

AI PLAYBOOK 2026

Which Calls to Automate With AI, and Which to Keep Human

The AI voice agent question has moved on. It's no longer “does it work?”, it's “which calls should it handle, and which belong to a human?” This is the decision framework: what to automate, what to escalate, and how to hand off.

Automate the **repetitive, structured, low-emotion** calls, after-hours answering, appointment booking, FAQs, routing and lead qualification, and missed-call recovery. Send anything **emotional, complex, high-value or regulated** to a human fast, with a clean handoff that carries the context across. The rule of thumb: if a competent new starter could handle it from a one-page script, an AI voice agent can too; if it needs judgement, empathy or a licence, it needs a person. Getting this split right is what makes the economics work, an AI-handled four-minute call runs roughly **\$0.28. \$0.60** versus **\$3. \$7** for a human (illustrative of the 2026 market), so you spend your people on the calls that actually reward a human. This is the “what to automate” companion to our cost-and-ROI breakdown.

■ The short version

Call type	Repetitive?	Emotional / complex?	Verdict
Angry complaint / cancellation	X No	✓ Very	Escalate fast
Your biggest client calling	X No	~ High-value	Escalate (VIP straight through)
Clinical / legal / financial advice	X No	✓ Regulated	Escalate, licensed person only
Complex custom quote or dispute	X No	✓ Complex	Escalate after capturing details

■ Key points

- Not sure where your calls fall?
- Sort your calls the right way

This is the companion, not the cost article

If you want the dollars, per-call cost, recovered missed calls, a worked ROI example, read [What an AI Voice Agent Actually Costs, and Saves](#). This piece is deliberately about *which calls*, not the maths. The two work best read together.

■ Questions the full guide answers

- ☐ Which calls should I automate first with an AI voice agent?
- ☐ Which calls should always go to a human?
- ☐ How does the AI know when to hand a call to a person?
- ☐ Won't customers be annoyed talking to an AI instead of a person?
- ☐ Does the AI voice agent's accent really matter?
- ☐ How is this different from working out what an AI voice agent costs?

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.