

Fixing intake before you automate it

THE LEAK REPORT

ISSUE 02 · 12 AUGUST 2026 · ATINNOVATORS.IN



Every channel
has an owner.
The set has none.

Why intake gets fixed before anything gets automated

Invisible a missed enquiry produces no signal at all

One queue every channel, an owner on every item

Wrong first move automating replies removes your only feedback loop

AI at step four the first three steps are what make it safe

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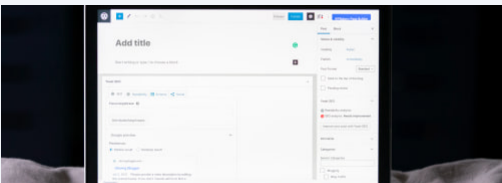
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The Leak Report is published by AT Innovators, an AI development studio building voice agents, retrieval assistants and workflow automation for owner-led service businesses.

Words and research **Ramanjit Singh**. Every figure in this issue is either published on our pricing page or stated as a target rather than a result.

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Photography Brett Jordan, Christian Wiediger, Glenn Carstens-Peters, Helena Lopes, Julian Hochgesang, Justin Morgan, Kelli McClintock, Lasse Jensen, Lisanto 李奕良, Paper Textures, Stephen Phillips - Hostreviews.co.uk, Vagaro, Vitaly Gariev via Unsplash.

A missed enquiry never complains.



| Every channel has a watcher. The set of channels has nobody.

Ask an owner how many open enquiries the business has right now. If the answer takes more than ten seconds, the problem is not follow-up speed. It is that no single place knows what exists.

This is the most common workflow failure we see, and the most expensive, because the cost is entirely invisible. A slow reply produces a complaint. A missed enquiry produces nothing at all — no signal, no angry email, just a customer

who went somewhere else and a business that never learned it happened.

Enquiries arrive on channels that were adopted one at a time, each for a good reason. The web form goes to an inbox. WhatsApp lives on one person's phone. The phone rings at reception, during hours. Each of those has an owner. **The set of them has no owner.**

So “did we follow up with that lead from Tuesday?” is genuinely unanswerable, and the honest answer becomes “probably”.

Ramanjit Singh Founder, AT Innovators



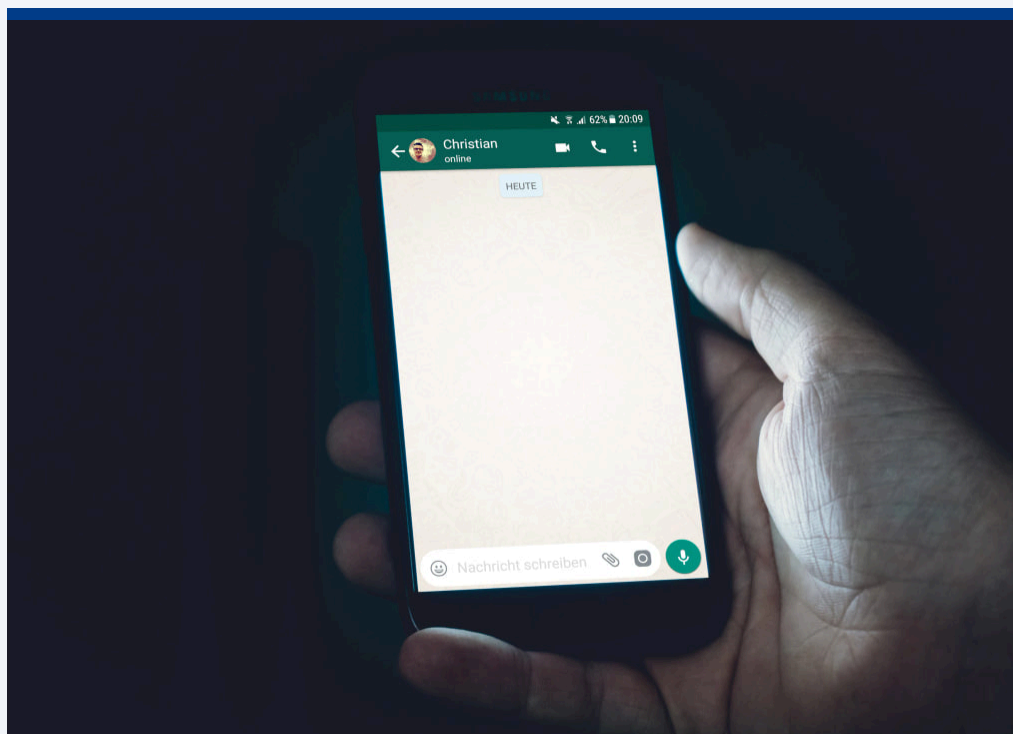
THE FEATURE

A chatbot adds a fifth channel

The instinct is to automate replies — put an AI on WhatsApp so nobody waits. We have been asked for this many times and we generally push back, for one reason that has nothing to do with the technology.

**If you cannot see the queue,
you cannot see what the bot got wrong.**

One of these makes the other one safe.



Automate the reply

Put a bot on the busiest channel so nobody waits. Response time collapses and, in a demo, it looks like pure gain.

It also makes that channel more attractive, so volume shifts toward the one place a human is no longer reading.

Not yet.



Build the queue

One place every enquiry lands, tagged with its source, with a named owner on every item and ageing visible at a glance.

Unglamorous and boring, and it changes behaviour within a week.

Start here.

If you cannot currently see the queue, you also cannot see what the bot got wrong. You have added speed and removed the only feedback loop you had.

Who is watching, and what happens at 7pm

01

Web form → email

Watched by whoever checks that inbox. At 7pm: nothing happens until morning.

02

WhatsApp

Watched on one person's personal phone. At 7pm: it depends entirely on who is awake.

03

Phone

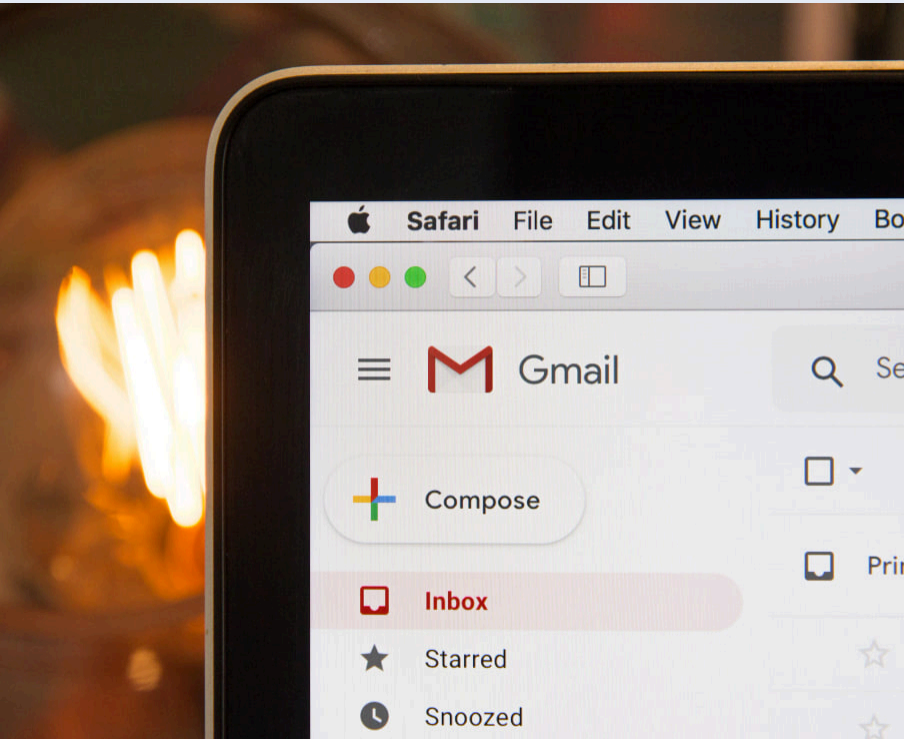
Watched by reception, during hours. At 7pm: voicemail that nobody plays back.

04

Instagram and social

Watched by marketing, sometimes. At 7pm, and often for days: nobody.

Each channel has an owner. The set of channels has no owner — which is precisely why “did we get back to them?” is unanswerable, and why the honest answer becomes “probably”.



Wrong guesses are visible, and cheap to correct.

CLASSIFY

Once every enquiry lands in one place, urgency, service type and likely value can be tagged on arrival.

This is worth automating because the downside is small. A miscategorised item is a minor annoyance that someone can see and fix.

Expect useful rather than perfect. Accuracy plateaus, and the system should be designed so that a wrong label never becomes a lost enquiry.

DRAFT

A first reply prepared automatically, put in front of the person who owns the item, with the original request beside it.

This captures most of the time saving with none of the exposure, because the judgement stays where it was.

What we do not automate is the send. On a customer-facing reply, a person presses the button — a deliberate design position, not a limitation we are working around.



The owner edits and sends. A person still presses the button.

SUMMARISE

Long threads get summarised so that whoever picks the item up does not read forty messages first.

This is most valuable exactly where handoffs happen, which is also where enquiries are most often dropped.

It is a reading aid rather than a decision, which is why it needs no approval step in front of it.



Especially where an enquiry has bounced between two people.



Suggesting the task, rather than performing it.

NUDGE

“This has been quiet for four days, do you want to follow up?” — a prompt aimed at the owner of the item.

The distinction matters. Suggesting keeps a person in the loop and keeps the tone of the follow-up under human control.

Performing it automatically would make this a customer-facing action, which moves it into the category that always needs approval.

Three questions, one minute.



One queue, every channel, an owner on every item.

If you cannot answer any of these in under a minute, this is the workflow to fix before anything else gets automated.

- 1 How many open enquiries exist right now?**
Not roughly. The number, from the systems you have, without asking anyone.
- 2 Which is the oldest one nobody has replied to?**
If ageing is not visible somewhere, this is unanswerable by construction.
- 3 Who owns it?**
“The team” is not an answer. Unassigned should not be a valid state.
- 4 Time it — do not estimate.**
Answer all three with a stopwatch running. Owners consistently guess low, because the painful cases are memorable and the frequent ones are not.

A queue does not create capacity. If four people cannot handle the volume, seeing that clearly is useful — but it is not a fix, and it should not be sold as one.

Three things this will not fix.

A queue does not create capacity.

If four people cannot handle the volume, a dashboard showing that clearly is useful but it is not a fix. The answer is capacity or scope, not software.

Channel convergence needs discipline for a fortnight.

People go back to their personal WhatsApp. It works if the owner uses the queue in front of the team; it fails quietly if not.

Classification accuracy plateaus.

Expect useful, not perfect. Design so that a miscategorised item is a minor annoyance rather than a lost enquiry.

AI enters at step four.



The first three steps are what make the fourth one safe.

1 Converge the channels

Every enquiry lands as a row in one place, tagged with its source — WhatsApp, form, email, call log. No channel keeps its own private memory.

2 Force an owner

Every item has a named person, assigned automatically on arrival by round-robin, category, or whoever is on shift. Unassigned is not a valid state.

3 Make ageing visible

An item untouched for N hours changes colour. This single feature does more than any AI in the system, because “nothing is overdue” becomes checkable at a glance.

4 Then add the AI

Classify urgency and category on arrival, draft a first reply for the owner to approve, summarise long threads. Never the send.

Note the order. AI enters at step four, and the first three steps are what make step four safe — because by then you can see what it did.



WHAT IT COSTS

Published, because
“contact us for a quote”
wastes your time.

AUDIT

Free

One workflow, mapped. Often concludes you should not build yet.

PROTOTYPE

from \$800

A working slice you can put in front of one real user.

PILOT

\$2,500–\$7,000

A system a real team uses in production, with a run log.

Send me the channel where enquiries go quiet.

The useful first message is one sentence: what gets missed, repeated, delayed, or is hard for you to see.

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