

THE EVERYTHING · FIELD GUIDES FOR TRADE BUSINESSES

The AI Rendering Playbook

How to run a rendering business in the age of AI

— and become the renderer a homeowner trusts with the face of their house.

THE COMPLETE SYSTEM · NO FLUFF · FREE TO SHARE

THE EVERYTHING

Read this first

Ten years ago, running a proper rendering business meant someone on the phone, a bookkeeper, and still working out the wall, the system and the coats on a scrap of paper in the ute between sites.

Today, a good renderer with the right setup answers every homeowner's call the moment it lands, gets to the wall, reads the substrate, quotes the right system for it, and turns one facade into the next job and a builder's whole pipeline — 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 better on the float. And he's definitely not a computer person — one of the best we've seen was still writing jobs on the back of a render bag 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 quotes, the substrate and prep notes, the progress claims, the invoices — can now do itself. So he put his energy where the money and the reputation are: on the wall doing the prep, the coats and the cure properly, and on becoming the renderer a homeowner trusts with the whole look of their house.

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 renderers give up before it clicks. Read it start to finish and you'll run a tighter, more profitable rendering 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 wall gets rendered, judges what a substrate needs, or replaces your trade, your eye or your read of the wall on site — and it never replaces your hand on the float or the way you set a finish. It carries the admin. What system suits that wall — cement render, acrylic render or a texture coat over brick, blockwork/besser or foam cladding — how much prep the substrate needs, how long each coat has to cure, and where the movement joints go is a call you make on site, never a number a computer invents; getting a flat, consistent, crack-free finish is your craft; and being straight with a homeowner — refusing to render over a damp or moving wall until it's sorted, and refusing to quote one you haven't seen — stays with you. All of it stays yours, start to finish.

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01

CHAPTER ONE

The New Playing Field

A homeowner ringing round to render their house can't see your past walls or watch you set a coat. They judge you on what they can reach — and that's where most renderers quietly lose the best jobs of the year.

Your customer is usually a homeowner who wants to render over tired old brick or besser and transform the whole look of their house — the single biggest visual change they can make for the money — plus builders who need the external finish on new builds and extensions. And the one thing a homeowner is really afraid of is the render that looks perfect on handover then cracks, goes drummy or blows off the wall a year later — a highly visible, expensive-to-fix mess on the face of their house. The job goes to whoever gets three things right first:

- 1 Did you answer — and give a straight steer?** The first renderer to pick up and sound like they know the wall wins the look. Let it ring out while you're on a float and they ring the next one — and call whoever answered for the next wall.
- 2 Will it stay put and not crack?** The homeowner's real fear is the drummy, cracking, blown-off render that shows up later. A renderer who reads the substrate, does the prep, uses the right system for that wall, lets it cure and gets the movement joints right beats a cheaper bloke who skips all of it — because it's their facade that cracks.
- 3 Will you tell me straight what the wall needs?** Some walls need repair or sealing first; a damp or moving wall needs the truth before a trowel touches it. A homeowner can tell the difference between someone who reads the wall and someone who just wants to slap render on and go.

Notice what none of those are about? Being the cheapest price. All three are about being reachable, reading the wall and doing the invisible fundamentals right — the exact stuff that's easy to cut at the end of a long day. And the other side already runs on AI. The question isn't whether AI comes into rendering — 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 rendering firms 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 renderer who does the prep and the cure right can now look and perform like the national outfit — without the overheads, and without a homeowner ever getting a voicemail when they want to transform their house.

“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 renderers, who talk a homeowner through the wall, the finish and the plan 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.

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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 call. Someone works out the wall, the system and the coats. Someone tracks the materials, the progress claims, the follow-ups. 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 labourer: say the outcome, let it work out the steps. One owner reorders materials by sending one message from the supplier counter — “grabbing render and mesh for the Nguyen facade” — 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 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 substrate check and prep, the right system for that wall, the coats, the cure time between them, and the movement joints — and that you never give a firm figure on a wall you haven't seen, and never render over a damp or moving wall until it's sorted — 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 on a wall	Voicemail. They ring the next renderer.	Answered and qualified, the look booked — a straight figure with the substrate and system noted by morning.
A builder needs a render stage for a handover date	You miss the call, they ring another crew.	Answered, the program noted, the render stage slotted so their painter and handover hold.
Supplier price-list update lands	Buried under 200 emails. Old rates on your next quote.	Extracted, applied to your rates — “render and mesh up, quotes adjusted.”
A job's done	Photos on the phone, follow-up never sent.	The facade shot saved, the review asked, the next wall and the builder's next site chased.

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

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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 rendering lead is perishable: a homeowner getting a couple of quotes books whoever answers first and sounds like they know the wall, and the slow one never hears back — and a builder with a program books the crew that picks up and can slot the render stage. The call buzzes at 4pm while you're on a float with your hands full. It rings out. That homeowner rings the next renderer, books the look, and now they're the one doing the facade — and the builder they mention you to goes to someone else too. Gone — and not just this job, maybe every wall that homeowner, their street and that builder ever have.

First in

wins the wall

A homeowner ready to transform their house rings whoever picks up and sounds like they read walls. A builder rings whoever can slot their render stage. A missed call isn't a deferred sale — it's the job, and often the street and the builder's pipeline behind it, handed to whoever answered. 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 wall, roughly its size and height, what it's made of (brick, besser, foam cladding), what finish they're after, whether it's a home facelift or a builder's stage — while you're on a wall or asleep. And it does the thing that wins the job: it answers first, every time, so you're the renderer who books the look while the others are still on voicemail — and it flags a builder's date so nothing slips.

Problem two — the customer nobody kept

A rendering business isn't won on one facade — it's won on becoming the renderer a homeowner recommends over the fence and a builder uses on every site. Most renderers do a job and never think past it. The one who answers first, reads the wall, does the prep and the cure right and delivers a finish that stays put is the one that homeowner recommends to the street, and the builder puts on their next three builds.

- ✓ Every enquiry answered in your business's name — including 6pm, including the weekend, including the builder ringing about next week's stage.
- ✓ A searchable record of every job — “what system did we use and what did we quote at the Rossi place, and which builders are due their next render stage?”
- ✓ Follow-ups that keep you in front of the people who matter — so when the next wall or the builder's next site comes up, you're the one they ring.
- ✓ Job details from the enquiry — the wall, the substrate, the finish — flow straight into the look, not re-typed three times.

The phone stops being the thing that costs you the best jobs and becomes the thing that books the look — and keeps you the renderer they call for every wall.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Quote It Straight — the Wall Decides

Rendering has a quoting shape most trades don't: half the value the homeowner is buying is that nothing goes wrong later — no cracking, no drummy hollow patches, no render blowing off, no patchy colour or salt staining. And none of that can be judged, or promised, down a phone line, because it all comes from the wall you haven't seen yet.

Looked-at and read

and the firm phone price is the tell

A render job is a wall AND a system, not a per-square-metre rate: the substrate (brick, blockwork/besser, painted surface or foam cladding all render differently), the prep and priming, the right system for that wall, the coats, the cure time between them and before painting, and the movement joints where the wall will move. The cheap number is usually someone who skips the prep and the cure and slaps it on — and when it cracks or goes drummy a year later, the homeowner wears the fix on the face of their house. Read the wall, use the right system, do the prep, let it cure, and price it straight — and you're the renderer a homeowner trusts with the whole look of their house.

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 rendering properly without seeing the wall, its substrate and condition, the area, the height and access, the prep it needs, and the finish chosen. The honest move is to give a rough steer, then look at the wall 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 rendering business today.

- ✓ **It asks the right questions first.** From the enquiry, the AI works through what actually sets the price and the risk — what the wall's made of, its area and height, the access, the condition, the finish they want — so you book the look with the right information in hand.
- ✓ **It prices from YOUR structure.** Feed it your past jobs and it learns your rates and your prep and system costs — and drafts a straight figure with the substrate check, the prep, the right system, the coats and the cure named, not a flat rate that hides them.
- ✓ **It leads with the fundamentals.** It doesn't forget to put the prep, the right system and the cure up front — the exact things that decide whether the render stays put or cracks.

Tell them what the wall needs

the honesty that keeps them

Here's the trust-maker of this trade: the cheap operator renders straight over whatever's there — a damp wall, a moving wall, a painted or flaky surface — because sorting it costs him time. The honest renderer reads the substrate: says straight when a wall needs repair or sealing first, when a damp problem has to be fixed before render goes near it, and when a different system suits that wall — even though the quick job is the easier sale. “I won't render over a wall that isn't sound, because it'll crack or go drummy and you'll be looking at it every day” is a stronger pitch than a low number, and it's exactly what brings the repeat work and the neighbour's facade next.

The look at the wall isn't friction — it's the sell

For any wall, the move is to give a rough steer, book the look and read the substrate before you commit the number. Framed right, that's not a delay — it tells a homeowner you won't quote their wall blind and then hit them with a surprise, or leave them with render that cracks. “I'll come and read the wall, tell you what system it needs, and give you a firm price and a finish that stays put” 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: “All rendered and cured, looking a completely different house — give us a yell when you want the back wall done.” That single habit wins more repeat work 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: read the wall, use the right system, do the prep, let it cure, get the movement joints right, and be straight about what the wall actually needs. A renderer with a notepad who hits that standard beats one with an app who doesn't. The AI just makes the standard effortless.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Get Paid Without the Awkward Chase

You've won the job. Now you've got to get the money — and rendering is often a deposit to book and start, progress claims across a bigger facade, and the balance when it's cured and finished, with the odd variation when the wall turns out to need repair it didn't show from the ground.

Deposit + progress

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 book and get materials on site, progress claims as the coats go on across a bigger job, and any variation — a wall that turns out to need repair, a hidden damp problem — had as a *conversation before the work*, not sprung after. A surprise “extra” at the end is the exact thing that turns a repeat customer into a one-off. Steady, predictable billing isn't just fair — it's your strongest reason to be called back for the next wall and recommended to the street.

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

- 1 **Deposit to book and start.** A clear deposit request when the job's booked and looked at holds the date and covers the materials.
- 2 **Progress claims across the job.** On a bigger facade, staged claims as the coats go on beat one lump sum at the end — and keep the cash flowing while the wall cures between coats.
- 3 **Flag the variation before it bites.** If the wall's worse than it looked and needs repair or damp work first, the homeowner hears what it costs and why *before* the work goes on. A conversation, not an ambush.
- 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.

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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 booking, a builder chasing a render stage, a request for a colour or finish sample, a photo of a tired old brick wall to look at, a review notification, a past customer with the next wall — all mixed in with junk, all landing while you're on a float with your hands full. 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 a builder chasing next week's render stage before his painter's booked."
- ✓ **Drafted.** Routine replies — "yes, we can render over besser, here's how we'd finish it", "we can come and read the wall Thursday" — written and waiting. You glance, tweak, send.
- ✓ **Answered on demand.** "What system did we quote the Rossi facade, and is the deposit in?" — 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.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Your Digital Office Manager

Every rendering 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 looks and jobs in order, which wall is due its next coat now the last one's cured, which builder needs their render stage confirmed, which homeowner should get a follow-up, who to chase for a deposit, and the one thing — a colour sample to send, a damp wall to flag — that'll bite you if you forget it. Two minutes with a coffee — and your labourer knows too.

Job files that build themselves

Every photo, quote and job attaches itself to the right customer — so when they ring for the next wall, the whole history's there. The walls you did, the system you used, what you charged, which ones are due another — all in one place.

The paperwork without the dread

The quote, the progress claim, the job record, the invoice — drafted, sent, and kept where you can find it, and there to show what system and prep went on that wall if anything's ever queried. Never a substitute for your read of the wall or your hand on the float — just stopped from going missing.

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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 a renderer whose work won't crack” — is presentation, and presentation is now nearly free.

A one-van operator and a fifty-person firm can send the identical, spotless, branded quote — and show the same fast response, the same before-and-after facade shots, and the same real reviews from homeowners and builders. In a trade where a homeowner is trusting you with the whole face of their house, the small operator who looks careful, organised and sure of the wall gets trusted like the big one — and kept for every wall.

The referral flywheel — on purpose, not by accident

- 1 Retain** — answer first, read the wall, do the prep and cure right and deliver a finish that stays put, so you're the renderer that customer calls for the next wall without shopping around.
- 2 Review** — ask for the Google review the moment a customer's happiest, the day they see their transformed facade, automatically, with the link. Reviews and fast response lift your ranking — and a homeowner choosing a renderer leans on both.
- 3 Refer** — rendering is the most visible work there is: the whole street watches a tired old house become a completely different one, and everyone who drives past asks who did it. It's one of the strongest over-the-fence referral webs in the trades — and a builder who trusts your finish puts you on every build.
- 4 Resell** — this is the whole game. A homeowner has other walls, the back of the house, the next place; a builder has a pipeline of sites. One good job isn't a facade, it's the street and a builder's whole run of work. It's all in the job file. A follow-up at the right time turns one wall into years of work.

START TODAY — EVEN WITH ZERO TECH

Ask every customer for a review the day they see the transformed facade, and always leave the door open — “give us a yell for the back wall, and send me to any neighbour who wants theirs done.” A homeowner looking at a house that's just become a completely different place is the most receptive you'll ever find them.

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CHAPTER NINE

The 30-Day Switch

Everything above works. The reason most renderers 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 look booked — and a builder's render stage flagged so nothing slips. This starts paying for the whole exercise immediately.
- 2 **Week 2 — Fix quoting.** The AI qualifies the job and drafts a straight figure with the substrate check, the prep, the right system, the coats and the cure named from your structure; you correct it — and every correction is a lesson it keeps. Look before any firm number, follow-up after every job.
- 3 **Week 3 — Fix getting paid.** Deposit to book, progress claims across the job, 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 substrate records building themselves, reviews asked automatically, the next wall and the builder's next site 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 look. The look becomes the properly-prepped, right-system job. The job becomes the review, the payment, and the next wall from the same customer.

The trust dial — how to hand over without losing sleep

You don't hand a new labourer the finish coat 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 customers, and anything with weight — quotes, system calls, a wall that needs repair first — 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 renderers 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.** You don't need it — a builder's real program (the render stage before his painter and handover) or a homeowner's facade timed to a sale or a season is honest urgency you can act on: “we can have that rendered and cured before your paint stage.” A fake discount deadline just makes you look like the cowboy.
- ✓ **Competing on price.** The moment you win by being the cheapest, you're competing with the bloke who skips the prep and the cure — and the homeowner's real fear is exactly the render that cracks or goes drummy a year later. A homeowner pays for a renderer who reads the wall and delivers a finish that stays put — being trusted with the face of their house wins every wall, not the lowest price.



BEFORE YOU PUT THIS DOWN

The 2-Minute Leak Audit

Most renderers aren't short of skill — they're losing customers. Your money isn't in winning strangers on a cheap price; it's in becoming the renderer a homeowner recommends to the street and a builder uses on every site, because one good facade is the street's work and a builder's pipeline for years. That's the tell: answer first, read the wall, do the prep and cure right, deliver a finish that stays put. Be honest — tick the ones that are true right now.

- ✓ I'm often slow to answer calls — and I don't know how many jobs the delay has cost me.
- ✓ A homeowner's call has rung out and I never knew, and they booked the next renderer.
- ✓ A builder needed a render stage and rang another crew because I didn't pick up.
- ✓ I've given a firm price down the phone on a wall I hadn't seen — and worn the loss.
- ✓ I don't lead with the prep, the right system and the cure, so I look the same as the slap-it-on bloke.
- ✓ I don't stay in front of past customers, so the next wall gets done by someone else.
- ✓ My quotes, substrate notes and job history live in my head and my phone, not in one place.
- ✓ I've rendered over a wall I knew wasn't sound, because sorting it first was the harder conversation.
- ✓ My inbox stresses me out, and important stuff — a builder's date, a damp wall — gets buried.
- ✓ If a customer asked what system and prep went on their wall, it'd take me a while to find it.

0–2

Tight ship. A few tweaks and you're the renderer more homeowners and builders call for every wall.

3–6

You're losing real customers in the boring half — and it's all fixable. Start with Week 1.

7+

Mate, you're doing the skilled work and handing the customer to whoever answered first. Good news: it's exactly the stuff that's now easiest to fix.

The biggest lever isn't a cheaper price — it's answering first, reading the wall and doing the prep and cure right, and turning each job into the next wall, the street and the builder's pipeline. Your biggest tick is your biggest opportunity. Start there.

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, flags a builder's render stage so nothing slips, qualifies the job and books the look, drafts a straight quote with the substrate check, the prep, the right system, the coats and the cure named, takes the deposit and runs the progress claims and flags a variation before it bites, keeps the substrate and job records that show what went on that wall, and chases the next wall and the builder's next site from every customer you've looked after — all in one, working in your rendering business this week — that's what we build. It's called .

- ✓ 14-day free trial. Cancel anytime. No fixed contracts, no catch.
- ✓ Nothing important — a quote, an invoice, a customer'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 render the wall, judge the substrate, or decide what system and cure a wall needs — that's still you, your eye, and your hand on the float. What it fixes is the office job you've been doing for free after dark.