COMPARISON · SERVICE BUSINESS LEAD TOOLS

AI answering service vs. AI lead follow-up

Two tools that both promise to stop you losing jobs. They plug two different holes. Here's what each one does, when it fires, and where it can't help.

	INBOUND · REAL TIME **AI answering service** A 24/7 virtual receptionist	AFTER THE LEAD · MULTI-TOUCH **AI lead follow-up** Speed-to-lead + persistent nurture
What it does	Answers the phone or web chat live so calls never hit voicemail. Handles common questions and books appointments.	Texts a lead back in seconds, qualifies them, then keeps following up over days and weeks until they book or say no.
When it fires	The moment someone reaches out **live** — an incoming call or chat.	The moment a lead **lands** — form fill, missed call, Google profile, marketplace lead.
The problem it solves	Missed calls. Demand walks up to the door and nobody's there to open it.	Slow response and no persistence. Leads come in fine, then die on the vine.
Best for	High inbound call volume, where every rollover to voicemail is a lost job.	Web/marketplace leads, after-hours form fills, and quotes that need a 2nd–5th touch.
What it can't do	Nothing happens if no one calls. A 10 PM form fill or a cold 3-week-old quote goes untouched.	Doesn't answer live phone calls. It works leads, not ringing lines.
Where Crave AI fits	Not us. Off-the-shelf options are good enough — go buy one if this is your gap.	**This is what we build. Instant reply, qualification, and persistent follow-up wired into your CRM.**

Quick gut check: Count your missed calls, then count your unworked leads. Buy against whichever number is uglier.