

REAL ESTATE · PROPERTY MANAGEMENT · 2026

Phone Systems for Real Estate and Property

A real estate business contains two teams with almost incompatible relationships to the telephone. The sales team is judged on never missing a call, because a missed enquiry is a listing that goes to the agency down the road.

An agency has two phone problems and they need different designs. Sales is a speed problem: a portal enquiry has a window measured in minutes, and a missed call is a listing that goes elsewhere. Property management is a volume and evidence problem: calls the team cannot decline, promises made verbally, and disputes resolved months later on the strength of records. **The after-hours repairs path is a compliance mechanism, not a courtesy.** Tenancy law across the states requires urgent repairs to be arranged quickly once notified, commonly within twenty-four hours, and faster for essential services in some jurisdictions, and generally lets a tenant who cannot reach you arrange the work and recover the cost. An unanswered emergency mobile is therefore a financial exposure with a paper trail that runs against you.

■ The short version

Sales	Property management	
Who calls	Buyers, vendors, prospective vendors. People choosing whether to deal with you.	Tenants, landlords, tradespeople, strata, insurers. People who already have to deal with you.
Value of one call	Potentially a listing. Very high, very variable.	Low individually, unavoidable collectively, occasionally carrying legal consequence.
Cost of missing it	The enquiry goes to a competitor within the hour. Usually invisible, you never learn what you lost.	Escalation, a complaint, a tribunal application, or a cost you have to wear.
Time sensitivity	Minutes. A portal enquiry is being made to several agencies simultaneously.	Varies from "next week" to "twenty-four hours, statutory".
Volume	Moderate, bursty, concentrated around listings and open homes.	High, constant, and rising with portfolio size regardless of staffing.
What the team needs	Never to miss one, and to be reachable on a mobile from a car.	Protection from interruption, plus an accurate record of everything agreed.

■ Also worth knowing

Call type	What it usually needs	Design response
Routine maintenance request	Logging accurately, with detail, and confirming what happens next.	Route to the portfolio manager, but capture the detail whether or not it is answered. A transcribed message is a work item; a voicemail is a task to listen to later.
Urgent repair	Immediate acknowledgement, and a trade contacted quickly.	Its own path, its own recording, and an answer every time. See the next two sections.
Rent, arrears, statements	An answer from someone with access to the ledger.	Route to accounts where one exists. Nothing frustrates a landlord more than a property manager reading a screen they cannot change.
Landlord asking about a decision	The history of what was agreed.	This is where transcription and summaries pay for themselves, the answer is usually in a phone call from three weeks ago.
Tradesperson coordinating access	Speed and a short answer.	Frequently better handled by SMS from the same system than by a call, and it leaves a written record.
Prospective tenant enquiries	Inspection times and application process.	The most automatable category in the entire agency. High volume, identical questions, no judgement required.

The realistic goal

Not "answer every call instantly", that is not achievable at portfolio scale and pretending otherwise is how good property managers leave the industry. The goal is **every call captured accurately, triaged correctly, and acknowledged**, with focused work protected in blocks. A tenant who gets an immediate acknowledgement and a callback at a stated time is materially more satisfied than one who reaches a person immediately and is told to send an email.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ What phone system does a real estate agency actually need?
- ☐ How should an agency handle after-hours calls about urgent repairs?
- ☐ Is an unanswered emergency mobile a legal risk for a property manager?
- ☐ Should real estate agencies record phone calls?
- ☐ Can AI answer calls for a real estate agency?
- ☐ How do you stop property managers being buried in phone calls?
- ☐ What should a franchise real estate network standardise across offices?

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**.