

## HOLIDAY PLANNING · 2026 TO 2027

# Holiday Trading Hours: The Phone Plan

The days that cost money are not Christmas and Boxing Day. They are the twenty-ninth, thirtieth and thirty-first, when your system thinks it is an ordinary Tuesday.

Phone systems handle **public holidays** well, because they are a known list loaded once. They handle **business closures** badly, because a closure is not a public holiday and nothing knows about it unless somebody puts it there. Christmas Day takes care of itself. The twenty-ninth does not.

## ■ The 2026 to 2027 run, and what your system does with each day

| Date                 | Status                                     | What your phones do                             |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Thu 24 Dec           | Working day, part-day holiday in SA and NT | Most finish early. Set the real time.           |
| Fri 25 Dec           | Christmas Day                              | Handled, if your holiday list is loaded.        |
| Sat 26 Dec           | Boxing Day, on a weekend                   | Usually already outside your hours.             |
| Mon 28 Dec           | Substitute holiday in most states          | Only handled if your list is current. Check it. |
| Tue 29 to Thu 31 Dec | Ordinary working days                      | Treated as normal. This is the gap.             |
| Fri 1 Jan 2027       | New Year's Day                             | Handled automatically.                          |
| Mon 4 Jan 2027       | First working day                          | Busiest inbound day of the quarter.             |

### Why this failure survives for a decade

A call that rings out and is abandoned is **not recorded as anything**. Not a missed call, not a line in a report, because from the system's point of view nothing happened. The only trace is a small unexplained difference in January revenue that nobody attributes to the phones. That is how a business repeats the same December every year without ever finding the cause.

## ■ October: four decisions, before anybody goes on leave

- 1 **Closed, or quieter?** Per day, not for the period. Closed on the twenty-ninth and open on the thirtieth is fine, as long as the phone knows.
- 2 **Who is available?** Names against dates. "Some of us will be around" produces a fortnight of everyone half-watching their phone.
- 3 **What is urgent?** A concrete description a caller can match themselves against, never the word urgent.
- 4 **What must customers know?** Last order date, closure dates, reopening date. All three, told in November.

### Why October, not December

In most small businesses exactly one person understands the phone system, and there is a good chance they finish on the nineteenth. Doing it early means the work is done calmly by the person who knows how, tested twice, and does not depend on anybody being reachable on Christmas Eve. It is the same amount of work. The difference is who is there to do it, and how much gets skipped.

### ■ December: configure in the first week, not the last

- 1 **Public holidays**, twelve months, from your state's official list, per location. Confirm the 28 December substitute is present.
- 2 **Your own closure days**. The twenty-ninth to the thirty-first. Not public holidays, so nothing knows unless you say so. *This is the step that fixes the gap.*
- 3 **Early finishes** on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Set the real time.
- 4 **Three separate recordings**: closure, reduced hours, urgent path. Separate means you can switch without re-recording.
- 5 **The urgent route** to a named on-call group of two or more, through the system.
- 6 **A defined end of the line**. AI answer, callback commitment, or transcribed mailbox with an owner. Never an unbounded ring.
- 7 **Automatic reversion** on your reopening date, so normal routing returns by itself.
- 8 **Test twice**. Preview the dates, then ring your own number in mid December. Something always changes.

### Never divert the business number to a personal mobile

Nothing said over the break is recorded, so anything agreed exists only in memory. The customer saves that number and rings it for years, at hours nobody agreed to. And there is no fallback when that person is driving, out of coverage or already on a call. **Route to the on-call person through the system instead.** Comparable effort, and you keep the number, the record and the backup.

### ■ Say the reopening date out loud

- "We will reopen in the new year" is not a date.
- A customer who knows you open Monday the fourth will wait.
- One who does not cannot tell the fourth from the nineteenth, and rings elsewhere.
- Give the last working day too. People planning December need both ends.

### ■ January: the peak you can see coming

- Backlog gets a named owner, who is not also on the live phone.
- Widen ring groups for three days, narrow again Thursday.
- Holiday message off *before* you open, not after.
- Ring the oldest callers first. They are closest to gone.

### If you get busier instead of quieter

Retail, hospitality, venues, tourism, emergency trades, veterinary, roadside and aged care have the opposite problem and the same calendar work. Set holiday trading hours explicitly per day. Widen the ring groups, because the usual answerers are partly on leave. Plan for the busiest *hour* last year, not the busiest day. Take out the repetitive calls: are you open, what time do you close, do you have this, where do I park. And set special hours on your Google Business Profile, because plenty of people check without ever ringing.