

Speed to Lead: The 60-Second First-Response Playbook for Personal Injury Firms

How to be the firm that always calls first, signs the cases your front desk misses, and stops handing accident victims to the office down the street. This is the exact first-response sequence. Take it and run it yourself, or hand it to us.

DRAFT. Public-facing. Run through voice-reviewer before anything ships. No em dashes, no banned vocab, grade 7-9 reading level.

PLAYBOOK

The dream outcome

You get a new lead at 8:41 PM. A guy got rear-ended on the freeway two hours ago, found your site, filled out the form, and is sitting on his couch in pain, scared, and ready to talk to a lawyer right now.

Two things can happen.

One: the lead lands in an inbox. Your intake person sees it at 9:15 the next morning. By then the guy has already called three other firms, talked to one, and signed with whoever picked up first. You paid for that lead. Someone else signed the case.

Two: his phone rings in under 60 seconds. A calm voice says it is calling about his accident, confirms a few details, books him for a consultation tomorrow at 10 AM, and texts him the confirmation before he has set the phone down. You wake up to a booked appointment on your calendar.

Same lead. Same money spent to get it. The only difference is who responded first, and how persistently.

The firms winning right now are not better lawyers. They are faster firms. This playbook is how you become one.

PLAYBOOK

Why speed wins, and what slow response actually costs

The math on this is not subtle. It has been studied for almost twenty years, across millions of leads, and it keeps saying the same thing.

The 5-minute cliff. The MIT / InsideSales Lead Response Management study (Dr. James Oldroyd, analyzing thousands of leads) found that the odds of reaching a lead drop 100 times when you call at 30 minutes instead of 5. The odds of qualifying that lead drop 21 times. Not 21 percent. Twenty-one times. ([source](#), [source](#))

The 1-minute edge. Velocify analyzed roughly 3.5 million leads and found that calling within one minute of the inquiry made a lead 391 percent more likely to convert than calling any time after. The first minute is its own category. ([source](#))

First firm usually wins. Around 35 to 50 percent of sales go to the company that responds first, simply because they got there first. ([source](#)) For accident victims this is even sharper. They are in pain, they want it handled today, and they will call the next firm on the list the second they hit a voicemail. When a lead is shared across multiple firms, the first attorney to give a real, professional response usually takes the case. Shared leads that get a fast human response convert far better than the same leads left to sit.

Most firms are slow, and they know it is hurting them. Harvard Business Review audited 2,241 US companies and found the average first-response time was 42 hours, and 23 percent never responded at all. Firms that responded within an hour were nearly 7 times more likely to qualify the lead than firms that waited even one more hour, and more than 60 times more likely than firms that waited a day. ([source](#))

Law firms specifically are leaking leads. Clio's secret-shopper research found that only about 40 percent of firms answered the phone from a live person, and a large share of email inquiries got no useful reply. Most firms that did respond never gave clear next steps or any sense of cost. ([source](#)) The bar is on the floor. Showing up fast and clear puts you ahead of more than half your competition.

The lead does not wait for your office hours. More than half of service-business leads arrive outside 8-to-5 weekday hours, and a big chunk of booked revenue traces back to leads that came in at night or on a weekend. ([source](#)) If your coverage stops at 5 PM, you are not closed for the evening. You are donating your nights and weekends to whoever stays on.

Put it together. Every new PI lead is a clock starting the moment they hit submit. The firm that gets a real voice on the phone first, and keeps showing up when the first try misses, wins the case. Everyone else paid for a lead that signed somewhere else.

PLAYBOOK

The Playbook: the exact first-response sequence

Here is the whole thing. Two parts: the under-60-second first contact, then a persistent multi-channel follow-up for the leads who do not pick up on the first call. Most conversions need 5 to 8 touches before the person responds, and the firms that quit after one call are leaving signed-up clients on the table. ([source](#))

Run it across three channels: AI voice call, email, and text. Same lead, same clock, every channel pulling in the same direction.

Part 1: The under-60-second first call

The moment a new lead comes in, a call goes out. Not a "we got your message" email. A call. Within 60 seconds, day or night, inside legal calling hours.

The first call has one job: reach a human, confirm this is a real injury matter, and book a consultation. Nothing else.

Example first-call script (AI voice or live intake):

"Hi, is this [First name]? This is Sarah calling from [Firm Name]. I am an automated assistant reaching out about the accident you just told us about online. I want to make sure you get connected with one of our attorneys quickly. Is now an okay time for a couple of quick questions?"

[If yes]

"Thank you. First, I am sorry this happened to you. Are you safe and somewhere you can talk for a minute?"

"Can you tell me roughly when the accident happened, and whether you have seen a doctor yet?"

"Got it. Based on what you have shared, this sounds like something our attorneys would want to talk through with you directly. I can get you on the calendar for a free consultation. I have tomorrow at 10 AM or 2 PM open. Which works better?"

[Book it]

"You are all set for [day and time]. I am sending you a text and an email right now with the details and a number you can reach us at any time. Is the number I called the best one to text you? Anything else I can note for the attorney before your call?"

Rules that make this work:

- **Let them talk. Never talk over them.** An accident victim is upset. The agent waits a full beat after they stop speaking before responding. Cutting someone off in the first 30 seconds loses the call.
- **Identify as automated up front.** California law (the BOT Act, SB 1001) requires that an automated agent disclose it is a bot. It is also just the right move. People are fine talking to an assistant that is honest about what it is. They are not fine being tricked. ([source](#))
- **Book the appointment on the call.** Do not promise a callback. The goal of the first contact is a confirmed time on the calendar, then a text and email confirmation that lands before they hang up.
- **Keep it short.** Confirm the accident is real, set the appointment, get off the phone. The attorney does the deep intake at the consultation.

If they pick up and book, you are done. The rest of the playbook is for the leads who do not answer the first call, which is most of them.

Part 2: The persistent follow-up sequence

Most people will not answer a number they do not recognize on the first ring. That is normal. It is not a no. The firms that win treat the first miss as the start, not the end.

Here is a sequence that fits inside legal calling windows (8 AM to 9 PM local, opt-out ends it instantly), spreads across voice, text, and email, and stops the moment they respond or book.

#	Timing from lead	Channel	Purpose
1	Within 60 seconds	Voice call	First attempt, book the consult
2	+ 2 minutes (if no answer)	Text	Land a message they will actually read
3	+ 5 minutes	Email	The paper trail, next steps, easy reply
4	+ 1 hour	Voice call	Second call attempt
5	+ 4 hours (same day)	Text	Gentle nudge, offer specific times
6	Next morning	Voice call	Fresh attempt at a better hour
7	Next morning + email	Email	Restate the offer, make replying one tap
8	Day 3	Voice call	Final call attempt
9	Day 4	Text	Soft close, leave the door open
10	Day 5-7	Email	Last touch, then stop

Ten touches over a week. Every one stops the second they book, reply with a time, or opt out. Most people who convert do so somewhere between touch 4 and touch 8, which is exactly the range where most firms have already given up.

Text after a missed first call (touch 2):

"Hi [First name], this is [Firm Name]. We just tried calling about your accident and want to help. When is a good time to talk? You can reply here or call us at [number]. Reply STOP to opt out."

Email after the missed call (touch 3):

Subject: Following up on your accident

Hi [First name],

This is [Firm Name]. You reached out about a recent accident, and we tried to call you a few minutes ago.

We want to make sure you understand your options before any deadlines pass. A consultation is free and there is no obligation.

Here are two times that are open:

- Tomorrow at 10 AM*
- Tomorrow at 2 PM*

Reply with the one that works, or just reply with a better time and we will make it happen. If you would rather talk now, call or text us at [number].

[Attorney or intake name]

[Firm Name]

If you would prefer not to hear from us, reply STOP and we will stop reaching out.

Same-day nudge text (touch 5):

"Hi [First name], still here whenever you are ready. We have tomorrow at 10 AM or 2 PM open for a free consult about your accident. Want me to hold one for you? Reply STOP to opt out."

Next-morning voice attempt (touch 6) opener:

"Hi [First name], this is Sarah with [Firm Name], following up on the accident you reached out about. I know yesterday was probably a tough day. I would still love to get you a few minutes with one of our attorneys. Is now an okay time?"

Day 4 soft-close text (touch 9):

"Hi [First name], I do not want to crowd you. If you are still looking for help with your accident, we are here and the consultation is free. Just reply when you are ready. Reply STOP to opt out."

Day 5-7 final email (touch 10):

Subject: Closing the loop on your accident

Hi [First name],

We have reached out a few times and do not want to keep filling your inbox. If you still want to talk through your accident with an attorney, we are here and the consultation is free.

Just reply to this email or call us at [number] whenever you are ready. Personal injury claims have deadlines, so it is worth at least one conversation.

[Attorney or intake name]

[Firm Name]

After touch 10 with no response, the lead goes quiet on its own. No more contact. If they ever reply, the sequence restarts as a live conversation.

That is the entire playbook. Fast first call, then a patient, polite, multi-channel follow-up that respects the person and stops the instant they say stop.

PLAYBOOK

The mistakes that hand cases to the firm down the street

Every one of these is common, and every one is fixable.

Calling once and quitting. This is the big one. One call, no answer, lead marked dead. But most conversions need 5 to 8 touches, and a large share of reps never even make a second attempt. ([source](#)) The lead was not gone. It was unfinished. Run the full sequence.

A slow handoff between capture and contact. A lead lands in a form, sits in an inbox, gets assigned to someone, who calls an hour later. Every step adds minutes, and minutes are the whole game. The capture and the first call should be the same event, automated, with no human bottleneck in between.

No after-hours coverage. Half your leads come in at night and on weekends. If your response stops at 5 PM, you are handing every evening accident to whoever answers. The sequence has to run 24/7, inside legal calling hours, without anyone staying late.

Talking over the caller. Accident victims are stressed and slow to get their words out. An agent that interrupts, rushes, or steps on their answer in the first 30 seconds loses them. The agent waits, lets them finish, and sounds like it actually heard them.

No script the firm approved. You are the lawyer. Nothing should be said to your prospects that you have not read and signed off on. Every script and message in the sequence gets your approval before a single call goes out. No surprises in your name.

No call summary written back. If a lead talks for three minutes and that conversation vanishes, you are flying blind at the consultation. Every call should leave a short written summary, what happened, what they said, what got booked, so the attorney walks in already knowing the story.

Ignoring the compliance guardrails. This is not optional, and getting it wrong is expensive.

- **TCPA calling windows.** Only call between 8 AM and 9 PM in the lead's local time zone. The sequence respects this automatically and never dials outside it.
- **DNC scrubs.** Numbers get checked against do-not-call lists before any call goes out.
- **Opt-out is instant and final.** A reply of STOP, or "remove me," or anything like it, ends the entire sequence on every channel, immediately. No exceptions.
- **Bot disclosure.** In California, the automated agent must identify itself as automated. It does, on every call. ([source](#))
- **Email rules.** Every email (CAN-SPAM) has a real reply path and an easy way to stop hearing from you.

Get these right and the playbook is an asset. Get them wrong and a fast-response system becomes a liability. There is no version of this that skips compliance.

PLAYBOOK

The honest close

This is exactly the process we run.

We gave you the whole thing. The 60-second first call, the ten-touch sequence, the scripts, the timing, the guardrails. Nothing held back. If you have a sharp intake person and the discipline to run it day and night, you can do this yourself, starting today. A lot of firms should.

We give it away because we only want to work with firms who actually need the help. If you can run this in-house, do it, and good for you. But most firms cannot answer every new lead in under a minute at 9 PM on a Saturday,

then follow up ten times over a week without dropping anyone or breaking a TCPA rule. That is the part that is hard to staff and easy to get wrong.

That is the part we run for you. BookedBack works your lead list across AI voice, email, and text, qualifies the people worth your time, and books them straight onto your calendar. We handle the speed, the persistence, and the compliance. You show up to the consultation and sign the case.

How it works: it is performance-based. Your first booked appointment is free. After that you pay between \$50 and \$300 per appointment that actually shows up, nothing for the ones that do not. It is a 100-lead pilot, nothing upfront, and you can cancel by text any time. We deliver booked, qualified appointments. You do the lawyering and sign the cases.

If you want to stop losing the leads your front desk misses, talk to us: bookedback.ai/contact

PLAYBOOK

Sources

- MIT / InsideSales Lead Response Management study (Oldroyd): hubspot.com, ainora.lt
- Velocify, The Ultimate Contact Strategy (391%, 6-call persistence): velocify.com
- Harvard Business Review, The Short Life of Online Sales Leads (42-hour average, 7x within the hour): hbr.org
- First-responder wins 35-50% of sales: spotio.com
- Clio Legal Trends Report, secret-shopper response data: clio.com
- After-hours lead volume (56% outside 8-5): nzleads.com
- Follow-up persistence (5-8 touches, most quit early): invespcro.com
- California BOT Act / SB 1001 bot disclosure: leginfo.legislature.ca.gov

Want BookedBack to run this for you?

We run this exact process across AI voice, email, and iMessage on your own lead list. Your first booked appointment is free. After that you pay only when an appointment shows up, \$50 to \$300 each depending on volume. No software fee, no setup fee, cancel by text.

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