

CHOOSING A PROVIDER · SUPPORT

Who Picks Up When Your Phones Break?

The same fault can take fifteen minutes or two days to fix. The difference is who answers, and how many companies stand between them and the problem.

■ One Monday fault, three providers (illustrative)

Provider	What happens	Fixed
Ticket only	Recorded message, portal ticket, auto-reply	Next day
Reseller	A person answers, then escalates to the platform company. Three transfers.	About 12.10pm
Owns the network	A person answers, sees the whole path, fixes it on the call	About 9.10am

Why the answer is so different

Every company between you and the fault is a hand-off, and every hand-off is a queue. A reseller can only escalate and wait when the fault sits in the platform or network. **A provider that runs both can look, find and fix.**

■ The industry is moving away from people

- Support numbers harder to find; chatbots, help centres and tickets first.
- Gartner (5,728 customers, July 2024): **64%** would prefer companies did not use AI for service; **60%** worry it makes reaching a person harder.
- Gartner predicts the EU will mandate a **right to talk to a human** by 2028.

■ Care is a set of habits you can check

Habit	How to check
A person answers	Ring support before you sign, at an awkward time
They know you	Ask what support can see when you call
They fix the cause	Ask for a fault example and what changed
They tell you first	Ask how outages are announced
Honest advice	Ask what they would remove from your setup
Callbacks happen	Watch the first promise they make you

■ Interview your provider like a new hire

- 1 "If my phones stop at 8.55am, what exactly do I do?" **You want a person, not a portal.**
- 2 "Who answers, and where are they?"
- 3 "Do you run the platform and network, or resell them?"
- 4 "Where do my calls go if my internet drops?"
- 5 "Who owns my numbers?" **"You do, port any time."**
- 6 "How do you help me set it up?"
- 7 "Can I ring your support line right now?" Then do it.

■ Red flags in the fine print

Clause	Red flag
Support hours	Business hours only, other time zone, phone only on higher plans
Channels	"Support is provided via the online portal"
Response times	Business days, or not mentioned
Numbers	Porting fees, notice periods, held in the provider's name
Term and exit	Long lock-ins, early termination fees
Change of ownership	Nothing about what happens if the provider is sold

AI should shorten the wait, not replace the person

Simple requests handled instantly. Anything urgent, unusual or emotional passed to a person **with everything you have already said**, and a clear way to reach someone at any point. The same rule applies to an AI agent answering your own calls.

The one test that beats every brochure

Before you sign with anyone, **ring the support line**, not sales, first thing on a Monday or late on a Friday. Ask a real question. Who answers, and how, tells you what the next few years will be like.