PRICING · QUOTE VERSUS BILL · 2026

The Quote Said $29. The Bill Said $61.

Nobody lied. A quote prices seats and an invoice prices a business, and those differ by about a third. Here is where each part of the gap lives, and the six questions that close it.

> A per user rate is the number every supplier is compared on, so it is the number every supplier optimises. That is not sinister, it is what happens to any figure that becomes the basis of comparison. The consequence is that everything *capable* of sitting outside that figure tends to. Not hidden, but disclosed somewhere other than the one page that decided the purchase.

The eight gaps

Gap	What it does to the bill
1. Seats counted as headcount	A fifth to a third of your people need an app only, shared or common area seat, not a full one. The biggest single lever, and it is a specification error rather than a price problem.
2. Your own 1300 number	You pay for inbound calls to it, mobile origination usually costs more, and most callers are on mobiles. It grows in direct proportion to your marketing working.
3. What "unlimited" excludes	Australian mobiles are the one that matters, since most business outbound now terminates there. Outbound 13, 1300 and 1800 are frequently excluded too.
4. AI billed by the minute	A campaign, a product issue or an outage doubles inbound volume, and doubles this line in the same month.
5. Storage at a retention nobody would choose	Commonly included at 30 days and chargeable at the 24 months you actually need. Small in month one, material in year three.
6. The rate with an expiry date	Legitimate, disclosed, and forgotten by month 13, because the person who signed has moved on.
7. A bill that only goes up	Adding seats is frictionless. Removing them is a separate clause, and sometimes a ratchet set at your highest ever count.
8. Work quoted after signature	Usually attached to the exact capability that motivated the purchase, such as the CRM integration.

Three bills, quoted beside actual (illustrative)

	Trade, 4	Services, 12	Contact team, 40
Quoted comparison	4 x $29 = $116	12 x $29 = $348	40 x $35 = $1,400
Seats, corrected by type	$110	$340	$1,600
Numbers and DIDs	$5	$60	$150
Inbound 1300 calls	n/a	$70	$320
Outbound call spend	$40	$90	$400
AI	Bundled	$120	$500
Storage at real retention	Included	$25	$120
Hardware, amortised	$5	$40	$150
Connectivity and failover	$30	$90	$250
Actual monthly	**about $190**	**about $835**	**about $3,490**
Real per user	**about $48**	**about $70**	**about $87**

A supplier whose quoted and actual figures sit close together is worth more

In all three cases the real figure lands a third to a half above the quoted comparison, and in none of them has anything improper occurred. Every line is legitimate and every line was disclosed somewhere. The problem is that the comparison was made on one line and the invoice arrives with nine. You can tell which suppliers are which before signing, in about twenty minutes.

Six questions before you sign

- **"What is the per seat rate in months 1, 13, 25 and 37?"** Four numbers, in writing. Closes gap 6.
- **"Show me this bill at double my inbound volume."** Closes gaps 2 and 4, and shows how they behave under a hard question.
- **"Exactly what is excluded from unlimited, and the fair use threshold?"** A specific list and an actual number. Closes gap 3.
- **"What does this cost at the retention I actually need?"** Not at thirty days. Closes gap 5.
- **"What will be quoted separately after I sign?"** Integration, configuration, training, porting. Closes gap 8.
- **"Can seats go down as well as up, and what does leaving cost?"** Closes gap 7 and prices the exit while it is hypothetical.

Then compare on one number, and compare it last

Five year total, divided by sixty months, divided by seat count. It frequently reorders a shortlist, because a supplier three dollars higher on the headline often lands lower on the total, their headline having been closer to the truth. And put the line no supplier bills you for on the same page: unanswered calls, times conversion, times customer value. For most businesses that is several times the entire phone bill, which changes the exercise from cost control to sizing an investment.