Grow That Local

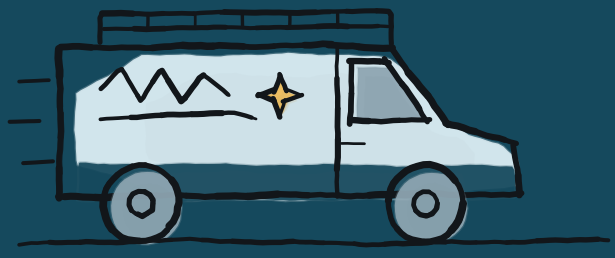
a free guide

Missed-call text-back replies

The text that goes out the moment you miss a call, the follow-ups, and what to say when they answer.

For owners on job sites all day.

- 12 short sections in 4 parts
- 36 things you can do in the next 24 hours
- An example in every section
- Sources for every figure



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Before you start

You can't answer from a roof, a crawl space or a ladder. The person calling you is often calling the next name on the list a minute later. A text that goes out the moment you miss the call keeps them talking to you instead.

Speed matters. In a well-known Harvard Business Review study, companies that contacted a lead within an hour were nearly seven times more likely to qualify it than companies that waited longer, and 23% never responded at all (HBR, "The Short Life of Online Sales Leads," 2011, hbr.org). The study is older and wasn't about the trades, but the lesson fits.

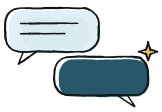
This pack has the instant replies (on a job, after hours, on weekends, for emergency trades and for booked trades), the follow-ups when they don't answer, and replies to the first things people text back. Most phone systems and business texting apps have a missed-call text-back setting. Paste the text in there.

The rules, once. A missed-call text answers a call the person just made, so keep it about their call: say who you are, ask what they need, and leave out offers and list sign-ups. The follow-ups below add "Reply STOP to opt out." Keep that line. If you send from software, your number must be registered for business texting. Our free guide Texting Customers Without Breaking the Rules explains the US rules in plain English.

The brackets. [business] is your business name, [your name] is yours, [phone] is the number people should call, and [time], [day] and [price] are what they say. Every text is under 300 characters once filled in.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every number has a public source, listed at the end. Our own rules of thumb say "GTL estimate," with our reasoning.
- Every text is a made-up starting point. Only promise what you'll do: if a text says "within the hour," make sure someone will.



Part 1

The instant reply

1 On a job

When to use it. Work hours, when you can't pick up. This is the one most owners set first.

Any trade:

"Hi, it's [your name] at [business]. Sorry I missed your call, I'm on a job. What can I help with? Reply here and I'll get back to you within the hour."

Roofer:
"Hi, it's [your name] at [business]. Sorry I missed you, I'm up on a roof. What's going on with yours? Reply here or send a photo and I'll call you back within the hour."
Landscaper:
"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you, we're out mowing. What can we help with? If it's mowing, text your address and we'll send a price today."
Plumber:
"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you, we're on a job. Is water leaking right now? If so, turn off your main water valve first. Then reply here and we'll call right back."
HVAC:
"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you. Reply 1 if you have no heat or no AC, 2 for anything else. If someone at home is elderly, a baby or unwell, tell us and we'll move you up."
House cleaner:
"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you, we're mid-clean. Text your number of bedrooms and bathrooms, how often you'd like us, and any pets, and we'll send a price today."
Painter:
"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you, we're on a job. Inside or outside, and about how many rooms? Send a photo or two and we'll set up a time to look."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back on your business line and paste in your trade's version.
- [ ] Call your own number from another phone, let it ring out, and read the text you get.
- [ ] Decide who reads the replies during the day, and how often.

2 After hours

When to use it. From closing time until you open. Most phone systems let you set a different text by time of day.
Booked trades (cleaners, landscapers, painters):
"Hi, it's [business]. We're closed for the night and open at [time]. Send your address and what you need, and we'll have a price or a time for you in the morning."
Plumber:
"Hi, it's [business]. We're closed, but we take emergencies at night. If water's leaking now, shut off your main valve and call [phone]. For anything else, reply here and we'll call at [time]."
HVAC:
"Hi, it's [business]. We're closed, but we take emergencies. No heat in freezing weather, or no AC with someone at risk at home? Call [phone]. For anything else, reply here and we'll call at [time]."
Roofer:
"Hi, it's [business]. We're closed for the night. If water's coming in, put a bucket under it and move what you can. Send a photo here and we'll call you first thing, at [time]."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down your real opening time and your emergency number, if you have one.
- [ ] Set the after-hours version to run from closing to opening.
- [ ] Only list an emergency number if someone will answer it tonight.

3 Weekend

When to use it. From Friday's close to Monday's open, or whenever you're off.

Booked trades:

"Hi, it's [business]. We're off for the weekend and back [day] at [time]. Text what you need and your address, and you'll have a price first thing [day]."

House cleaner:

"Hi, it's [business]. We're off for the weekend. Text your bedrooms, bathrooms and how often you'd like us, and we'll send a price first thing [day]."

Landscaper:

"Hi, it's [business]. We're off for the weekend. Text your address and what you need. We can price most mowing from the map, so you'll have a number first thing [day]."

Emergency trades (plumbers, HVAC, roofers):

"Hi, it's [business]. We're off for the weekend but on call for emergencies. Leak, no heat or no AC? Call [phone]. For anything else, reply here and we'll call [day] morning."

Do it in 24 hours

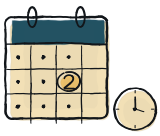
- [ ] Decide whether you'll take weekend emergencies, and who answers.
- [ ] Set the weekend version to run from Friday's close.
- [ ] Put a Monday reminder to reply to every weekend text before 9 a.m.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first 25 customers texted

Win-back texts is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Win-back texts: growthatlocal.com/services/win-back-texts



Part 2

Sort the call in the first text

4 Emergency trades: one question that sorts urgent from routine

When to use it. Plumbers, HVAC and roofers, any time of day. The text asks one question so the worst call gets your first callback.

Plumber:

"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you. Reply 1 if water is leaking now, 2 for no hot water, 3 for anything else. If it's leaking, turn off your main water valve first."

HVAC:

"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you. Reply 1 for no heat or no AC, 2 for a noise or a smell, 3 for a tune-up or quote. If you smell gas, leave the house and call your gas company from outside."

Roofer:

"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you. Reply 1 if water is coming inside now, 2 for storm damage with no leak, 3 for a quote. If it's leaking, put a bucket under it and move what you can."

When they reply 1:

"On it. [your name] will call you within 10 minutes. If anything gets worse before then, call [phone]."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Paste your trade's version into your missed-call setting.
- [ ] Write the "reply 1" answer on a card for whoever reads messages.
- [ ] Agree who calls back a "1" and how fast, and test it this week.

5 Booked trades: get the quote facts in the first text

When to use it. Cleaners, landscapers and painters. The first text collects what you need to price the job, so your callback can be a price, not a question.

House cleaner:

"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you. For a price today, text your bedrooms and bathrooms, how often you'd like us, and any pets."

House cleaner, once they answer:

"Thanks. For a home that size every two weeks, it's [price] a visit. We have [day] open. Want it?"

Landscaper:

"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you. Text your address and what you need: mowing, a cleanup or a project. We'll send a price today."

Landscaper, once they answer:

"Thanks. Weekly mowing at your address is [price] a cut. Our crew is on your street on [day]s. Want to start next week?"

Painter:

"Hi, it's [business]. Sorry we missed you. Inside or outside? Text a photo of each room or side of the house, and we'll set up a time to look."

Painter, once they answer:

"Thanks for the photos. We can come look and measure on [day] at [time]. It takes about 20 minutes. Does that work?"

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write your price for your three most common job sizes, so a reply takes a minute.
- [ ] Paste your trade's first text into your missed-call setting.
- [ ] Save the "once they answer" text on your phone.



Part 3

When they don't answer

6 One hour later

When to use it. When the first text got no reply after about an hour. One short nudge, then wait.
Any trade:
"Hi, it's [your name] at [business] again. Still need a hand? I can call you now, or reply with a good time. Reply STOP to opt out."
Emergency trades:
"Hi, it's [your name] at [business] again. Want us out today? We have a tech free this afternoon. Reply here or call [phone]. Reply STOP to opt out."
Booked trades:
"Hi, it's [your name] at [business] again. If it's easier, just send your address and we'll text back a price. Reply STOP to opt out."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Turn on a one-hour follow-up in your texting tool, or set a phone reminder for each missed call.
- [ ] Skip it for anyone who already called back or replied.
- [ ] Look at last week's missed calls and text every one that never heard back.

7 Next morning, then stop

When to use it. The morning after, if they still haven't answered. This is the last text.
Any trade:
"Morning, it's [your name] at [business]. Didn't want your call to slip through. If you still need us, reply here or call [phone]. This is my last text about it. Reply STOP to opt out."
Booked trades:
"Morning, it's [your name] at [business]. We still have [day] open if you'd like a price. Reply here or call [phone]. This is my last text about it. Reply STOP to opt out."

After this, stop. If they call again later, start over at section 1.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Set the morning text for 9 a.m., never earlier.
- [ ] Make sure nothing else goes out after it.
- [ ] Count how many of last week's missed calls never got a reply at all.

or we can do it for you

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Win-back texts is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Win-back texts: growthatlocal.com/services/win-back-texts



Part 4

Replies to their first answer

8 "How much is it?"

When to use it. It's the first question most people text back. Answer it, even if the answer is a range or a visit fee.

Plumber or HVAC:

"Our visit fee is [price]. If you go ahead with the repair, it goes toward it. We'll give you the repair price before any work starts. Want [day] at [time]?"

Roofer:

"The inspection is [price, or free]. Repairs depend on what we find, so we'll send photos and a written price before any work. Want [day] at [time]?"

House cleaner:

"For [bedrooms] bedrooms and [bathrooms] bathrooms every two weeks, it's [price] a visit. The first clean is a bit more because it's deeper. Want [day]?"

Landscaper:

"Weekly mowing at your address is [price] a cut, including edging and blowing off the drive. Want to start [day]?"

Painter:

"It depends on the rooms and the prep, so we price after a 20-minute look. We can come [day] at [time]. Does that work?"

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write the one price people ask about most in your trade: visit fee, inspection, per visit or per cut.
- [ ] Save your trade's reply with that number filled in.
- [ ] Answer the next price question within five minutes.

9 "Can you come today?"

When to use it. When they ask how soon. Give a real time, not "we'll see."

When you can:

"Yes. [your name] can be there by [time]. What's the address?"

When you can't:

"Today we're full, but I can be there [day] at [time]. If it gets worse before then, call [phone] and we'll move you up."

Booked trades:

"This week's full. The next opening is [day]. Want it? I'll text the day before to confirm."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Each morning, write down your first two open times on a card or in your phone notes.
- [ ] Save the three replies on your phone.
- [ ] Tell whoever reads messages: always offer a real time.

10 "Who is this?"

When to use it. When the text-back confuses them. They may have called several numbers.
Any trade:
"It's [your name] at [business]. You called this number at [time] and we missed you. We do [service] in [town]. Anything we can help with?"

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Check that your missed-call text starts with your business name.
- [ ] Save this reply on your phone.
- [ ] Set your business name as the contact name in your texting tool, if it allows it.

11 "Already found someone" or "no thanks"

When to use it. When they say no. Thank them and stop.
Any trade:
"No problem, thanks for letting us know. If you ever need [service] again, we're at [phone]."
If they say "wrong number":
"Sorry about that. We won't text this number again."

After either one, send nothing more. A "wrong number" goes on your do-not-text list the same day.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Save both replies on your phone.
- [ ] Make sure your tool won't send the follow-ups from sections 6 and 7 after a no.
- [ ] Add any "wrong number" to your do-not-text list today.

12 They send a photo, or "it's an emergency"

When to use it. When they reply with a picture of the problem, or say it can't wait.
Photo of the problem:
"Got it, thanks. That looks like [what you see]. I can be there [day] at [time] to fix it. Does that work?"
Roofer, photo of a leak:
"Got the photo. Put a bucket under it and move anything you can. We can get a tarp on it [time] today. What's the address?"

Plumber or HVAC, "it's an emergency":
"Calling you now." Then call within two minutes.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Save the photo reply on your phone.
- [ ] Agree that "emergency" in a reply means a phone call, not a text.
- [ ] Ask your crew to snap and send the "after" photo when these jobs are done.

or we can do it for you

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Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you only do five things today, do these:

- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back with your trade's version (section 1).
- [ ] Set the after-hours and weekend versions (sections 2 and 3).
- [ ] Call your own number, let it ring out and read the text.
- [ ] Save the "how much is it" reply with your real number in it (section 8).
- [ ] Text every missed call from last week that never heard back (section 6).



Where to go next

- Texting Customers Without Breaking the Rules: consent, STOP replies and carrier registration, in plain English.
- Quote Follow-Up Texts: what to send after the quote, when the customer goes quiet.
- 10 Texts That Bring Old Customers Back: ten win-back texts, with a version for each trade.



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local sets up texts for local businesses, with consent and opt-outs handled. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: Win-back texts. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted. Win-back texts is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Win-back texts — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
Bring past customers back for their next job. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted.

Websites — **from $1 a month · 7-day full refund**
A fast, good-looking site that turns visitors into calls. Free sample: a preview of your new site.

Google Business Profile — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Show up in the map when neighbors search for what you do. Free sample: a profile check-up with 10+ fixes.

Review requests — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
More 5-star reviews, without the awkward asking. Free sample: your first 10 requests sent.

Social media posts — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Fresh posts every week, made from your real job photos. Free sample: two weeks of posts, ready to go.

Email newsletter — **$50 a month · 7-day full refund**
Stay top of mind, so past customers call you first. Free sample: your first newsletter, written.

SEO — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Climb Google for the searches that bring in jobs. Free sample: a ranking check and 10 fixes.

Neighborhood postcard — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Your ad in mailboxes across nice neighborhoods. Free sample: your ad, designed and shown on the card.

Monthly report card — **free**
See how you stack up against local competitors. Free sample: your first report card, this month.

Text us at (423) 924-2014, or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Sources

Every statistic above, with where to check it:

1. Harvard Business Review, "The Short Life of Online Sales Leads" (2011): contacting within an hour made qualifying a lead nearly 7 times more likely. hbr.org (before you start)
2. Same study: 23% of companies never responded to the lead. (before you start) (hbr.org)

Rules cited (not statistics), checked November 12, 2026:

- FCC rules, 47 CFR 64.1200: consent, opt-outs and confirmation texts. ecfr.gov (before you start)
- T-Mobile Code of Conduct: a quick reply to a customer who reached out first counts as a conversation. t-mobile.com (before you start)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. A missed-call text stays a reply when it sticks to the call (before you start). Reasoning: it answers a contact the customer started, the same way carriers treat a reply to a customer's text.
2. Promise a callback "within the hour" in work hours (section 1). Reasoning: it's a promise a small crew can keep from a job site, and it lands inside the one-hour window the HBR study points to.
3. A one-question text sorts urgent calls best (section 4). Reasoning: a number reply takes the caller a second, and it tells you who to call back first without reading a paragraph.
4. Call back a "1" within 10 minutes (section 4). Reasoning: someone with water coming in or no heat will keep calling other companies until a person answers.
5. Two follow-ups at most, an hour later and next morning (sections 6 and 7). Reasoning: one nudge catches people who were busy, a second catches the ones who forgot, and more than that reads as pushy.
6. Answer a price question within five minutes (section 8). Reasoning: people price-shopping text several businesses at once and tend to book the first clear answer with a date.

want it done for you?

Every part of this guide is something we do.

Each one starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay. Text us at (423) 924-2014 or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Grow That Local