

The hidden cost of missing calls: Why SMBs are switching to an AI receptionist

Customers call outside business hours, and they expect answers. When they can't reach you, they often move to the next option. Every call is an opportunity to grow your business. This assessment analyzes the ROI of an AI receptionist, comparing the costs and benefits of 24/7 call coverage versus traditional staffing approaches.



Understanding your reception costs

Unanswered calls can mean missed revenue opportunities, lost customers to faster competitors and growth limitations when your current setup can't scale with your business goals.

Protect your marketing investment.

Missed calls can waste marketing investment. With Canadian **customer acquisition costs ranging from \$536-\$702 (B2B/SaaS)¹ to \$70-78 (eCommerce),²** capturing inbound inquiries is essential to protecting marketing ROI.

Speed wins customers.

Customers favour whoever responds first, and **responding within minutes boosts lead conversion by up to 400%.**³ AI receptionists provide immediate call routing and instant engagement, giving you the competitive edge to connect first.

Eliminate single points of failure.

Administrative roles face 30-45% annual turnover,⁴ costing \$4,700 per replacement,⁵ 2-4 weeks of reduced productivity and 60-90 days to proficiency. Temp coverage can run \$200-\$300 daily.⁶ AI receptionists eliminate turnover, training and coverage gaps.

Scale without hiring constraints.

Avoid bottlenecks and extra hiring during peak periods. When **call volume triples during seasonal surges**, you're paying for leads you can't handle. AI receptionists manage simultaneous calls, scaling instantly and enabling seamless growth.

Make smarter decisions with data.

Automatically track call volume, duration, peak times, sentiment and conversions with seamless CRM integration. Optimize marketing spend, identify customer needs, staff efficiently and spot growth patterns you'd otherwise miss.

Reduce missed opportunities.

AI receptionists provide 24/7 availability with sophisticated routing and analytics for a professional first impression. Capture leads during lunch breaks, after hours and peak volume spikes when competitors send callers to voicemail or busy signals.

The strategic advantages are clear: **revenue protection, competitive speed, operational resilience and the ability to scale more easily.** These benefits deliver measurable impact that compounds over time.

Direct cost analysis

Understanding the strategic value of an AI receptionist is essential, but the direct cost comparison is equally compelling. With an AI Receptionist, the savings compared to traditional staffing are substantial. Here's the breakdown:

Yearly cost			
	Base salary	Benefits (25%)	Total
Traditional receptionist (8 hrs/day)	\$50,015 ⁷	\$12,485 ⁸	\$62,500
AI Receptionist (24/7)	\$4,620*	-	\$4,620
Cost savings with AI			\$57,880

*Pricing reflects an average small-to-medium business usage of 700 minutes at \$385/month for AI Receptionist with TELUS Business Connect integration.⁹

Beyond the direct savings

The cost savings extend beyond salary and benefits. Here's what the numbers don't show:

- Traditional receptionist costs exclude recruitment (\$4,700 per hire)¹⁰ and 2-4 weeks of onboarding.
- AI provides scalability, handling multiple simultaneous calls without incremental cost.
- 24/7 availability is included in base pricing, eliminating shift coverage and overtime.

What about the human touch?

AI receptionists greet callers professionally, understand natural language, answer common questions and route calls intelligently to the right person. They enhance human interaction rather than replace it by eliminating transfer loops while your team handles every important conversation.

Is an AI receptionist right for your business?

If you're managing growing call volumes or want better customer experiences without expanding headcount, an AI receptionist delivers. It can reduce costs, streamline operations and requires minimal implementation to help you grow smarter, not just bigger.

Connect with the **TELUS Business** team to discuss a solution built around your needs and designed to scale with your business.

1. First Page Sage: Average Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) By Industry: B2B Edition, 2025

6, 7. Indeed Canada: Receptionist/Administrative Assistant average hourly wage, 2026.

2. Shopify Canada: Customer Acquisition Costs by Industry, 2025

8. Pebl: Employee Benefits in Canada, 2025

3. Influx: 24/7 customer support stats you need to know, 2025

9. RingCentral: RingCentral Announces General Availability of AI Receptionist (AIR), 2025

4. Insignia Resources: Customer service role turnover rates, 2025

5, 10. SHRM: The Real Cost of Recruitment, 2022