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FREE PLAYBOOK · SPEED TO LEAD

# The 5-Minute Lead Playbook

## Answer first. Win more.

How to reply to every new lead in under 5 minutes without hiring anyone, plus the exact first messages that get people to book.

- → Why the first 5 minutes decide the sale (and the research behind it)
- → 12 copy-paste first replies for texts, forms and DMs
- → The 4-message follow-up that stops when they reply
- → A 30-minute setup checklist you can do today

READ THIS FIRST

# What's inside

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| Page 3 | Why the first 5 minutes decide the sale, and the research behind it |
| Page 4 | 6 first replies for texts and missed calls |
| Page 5 | 6 first replies for web forms, DMs and quote requests |
| Page 6 | The 4-message follow-up that stops the second they reply |
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### How to use this

Don't read it all tonight. Go to page 4, pick one reply, put your name on it and set it as your auto-reply today. That one change is most of the win. Come back for the rest this week.

THE RESEARCH

# Why 5 minutes?

The business that answers first usually gets the job. Not because they're cheaper. Because they showed up while the customer still cared.

**21x**

Leads contacted within 5 minutes were about 21 times more likely to turn into a qualified conversation than leads contacted at 30 minutes (MIT / InsideSales).

**~7x**

Companies that reached out within an hour were about 7 times more likely to qualify the lead than those who waited longer (Harvard Business Review).

### What this means for a local business

- [ ] People fill out 2 or 3 forms at once. The first real reply sets the price and the timeline everyone else gets compared to.
- [ ] You can't answer in 5 minutes while you're on a roof, in a chair, or with a client. That's the whole point: the first reply has to go out on its own.
- [ ] Automatic doesn't mean robotic. The first message just says you got it and asks one easy question. You take it from there.

**The rule for this playbook:** every new lead gets a real, human-sounding first reply in under 5 minutes, 7 days a week. Everything else is detail.

COPY · PASTE · PERSONALIZE

# First replies: texts & missed calls

Swap the brackets. Keep them short. Every one ends with one easy question.

**1 · MISSED CALL**

Hey, this is [Name] at [Business]. Sorry I missed you! I'm on a job right now. What can I help you with?

**2 · MISSED CALL, AFTER HOURS**

Hi, it's [Name] from [Business]. We're closed for the night but I saw your call. What's going on? I'll get back to you first thing in the morning.

**3 · NEW TEXT, SERVICE BUSINESS**

Got it, thanks for reaching out! Is this for something urgent, or are you planning ahead?

**4 · NEW TEXT, APPOINTMENT BUSINESS**

Thanks for texting [Business]! Are you looking to book this week, or just checking prices for now?

**5 · RETURNING CUSTOMER**

Hey [First name], good to hear from you again! Same as last time, or something new?

**6 · TEXT WITH A PHOTO**

Thanks for the photo, that helps a lot. Roughly when are you hoping to have this done?

COPY · PASTE · PERSONALIZE

# First replies: forms, DMs & quotes

7 · WEBSITE FORM

Hi [First name], [Name] here from [Business]. Got your request about [service]. Quick question so I can get you a real answer: what's the address or town?

8 · QUOTE REQUEST

Thanks [First name]! To get you an accurate number I just need 2 things: a couple of photos and your rough timeline. Can you send those here?

9 · INSTAGRAM OR FACEBOOK DM

Hey! Thanks for the message. Happy to help. Are you in [Town] or nearby?

10 · GOOGLE BUSINESS MESSAGE

Thanks for reaching out to [Business]! What can we help with today?

11 · PRICE SHOPPER

Totally fair to ask. Most [jobs] land between a few ranges depending on [size / scope]. Want me to ask 2 quick questions so I can narrow it down for you?

12 · REFERRAL

Hey [First name], [Referrer] told me you might reach out. Thanks for trusting us! What are you working on?

**Avoid in a first reply:** links, menus ("Reply 1 for..."), long paragraphs, and anything that sounds like a terms-of-service page.

STOPS THE MOMENT THEY REPLY

# The 4-message follow-up

Most leads don't say no. They just get busy. This sequence brings them back without sounding desperate.

| WHEN | CHANNEL | MESSAGE |
|---|---|---|
| **Minute 0** | Text / email | Your first reply (pages 4–5). |
| **Hour 2** | Text | "Just making sure this got to you. Still happy to help with [service]." |
| **Day 1** | Text or call | "Hey [First name], did you still want help with [service]? I've got an opening [day]." |
| **Day 3** | Email | One helpful thing: a photo of a similar job, a quick tip, or a straight price range. |
| **Day 7** | Text | "Should I close this out? No worries either way, just don't want to keep bugging you." |

- [ ] Stop the sequence the second they reply. Every booking tool and most CRMs can do this.
- [ ] The day 7 "close it out" text gets more replies than any other. People hate leaving things open.
- [ ] Never send the same words twice. Each message should give them a new reason to answer.

NOTHING SITS OVERNIGHT

# After hours & weekends

1. **Decide what counts as urgent**
   Write down the 2 or 3 situations that truly can't wait (a leak, a lockout, a same-day cancellation). Everything else can wait for morning, as long as the customer knows that.

2. **Set an honest auto-reply**
   Tell people when you'll get back to them. "First thing tomorrow by 9" beats silence every time.

3. **Route the urgent ones**
   If a message matches your urgent list, forward it to your cell or the on-call person. Everything else waits in one inbox.

4. **Let them book without you**
   Put your booking link in the after-hours reply so people who are ready can grab a time at 11pm.

5. **Clear it by 9am**
   Start every day by replying to anything that came in overnight before you check anything else.

DO IT TODAY

# The 30-minute setup

- [ ] **5 min:** Turn on missed-call text-back in your phone system, carrier app or booking tool. Paste reply #1.
- [ ] **5 min:** Set your website form's confirmation email and text to reply #7.
- [ ] **5 min:** Set your Google Business Profile and Facebook/Instagram auto-replies to #9 and #10.
- [ ] **5 min:** Add your booking link to your after-hours reply.
- [ ] **5 min:** Load the 4-message follow-up into your CRM or booking tool. If you don't have one, set 3 phone reminders for now.
- [ ] **5 min:** Test everything. Call yourself from another phone, fill out your own form, DM your own page. Time each reply.

**No tools?** Start with #1 and #7 only. Those two cover most of the leads a local business gets.

3 NUMBERS, 5 MINUTES A WEEK

# The Friday scorecard

| NUMBER | HOW TO FIND IT | GOAL |
|---|---|---|
| **Median first-reply time** | Look at your last 10 leads. When did they reach out, when did they get a reply? | Under 5 minutes |
| **Leads with no reply after 24h** | Scroll your texts, DMs and form emails | Zero |
| **Leads → booked** | Booked jobs ÷ new leads this week | Up and to the right |

Write the three numbers down every Friday. If the reply time creeps up, something broke: a phone setting got switched off, or a new channel (like TikTok DMs) isn't covered yet.

NEXT STEP

# Want this running for you?

WANT IT DONE FOR YOU?

## Book a free 30-minute AI Audit.

We'll look at how fast you reply today and what it would take to hit 5 minutes every time. You leave with a one-page plan showing the 3 places AI saves you the most time. Use it yourself or have us set it up.

**make-simple.ai/book-a-call**

SOURCES

1. MIT / InsideSales.com, Lead Response Management Study (Dr. James Oldroyd).
2. Oldroyd, McElheran & Elkington, "The Short Life of Online Sales Leads," Harvard Business Review, March 2011.