

Guarantee a Customer Can Always Reach a Human

This is the highest-value item in the entire audit — and it costs nothing.

TIME	COST	DIFFICULTY	AUDIT SIGNAL
45 minutes	Free	Easy	human_reached_on_request

WHAT WE MEASURED

We called and asked to speak to a person, then measured whether a human was reached and how long it took.

WHY IT MATTERS

This carries more points than any other single item we measure, for one reason: it's the thing customers care about most and the thing almost no business gets right.

Here is a real quote from a homeowner explaining why he cancelled a five-figure remodel:

"I will not use a contractor that I cannot personally get in touch with."

Note what he wanted. Not a call centre. Not "a human." **A human from that business.** That's the whole design principle below — you don't need to hire anyone. You need to guarantee the connection to someone who is already there.

FIX IT YOURSELF

1 Name your on-call person

Write down, right now:

- **Primary:** who answers when the main line doesn't. Usually the owner's mobile.
- **Backup:** who answers if the primary doesn't. A co-owner, a lead tech, a spouse who can take a message.
- **Hours:** when each is on call.

If it's just you, you're both. That's fine — the point is that it's decided, not improvised.

2 Remove every barrier to the word 'human'

If you have a phone menu, a receptionist, or an AI answering service, the rule is absolute:

When a caller says "human," "person," "representative," "someone real," or "agent" — they get transferred immediately. No qualifying question. No "let me try to help first." No retry. No loop.

People have been trained by bad phone systems to mash 0, then #, then stay silent, then swear. Don't fight it — design for it. Announce the escape hatch at every level: *"or press 0 at any time to reach someone."*

3 Use warm transfers, not cold ones

A **cold transfer** dumps the caller on the next person with no context, and they have to explain everything again. That's the single most-cited source of customer frustration.

A **warm transfer** means you stay on the line, brief the person receiving the call, then drop off. It costs about thirty extra seconds and it's worth it for anything escalated, upset, or complicated.

4 Make a specific promise when nobody's available

If no human can be reached, the caller must not simply hit voicemail with a generic greeting. They must hear a **specific, time-boxed commitment**:

"I'm not able to reach someone right now. Someone from [business] will call you back within 30 minutes. I'm sending you a text confirming that, with a direct number."

Two things make this work: a **specific time**, and **written proof** the caller can hold. A promise with a number attached converts. "We'll get back to you soon" does not.

5 Send the text

Immediately after the call, the caller gets a text containing:

- Your business name
- The promise and the time ("someone will call you by 3:45pm")
- A direct number they can use

You can do this manually from your phone in fifteen seconds. It changes the caller's experience completely — they stop shopping around because they're holding a commitment.

6 Keep the promise, and track it

This is the part that actually earns the points. Start a simple log — a notebook, a spreadsheet, a notes app:

DATE	TIME CALLED	WHO	PROMISED BY	ACTUALLY CALLED BACK
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Two weeks of this tells you your real callback rate. Most owners are shocked by it the first time.

CHECK YOUR WORK

- ☐ You have a named primary and backup on-call person.
- ☐ Saying 'human' gets an immediate transfer with no obstacles.
- ☐ Unanswered calls produce a specific, time-boxed callback promise.
- ☐ The caller gets that promise in writing.
- ☐ You're logging whether callbacks actually happen.

COMMON MISTAKES

- **A menu with no way out.** Invalid input should escalate on the second failure, not replay forever. Silence should route to a human — it usually means a confused caller or a bad connection.
- **A promise you don't keep.** A broken specific promise is worse than a vague one.
- **Menus more than two levels deep.** Every level multiplies abandonment.

This fix is free. You can earn and keep any Agenarys Seal tier — including Platinum — without paying Agenarys anything beyond the audit itself. If you would rather have help doing it, we sell that. We never sell passage.

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

