The AI Flooring Playbook

How to run a flooring business in the age of AI

— and become the installer whose floors last.

THE COMPLETE SYSTEM · NO FLUFF · FREE TO SHARE

THE EVERYTHING

Read this first

Ten years ago, running a proper flooring business meant someone on the phone, a bookkeeper, and still working out the metres, the wastage and the subfloor prep on a scrap of paper in the ute between jobs.

Today, a good flooring installer with the right setup answers every enquiry the moment it lands, books the measure, tests and preps the subfloor so the floor lasts, and turns one room into the whole house and a stream of referrals — while a bigger outfit across town is still returning voicemails. And he spends zero nights on paperwork.

He's not smarter than you. He's not a better floor layer. And he's definitely not a computer person — one of the best we've seen was still working out metres on the back of an offcut two years ago. He just worked out one thing before everyone else: **the boring half of the business** — the enquiries, the follow-ups, the honest measured quotes, the moisture and prep notes, the trims, the invoices — can now do itself. So he put his energy where the money and the reputation are: on his knees laying a floor that lasts, and on becoming the installer a homeowner floors their whole house with and every visitor asks about.

This is the playbook for how he does it. No “50 prompts to copy”. No tech-bro nonsense. The actual system — how to think about it, what to set up, in what order, and the mistakes that make good installers give up before it clicks. Read it start to finish and you'll run a tighter, more profitable flooring business than you do right now, even if you never spend a cent on software.

A STRAIGHT WORD ON WHAT STAYS YOURS

Nothing in here decides how a floor gets laid, or lays it for you — and it never replaces your eye, your craft, or knowing what a subfloor needs before a board goes down. It carries the admin. Whether a base is dry, level and sound enough to lay on, and whether the material has settled into the room, is a call you make on site with your own moisture check, never a number a computer invents; how the floor is prepped, laid and finished to last is your trade; and being straight with a customer about what the job really needs stays with you. All of it stays yours, start to finish.

What's inside

01 CHAPTER ONE

The New Playing Field

A homeowner ringing round for a flooring quote can't see your past floors or watch you lay. They judge you on what they can reach — and that's where most installers quietly lose the best jobs of the year.

Your customer is usually a homeowner renovating — choosing the biggest surface in their home, something they'll look at and walk on every day for years — or a builder. And here's what makes missing the call so costly: they're getting a few quotes and they book fast once they trust someone. The job goes to whoever gets three things right first:

1. **Did you answer — and give a straight steer?** The first installer to pick up and sound careful and professional wins the measure. Let it ring out while you're on your knees laying a floor and they ring the next one — and floor the whole house with whoever answered.
2. **Will the floor last?** The homeowner's real fear is a floor that cups, lifts or gaps months later — and that comes from the subfloor, not the boards. An installer who tests the moisture and preps the base beats a cheaper one who lays straight over it, every time.
3. **Are you straight about what it needs?** Honest about the prep, the acclimatisation, the trims — and about what could vary once the old floor's up. A vague cheap quote that skips the subfloor loses the homeowner the moment they smell a shortcut.

Notice what none of those are about? Being the cheapest per-metre rate. All three are about being reachable, careful and straight — the exact stuff that's easy to drop at the end of a day on your knees. And the other side already runs on AI. The question isn't whether AI comes into flooring — it's whether it's working for you or against you.

The good news? This is the first time the technology favours the small operator. The big outfits run committees, rollouts and training programs. You can decide on a Tuesday and be answering first by Friday. The playing field just flipped: the small, careful installer can now look and perform like the national outfit — without the overheads, and without a homeowner ever getting a voicemail when they're ready to book their floor.

“But I'm not a computer person”

Neither are the trades doing this best. One of the fastest adopters we've seen is a trade-business owner with 26 years on the tools who only picked up a computer three years ago. His words: **“Don't worry about spelling. Don't worry about grammar.”** If you can send a text or leave a voice message, you can run everything in this playbook. Being able to say what you want is the new requirement — and installers, who talk a homeowner through product, prep and finish every day, are already good at that.

$200–800
+ per month

What job-management software commonly charges in AUD — and it still makes you do the typing and the chasing. One owner was paying a grand a month for tools his team barely used. Everything in this playbook either replaces that spend or makes it earn its keep.

The firms three times your size are slow because they're big. That's your opening. This playbook is about walking through it.

02 CHAPTER TWO

Think AI-First

Before we touch a single tool, we need to fix how you think about this — because the biggest mistake isn't buying the wrong software. It's bolting AI onto your old way of working and wondering why nothing changed.

Every process in your business was built on one assumption: a human has to do each step. Someone answers the enquiry. Someone works out the metres, the wastage and the subfloor prep. Someone tracks the measures, the moisture notes, the product orders. Your whole day is shaped around that assumption — and that assumption just died.

Don't automate your old process. Re-draw it — with the AI touching everything first, and you supervising. Three mental shifts:

Shift one — delegate outcomes, not steps

Stop thinking “which buttons do I click”. You now talk to your business the way you'd talk to a good offsider: say the outcome, let it work out the steps. One owner reorders product by sending one message from the supplier counter — “grabbing the boards and underlay for the Nguyen job” — and the order, the expense and the books sort themselves.

Shift two — AI first, you second

The AI does the first pass of everything, and you approve, tweak or overrule. The measured quote is drafted before you sit down. One customer described it: **“Nine times out of ten it's perfect. Just go — yep, send.”** Your job shrinks to ten seconds of judgment, not forty minutes of typing.

Shift three — corrections are investments

With normal software, you fix the same mistake forever. With AI, you fix it once. Tell it a standard quote always names the subfloor prep, the moisture check, the acclimatisation and the trims — and that you never give a firm figure on a floor you haven't measured — and it answers, **“I'll remember that from now on.”** Every correction compounds. Six months in, it quotes like you, writes like you and knows your rules — because you taught it, once.

The re-imagining exercise

Walk your business and ask one question about every interaction: “What would this look like if the AI touched it first?”

INTERACTION	THE OLD WAY	AI-FIRST
Homeowner rings while you're laying a floor	Voicemail. They ring the next installer.	Answered and qualified, measure booked — a straight, careful figure drafted by morning.
The old floor comes up and the subfloor's worse than expected	Awkward mid-job call, homeowner feels ambushed.	Flagged the moment it's found, the homeowner told what the extra levelling costs before the work goes on.
Supplier price-list update lands	Buried under 200 emails. Old rates on your next quote.	Extracted, applied to your rates — “boards up on four ranges.”
A floor's finished	Photos on the phone, care advice never sent.	Handover pack + care advice sent, the next room and the referral chased.

Every chapter from here is just this exercise applied to one part of your business.

03 CHAPTER THREE

Never Miss a Job Again

Let's start with the leak that costs you the most and hurts the least — because you never see the bill.

The flooring lead is high-value and perishable in a quiet way: a homeowner getting a few quotes books fast once they trust someone, and the slow installer never hears back. The call buzzes at 4pm while you're on your knees with a tapping block in one hand. It rings out. That homeowner rings the next installer, books the measure with them, and now they're the one flooring the house. Gone — and not just this room, maybe the whole house and every referral behind it.

First in

wins the floor

A homeowner ready to floor their home rings a couple of installers and books whoever answers first and sounds careful. A missed call isn't a deferred sale — it's the job, and often the whole house and the referrals behind it, handed to whoever picked up. And slow response drags your search ranking down, so it costs you the next one too.

Voicemail is where the best jobs of the year go to die. The AI-first fix is bigger — because an enquiry is really two problems.

Problem one — the call you couldn't take

An AI receptionist answers in your business's name, 24/7, sounds calm and professional on the phone, and captures every detail — the rooms and rough area, the product they're after, whether there's an old floor to lift, the timing — while you're on your knees or asleep. And it does the thing that wins the job: it answers first, every time, so you're the installer who books the measure while the others are still on voicemail.

Problem two — the customer nobody kept

A flooring business isn't won on one room — it's won on becoming the installer a homeowner floors their whole house with, and the one every visitor asks about. Most installers do a job and never think past it. The one who answers first, measures carefully, preps the subfloor so the floor lasts, and finishes it beautifully is the one that homeowner calls for the next room, and the one who gets recommended to everyone who compliments the floor.

- ✓ Every enquiry answered in your business's name — including 6pm, including the weekend, including the week every renovator in town wants a floor quoted.
- ✓ A searchable record of every job — “what did we lay and quote at the Rossi place, and what product was it?”
- ✓ Follow-ups that keep you in front of the homeowners and builders who matter — so when the next room or the next project comes up, you're the installer they ring.
- ✓ Job details from the enquiry — the rooms, the product, the old floor, the timing — flow straight into the measure, not re-typed three times.

The phone stops being the thing that costs you the best jobs and becomes the thing that books the measure — and keeps you the installer they floor the whole house with.

04 CHAPTER FOUR

Quote It Straight — Subfloor and All

Flooring has a quoting shape most trades underestimate: the number isn't just the boards and the labour. It's a measured area with cut wastage, the state of the subfloor, the moisture, the acclimatisation, and the trims — and the danger lives in the part you can't see once the floor's down.

The subfloor, not just the boards

and the moisture is the tell

A flooring job is a scope, not a per-metre rate: taking up the old floor, testing the moisture, preparing and levelling the subfloor, the underlay, acclimatising the material, laying it well, and finishing the trims and transitions. The cowboy lays straight over a damp or unlevel base to look cheaper and is long gone when the floor cups, lifts and gaps. Test the moisture, prep the base, acclimatise the material, and price it straight — and you're the installer a homeowner trusts with a floor they'll stare at for fifteen years.

Here's the honest truth of this trade: **a firm price down the phone, sight-unseen, is the red flag — not the reassurance.** Nobody can price a floor properly without measuring the area, seeing the subfloor, and reckoning with the moisture and the wastage. The honest move is to give a rough steer, then book a measure — check the base, test the moisture, work out the wastage and the trims — before you commit a firm figure.

AI-first quoting makes that easy: the AI *qualifies* the job before you roll. Here's what that looks like in a real flooring business today.

- ✓ **It asks the right questions first.** From the enquiry, the AI works through what actually sets the price — the rooms and rough area, the product, whether there's an old floor to lift, and the likely subfloor — so you book the measure with the right information in hand.
- ✓ **It prices from YOUR structure.** Feed it your past jobs and it learns your rates, your wastage and your prep costs — and drafts a straight, itemised figure with the subfloor prep named as its own line, not a flat per-metre number that hides it.
- ✓ **It catches what a tired quote drops.** It doesn't forget the underlay, the trims and transitions, the acclimatisation, or the fact that an old slab almost certainly needs the moisture checked before anyone commits a price.

The hidden subfloor

the prep you never skip

Here's the trust-killer of this trade: an installer lays a beautiful floor straight over a damp or unlevel subfloor, skips the moisture check and the prep, wins on the cheap per-metre number, and is long gone when it cups and lifts months later. The honest installer says it plainly up front: the base has to be dry, level and sound, and the timber has to settle into the room, before a board goes down — that's real work with a real cost a straight quote names and a cheap one hides. Refusing to lay over a bad base isn't you being difficult. It's the whole reason a homeowner should pick you.

The measure on a floor isn't friction — it's the sell

For any floor, the move is to give a rough steer, book the measure and check the subfloor before you commit the number. Framed right, that's not a delay — it tells a homeowner you won't under-quote their floor and then either cut a corner on the prep or come back cap in hand. “I'll give you a ballpark now, and a firm price once I've measured it and checked the base, so the floor I lay you doesn't cup or lift in a year” turns your care into the reason they picked you.

Then the bit everyone skips — staying in front of the customer. One message after a job: “Floor's in and the care advice is with you — happy to sort the next room whenever you're ready.” That single habit wins more whole-house floors than dropping your rate ever will. AI-first, that follow-up isn't a thing you remember. It's a thing that just happens.

THE POINT ISN'T THE SOFTWARE

It's the standard: measure it, test the moisture, prep the base, acclimatise the material, lay it well and finish the trims — and be the installer whose floors last. A floor layer with a notepad who hits that standard beats one with an app who doesn't. The AI just makes the standard effortless.

05 CHAPTER FIVE

Get Paid Without the Awkward Chase

You've won the job. Now you've got to get the money — and in flooring that's rarely one invoice. There's a deposit for the material, the job as it's laid, and the odd variation when the subfloor turns out to need more work — and a homeowner who hates a surprise on the bill.

Deposit + on completion

no surprise variation

The single most reassuring thing you can do for a homeowner is be straight and steady on the money: a deposit to order the material, the balance on completion, and any variation — a subfloor that needs more levelling, moisture that has to be addressed — had as a *conversation before the work*, not sprung after. A surprise “extra” on a flooring bill is the exact thing that turns a whole-house customer into a one-room one. Steady, predictable billing isn't just fair — it's your strongest reason to be kept.

The chasing is a system problem, not a people problem. Fix the system and you never have the awkward conversation again.

1. **Take the deposit to order.** A clear deposit request when the job's booked and measured beats “here are our bank details” — and it covers the material you're ordering in.
2. **Invoice on completion.** A “pay now” link the day the floor's laid and the trims are on beats “I'll send it later” — and a homeowner looking at a beautiful new floor is the most willing they'll ever be to pay.
3. **Flag the variation before it bites.** If the old floor comes up and the subfloor needs more levelling, the homeowner hears what it costs and why *before* the work goes on. A conversation, not an ambush at invoice time.
4. **Escalate the tone only if you have to.** Most pay on nudge one or two. You stay the good guy the whole way.

Money is money: this is the one place you keep the AI on a short leash at the start. It drafts, you approve — until you've watched it be right for a month.

06 CHAPTER SIX

The Inbox That Runs Itself

Your inbox is where quiet money leaks out and stress leaks in.

Supplier statements, a homeowner confirming a colour, a builder wanting a floor priced for a project, product back-order notices, a photo of a subfloor to look at, a review notification, a past customer asking about the next room — all mixed in with junk, all landing while you're on your knees with adhesive on your hands. One trade owner started with a backlog of 24,000 emails: "I'd read one email, it'd get lost. I wouldn't even be able to find it again."

AI-first, the inbox becomes something that's already handled by the time you look:

- ✓ **Triaged.** The three emails that matter today float to the top, flagged with why — "this one's the Rossi job wanting to lock in the colour so we can order."
- ✓ **Drafted.** Routine replies — "yes, we prep the subfloor", "we can measure Thursday" — written and waiting. You glance, tweak, send.
- ✓ **Answered on demand.** "What did we quote the Rossi floor, and what product and underlay was it?" — and it finds it instantly.

THE PART NOBODY EXPECTS — IT GUARDS YOUR MONEY

Because the AI reads everything, it catches things. One business: "It's already saved me thousands in mis-ordered products — it said, hold on, based on your past jobs you probably want this one." Another had a supplier accidentally invoice at a 50% discrepancy — flagged automatically before it was paid.

07 CHAPTER SEVEN

Your Digital Office Manager

Every flooring business has an office manager. Usually it's you, doing it badly at 10pm.

One week
no office admin

One trade business's admin person went on leave for a week. The owner: “We haven't had her in the office for a week, and it's helped us do her job.” It ended up being one of their strongest weeks — not survive the week, one of their best — because the follow-ups and the chasing didn't stop when she did.

The morning brief

Before you turn the key: today's measures and installs in order, which job's material has landed and which is on back-order, which homeowner should get a follow-up today, who to chase for a deposit, and the one thing — a moisture recheck, a colour to confirm — that'll bite you if you forget it. Two minutes with a coffee — and your offsider knows too.

Job files that build themselves

Every photo, quote, measure and moisture note attaches itself to the right job — so when the homeowner rings in three months for the next room, the whole history's there. The product, the underlay, the prep you did, the wastage, the care advice — all in one place.

The paperwork without the dread

The measure, the quote, the moisture and prep notes, the care advice, the invoice — drafted, sent, and kept where you can find it. Never a substitute for your eye or your check on the base — just stopped from going missing.

08 CHAPTER EIGHT

Look Twice as Big as You Are

Here's a secret the big outfits rely on you not knowing: most of "looking professional" — and "looking like an installer whose floors last" — is presentation, and presentation is now nearly free.

A one-van operator and a fifty-van outfit can send the identical, spotless, branded quote — and show the same fast response, the same measure and moisture care, the same photos of a beautifully finished floor, and the same real reviews from homeowners. In a trade where the customer is trusting you with the biggest surface in their home, the small operator who looks careful and professional gets trusted like the big one — and kept.

The referral flywheel — on purpose, not by accident

1. **Retain** — answer first, measure carefully, prep the base and finish it well, so you're the installer that homeowner floors the next room with without shopping around.
2. **Review** — ask for the Google review the moment a homeowner's happiest, the day they walk on their finished floor, automatically, with the link. Reviews and fast response lift your ranking — and a homeowner choosing an installer leans on both.
3. **Refer** — flooring is on display: every visitor stands on your work and asks who did it. The homeowner who loves their floor recommends you to the whole street and their family. It's one of the strongest referral webs in the trades because the work is literally underfoot for everyone to see.
4. **Resell** — this is the whole game. One happy homeowner isn't a room, it's the whole house over time: the next room, the stairs, the next place. It's all in the job file. A follow-up at the right time turns one room into a decade of work.

START TODAY — EVEN WITH ZERO TECH

Ask every homeowner for a review the day they walk on their finished floor, and always leave the door open — "happy to sort the next room whenever you're ready, and send anyone who asks about the floor my way." A homeowner admiring a floor you just laid is the most receptive you'll ever find them.

09 CHAPTER NINE

The 30-Day Switch

Everything above works. The reason most installers don't get it working is they try to do it all at once, get overwhelmed mid-job, and go back to the old way. So: one thing at a time, without stopping work.

1. **Week 1 — Stop the biggest leak: the missed call.** Every enquiry answered and qualified, a straight steer given, the measure booked. This starts paying for the whole exercise immediately.
2. **Week 2 — Fix quoting.** The AI qualifies the job and drafts a straight, itemised figure with the subfloor prep named as its own line from your structure; you correct it — and every correction is a lesson it keeps. Measure before any firm number, follow-up after every job.
3. **Week 3 — Fix getting paid.** The deposit to order, the balance on completion, variations flagged early, automatic reminders — with you approving everything money-related until it's earned the leash.
4. **Week 4 — Hand over the back office.** Inbox triaged and drafted, morning brief running, job files and measure/moisture records building themselves, reviews asked automatically, the next room chased.

Why all four? Because one process never feels like much. Three is where the “holy hell” moment happens — because that's when the pieces start talking to each other. The call becomes the measure. The measure becomes the well-prepped floor. The floor becomes the review, the payment on completion, and the next room from the same homeowner.

The trust dial — how to hand over without losing sleep

You don't hand a new offsider a whole floor on day one. Same here:

1. **Weeks 1–2: it asks about everything.** Every email draft, every quote — “here's what I'd send, OK?” You approve, correct, teach.
2. **Weeks 3–4: it asks about the important stuff.** Routine replies just go; money, new homeowners, and anything with weight — quotes, subfloor calls, colours — still get your nod.
3. **Month two onward: it asks about exceptions.** Now it runs, and you get the morning brief and the flags. You're still the boss — you've just stopped being the bottleneck.

The mistakes that make good installers quit before it clicks

- ✓ **Doing all four weeks at once.** Don't. One a week. Each banks a win before you add the next.
- ✓ **Bolting AI onto the old process.** If you're still typing every job into the same old software and asking AI to “help”, you've missed the point. Re-draw the process (Chapter 2).
- ✓ **Reaching for fake urgency.** The flaky operators use “book today”. You've got a real lever — your lead time and the acclimatisation: “we'll measure this week and have it down for the date you need the room back” — so use that honest one.
- ✓ **Competing on the per-metre rate.** The moment you win by being the cheapest lay, you're the one who has to skip the subfloor prep to make the money work — and that's the floor that fails. A homeowner pays for a floor that lasts and an installer who's straight — the finish and the prep win the whole house, not the lowest rate.

✓ BEFORE YOU PUT THIS DOWN

The 2-Minute Leak Audit

Most installers aren't short of skill — they're losing homeowners. Your money isn't in winning strangers on a cheap per-metre rate; it's in becoming the installer a homeowner floors their whole house with, because one happy homeowner is the next room, the stairs, and the referral to everyone who walks on the floor. That's the tell: answer first, measure carefully, prep the base, finish it well. Be honest — tick the ones that are true right now.

- ✓ I'm often slow to answer calls — and I don't know how many homeowners the delay has cost me.
- ✓ A homeowner's call has rung out and I never knew, and they booked the next installer.
- ✓ I've given a firm price down the phone on a floor I hadn't measured — and worn the loss.
- ✓ I've won a job on a cheap per-metre rate that left the subfloor prep or the moisture check off.
- ✓ I've laid over a base I wasn't sure about, and had a floor come back on me.
- ✓ I don't stay in front of past homeowners, so they get the next room done by someone else.
- ✓ My measures, moisture notes and product details live in my head and my phone, not in one place.
- ✓ I've had a floor cup, lift or gap and known it was the subfloor, not the boards.
- ✓ My inbox stresses me out, and important stuff — a colour to confirm, a deposit — gets buried.
- ✓ If a past homeowner rang about their floor, it'd take me a while to find the product and the details.

0–2	3–6	7+
Tight ship. A few tweaks and you're the go-to for more whole-house floors.	You're losing real homeowners in the boring half — and it's all fixable. Start with Week 1.	Mate, you're doing the skilled work and handing the floor to whoever answered first. Good news: it's exactly the stuff that's now easiest to fix.

The biggest lever isn't a cheaper rate — it's answering first, prepping the base so the floor lasts, and turning each homeowner into the whole house and referrals from everyone who sees the finish. Your biggest tick is your biggest opportunity. Start there.

ONE LAST THING

Want it set up for you?

Everything in this playbook, you can build yourself — and you should, if you've got the time and the patience. Plenty do. If you'd rather it was just done — the AI that answers your phone the moment a homeowner rings, qualifies the job and books the measure, drafts a straight, itemised quote with the subfloor prep and the moisture check named honestly, takes the deposit and invoices on completion and flags a variation before it bites, keeps the measure, moisture and product records, and chases the next room and the referrals from everyone who walks on the floor — all in one, working in your flooring business this week — that's what we build. It's called The Everything.

- ✓ 14-day free trial. Cancel anytime. No fixed contracts, no catch.
- ✓ Nothing important — a quote, an invoice, a homeowner's message — ever goes out without you seeing it first.
- ✓ It lives in Microsoft Teams and the tools you already use.

See it working on your own jobs at the-everything-app.com — no credit card to look.

Honest note: this won't fix a broken business, and it won't lay the floor, check the subfloor, or decide when a base is ready — that's still you, your eye, and your craft. What it fixes is the office job you've been doing for free after dark.