⏱️ 25 MIN SETUP

Speed to lead: auto-reply to website enquiries and call back fast

Part of our Small Business Automation guide: what to automate first and the 10 easiest wins.

The problem

“Speed to lead” means how quickly you respond after someone enquires. People who fill in a website form are often contacting several businesses at once, and the first one to reply has a head start. An email confirmation helps, but what really wins the job is a person getting back to them quickly. This guide sets up both: an instant auto-reply so the enquirer knows you’ve got it, and an alert to your phone so you can follow up fast. It also tracks how long you take to respond, so you can see if you’re getting faster.

Saves: leads lost to slower competitors, and enquiries that sit unread in an inbox all day.

How it works

1. Someone fills in your website form.
2. They get an instant, friendly auto-reply that sets expectations.
3. You get a text alert on your phone with their name, number and message.
4. The enquiry is logged in a Google Sheet with the time it arrived.
5. When you’ve called or replied, you mark it done, and the sheet shows your response time.

What you need

- Your website form (Google Forms, Typeform, Jotform, WordPress or Wix).
- Zapier or Make. The free plans are fine to start with.
- Gmail or Outlook for the auto-reply.
- A Twilio number to text the alert to yourself (or use email or a chat app alert instead).
- A Google Sheet with columns for name, phone, email, message, received time, responded time and status.

Setup with Zapier

1. **Trigger:** choose your form tool's **New Submission** (or **New Form Entry**) trigger. [Screenshot]
2. **Auto-reply:** add **Gmail, Send Email** to the enquirer with the message below.
3. **Phone alert:** add **Twilio, Send SMS** to your own mobile with the enquirer's name, number and a short version of their message. [Screenshot]
4. **Log it:** add **Google Sheets, Create Spreadsheet Row** with the details and the time it arrived.
5. **Test it** by filling in your own form, then turn the Zap on.

Setup with Make

1. Start with your form's watch module.
2. Add a **Router** with three branches: Gmail auto-reply, Twilio alert to you, and Google Sheets add row.

3. Run it once with a test submission, then switch the scenario on.

Track your response time

In the sheet, fill in the responded time when you call or reply. Add a column with a formula that subtracts the received time from the responded time. Check it weekly. If your response times creep up, add a second person to the alert, or set a reminder text if a lead is still marked “new” after a set time.

Message templates

Instant auto-reply to the enquirer (business hours)

> Hi [Name], thanks for contacting [Business]! We’ve got your message and someone will call you within [timeframe]. If it’s urgent, call us on [number].

Instant auto-reply (after hours)

> Hi [Name], thanks for contacting [Business]! We’re closed right now, and we’ll be in touch by [time] on our next business day.

Alert text to you

> NEW ENQUIRY: [Name], [Phone]. “[First line of message]”. Received [time].

Optional follow-up text to the enquirer (only if they gave you their number to be contacted by text)

> Hi [Name], it's [Business] following up on your enquiry. When's a good time for a quick call? Reply STOP to opt out.

Only promise a timeframe you can keep. A specific promise you meet builds more trust than a fast one you miss.

Consent and local rules

The auto-reply answers someone who contacted you, so it isn't marketing. Keep promotions out of it. Only text an enquirer if your form says you'll contact them by SMS, include your business name and "Reply STOP to opt out" in any follow-up text, and stop when someone opts out (TCPA in the US, the Spam Act in Australia, PECR and GDPR in the UK and EU, CASL in Canada). This isn't legal advice.

FAQ

What does speed to lead mean?

It's how quickly you respond after someone enquires. A fast response means you reach the person while they're still thinking about the job, before they've settled on someone else. An instant auto-reply plus a quick personal follow-up covers both sides.

Is an automatic reply enough on its own?

No. The auto-reply tells the enquirer you've got their message, but a real person still needs to follow up. That's why this setup also texts you an alert, so you can call back quickly.

What should a website enquiry auto-reply say?

Thank them, confirm you've got their message, and say when they'll hear from you. Add a phone number for urgent jobs. Keep it short and free of promotions.

How do I respond faster when I'm busy?

Send the alert to more than one person, and agree who calls back during which hours. Use the response-time column in your sheet to spot slow days. An after-hours version of the auto-reply sets expectations when nobody's available.

Skip the setup with our template pack

Our US$19 Web form leads instant reply template pack includes a Make blueprint, an n8n workflow, a Zapier build sheet, instant reply and booking-link variations, optional SMS, owner alert copy and a one-page setup checklist.

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One-page checklist: Speed to lead: website enquiry auto-reply

- ☐ Trigger: choose your form tool's New Submission (or New Form Entry) trigger.
- ☐ Auto-reply: add Gmail, Send Email to the enquirer with the message below.
- ☐ Phone alert: add Twilio, Send SMS to your own mobile with the enquirer's name, number and a short version of their message.
- ☐ Log it: add Google Sheets, Create Spreadsheet Row with the details and the time it arrived.
- ☐ Test it by filling in your own form, then turn the Zap on.

Consent note: only message people who have contacted you or agreed to hear from you, and include a way to opt out. This isn't legal advice.

Full guide: https://www.automatequick.com/guides/speed-to-lead-website-enquiry-auto-reply