

OUTBOUND · ANSWER RATES · 2026

Your Answer Rate Fell. It Is Not Your Script

Everyone has an explanation for why nobody answers the phone any more, and most of them are about the market. Here is a fact that none of them account for: two of your own numbers, dialling the same list in the same hour, usually do.

Start with one question: do your calls ring? If they do not ring, you have a rules problem, the number you present is invalid, malformed, or one your business does not hold rights of use over, and Australian providers are required to block calls like that. Same-day fix, no cost. **If they ring and nobody answers, you have a reputation problem,** carrier screening, handset software, call-identification apps and personal block lists deciding independently to warn the recipient, based on your volume, call duration, complaints and blocks. Weeks to repair, and nothing you can buy will do it. **Test it in two hours:** list every number you present and who holds it, ring each one from outside, then dial from your platform to a mobile on each of the three networks plus a landline and photograph every screen.

The short version

Source	What it does	Can you influence it?
Carrier screening	Network-side assessment that warns the subscriber or diverts the call. On by default for some plans, opt-in for others.	Indirectly, over weeks, through behaviour.
Handset software	Operating-system features that screen, silence or flag unknown callers. Differs by platform and version, and the recipient may not know it is enabled.	Only by becoming a known caller.
Call-identification apps	Crowd-sourced labels. A small number of users tagging your number produces a label everyone with that app then sees.	Some vendors offer a dispute or business-registration path. Per vendor, not universal.
The recipient's own settings	Personal blocks, and "silence unknown callers". Permanent until they change it.	No, and that is entirely their right.

■ Also worth knowing

Change	Why it is this high	
1	Present one real number you hold, per purpose, on every single call.	Removes the rules problems entirely and starts accumulating the only trust signal you own, consistency.
2	Make every presented number reach a person or an AI answer quickly, at any hour.	People who missed you ring back. If nothing answers, you paid for the call and discarded the result.
3	Stop withholding caller ID anywhere, including field mobiles.	Withheld numbers are effectively unanswerable, and for telemarketing this is a standards requirement.
4	Document authority for any number you present on someone else's behalf.	Closes a compliance gap and removes the most common silent-failure cause for agencies dialling as a client.
5	Split outbound across purpose-specific numbers that each answer.	Reduces the concentrated volume profile honestly, without pretending to be several businesses.
6	Dial less aggressively. Fewer attempts, wider gaps, stop chasing contacts who have never once answered.	The only real remedy for a volume-and-duration profile, and it reduces the complaints that drive everything else.
7	Tell people the call is coming, by SMS or email, where you have a lawful basis.	Frequently the single biggest lift available, because it changes the question being asked on the other end.

The three settings that cause almost all of it

An inherited number. An old office, a closed entity, a previous provider, still configured as your presentation number, possibly reallocated to a stranger since. **A typo.** One digit wrong in a trunk configuration, an extension presented as a full number, or an international format where a national one belongs. **Someone else's number.** Agencies dialling as their client, or a subsidiary presenting the parent's number, on the strength of an email rather than documented authority.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ Why is my business call answer rate dropping when nothing else has changed?
- ☐ How can I tell if my calls are being blocked or just ignored?
- ☐ Is it against the rules to show a different caller ID on outbound calls?
- ☐ Should I use several phone numbers to improve my outbound results?
- ☐ What is the cheapest way to improve outbound answer rates?
- ☐ Does registering an SMS sender ID help my phone calls get answered?
- ☐ Will sending a text before I call actually make a difference?

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 663 222 or visit vocphone.com/about/contact-us.