

The Modern Plumbing Business: Communication for the Future

How the latest tech can reduce
inefficiencies, retain good employees,
and build customer relationships

We live in a time when communication is easier than ever before.

This ease of communication can either optimize our work or remain untapped potential. In the case of plumbing businesses, many plumbers are so busy making their already-existing communication tools work for them, they don't stop to think about how they could further modernize their communication.

Every plumbing business deals with the problems of inefficiency, employee retention, and modernization. Much of the work done to address these issues revolves around improving the quality of the work itself, and rightfully so. However, other variables factor into the customer experience, especially communication.

Inefficient customer communication affects the well-being of your plumbing company, including customer loyalty. Here, we'll walk through those challenges and offer some solutions to combat these inefficiencies.

To better understand how modern plumbing businesses are engaging with their customers, we commissioned a survey of 750 business leaders and 750 consumers. The results showed that small businesses using outdated systems and tools — think broken websites and traditional voicemail — are increasingly overwhelmed with tedious tasks that automation and technology could help streamline, saving them time and money. Let's explore some of the most important findings from our survey.

Methodology

Weave, a leading all-in-one customer communications platform, commissioned an independent study of healthcare clinics, small businesses, and US consumers in September 2021 using an independent market research firm and a global sample provider.

Weave's study surveyed 750 business leaders (margin of error +/- 3.60%) and 750 US consumers (margin of error +/- 3.58%) to understand how business communication is evolving, and how technology is changing the way consumers interface and pay for services.

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01

Inefficient customer communication costs time, money, and employees

When plumbers and their crews spend significant amounts of time trying to communicate with their customers, quality work can feel rushed. If plumbing business owners waste chunks of their budget on a cumbersome and disjointed communication network, they can't offer some of the small luxuries that make a difference in the customer experience. And as employees recognize these inconveniences, they grow tired of their jobs and quit.

Today's plumbing businesses recognize the benefit of communication technology. The question for plumbers is whether or not they're taking advantage of technology to further optimize the customer experience.

Some businesses put a premium on keeping their lines of communication up-to-date. However, many plumbers are still using office technology that's over 5 years old. The constant stream of technological innovations in virtually every market can be daunting, but it's worth considering how modern communication saves plumbing businesses' time, money, and employees.

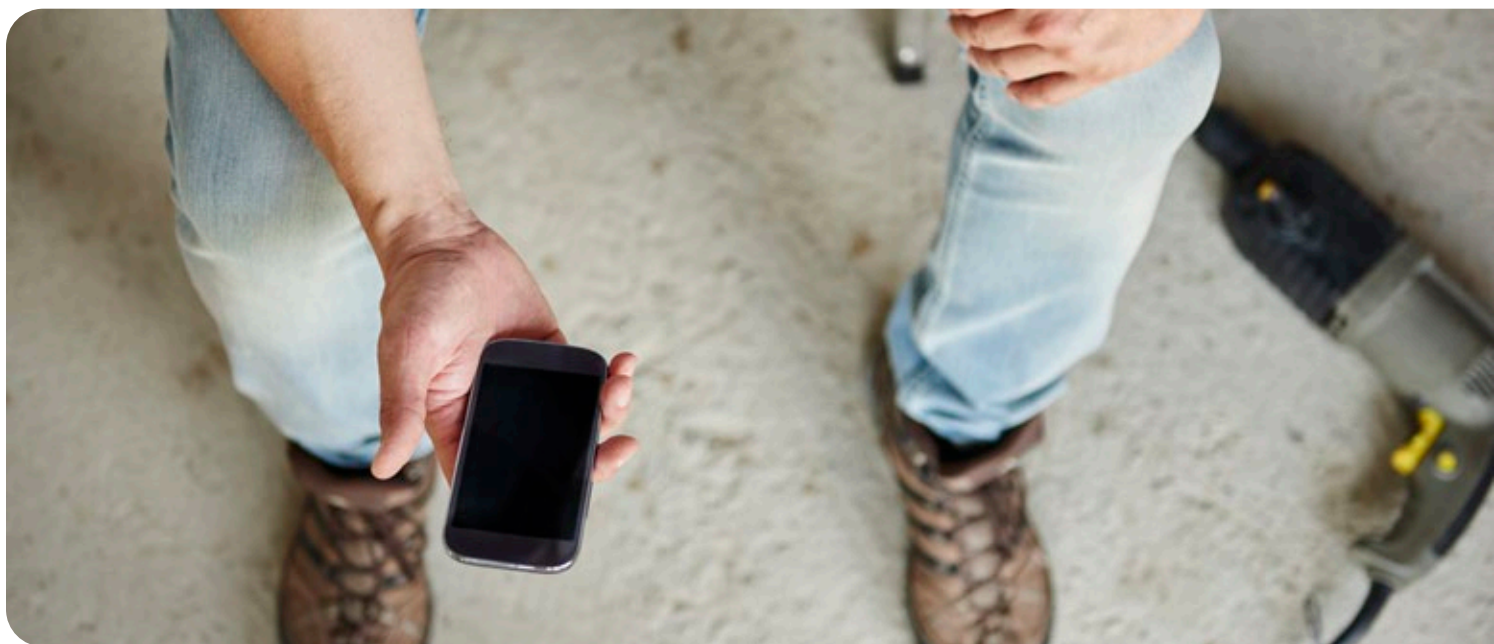
Plumbers spend too much time on the phone

The average plumbing business owner spends hours each day responding to customers. This workload is what we've come to expect of our bosses and crew leaders. We're used to seeing them jump from phone calls to emails to billing and back again. But what if they could be free to work more productively?

Plumbers could save on the amount of time they spend communicating with customers if they had the option to automate more of their customer communication. Although the computer science behind automation is complex, its functionality is meant to be

user-friendly. Once automated processes are set up for your plumbing business, you and your team are able to focus on the job at hand.

Making your business's communication more efficient doesn't mean working around the clock. Automation is able to handle calls, texts, and emails when plumbers and their techs aren't on the clock. Many plumbing businesses aren't able to help customers after hours because they don't have the right communication tools. Automated responses and website tools keep customers informed and loyal to their plumber while respecting the need for them to rest and recuperate.

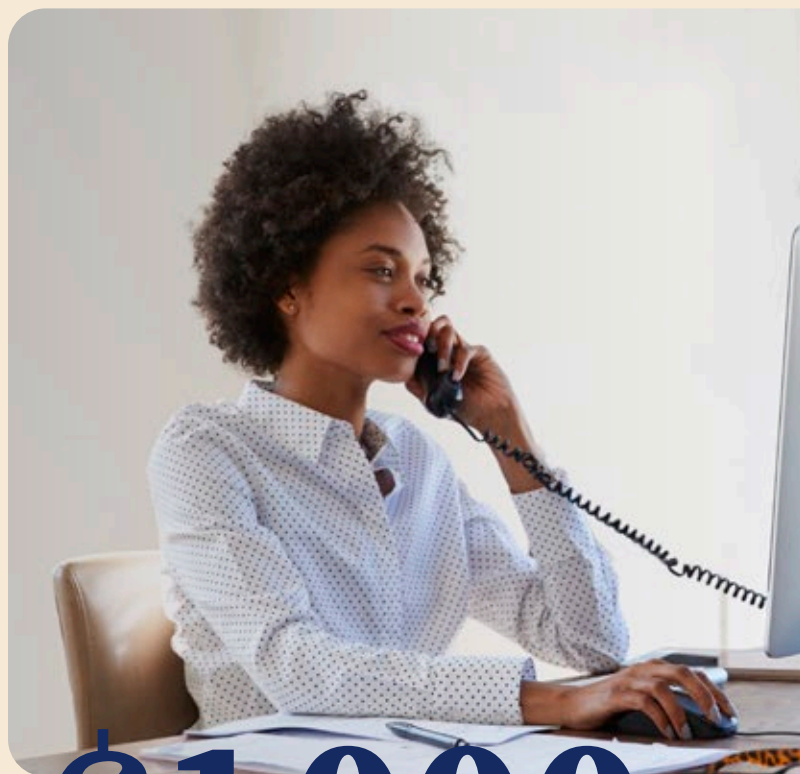


The wrong communication technology wastes your budget

One objection to new technology plumbers might have is cost. Managing the finances of any business is a delicate art, and adding a new toy could throw off the balance. At a certain juncture, though, trying to maintain the status quo is actually more expensive than updating.

Some businesses spend over \$1,000 a month on the technology they use to interact with customers. This technology includes communication as variable as taking calls, setting up extensions and voicemail, text messaging, email marketing, scheduling appointments, appointment reminders, and digital forms.

There's a laundry list of technological shortcuts to efficiency, but they often wind up breaking the bank, as businesses have to assemble a patchwork of different tools and softwares that can range in cost and often don't integrate with one another. That adds another level of inefficiency, since plumbers have to bounce between multiple services to handle customer communication.



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One Weave user, Jena Questen, had the following experience with her phone system:

“

When I bought this [business], we had to have AT&T for out-of-state, long-distance calls, and then we had to have Century Link for in-state, long-distance calls. Plus, I had to pay for a normal landline. It was really confusing and a lot of hassle because we basically had three different phone bills going on every month. It was nuts.”

By signing up for Weave, Jena found a [cost-effective phone service](#) that allows her business to make all its calls from a single platform. For her, it was worth switching to Weave for that benefit alone. Throw in the complete suite that includes texting, email marketing, scheduling, and digital forms (just to name a few solutions), and plumbing businesses have virtually all of their communication unified in a single platform.





Recruit and retain crew members by updating your systems

Inefficient communication systems impact not only business owners, but the people they employ. Spending inordinate amounts of time on responding to customer questions and complaints leads to a stressful environment that pushes crew members away, and paying too much for communication technology means your ability to properly compensate employees is affected.

Everyone these days uses smart technology; why shouldn't they be able to put these tools to work at their job? Plumbing businesses relying on the same old communication tools are

increasing the likelihood of their having a high turnover rate. Constantly searching for new crew members is an exhausting process and inflicts a significant cost on small businesses.


To avoid burning through time, money, and employees, plumbing businesses need a communication solution that allows crew members to focus on their jobs, business owners to make prudent financial decisions, and plumbers to feel calm and in control of their work environment. Finding a single platform to address these issues consequently improves the customer experience.

Most customers aren't loyal to their plumber

Although time, finances, and crew members are crucial parts of running a successful plumbing company, plumbers widely consider the quality of their work to be the crux of their business. Whether they're fixing leaky pipes, replacing a septic tank, or installing a whole new system, plumbers are primarily focused on the work they provide to their customers. Without customers, the plumbing industry wouldn't exist.

Many plumbing customers tend to float between companies. Even if they haven't moved to a new geographic area, customers can become dissatisfied with their plumber and look elsewhere (like at Google reviews) for someone that better suits their needs. According to our survey, 68% of customers aren't loyal to their plumber.

So, what prevents customers from being loyal to their plumber?

A man with glasses and a grey t-shirt is working on a white cabinet. He is looking down at his work. A wrench is visible on the right side of the cabinet.

68%

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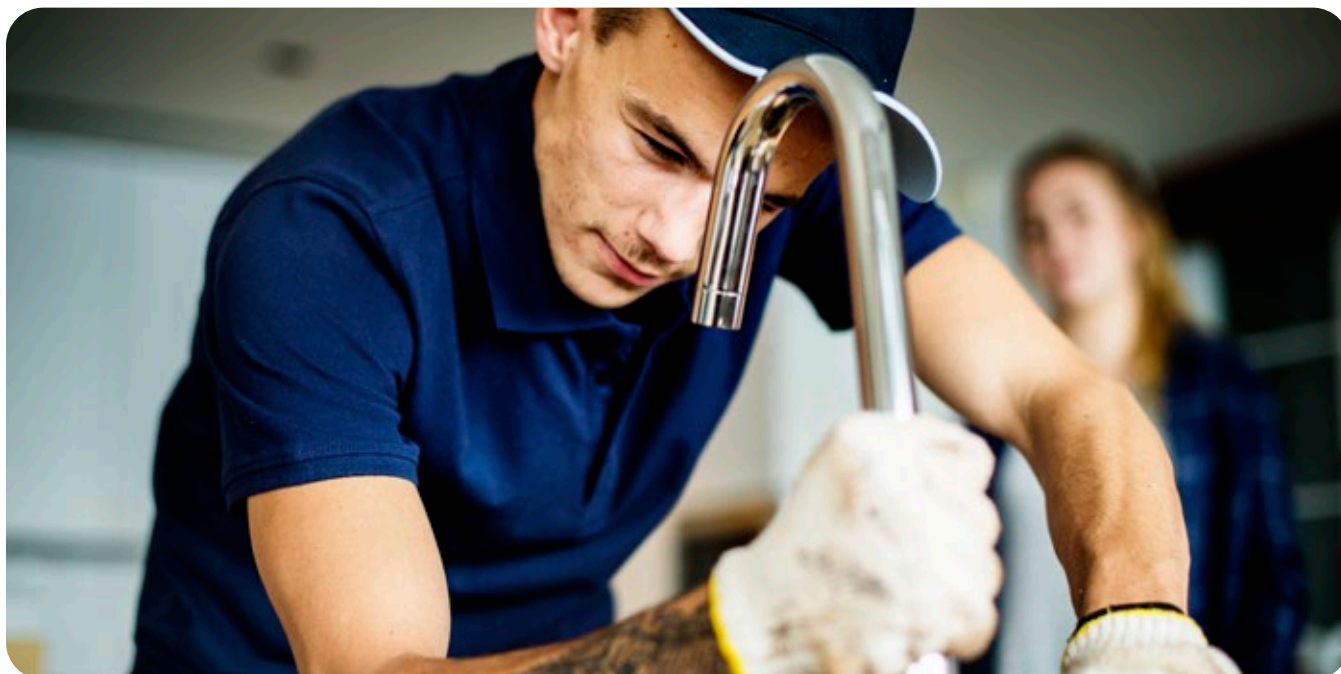
Reasons HVAC customers switch businesses

In our survey, plumbing customers switch to new offices for a variety of reasons. The first is cost. Plumbers are constantly dealing with the process of finding a balance between the expenses inherent to running their business and the amount they charge their customers. As discussed in the previous section, inefficiencies stemming from poor time management and expensive communication systems contribute to job prices that drive customers away.

Poor job outcomes also cause plumbing customers to switch businesses. The occasional hiccup with labor happens to every plumbing company, but could optimizing the customer

experience by improving communication give customers a reason to reconsider finding another business to do their plumbing?

Difficulty setting times for a quote or job is another reason customers choose a new plumber. Customers would like to be loyal to their plumber; they just need businesses to be responsive in order to show that loyalty. Implementing modern communication tools opens up new possibilities for eliminating inefficiencies, keeping a top-notch workforce, and developing an experience that turns first-time clients into lifelong customers.



How to modernize your plumbing business's communication

Just as smartphones, tablets, and laptops help us communicate more effectively in our personal lives, modern communication technology is able to support plumbers and their crew in their efforts to establish loyal customers. Along the way, these solutions also reduce

wasted time, offer financial savings, and bolster employee productivity.

Here are four solutions our survey found to be powerful ways to modernize your plumbing business:



Adopt a VoIP phone system

Everyone's familiar with the problem of calling a business and getting put on hold for minutes on end. With the advent of VoIP phone systems (Voice over Internet Protocol), though, the days of putting potential customers on hold are numbered.

As previously mentioned, the inability to get a timely appointment makes customers want to find a new plumber. 90% of plumbing customers say they are placed on hold when calling to make an appointment. A VoIP phone system unifies calling and texting to give plumbers relief in handling busy call times with rollover lines, connection to smartphones, and missed call texts.

[Weave Phones](#) is an easy-to-use and customizable way to minimize the amount of clients and potential customers that are put on hold. Plumbing businesses can set up their phone tree to make it simple for customers to reach specific pros and techs at the shop, the office, or at job sites. Missed call texts are automatic text messages that go out to customers that aren't able to reach someone over the phone, allowing them to begin text conversations with your business.



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Update your website



6.5_{min}

On average, it takes over six and a half minutes to schedule an appointment by phone with a plumbing business, while online scheduling requires only five and a half minutes

A company website is critical for every modern plumbing company. One of the reasons plumbing businesses have their own websites is to improve their scheduling. On average, it takes over six and a half minutes to schedule an appointment by phone with a plumbing business, while online scheduling requires only five and a half minutes.

[Weave Web Assistant](#) offers plumbing businesses flexibility in how they respond to job requests. Unlike phone calls, scheduling through your website lets you pay attention to the job you're currently working on. Customers provide times they'd like to get a quote or have work done, and your team is able to confirm or suggest another appointment time by text message.

Traditional company websites handcuff potential customers to a representative on the other end of a scheduling conversation. With Weave, text conversations started through the website can continue via SMS. This aspect of Web Assistant makes scheduling with potential plumbing customers more natural and keeps them in more consistent contact with your business.

Automate your scheduling

Today's plumbing customers want to get appointment reminders by text rather than by phone or email. That's because text messages include written details about the location customers are able to reference to remind themselves of their upcoming appointment. [Weave Scheduling](#) gives plumbing businesses a number of ways to engage with customers by text.

Appointment reminders free up time for plumbers to focus on their current job instead of worrying about the next one. Weave's software lets you customize and personalize these reminders before scheduling them to go out at a specific time and date. Sending appointment reminders to customers decreases the likelihood of no-shows and builds trust with your clients.

Scheduling also provides you with sentiment analysis that interprets customer responses to appointment reminders. It lets your system know about confirmed appointments and notifies you of negative responses. In the event of last-minute cancellations, Quick Fill lists help you identify customers that might be willing to get a quote or have work done on short notice, then send them a text blast.





86%

of the customers in our survey check the online reviews of a business before requesting an appointment

Collect online reviews

It's becoming common knowledge that most consumers refer to online reviews before making a purchase. Plumbing customers are no different. 86% of the customers in our survey check the online reviews of a business before requesting an appointment.

Although customers are eager to read reviews, they're not likely to write reviews without prompting. Only 13% of customers consistently leave online reviews for their plumber, but 53% of them say they would if they got a reminder. Sending review requests following completed jobs and collecting them on key sites like Google and Facebook is a cornerstone of online marketing for modern plumbing businesses.

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We use Weave Reviews exclusively to get reviews, other than the occasional [customer] that writes a review manually on paper,” says marketing coordinator and Weave customer Dan Trachtenberg. “Compared to last year and the year before, it’s made a big difference.” The office Dan works for in New York added 4x their new online reviews from the previous two years in 2021 with Weave Reviews.



Conclusion:

Modernize your plumbing business with Weave

Today's plumbing businesses are hungry for technology that can make them more efficient, more competitive, and more caring. Effective communication enables plumbing companies to use their time wisely, manage their business profitably, and support their techs properly. An optimized communication system helps customers feel secure and that their plumbers are doing everything possible to meet their needs.

Unifying your customer communication with a single platform is possible with Weave. Using our VoIP phone system as its foundation, our platform enables plumbing businesses to update their websites, automate their scheduling, and strengthen their online presence.

We invite you to discover how to modernize your plumbing company's communication with Weave. Visit our website, check out our educational resources, and schedule a demo to find out why Weave is the single communication platform for the future.

Schedule a demo