Auto Attendant

AUTO ATTENDANT / RESEARCH & PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Missed Call Text Back for Small Business: Risks and Checklist

> 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

Missed-call text-back is an automation that detects an unanswered inbound call, sends a Short Message Service (SMS) reply, and opens a conversation for a person or workflow to continue. It can close a narrow gap: the caller reached a business number, nobody answered, and a team member can own the text thread soon afterward. It does not, by itself, fix weak call routing, provide an answering service, or create permission for unrelated promotion. **The safest buying rule is to treat the original interaction as a phone call, not as blanket marketing consent.** CTIA asks non-consumer senders to obtain consent before texting consumers (ctia.org), while Federal Communications Commission (FCC) precedent ties number-based consent to information closely related to the purpose for which the number was provided (docs.fcc.gov). A business should have US counsel assess its message, technology, consent path, state-law exposure, and follow-up sequence.

The workflow has more moving parts than the phrase “automatic text response to missed calls” suggests. HighLevel defines the trigger as an inbound call that remains unanswered beyond its ring timeout and says an answered call never triggers the text (help.gohighlevel.com) (help.gohighlevel.com). But platforms differ on abandoned calls, repeat calls, sending-number fallback, quiet hours, and reply ownership. CallRail, for example, classifies a caller who disconnects before **15 seconds** as abandoned and does not send that caller an automatic response (support.callrail.com). These are configuration choices, not interchangeable defaults.

Number readiness is a separate gate. A local sender may need application-to-person **10-digit long code (A2P 10DLC)** brand and campaign registration, and a toll-free sender may need toll-free verification. The Campaign Registry requires a brand to reach Verified status before registering campaigns and sending on 10DLC (campaignregistry.com). Current first-party examples show materially different economics: Allo cites a one-time **$24** 10DLC charge, Callita TextBack includes **300 texts monthly** then charges **$0.03** per extra text, and BeepBack lists **$79 per location monthly** (withallo.com) (gettextback.com) (getbeepback.com).

The best missed-call text-back for a small business is therefore not the product with the fastest advertised trigger. It is the option that can use an expected sending number, prove the intended consent basis, suppress opted-out and duplicate contacts, accept replies, keep auditable logs, and assign a human owner. If callers need immediate help, after-hours or on-call routing is usually safer. If they need a conversation handled, use a human or AI answering service. If calls, texts, and voicemail must share one workspace, buy a messaging-capable phone platform. **autoattendant.io does not send missed-call texts**; its documented unanswered-call path is voicemail with an emailed recording and transcript (autoattendant.io). Businesses that require texting should choose a platform that explicitly provides it.

Introduction and Background

A missed call is an ambiguous event. It may represent a homeowner asking for an estimate, a patient trying to reschedule, a tenant reporting a leak, a vendor returning a call, a robocall, or a wrong number. Missed-call text-back converts all or some of those events into outbound messages. The attraction is obvious: a brief acknowledgement can preserve the caller’s context while the team is driving, treating a patient, inspecting a property, or speaking with another customer.

The risk is equally practical. Automation can reply to an ineligible line, send repeatedly to a persistent caller, use a number the caller does not recognize, continue after an opt-out, or create a text thread nobody monitors. It can also change the nature of the communication. “Sorry we missed your call. This is Northside Plumbing. What can we help with?” is operationally different from adding a discount, financing offer, or recurring campaign. FCC rules define telemarketing by whether the communication encourages a purchase, rental, or investment (ecfr.gov). The FCC also states that prior express consent for a covered robotext containing advertising or telemarketing must be written (docs.fcc.gov).

This report addresses a US audience and separates three decisions: whether text-back fits the caller’s need, whether the business number and provider can send compliant messages, and whether the team can operate the resulting conversation. It is not individualized legal advice. CTIA itself advises organizations to consider qualified legal and regulatory advice before acting (api.ctia.org).

Key Changes in the Missed-Call Workflow

From an unanswered call to a governed message trigger

How does missed-call text-back work? In its simplest form, the phone system records an inbound call outcome, tests that outcome against rules, chooses a sending number and template, sends one SMS, and puts any reply into an inbox. A person or automation then continues the conversation. Allo describes an immediate message from the business number and places replies in a shared inbox for the team (withallo.com) (withallo.com). Callita instead uses conditional forwarding of unanswered calls to a TextBack number, and its message comes from that separate number (gettextback.com) (gettextback.com).

Those architectures create different customer experiences. Same-number sending preserves recognition. A fallback or separate sender may be technically necessary, but the opening text must identify the business and explain the context. HighLevel’s documented fallback order can move from the dialed number to the default outbound number and then another eligible messaging number (help.gohighlevel.com). A buyer should therefore test the number the caller actually sees, not merely approve a template in an administrator screen.

The trigger also needs a precise definition. Useful distinctions include:

- **Answered:** a person or external answering service connected, so no text should fire.
- **Timed out:** the phone rang for the configured period without an answer.
- **Abandoned:** the caller disconnected early, possibly before routing completed.
- **Busy or rejected:** the endpoint could not or would not accept the call.
- **After hours:** a schedule, not just the call outcome, determines the response.
- **Repeat caller:** the system decides whether to suppress, append, or send again.

HighLevel says the same caller can receive another text after repeated tries in a brief period (help.gohighlevel.com). By contrast, BeepBack says a repeat call lands in the existing thread and caps unanswered outbound texts to **three per day** (getbeepback.com) (getbeepback.com). Neither default is universally right. The business must choose and test its suppression rule.

Four questions before enabling an automatic reply

Table 1 turns the pre-purchase issue into four observable decisions.

Question	Evidence required before launch	Reason to pause
Did the caller expect a text?	Document where the number was published, what the caller was told, the purpose of the call, and counsel's view of the proposed reply.	An inbound call is not a reliable assumption of blanket permission for marketing. CTIA says messages should follow an opt-in (api.ctia.org).
What will the message contain?	Approve one contextual, non-promotional acknowledgement. Identify the business and why it is writing.	A coupon, financing pitch, or continuing sequence can change the legal and customer-expectation analysis. Twilio requires messages to clearly identify the sender that obtained consent (twilio.com).
Can the caller reply and opt out?	Test inbound replies, STOP and ordinary-language requests, confirmation behavior, and future suppression.	A one-way alert without monitored replies cannot complete the handoff. Twilio checks its block list before later outbound messages (twilio.com).
Who owns follow-up?	Name a role, response window, backup person, inbox, escalation path, and closure state.	Automation that creates an unowned conversation can merely replace one missed channel with another.

The table shows why the feature is better understood as a small messaging operation than as a canned response. Consent, content, transport, and staffing must all agree. If any answer is unknown, leave the automation off and repair the underlying process first.

Missed-call message examples for a business

A low-risk operational template should be short, contextual, identifiable, and reply-capable. **Hypothetical example:** "Northside Plumbing: We missed your call about 10 minutes ago. What can we help with? Reply STOP to opt out." The template does not claim that this wording creates consent. It makes the sender and event clear and provides a visible control. Allo's own shorter example is "Hi! Sorry we missed your call. How can we help?" (withallo.com).

For a clinic, avoid putting sensitive information into the automatic message. A neutral acknowledgement can ask the person to call back or reply without naming a condition, appointment type, or patient status. Property and home-service teams should reserve "emergency" language for workflows that are actually staffed and authorized to respond. A professional practice should not attach a promotional sequence to the acknowledgement unless its consent process and counsel support that separate use.

The following templates are also **hypothetical examples** to reject:

- **Unidentified:** "Sorry we missed you. How can we help?"
- **Promotional:** "We missed your call. Book today for 20% off."
- **Overpromising:** "We will reply immediately," when no response owner exists.
- **One-way:** "Do not reply," when the purpose is to recover a conversation.
- **Sensitive:** a message that reveals health, tenancy, legal, or financial context on a shared phone.

Implementation Considerations and Process Changes

US consent, identification, opt-out, and records

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) analysis depends on the technology, message purpose, consent facts, and recipient. The statute generally addresses calls made with an automatic telephone dialing system or artificial or prerecorded voice to cellular numbers without prior express consent, subject to exceptions (uscode.house.gov). Current FCC rules define an autodialer by capacity involving a random or sequential number generator (ecfr.gov). Those rules do not support a universal conclusion that every missed-call reply is covered in the same way, nor do they make an inbound call blanket permission for promotion.

A responsible US checklist is:

- **Consent basis:** record the specific interaction, disclosure, number, purpose, campaign, and date that support the intended message. CTIA recommends documenting the specific campaign for which an opt-in was provided (api.ctia.org).
- **Identity and purpose:** name the business in the first message and tie the message to the just-missed call. CTIA recommends representing the organization in the initial message (api.ctia.org).
- **Opt-out:** support STOP and ordinary-language withdrawal through the channels the law and provider require. FCC rules recognize STOP, QUIT, END, REVOKE, OPT OUT, CANCEL, and UNSUBSCRIBE as per se reasonable reply terms for covered messages (ecfr.gov).
- **Suppression:** stop covered communications promptly and prevent a later missed call from silently re-enrolling the same number. FCC rules allow no more than **10 business days** to honor covered revocations, although an operator can and generally should suppress much faster (ecfr.gov).
- **Confirmation:** if a covered opt-out confirmation is sent, keep it to the revocation, with no marketing. The FCC permits only one additional confirmation and says it must contain no marketing or promotion (ecfr.gov).
- **Records:** retain opt-in, opt-out, template, registration, delivery, reply, assignment, and suppression records. CTIA recommends retaining both opt-in and opt-out requests (api.ctia.org).
- **Timing:** apply quiet hours based on the recipient's location and the message classification. FCC telephone-solicitation rules use **8 a.m. to 9 p.m.** in the called party's local time (ecfr.gov).

One current timing nuance matters. As of September 2026, the FCC extended the effective date of a limited cross-category revocation requirement to **January 31, 2027** (docs.fcc.gov). That limited waiver does not erase the broader need to process opt-outs. Counsel should confirm the current federal rule, state rules, and the exact workflow immediately before launch.

Number readiness and carrier registration

A business cannot infer text capability from the fact that a number accepts calls. Twilio exposes Voice, SMS, and Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) capabilities as separate Boolean fields (twilio.com). A line-type lookup can help screen destinations, but Bandwidth cautions that classification reflects carrier records, not

necessarily how a call or text is transported; some traditional landlines are text-enabled through hosted messaging (bandwidth.com) (bandwidth.com). The correct test is an end-to-end capability and reply test, not a mobile-versus-landline guess.

For US A2P messages from local long-code numbers, providers commonly require brand and campaign registration. The Campaign Registry validates the Employer Identification Number (EIN), legal company name, and legal address (campaignregistry.com). Its campaign record requires every available opt-in method to be listed (campaignregistry.com). T-Mobile says entities using sanctioned 10DLC routes must register before campaign messages can be approved for delivery (t-mobile.com).

Toll-free messaging uses a different verification path. Bandwidth describes toll-free verification as a free process that tags traffic as verified and says manual review can take up to **five business days** (bandwidth.com) (bandwidth.com). Sinch says unverified or pending toll-free numbers cannot send messages and cites up to **seven business days** for verification (support.app.sinch.com) (support.app.sinch.com). These are provider-specific statements, not universal service-level commitments.

Trigger and failure-mode test sheet

Table 2 is a launch acceptance sheet. Record the actual result, screenshot, message identifier, timestamp, and owner for every row.

Test	Expected control	Failure to investigate
Answered call	No text.	A completed customer conversation triggers an unnecessary message.
Timed-out missed call	One identified acknowledgement from the approved number within the configured window.	No send, excessive delay, or unexpected fallback sender.
Early abandoned call	Explicit chosen behavior.	Product default silently differs from policy. CallRail suppresses its automated response for calls classified as abandoned (support.callrail.com).
Repeat call	Suppression window or same-thread behavior works.	Duplicates accumulate.
Known spam or blocked number	No send and a logged reason.	The system spends messages and creates nuisance threads.
Landline or invalid destination	Graceful failure, no retry loop, and recorded status.	Repeated attempts to an ineligible destination. SimpleTexting removes detected landlines and invalid numbers from later sends (simpletexting.com).
Blocked caller ID	No attempt unless a valid callback number exists.	A malformed contact is created.
STOP and ordinary-language opt-out	Confirmation, suppression, and audit record match policy.	Another missed call reactivates texting.
Reply	Appears in the correct inbox and alerts the named owner.	Nobody sees the conversation.

Test	Expected control	Failure to investigate
After hours	Hold, route, or send only as approved for the caller's local time.	A late message violates policy or expectations.
Provider outage or registration rejection	Calls continue through the documented fallback; text failure is visible.	Silent loss creates false confidence.

The sheet emphasizes observed behavior. Product pages are useful starting points, but they cannot prove the configuration of a particular account, carrier path, ported number, or staff process.

Choosing Text-Back or a Safer Alternative

Decision matrix by caller need

Should businesses text back missed calls? Only when a text is expected or otherwise properly supported, the caller can reply and opt out, and a person owns the follow-up. *Table 3* compares the main alternatives.

Option	Best fit	Urgency and dialogue	Consent and staffing implication	Current first-party price example
Missed-call text-back service	Caller can continue asynchronously and the business has a defensible messaging workflow.	Low to moderate urgency; two-way text.	Requires number readiness, registration, opt-out, logs, suppression, and an inbox owner.	Callita includes 300 texts, then **$0.03 each** (gettextback.com); BeepBack lists **$79 monthly per location** (getbeepback.com).
Voicemail transcript and callback	The caller can explain the issue and wait for a human callback.	Low urgency; asynchronous voice.	Avoids an automatic outbound text, though callback and privacy policies still matter.	Quo lists voicemail-to-text on all plans and Starter from **$15 per user monthly when billed annually** (quo.com).
After-hours or on-call route	Urgent caller should reach the right employee now.	High urgency; live dialogue.	Needs a maintained schedule, escalation, and accountable on-call person.	autoattendant.io lists **$29 monthly flat for the company** (autoattendant.io).
Human answering service	A person must qualify, take a message, schedule, or transfer.	Moderate to high urgency; live dialogue.	The provider handles calls, but the business must define scripts, authority, privacy, and escalation.	Smith.ai lists **$300 monthly for 30 calls** on its human-first Starter plan (smith.ai).
AI answering service	The call must be answered when staff are unavailable and the use case tolerates automation.	Moderate urgency; automated voice dialogue.	Requires careful script, escalation, disclosure, privacy, and failure review.	Beside lists **$29.99 monthly with 30 answered calls** (beside.com).
Messaging-capable phone platform	Calls, texts, voicemail, and shared ownership should live together.	Varies; unified dialogue history.	Broader deployment, user administration, registration, and training.	Quo documents calls, texts, and voicemail transcripts in one workspace (quo.com).

The matrix is not a feature ranking. The right product follows the failure being solved. A leak reported after hours needs routing, not an SMS queue. A receptionist-style intake needs someone or something to answer. A solo professional who can return calls from a transcript may not need messaging at all.

autoattendant.io is a direct provider of the call-routing alternative, not of missed-call text-back. It provides one business number with a multi-option attendant that rings team members' existing mobiles, and it does not send texts. It also states that it does not answer calls on the customer's behalf. At **$29 monthly for the company**, with no per-user seats, it fits teams that want the call to reach their own people (autoattendant.io). A buyer who needs two-way SMS should choose a messaging-capable service instead.

Provider verification checklist

Before selecting a missed-call text-back service, obtain written answers to these questions:

- **Trigger:** Which call outcomes fire, and how are busy, rejected, abandoned, spam, and blocked-ID calls treated?
- **Timing:** What delay, business-hour schedule, quiet-hour policy, and recipient-time-zone logic apply?
- **Duplicate suppression:** What happens after the second call, an existing open thread, or a prior unanswered text?
- **Sending number:** Is it the dialed number, a registered local number, a toll-free number, or an automatic fallback?
- **Capabilities:** Can the existing number send and receive SMS, and what changes if it is ported or hosted?
- **Registration:** Who files A2P 10DLC or toll-free verification, who owns the registration, and what happens while pending?
- **Consent records:** Where are the opt-in source, disclosure, purpose, timestamp, and campaign stored?
- **Opt-out:** Which keywords and ordinary-language requests are recognized, and is suppression account-wide?
- **Replies:** Which inbox receives a reply, who is alerted, and can a second person take over?
- **Logs:** Can the business export trigger, send, delivery, reply, failure, assignment, and suppression events?
- **Privacy:** What message content, retention, access control, and data handling fit the business context?
- **Continuity:** What happens to calls and messages during an outage, failed registration, or number change?

Provider documentation should answer these operational questions before price becomes decisive. For example, CallRail requires Text Messaging Compliance registration before using its automatic response (support.callrail.com), while HighLevel tells local-number users to complete A2P 10DLC and toll-free users to complete toll-free verification (help.gohighlevel.com).

Data Analysis and Evidence

What current numbers do and do not show

There is no credible universal benchmark for the conversion rate of a missed-call text-back. Businesses should reject vendor claims that imply a guaranteed reply rate, booking rate, or revenue lift without the population, time period, denominator, exclusions, and sponsor. Available quantitative evidence supports process design, not a guaranteed return.

The broader environment makes caller trust relevant. The FCC reported about **12,000 unwanted or illegal text complaints in 2023** and **15,600 through August 6, 2024** (docs.fcc.gov). An April 2025 Pew Research Center survey found **20% of US adults** encountered scam texts daily (pewresearch.org). Complaint counts and scam exposure do not measure missed-call text-back effectiveness, but they explain why an unidentified or unexpected message may be ignored.

Operational timing varies substantially. CallCovered advertises a first auto-text in under **5 seconds**, EveryCatch says its SMS fires within **30 seconds**, and CallRail's abandonment threshold is **15 seconds** (getcallcovered.com) (everycatch.com) (support.callrail.com). These are different measures. A five-second send claim is not comparable with a platform's rule for deciding whether a call counts as abandoned.

Registration also affects launch planning. Bandwidth's August 2026 guidance estimated **three to five business days** for an initial 10DLC campaign review and listed a **$15 fee per vetting event** (bandwidth.com) (bandwidth.com). Sinch lists a **$5** private 10DLC brand fee (developers.sinch.com). These are provider-specific current examples, not a complete cost schedule.

A pilot calculation that uses observed inputs

The decision model should contain no borrowed rate. For a defined pilot period, calculate:

Eligible missed calls × observed reply rate × observed qualified-outcome rate = qualified outcomes

Fill it with local observations only:

- **Missed calls: _____**
- **Excluded spam, blocked, landline, opted-out, or otherwise ineligible callers: _____**
- **Eligible callers: _____**
- **Replies: _____**
- **Observed reply rate: _____**
- **Qualified outcomes under a written definition: _____**
- **Observed qualified-outcome rate: _____**
- **Staff minutes spent on text threads: _____**
- **Software, message, registration, and implementation cost: _____**

Also compare the pilot against the pre-pilot callback process. The relevant question is not whether some people replied. It is whether the workflow improved a defined outcome without increasing unwanted messages, duplicate sends, unowned threads, privacy risk, or labor beyond the value created.

Implications and Future Directions

The category is moving toward more explicit sender identity, campaign registration, and provider-level suppression. The Campaign Registry makes STOP a mandatory opt-out field and HELP a mandatory help field in campaign registration (campaignregistry.com). Bandwidth requires sample messages to identify the brand, match the registered use case, and include opt-out language in at least one sample (bandwidth.com) (bandwidth.com). Buyers should expect onboarding to require more than toggling on a template.

The useful future product is not merely faster automation. It is a system that exposes why the message fired, which consent and registration record applied, which number sent it, whether it was delivered, whether the person opted out, and who owns the reply. Those controls make failure review possible.

For a small team, the durable architecture may still be voice-first. Better menus, simultaneous or sequential ringing, on-call schedules, and voicemail transcripts can reduce misses without opening a new outbound channel. Google Voice documents call forwarding and voicemail transcripts, and its auto attendant can handle after-hours calls differently (knowledge.workspace.google.com) (knowledge.workspace.google.com). The choice should follow the caller's real need, not the novelty of the automation.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is a missed-call text-back service?

It is a phone or messaging system that detects a qualifying unanswered inbound call and sends an automatic SMS acknowledgement. Better systems also receive replies, suppress repeats and opt-outs, log events, and route the thread to a person.

What are the main missed-call text-back pros and cons?

The main benefit is a fast asynchronous acknowledgement when nobody can answer. Other benefits can include a shared reply inbox and preserved context. The main disadvantages are consent uncertainty, registration work, duplicate or spam-triggered sends, ineligible destinations, unfamiliar sending numbers, privacy exposure, and unowned conversations.

Does a missed call give a business consent to text?

Do not assume so. No primary source reviewed for this report states that an inbound call alone grants blanket consent for every automatic or marketing text. CTIA asks non-consumer senders to obtain consent, and FCC precedent connects consent to the purpose for which the person provided the number (ctia.org) (docs.fcc.gov). Obtain current US counsel review for the exact message and workflow.

What is the best missed-call text-back for a small business?

There is no universal winner. The best fit passes the business's tests for caller expectation, message purpose, same-number or clearly identified sending, A2P registration, opt-out and suppression, duplicate control, monitored two-way replies, exportable logs, privacy, and total cost. A fast trigger without those controls is not a complete solution.

Can a landline receive the automatic text?

Sometimes, but line labels are not decisive. Some landlines are enabled for hosted messaging, and carrier-record classification does not prove the technical path (bandwidth.com). Test actual send, delivery, reply, and failure handling.

When is voicemail or call routing safer?

Use voicemail transcription when the caller can leave context and wait. Use after-hours or on-call routing when the need may be urgent and a real team member should speak now. Use human or AI answering when someone must conduct intake. Use a full messaging-capable phone platform when voice, SMS, voicemail, ownership, and history must be managed together.

Conclusion

Missed-call text-back solves one specific problem: a qualified caller could not reach the team, expects or has properly authorized the relevant text, and can be served through a monitored two-way conversation. It is not a substitute for consent analysis, dependable call routing, an answering service, or human ownership.

The practical sequence is straightforward. First classify missed calls and decide which should trigger. Then have counsel review the message purpose and consent path. Confirm that the sending number is SMS-capable and properly registered. Configure identity, STOP handling, suppression, quiet hours, logs, and a reply owner. Test answered, abandoned, repeated, spam, landline, blocked-number, opt-out, reply, and outage cases. Finally, run a limited pilot and use only observed local rates.

If the actual gap is urgent access, route the call to an on-call person. If it is intake, use an answering service. If it is asynchronous callback, voicemail transcription may be enough. If it is unified conversation management, select a messaging-capable phone platform. autoattendant.io belongs to the call-routing option and does not provide missed-call texting, so businesses that need automatic SMS should select a service that documents that capability, registration path, controls, and reply workflow.

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