



AUTO ATTENDANT / RESEARCH & PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

How to Get a Business Phone Number: Options & Costs

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

Getting a business phone number is not one purchase decision. It is a choice among a **second SIM or eSIM**, a carrier business line, a virtual forwarding number, Google Voice, a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) suite, a dedicated auto attendant, a contact centre, or a human answering service. A compatible iPhone can hold two active numbers and explicitly supports using one for business and one for personal calls (support.apple.com). At the other end of the spectrum, a contact-centre platform provides configurable call flows, routing and queue assignment ([twilio.com](https://www.twilio.com)). The right answer depends on whether one person needs privacy, several people need calls routed to their own phones, or agents need queues, recording and supervision.

As of **September 21, 2026**, published U.S. prices illustrate why packaging matters. Google Voice for business starts at **\$10 per user per month** and requires Google Workspace (support.google.com), Ooma Office Essentials is **\$19.95 per user per month** (ooma.com), and RingCentral RingEX Essentials starts at **\$19.99 per user per month** when billed annually, for up to 20 users (ringcentral.com). For a 10-person team, the Google Voice business comparison must also include the required Google Workspace subscriptions; the Ooma and RingCentral totals based on the cited seat rates are \$199.50 and \$199.90 monthly, respectively. By contrast, autoattendant.io publishes **\$29 per month flat for the whole company** (autoattendant.io), while AnswerConnect's Entry plan is **\$350 per month for 200 minutes, plus a \$49.99 setup fee** (answerconnect.com). These products solve different problems, so price alone is not a valid ranking.

The practical sequence is to define the call flow, choose **local, toll-free or vanity**, check number inventory and jurisdiction rules, decide whether to take a new number or port the existing one, submit identity and address evidence, configure greetings and destinations, and test ordinary calls; arrange any emergency-call test only through the provider's and local emergency centre's approved non-emergency procedure.

Requirements are not universal. Twilio notes that countries may require an end user's name, address, proof of address or identity document ([twilio.com](https://www.twilio.com)). Business registration is therefore provider, number-type and country dependent, not an automatic prerequisite everywhere.

Emergency calling must be checked before purchase. In the United States, a VoIP device must be registered to a physical address so a 911 centre can locate it ([911.gov](https://www.911.gov)). In Canada, a VoIP 9-1-1 call may first go to a third-party routing provider ([crtc.gc.ca](https://www.crtc.gc.ca)). In the United Kingdom, providers must offer access to **112 and 999 at no charge** ([ofcom.org.uk](https://www.ofcom.org.uk)). A business should keep a separate mobile available during power or broadband failure and confirm exactly what its selected service supports.

Introduction and Background

A business phone number is a public identity and a routing decision, not necessarily a second physical telephone. It can terminate on a SIM, forward to an existing mobile, ring an app, distribute calls through a menu, enter a queue, or reach a receptionist employed by another company. A virtual number is specifically not tied to one physical place or device ([zoom.com](https://www.zoom.com)), which is why a small company can publish one stable number while changing who answers it.

The decision usually begins when an owner realizes that a personal mobile has become part of the firm's permanent public surface. Google says a phone number on a Business Profile is visible to customers on Google (support.google.com). Once that same number is also printed on invoices, vehicles and signs, changing it means finding every copy, updating every directory and retraining repeat callers. “Permanent” is a practical inference, not a technical rule, but it is a sound reason to separate the business identity before publication.

This report maps the main **business phone number options** and the costs that dominate for teams of **one to ten people**. It answers how to set up a business phone number, how to place a separate business number on a cell phone, and when a virtual business phone number is enough for a small business. It treats a number as a portable business asset, distinguishes real humans from automated menus, and gives emergency calling equal weight with features. Prices are public list prices in the currency and billing cadence shown, checked on **September 21, 2026**. Taxes, regulated fees, hardware, usage, promotions and required companion subscriptions may change the invoice.

Understanding the Business Phone Number Choices

The best way to get a business phone number is to start with the required outcome rather than a vendor list. A solo consultant who only wants privacy has little reason to buy queue analytics. A field-service team may need one published number that rings several technicians. A medical office may need every caller answered by a person. A support operation may need queues, recording, quality controls and customer relationship management (CRM) integration.

Use these screening questions:

- **One identity or many extensions:** Decide whether callers need a single route or a menu for sales, service and billing.

- **One answerer or a team:** Count everyone who must receive calls. Per-user pricing becomes the dominant cost difference as the team grows.
- **Existing dialler or new app:** Decide whether staff can install a business communications app or must keep using their normal mobile dialler.
- **Calls only or broader communications:** Text, meetings, internal messaging and presence point toward unified communications as a service (UCaaS), not simple forwarding.
- **Routing or answering:** An auto attendant routes. An answering service employs people who speak to callers. They are not substitutes.
- **Emergency dependency:** Determine whether this line will ever be used to call emergency services and what happens during broadband or power loss.
- **Number ownership:** Decide whether to select a new number or port an already advertised one before cancelling anything.

Table 1 compares the main paths. “Skip” means the category is oversized, underspecified or operationally mismatched for that reader, not that the product is inherently weak.

Option	How calls reach the business	Genuinely right for	Who should skip it	Typical charging logic
Second SIM or eSIM	A second carrier line rings the existing handset. Dual SIM supports two active numbers (support.apple.com).	One person who wants clean personal and business identities.	Teams, menus, shared coverage and queue users.	Per mobile line.
Carrier business line	A native mobile or fixed line is billed to a business account. Verizon One Talk is available to any Verizon Business account in the domestic U.S. (verizon.com).	Owners prioritizing carrier-native voice, data and conventional emergency behavior.	A distributed team needing provider-independent routing.	Per line, plus taxes and fees.
Virtual or forwarding number	The published number redirects to mobiles, desk phones, softphones or other numbers (zoom.com).	Solo operators and small teams needing privacy and flexible destinations.	Teams needing deep queues, workforce controls or human call handling.	Per number, plan or user.
Google Voice	A Google-managed number rings web, mobile and configured devices.	A U.S. solo user wanting a no-charge personal line, or Workspace users needing a paid business plan.	Buyers outside supported markets or teams needing features absent from the selected tier.	No-charge consumer plan, or per license for business.
autoattendant.io dedicated menu	One number presents up to nine menu options and routes each to existing mobiles (autoattendant.io).	Two to ten people who answer their own calls and want no app or seat charge.	Solo users who never need a menu, or teams needing queues, recording, CRM or someone else to answer.	\$29 monthly flat for the company.

Option	How calls reach the business	Genuinely right for	Who should skip it	Typical charging logic
VoIP or UCaaS platform	Calls, messaging and meetings run through a unified application. Dialpad describes Connect as combining calling, messaging and meetings (dialpad.com).	Teams that want extensions, internal collaboration and managed calling.	A simple forwarding use case where each seat adds unnecessary cost and administration.	Usually per user or seat.
Full contact centre	Calls enter skills-based routing and queues, then reach managed agents.	Support or sales operations needing queues, recordings, dashboards, supervision and CRM workflows.	Ordinary small businesses that only need a number and a simple menu.	Per named/active agent, sometimes plus usage.
Human answering service	An external receptionist answers, takes messages or completes approved tasks. Ruby advertises human coverage around the clock (ruby.com).	Teams that cannot reliably answer and value a person over self-service.	Owners who want customers to speak directly with their own team.	Usually included minutes, then usage.

The table reveals two separate axes. The first is **where the call terminates**, such as a carrier line, app or existing mobile. The second is **who or what answers first**, such as the owner, a menu, a queue or an outsourced receptionist. Many poor purchases happen because buyers compare options on only one axis.

Dedicated Mobile and Carrier Lines

Capabilities

A second SIM or eSIM is the lowest-complexity separation. The owner receives two carrier numbers on one compatible handset, can label lines, and can choose which identity originates a call. It behaves like a native mobile line because it is one. Verizon's Second Number, for example, requires a compatible Dual SIM smartphone with an available SIM (verizon.com) and depends on the primary eligible line remaining active (verizon.com).

A carrier business account can add centralized billing, device management and business features while preserving native calling. It is often the right answer when one employee owns each line, staff need mobile data anyway, or the business wants one carrier relationship. It does not automatically create a shared main number or a department menu.

Adoption, Strengths and Limitations

The principal strength is operational familiarity: no new calling application and no dependence on an office internet connection for cellular calls. Published carrier prices can be promotion-sensitive. T-Mobile lists **\$65 monthly for one CoreMobile line and \$120 for three** before stated adjustments (t-mobile.com). Verizon separately advertises a conditional **\$15 per month bring-your-own-device line** when a customer transfers a number (verizon.com). Those figures should not be treated as directly comparable without checking eligibility, taxes, fees and data allowances.

Skip this route if the central requirement is “one public number, many answerers.” Adding ten mobile lines creates ten identities unless a separate routing layer is added. It is also a poor fit if the number must move independently of the underlying mobile subscription.

Virtual Numbers and Google Voice

Capabilities

A virtual number separates the public address from the endpoint. Grasshopper explains that call forwarding automatically redirects incoming business calls (grasshopper.com). That destination can change without repainting a van or changing a website. A service can add voicemail, schedules, greetings and text, but the feature list varies widely.

Google Voice deserves separate treatment because “free” and “business” refer to different plans. Google's basic no-charge plan is for personal consumer use (support.google.com). Single-user offerings that do not require paid Workspace are available only in the United States (support.google.com). Multiple-user business plans are add-on subscriptions to paid Google Workspace (support.google.com).

Adoption, Strengths and Limitations

For a solo U.S. operator, the no-charge route is a personal consumer service rather than an organization-managed business phone system. The limits are equally important: it is a personal product, geographic availability is constrained, and a growing team enters paid licensing. Identity verification is now part of activation for some new numbers, and Google says calls and messages remain unavailable until it is complete (support.google.com).

Virtual numbers suit mobility and privacy, but buyers should test outbound caller identity, short-code messaging, emergency calling, port-out policy and simultaneous ringing. Inventory is not unlimited. Zoom notes that only unused and otherwise unrestricted numbers can be selected (zoom.com).

Auto Attendants, UCaaS, Contact Centres and Answering Services

Capabilities

An **auto attendant** is recorded automation that answers first and routes by keypress or spoken choice. A dedicated service is intentionally narrow. Autoattendant.io publishes one local or toll-free number, a menu of up to nine options, simultaneous or sequential ringing to existing mobiles, separate after-hours and weekend greetings, and voicemail recording plus transcript by email. It also states that there is nothing to install and that receiving users keep their existing phones (autoattendant.io). This is routing, not outsourced answering or a complete phone suite.

UCaaS combines external calling with internal communications. It is justified when chat, meetings, extensions, presence and administration belong in one application. Ooma, Dialpad and RingCentral price the service per user, which aligns cost with enabled staff but makes team size the main budget driver.

A **contact centre** adds agent operations. Twilio Flex documents customizable call flows, routing and queue assignment, while its commercial models include **\$35 per monthly active user plus metered services** ([twilio.com](https://www.twilio.com)) or starting prices of **\$1 per active hour** ([twilio.com](https://www.twilio.com)). These tools fit managed support and sales teams, not a tradesperson who just wants calls routed to three mobiles.

An **answering service** places a human between the caller and the business. It can take messages, qualify leads or follow scripts when the owner's team is unavailable. Its value comes from labor, so included minutes and overages matter more than employee count. AnswerConnect's Entry plan is **\$350 monthly for 200 minutes plus a \$49.99 setup fee**, illustrating that distinct cost model.

Strengths and Limitations

Choose the smallest category that meets the operational requirement:

- **Dedicated auto attendant:** Strong for one public identity and predictable routing to a small team. Skip it when agents need queue state, recordings, CRM context or coaching.
- **UCaaS:** Strong when calling is one component of a broader collaboration system. Skip it when most staff only need their current mobile to ring.
- **Contact centre:** Strong for queue discipline, reporting and managed agents. Skip it when there is no queue to operate.
- **Answering service:** Strong when calls must be answered even while the internal team is busy. Skip it when customers should always reach the company's own people.

Feature Comparison

Table 2 converts official U.S. list prices into a simple team-size view. It is a budget comparison, not a feature-equivalence ranking. Calculations multiply the published per-user rate by the headcount shown. “Starting” means the vendor may impose plan, usage, tax, fee or subscription conditions beyond the displayed amount.

Service and plan	Published price, USD, checked Sep. 21, 2026	1 user	3 users	10 users	Primary fit
Google Voice for business	Starts at \$10 per user monthly and requires Google Workspace (support.google.com)	\$10 plus Workspace	\$30 plus Workspace	\$100 plus Workspace	Organization-managed business voice.
Grasshopper Solo Plus	\$25 per plan monthly (grasshopper.com)	\$25	Plan limits apply	Plan limits apply	Virtual number and forwarding.
autoattendant.io	\$29 flat monthly (autoattendant.io)	\$29	\$29	\$29	One number and menu routing to existing mobiles.
Ooma Office Essentials	\$19.95 per user monthly (ooma.com)	\$19.95	\$59.85	\$199.50	Small-business VoIP.
Quo Starter, monthly billing	\$19 per user monthly (quo.com)	\$19	\$57	\$190	App-based virtual business phone.

Service and plan	Published price, USD, checked Sep. 21, 2026	1 user	3 users	10 users	Primary fit
Dialpad Connect Standard, annual billing	\$15 per user monthly (dialpad.com)	\$15	\$45	\$150	UCaaS calling, messaging and meetings.
RingCentral RingEX Essentials, annual billing	Starts at \$19.99 per user monthly, up to 20 users (ringcentral.com)	\$19.99	\$59.97	\$199.90	UCaaS for up to 20 users.
Zoom business virtual number	Starts at \$8 per user monthly (zoom.com)	\$8	\$24	\$80	App-based cloud calling.
T-Mobile CoreMobile	\$65 for one, \$120 for three (t-mobile.com)	\$65	\$120	Not stated	Native carrier business mobile.
Twilio Flex, active-user model	Starts at \$35 per active user, plus usage (twilio.com)	\$35+	\$105+	\$350+	Programmable contact centre.
AnswerConnect Entry	\$350 monthly for 200 minutes, plus \$49.99 setup; \$2.50 per additional minute (answerconnect.com)	\$399.99 first month; \$350 recurring	\$399.99 first month; \$350 recurring	\$399.99 first month; \$350 recurring	Human answering, assuming same shared minute pool.

At ten users, seat-based totals in this sample range from **\$80 to \$200 per month** before extras, while the cited flat routing plan remains \$29 and the cited human service begins at \$350. These are calculations from the sourced unit prices in the table. The spread is explained by scope, not merely margin: a number that forwards, a collaboration suite, an agent platform and paid receptionist labor are different inputs. Buyers should compare the least expensive plan that contains every required capability, not the cheapest row.

Number Type, Setup and Porting

Local, Toll-Free and Vanity Numbers

A **local number** uses a geographic numbering area. It signals proximity and can be useful where buyers choose nearby providers. Ofcom says U.K. geographic numbers are linked to a specific area through their opening digits (ofcom.org.uk). A **toll-free number** signals broader coverage and shifts the telephone toll to the called party. Somos states that the called party, rather than the caller, pays the charge (support.somos.com). A **vanity number** uses a memorable numeric or letter pattern. Somos permits alphabetic characters to define a toll-free vanity number (support.somos.com), so vanity describes memorability rather than a separate routing architecture.

Table 3 summarizes the selection tradeoff. Customer “signal” is positioning judgment, not a guaranteed response.

Number type	What it can signal	Cost and administration	Best fit
Local	Presence in a town or metro area.	Often included in a service plan, but inventory and address rules may restrict selection. Some countries require an address in the prefix locality (twilio.com).	Local trades, clinics, shops and professional services.
Toll-free	National or multi-region reach and no caller toll.	The active North American codes are 800, 888, 877, 866, 855, 844 and 833 (support.somos.com). Charges vary. Ooma includes 500 minutes, then 3.4 cents per additional minute (ooma.com).	Businesses serving customers beyond one local area.
Vanity	Memorability when the spelling or pattern reinforces the brand.	Availability drives cost. A toll-free vanity number is administered as a toll-free number and may move through a RespOrg change.	Advertising-led businesses that benefit from spoken recall.

North American toll-free numbers move differently from ordinary local numbers. In the Toll-Free Number Registry, every non-spare number has one managing **Responsible Organization (RespOrg)** (support.somos.com). A subscriber can move a number between RespOrgs through the RespOrg-change process (support.somos.com). This administrative layer is a reason to ask a prospective provider who controls the number and how port-out requests work.

What Is Required and How to Set It Up

The setup sequence is straightforward, but the evidence differs by jurisdiction and provider:

1. **Define the call flow.** Write who answers during business hours, after hours and when nobody answers.
2. **Choose the category and number type.** Select carrier, forwarding, menu, UCaaS, contact centre or answering service, then local, toll-free or vanity inventory.
3. **Check eligibility.** Confirm service country, local-prefix rules, permitted use and whether an individual or registered organization may subscribe.
4. **Gather documents.** Providers may request the user's name, service address, proof of address and identity documentation. In the United Kingdom, Twilio's local-number rules for individuals require a valid U.K. address and proof of address ([twilio.com](https://www.twilio.com)), while its mobile and toll-free requirements permit a valid address elsewhere in the world ([twilio.com](https://www.twilio.com)).
5. **Select new or port.** A new number is faster to configure operationally, but every listing starts from zero. Porting preserves customer recognition but requires exact account details and coordination.
6. **Do not cancel the old service.** Keep it active until the new provider confirms completion. Canada's regulator expressly requires existing service to remain active during transfer ([crtc.gc.ca](https://www.crtc.gc.ca)).
7. **Configure and test.** Test every menu choice, missed-call path, voicemail, caller ID, after-hours rule and outbound identity. Arrange any emergency-call test only through the provider's and local emergency centre's approved non-emergency procedure.

A registered business entity is therefore not universally required. A personal eSIM and consumer Google Voice demonstrate individual routes, while regulated number types in other places demand business identity or local-address evidence. The provider's current country guideline controls.

New Number Versus Porting

Choose a new number when the personal number has not been widely published, a clean local identity matters, or a temporary overlap is acceptable. Port when the current number already appears on a website, invoices, vehicles, maps or customer contacts. The more public the number, the stronger the case for preserving it.

Portability is qualified, not absolute. In the United States, the federal rule gives simple wireline-to-wireline and simple intermodal ports a **one-business-day** interval unless the customer or new provider requests longer (ecfr.gov). That rule does not justify promising every customer a one-day completion. The FCC consumer portal also frames keeping a number around remaining in the same geographic area (consumercomplaints.fcc.gov). In Canada, moving province or local calling area may require a new number (crtc.gc.ca). In the U.K., a mobile number should normally be ready within one working day after the new provider receives the Porting Authorisation Code (ofcom.org.uk).

The practical rule is simple: obtain the exact account name, account number, billing address and transfer PIN before ordering. Verizon lists the number, account number, PIN, account-holder name and billing address among transfer requirements (verizon.com). Treat the old line as live until completion is verified.

Emergency Calling Is a Purchase Criterion

Internet and forwarding-based numbers do not necessarily behave like a traditional fixed line for **911, 999 or 112**. The risks fall into three categories: location may not follow the device, the call may take an intermediary routing path, and power or broadband failure may disable service.

United States

For U.S. VoIP, register the physical location and update it whenever the device moves. The federal 911 resource tells owners to contact the provider to update the new physical location (911.gov). Provider implementation also matters. AT&T warns that an electrical outage, data-transport outage or broadband failure can prevent its IP service's 911/E911 function (corp.att.com).

Canada

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) says a VoIP 9-1-1 call may be forwarded to a third-party service provider. It instructs callers to state location and contact details immediately (crtc.gc.ca). The CRTC also notes that VoIP depends on internet connectivity and electrical power (crtc.gc.ca).

United Kingdom

Ofcom's conditions require relevant providers to warn customers that emergency access may cease during a power or internet-connection failure (ofcom.org.uk). For VoIP used at multiple locations, providers must recommend registering and updating location information (ofcom.org.uk).

Before purchasing, ask the provider five direct questions:

- **Can this service place an emergency call at all?** Some inbound-only forwarding products may not provide outbound calling.
- **What address reaches the emergency operator?** Confirm how to register and update it.
- **What happens away from that address?** A nomadic app may retain an old registered location.
- **What fails with power or internet?** Keep a charged cellular phone available as a separate path.
- **What must employees know?** Document the fallback and test only through the provider's approved non-emergency procedure.

Performance and Benchmarks

There is no responsible universal call-quality benchmark for “a business number.” A native mobile line depends on radio coverage. A VoIP app depends on local network conditions, device configuration and internet transport. A forwarded call spans the routing service and the terminating carrier. Vendor list prices are measurable, but they do not prove comparable reliability or audio quality.

Operational benchmarks are more useful:

- **Time to answer:** Measure the caller's elapsed time through greetings and menus to a person.
- **Routing success:** Place test calls to every option, simultaneously and sequentially where supported.
- **Failure behavior:** Disconnect broadband, let calls go unanswered, and confirm the promised voicemail or fallback.
- **Identity behavior:** Verify the business number shown on outbound calls and messages.
- **Administrative effort:** Record how long it takes to add an employee, change a schedule and retrieve a voicemail.
- **Portability evidence:** Save account ownership, billing records and port-out instructions before the number becomes widely published.

A virtual service can avoid desk hardware. Zoom states that no physical phone hardware is required ([zoom.com](https://zoom.us)). That is a deployment fact, not proof of performance. A measured pilot using the business's real mobiles, networks, hours and call flows remains the defensible comparison.

Data Analysis and Evidence

The dominant quantitative result is the divergence between **per-user**, **flat-company** and **usage-based** pricing. At published rates, adding people changes the monthly total even when they answer few calls. Google Voice for business starts at \$10 per user per month and also requires Google Workspace, so the Voice license

alone is not a complete organization-managed cost. Ooma Office Essentials rises from \$19.95 to \$199.50. Quo Starter on monthly billing rises from \$19 to \$190; its annual-billing rate is lower at **\$15 per user monthly** (quo.com).

This creates a break-even question, not a universal winner. Using the cited unit prices, a flat **\$29** routing service costs more than a \$10 single license for a solo user. A comparison with Google Voice for business must include the required Google Workspace subscriptions as well as the Voice licenses. At ten users, the arithmetic gap widens, yet a team needing messaging, meetings, recordings or dashboards should still pay for the appropriate broader system.

Usage-based services reverse the variable. AnswerConnect's cited starting plan ties spend to **200 receptionist minutes**, not staff count. Ooma's toll-free allowance includes **500 minutes**, then prices additional minutes at **3.4 cents** (ooma.com). A business with few employees and heavy inbound traffic can therefore spend more than a larger team with light traffic.

Three calculation rules prevent false comparisons:

- **Normalize billing cadence.** Dialpad Connect Standard lists \$15 per user monthly with annual billing and \$27 with monthly billing (dialpad.com). Do not compare the annual rate with another vendor's flexible monthly rate without noting commitment.
- **Include prerequisites.** Google describes multi-user Voice as an add-on to paid Workspace. The voice license alone may not equal the complete required spend.
- **Model realistic usage.** Contact-centre and answering costs can include active hours, minutes, telephony and overages. Twilio also publishes a named-user option starting at **\$150 monthly per agent, supervisor or administrator** (twilio.com).

The evidence supports a practical procurement rule: calculate at today's headcount, likely headcount in 12 months, expected inbound minutes, required numbers, toll-free usage, taxes, fees, hardware and companion subscriptions. Then test whether the cheapest qualifying category still meets the non-price requirements.

Implications and Future Directions

The most durable decision is to separate the business identity early. A public number can remain stable while employees, carriers and workflows change. Google notes that users can contribute factual information such as addresses and phone numbers to business data (support.google.com), reinforcing the practical difficulty of fully retracting a personal number once it spreads.

The next implication is ownership discipline. Store the provider contract, account name, billing address, transfer credentials and emergency address centrally. Confirm that the business, not an employee or reseller, is the recognized subscriber. For toll-free service, ask which RespOrg manages the number. For a local number, confirm whether changing geography would affect portability.

Finally, buy for the call-handling model the business actually operates:

- **Solo, never needs a menu:** Use a second SIM/eSIM, a carrier line or a simple virtual number. Google's no-charge Voice plan is a personal consumer service, not an organization-managed business phone system.
- **Two to ten people who answer their own phones:** Use a forwarding service, auto attendant or appropriately sized business VoIP plan. Compare flat-company pricing with per-user totals.
- **Team that needs calls answered for it:** Buy a human answering service and model included and excess minutes.
- **Team that needs queues and recording:** Buy a contact-centre or UCaaS platform with the required recording, dashboards, CRM and governance, not a simple forwarding number.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How can a business phone number be obtained for free?

In the United States, Google's basic Voice plan is a no-charge personal consumer service. It should be evaluated as a personal consumer service, rather than as an organization-managed business phone system. It is not the same package as multi-user business Voice, which is a paid Workspace add-on. "Free" carrier promotions should be checked for line, device, port-in and term conditions.

How much does a business phone number cost?

The cited September 2026 examples run from a no-charge consumer option to **\$8 to \$20 per user per month** starting prices for several cloud products, **\$29 flat monthly** for a dedicated menu-routing service, and **\$350 monthly for 200 minutes plus a \$49.99 setup fee** for human answering. Those figures are summarized from the sourced comparison table above. Carrier service, taxes, regulated fees, usage and companion subscriptions can raise the total.

Can a separate business number ring an existing cell phone?

Yes. A second SIM/eSIM can ring natively, and virtual or forwarding services can route to the existing mobile. The important distinction is whether outbound calls also display the business identity, whether an app is required and whether emergency calls use the mobile carrier or the virtual service.

Is business registration required?

Not universally. Consumer and individual options exist, while other countries and number types require organizational identity, a local address, proof of address or identity evidence. Check the selected provider's current rules for the destination country and number type.

Should an existing number be ported or replaced?

Port it when customers already know it and it appears widely in public materials. Choose new when little recognition would be lost or a different local identity is important. Keep the old service active and submit exact account details until the new provider confirms completion.

Does a virtual business number support 911, 999 or 112?

It depends on the service and jurisdiction. Ask whether outbound emergency calling is supported, what location is registered, how nomadic use is handled, and what happens during power or internet failure. Maintain an independent cellular fallback when the business relies on internet telephony.

Conclusion

The best way to get a business phone number is to match the routing model to the business before comparing vendors. A solo owner usually needs privacy and a stable identity, not a contact centre. A small team may need one published number, a menu and routing to the mobiles already in use. A service organization may need human answering, while an agent operation needs queues, recording and management tools.

The purchase process is equally important: select local, toll-free or vanity inventory; verify country, address and identity requirements; decide between a new number and a port; preserve the old service during transfer; and test every route. Treat emergency calling as a required capability review, not a footnote.

Pricing becomes clear only after its unit is identified. A per-user subscription scales with headcount, a flat plan does not, and an answering or contact-centre service may scale with minutes, hours or active agents. The correct comparison is the full monthly cost of the smallest category that meets the real call-handling need. Separating the business number before the personal mobile becomes public is the most reversible and durable starting decision.

Source links

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

1. <https://support.apple.com/en-ie/109317>
2. <https://www.twilio.com/docs/flex/admin-guide/what-is-twilio-flex>
3. <https://support.google.com/voice/answer/10931150?hl=en>
4. <https://www.ooma.com/small-business-phone-systems/faqs/how-much-does-ooma-office-cost/>
5. <https://www.ringcentral.com/shared/content/plans-and-pricing.html>
6. <https://autoattendant.io>
7. <https://www.answerconnect.com/services>
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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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