

How Gagne Heating & Air Canceled Their Answering Service in Two Weeks and Never Looked Back



Summary

Jeff Gagne wasn't necessarily looking for AI. He was looking for something better than what he had. For years, Gagne Heating & Air relied on an after-hours answering service that was, at best, inconsistent. Calls were missed. Customers sat on hold during their busiest seasons. And when someone did answer, the information they gave wasn't always right. For a company built on trust and reliable service, the gap between the experience they promised and the one customers were actually getting was becoming impossible to ignore.

The turning point came at an industry conference, where Jeff started seeing AI platforms showcased alongside the CRMs his team already used every day. He didn't walk in as a believer, but he left paying attention. Frustrated by the inconsistencies in their current service and curious about what AI could actually do, he decided to put it to the test and research different providers.

The Problem

Gagne Heating & Air was paying for a service that was costing them more than just money. Their live answering service had a fundamental flaw: it could take a message, but it couldn't book a job. Not a service call. Not an emergency. Just a name, a number, and a promise that someone would follow up. In the home services world, that's often not good enough, especially when a homeowner's heat goes out on a January night, and they need help now, not tomorrow morning.

During peak season, the cracks got even harder to ignore. Hold times climbed, and customers. The ones Jeff's team had worked hard to earn were hanging up and calling a competitor who could answer faster. The information that did get captured wasn't always accurate, leaving the team to chase down details that should have been handled on the first call.

And then came the bill. Because they were charged by the minute, from the moment the phone started ringing, summer became the most expensive time of year to simply answer the phone. More calls, longer hold times, higher costs, and fewer jobs actually booked. It was a losing equation. Paying more, capturing less, and watching customers walk out the door during the exact season that should have been their most profitable. Jeff knew something had to change.

The Plan

After evaluating Free2Grow alongside another AI answering solution, the decision came down to two things: capability and cost. Free2Grow's flat-rate billing was a stark contrast to the by-the-minute model that had been draining their budget every summer. And when it came to what the platform could actually do, Free2Grow stood apart.

Gagne Heating & Air began rolling out Free2Grow for after-hours, nights, and weekends only, keeping their team on the phones during regular business hours while they got comfortable with the technology. It was a deliberate, low-risk way to build confidence before going all in.

Jeff was the first to admit he was a rookie when it came to AI. No prior experience, no technical background, just a business owner who knew he needed a better solution and was willing to learn.

What made the difference was the people on the other side. Free2Grow's team guided Jeff and his staff through the entire setup, walking them through the call flow step by step and making sure the system was running exactly the way their business needed it to from day one.

The onboarding wasn't complicated. By the time Free2Grow went live, the team felt ready, not rushed.

Outcome & Results

The difference was immediate. Calls were answered on the second ring, every time. Customers got accurate information. And after-hours calls were being booked. Two weeks in, Jeff canceled his old answering service, because the difference was that clear.

Missed calls dropped. Booked appointments climbed. On-call technicians received call transcripts by text before every job. And on Sunday nights, Jeff found himself on his couch watching Monday morning service calls book themselves in real time.

Jeff's team calls Free2Grow's AI voice agent Sarah, not "the system." She's part of how Gagne Heating & Air operates that customers interact with her just like any other team member.

The most unexpected result? Weekends feel like weekends again. The business keeps running, and the team gets to be present with their families.

Jeff calls it a partnership. He's in for the long haul, and he recommends it to any home services company ready to stop missing calls and start capturing the revenue they've already earned.

