRTC acknowledged that not all calls will be verifiable ((www.canada.ca)).
- **Complaints.** In Canada, the CRTC's complaint page says the first step is to call your telephone company directly ((web.archive.org)). The Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services (CCTS) treats a business as a small business customer when its average monthly telecommunications bill is under $2,500 ((www.ccts-cprst.ca)) and accepts service-quality issues including unreasonable interruptions or complete loss of service ((www.ccts-cprst.ca)). The CCTS may stop handling a complaint if the complainant is not a customer of the provider concerned ((www.ccts-cprst.ca)), so a caller served by a different carrier may not qualify.

Note: some CRTC pages are cited from archived copies, so the live text could differ; Canadian readers should confirm current wording on crtc.gc.ca.

Who to Contact and in What Order

The escalation order follows the visibility boundary: start with the party that can see the most about the failing leg and move outward.

1. **Your own provider, with the five facts.** Provider help pages converge on the same ticket contents: the numbers involved, the time with time zone, and the symptom ((www.bandwidth.com)). Include examples from the last day and the three-network test results.
2. **The caller's carrier, reported by the caller.** The FCC's guidance for calls that fail to reach a rural line says the caller should report first to their own long-distance or wireless provider, which should be best able to locate the source of the problem and fix it ((www.fcc.gov)). Give the caller the intake card.
3. **Your previous or local carrier, if relevant.** The same FCC guidance tells the receiving party to give the details to their own local phone company so it may work with the caller's provider ((www.fcc.gov)). For a recently ported number this includes the old carrier, which may need to clear routing.
4. **A regulator complaint, last.** In the U.S., the FCC says to try to resolve the issue with your provider before filing ((www.fcc.gov)). The FCC says filing online is the most effective way to contact it (www.fcc.gov).

What the regulator step can and cannot do

Treat the regulator as a record and a pressure point, not a repair service. The FCC says only certain complaints are sent to a provider to help resolve the issue ((www.fcc.gov)), and that if it does not have legal authority to resolve a complaint, it may direct the filer to another agency that can help (www.fcc.gov). For rural call completion complaints the minimum facts are the caller's number, the called number and the date of the attempts.

The FCC's undated rural call completion guidance tells filers to select "Rural Call Completion" from a menu in the Phone Issues form ((www.fcc.gov)), but the current complaint center landing page lists broad topics such as billing, equipment, coverage, number porting and unlocking ((consumercomplaints.fcc.gov)), so the live form may differ from the guidance. Filers should read the live form and pick the closest match.

In Canada, the equivalent sequence is the provider first ((web.archive.org)), then the CRTC or the CCTS where the complaint is within its mandate, noting the customer-relationship limit above ((www.ccts-cprst.ca)).

Escalation evidence checklist

- **To the business's provider:** intake cards from at least two callers, the completed test log, the time of the last change (number activation, port, menu edit), and call IDs if the dashboard shows them.
- **To the caller's carrier (sent by the caller):** the caller's own number, the dialed number, times with time zone, what was heard, and which other numbers worked.
- **To a regulator:** the same facts, plus the dates the provider and carrier were told and their responses.

Prevention and Provider Questions

Keep a carrier-diverse test list

Keep two or three people on different mobile carriers, plus one landline or VoIP line, who can place a test call on request. Test after any number change (activation, port, menu change) and again a day later, since routing data can lag. Vendor log tools hold limited history: one retains Voice Insights data for 30 days ((www.twilio.com)), a second shows call logs for the past 30 days ((www.bandwidth.com)), and a third has a call-flow tool that searches back a maximum of 3 days ((support.telnyx.com)). Report a suspected failure promptly.

List a second contact method

Publish a text-capable number or a web form on the website and in the Google Business Profile. A second route does not fix the first, but it keeps a customer reachable while the cause is traced, and a caller who can text but cannot call narrows the failure to the voice path.

Questions to ask a provider before buying

Table 3 below lists questions grouped by what each answer reveals, with documented examples from provider pages as of November 2026. The figures are vendor-stated, not independently measured. Service level agreements (SLAs) typically measure the provider's own platform, not other carriers' networks, and several state the exclusion in their own documents.

Question to ask	Why it matters for partial completion	Documented examples (vendor-stated, November 2026)
Can I see call logs with the failure code and the caller's number?	Without a record of the failed attempt, the provider cannot trace it.	One voice platform retains its Voice Insights call data for 30 days ((www.twilio.com)). Another vendor's call logs cover 30 days and up to 10,000 records without filtering ((www.bandwidth.com)).
How far back can your support trace a failed call?	Callers report failures late.	One vendor asks for examples under 24 hours old ((help.nextiva.com)); another states peer carriers often cannot look further back ((www.bandwidth.com)).
What does your uptime commitment exclude?	A platform SLA rarely covers a caller's carrier.	A voice API SLA excludes telecommunications provider-related problems ((www.twilio.com)); another vendor's summary excludes internet routing issues beyond its network ((telnyx.com)).
What uptime figure is stated, and how is it measured?	Figures differ by vendor and product.	One vendor states a 99.99% uptime SLA for core voice ((telnyx.com)); another states an end-to-end 99.999% uptime SLA covering uptime and call quality ((www.8x8.com)). These are claims about the vendors' own platforms.
Do you have a status page and a named escalation route to other carriers?	Carrier-specific faults need provider-to-carrier contact.	Providers ask customers to check status pages first ((support.twilio.com)) and say carrier issues are resolved through their support ((www.twilio.com)).
autoattendant.io (the publisher of this site): what is the model?	A direct comparison point.	Flat $29 per month per business line for the whole company, as the publisher describes it (a self-description, not independently verified); one menu level with up to seven options; each option rings up to three of the team's own mobiles in turn; no app or desk phone; local or toll-free numbers in the U.S. and Canada, subject to availability. This report makes no completion, uptime or carrier claim for it, and the same questions apply to it.

Providers that cannot answer the first two rows leave the business unable to produce evidence when a caller reports a failure. The SLA rows show why a "99.99%" figure should not be read as "99.99% of callers get through": the measured thing is the provider's platform. The last row is deliberately plain: a flat-rate number that rings mobiles is a simple design with two legs, and a business should ask any provider, including this one, how each leg is monitored.

When this is the wrong product conversation

A business that cannot tolerate any lost inbound call, such as an emergency-service contractor or a clinic with urgent inbound lines, has a requirement that a small flat-rate service does not promise. Such a business should ask larger VoIP platforms about redundant carrier arrangements, service-level terms and contractual response times. No source cited here shows that any provider, small or large, can guarantee completion from every caller's carrier.

Data Analysis and Evidence

The evidence base for this problem is thin and mostly structural. The facts below are grouped by what they can and cannot support.

What was measured

- **Who is calling.** In the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) National Health Interview Survey early release for July to December 2025, 80.0% of U.S. adults lived in wireless-only households, up from 76.0% in July to December 2023 ((www.cdc.gov)). It is a survey estimate, and the report notes the 2025 sample was reduced by a data-collection pause.
- **Where the lines are.** The FCC's Voice Telephone Services report, with data as of December 2025, counts 14 million end-user switched access lines ((docs.fcc.gov)). Mobile voice subscriptions rose from 372,604 thousand in December 2022 to 396,983 thousand in December 2025 ((docs.fcc.gov)).
- **What business lines are made of.** Of wireline retail voice connections, 51 million, or 68%, were business connections ((docs.fcc.gov)), and the FCC reports that 82.7% of those are non-incumbent interconnected VoIP subscriptions. The FCC defines interconnected VoIP as service that permits users generally to receive calls that originate on the public switched telephone network, so a VoIP business number's reachability depends on interconnection with other carriers.
- **Complaint counts, not failure rates.** The FCC reported 728 consumer rural call completion complaints in 2013 through 30 September ((docs.fcc.gov)). These count complaints about long-distance calls to rural areas, and they are not call-failure rates.

What was not found

No official statistic for inbound call failure to small-business numbers, or for failures confined to certain carriers, is cited here. The FCC's 2018 order eliminated the reporting requirement that would have produced a continuing completion-rate dataset ((www.federalregister.gov)). Vendor blogs that quote failure percentages are not originating sources, so none are relied on here.

Derived figures and interpretation

Dividing 397 million mobile subscriptions by the 472 million total retail voice connections the FCC reports for December 2025 gives about 84% (derived here from the FCC totals, not a figure the FCC states).

Three implications follow. First, two mobile carriers cover most callers, so a test matrix with two mobile rows is sensible without being exhaustive. Second, because no failure rate exists, a business cannot benchmark its provider against an industry norm; the only defensible evidence is its own logs. Third, evidence windows of 24 hours to 30 days mean that the speed of the first report matters more than the sophistication of the diagnosis.

Implications and Future Directions

Three developments make the "works for me, fails for some callers" problem more likely to be a filtering or routing question than a single-carrier fault.

More mobile, more filtering. With mobile subscriptions growing and switched lines falling, more business calls end on phones where carrier tools and handset settings decide whether the call rings. Terminating providers' blocking analytics include consideration of caller ID authentication information where available ((www.law.cornell.edu)), and authentication works only on IP networks, so some calls arrive without it. Redress routes exist but promise little: one carrier says businesses may call for help with blocked calls ((www.t-mobile.com)) and that corrections are made within 48 hours of a verified request ((www.t-mobile.com)), another warns that a submission may not change labeling ((voicespamfeedback.com)), and the Free Caller Registry says registration does not guarantee redress ((www.freecallerregistry.com)).

More dialing changes. Area-code overlays continue to require ten-digit dialing. A Tennessee overlay notice shows the mechanics: from 5 August 2025, 7-digit calls in the 423 area code are routed to an announcement ((www.nanpa.com)). Callers with 7-digit habits will fail for dialing reasons alone.

Better blocked-call signalling. The IETF defined SIP response code 608 to give legal callers a remediation path when an intermediary blocks a call ((www.rfc-editor.org)), and the FCC's blocking rule refers to SIP code 603+ for analytics-based blocking ((www.law.cornell.edu)). Provider dashboards that show such codes make carrier-versus-business diagnosis easier, but only for providers that expose them.

The structural conclusion is that responsibility remains distributed. The U.S. framework governs large originating providers' path choices, Canada relies on interconnection policy and blocking conditions, and nothing found assigns a small receiving business a right to completion. The business's leverage is evidence: an intake process, a test log and quick reporting.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why can't customers call my business number, and why do business calls not go through for some people?

Your own calls and the provider's logs can look healthy while a particular caller's carrier uses a route that fails. Causes include the caller's dialing format after an area-code overlay, routing data not yet updated on a new or newly ported number ((support.telnyx.com)), a stale route at one carrier, or filtering on the receiving mobile. One provider's guide lists dialing and configuration errors and network problems among the reasons ((www.bandwidth.com)). The symptom alone cannot tell them apart; the pattern across test networks can.

Why do calls to my business number go straight to voicemail?

On a number that rings team mobiles, check the mobile first. A phone that is off, in airplane mode or out of signal may forward to carrier voicemail ((www.att.com)), and an iPhone with Silence Unknown Callers on sends unsaved callers to voicemail ((support.apple.com)). On Android, blocked callers cannot leave voicemails when visual voicemail is on ((support.google.com)).

Why does my business phone number not ring?

If it rings for no caller, the number or provider is the likely common factor, so check the status page and logs. If only some callers fail, follow the symptom table and the test log.

What is call completion rate and how do I troubleshoot it?

Call completion is the share of call attempts that reach the called party. No public benchmark exists for small-business lines, and the FCC dropped its rural reporting requirement in 2018 ((www.federalregister.gov)). Troubleshoot with your own logs, the test matrix and the intake card.

Could my business number be blocked or labelled spam likely?

Calls from your number to customers can be labelled or blocked by the recipient's carrier or phone, and the FCC says automatic enrollment in blocking services can occur with an opt-out ((www.fcc.gov)). Inbound calls to you can be filtered at the receiving mobile.

Why do my auto attendant calls not ring the team's mobiles?

Check the second leg separately: call forwarding settings ((www.verizon.com)), unknown-caller silencing ((support.apple.com)), Do Not Disturb, Wi-Fi Calling in low-coverage locations ((www.verizon.com)) and any carrier spam filter. Router settings can also cause incoming calls to fail on some VoIP setups ((www.ooma.com)).

How do I test whether customers can reach my business number?

Use the three-network test: two different mobile carriers, one landline or VoIP line and one Wi-Fi Calling call, logged with time zones. Vary the caller ID where possible, since one vendor recommends it to see whether the problem depends on the calling number ((help.twilio.com)).

Conclusion

When some callers cannot reach a business number while the owner's own calls work, the useful question is which leg failed and who can see it. The business can rule out its own setup in 15 minutes, collect five facts from each affected caller, and test from three kinds of network. The pattern in the results points toward the business's provider, the caller's carrier, or the receiving mobiles.

The U.S. rural call completion framework governs how large providers manage call paths, and the FCC's published guidance routes callers to their own carriers first. It gives a small receiving business neither a right to a fix nor a numeric completion standard. In Canada, no equivalent rule was found, and complaints run through the provider, then the CRTC or the CCTS within their mandates.

Prevention is modest and practical: a standing test list across carriers, a second published contact method, and provider questions about logs, trace windows and what an uptime commitment excludes. Where no lost inbound call is acceptable, the business should look at redundant arrangements on larger platforms. No provider's completion record can be assumed, and the business's own evidence is the one asset it fully controls.

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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