

AI ANSWERING · GETTING STARTED · 2026

I Want AI to Answer My Calls: How It Actually Works

It is one of the most common things Australian business owners now say to a phone provider, and four completely different products answer to the name.

Work out which of the four you mean first. A **recorded greeting with menu routing** is not AI and is often all a business needs. **Voicemail transcription and call summaries** is AI, is cheap, changes your day immediately and carries almost no risk. An **AI receptionist** genuinely converses with the caller, answers questions, takes messages and books appointments. **AI agents** complete transactions end to end and are the most work to get right. Most people asking the question want the third one, and quite a few actually want the second. **What it does well:** the same twenty questions asked every day, after-hours capture, taking details accurately, booking into a real diary, and never being busy. **What it still does badly:** upset people, unusual requests, heavy accents on a poor line, and anything where being wrong is expensive.

■ The short version

What it is	What it can do	Effort	
1. Auto-attendant	A recorded greeting and a menu. <i>Not AI at all</i>	Route calls, state your hours, take a voicemail	An afternoon
2. Transcription and summaries	AI that listens after the fact	Turn voicemails into readable text, summarise calls, write the follow-up actions into your CRM	A setting
3. AI receptionist	A conversational voice that speaks with the caller	Answer common questions, qualify, take detailed messages, book into a live diary, transfer intelligently	A week to set up, then tuning
4. AI agents	Conversation plus the ability to complete transactions	Look up an order, change a booking, take a payment, process a request end to end	A project, with integration work

■ Also worth knowing

Genuinely good at	Still not good at
Answering the same question for the four-hundredth time, at the same standard, at 11pm	Somebody who is upset. It can detect frustration and escalate, but it cannot defuse it
Never being busy. Ten simultaneous callers all get answered	The genuinely unusual request that does not resemble anything it was set up for
Capturing details accurately, name, number, address, job type, without mishearing	Heavy accent plus background noise plus a poor mobile line. It is better than it was, and it is not perfect
Booking into a live calendar and checking real availability	Judgement calls. Anything where being confidently wrong costs you money or trust
Being consistent, no bad days, no shortcuts, no forgetting to ask	Reading the room. A person can tell when a caller has stopped listening
Working while you are on a roof, in a consult, or asleep	Relationships. Your best customers often ring to talk to a specific person, and they should get one

Two things worth knowing before you shop

First, a surprising number of businesses who ask for option three are properly served by option one plus option two, a decent greeting that answers the hours question, and transcription so nobody has to listen to voicemail. That combination costs almost nothing and solves a genuine problem. **Second, if you are missing calls after hours, option three is the one that pays, because there you are competing against voicemail rather than against a person.**

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ What does 'AI answering my calls' actually mean?
- ☐ Which calls should I let AI answer first?
- ☐ Will my customers be annoyed by an AI answering?
- ☐ What is the most important setting for AI call answering?
- ☐ How do I know if AI answering is working?
- ☐ What Australian rules apply to AI answering calls?
- ☐ When is AI answering the wrong choice?

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

Every point above is worked through in full on our site, with the Australian context, the numbers and the exceptions. If you would rather talk it through, call **1300 881 662** or visit **unidenvoice.com/get-started**.