

THE EVERYTHING · FIELD GUIDES FOR TRADE BUSINESSES

The AI Waterproofing Playbook

How to run a waterproofing business in the age of AI

— and become the waterproofer builders trust not to leave a leak.

THE COMPLETE SYSTEM · NO FLUFF · FREE TO SHARE

THE EVERYTHING

Read this first

Ten years ago, running a proper waterproofing business meant someone on the phone, a bookkeeper, and still working out the areas, the details and the cure time on a scrap of paper in the ute between jobs.

Today, a good waterproofer with the right setup answers every builder's call the moment it lands, gets in before the tiler, details it so it never leaks, and turns one bathroom into a standing spot on every job that builder runs — 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 tools. And he's definitely not a computer person — one of the best we've seen was still writing jobs on the back of a membrane tin 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 cure-time reminders, the pre-tile handover records, the invoices — can now do itself. So he put his energy where the money and the reputation are: on his knees getting the detailing right, and on becoming the waterproofer a builder never has to worry about coming back on them.

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 waterproofer's give up before it clicks. Read it start to finish and you'll run a tighter, more profitable waterproofing 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 membrane goes down, details a corner, or replaces your judgement on whether an area is ready and cured — and it never replaces your eye, your craft, or the standards you work to. It carries the admin. Whether a substrate is sound, whether the falls run to the drain, and whether the membrane has cured before anyone tiles is a call you make on site, never a number a computer invents; how the detailing and the coats go on to keep the water out is your trade; and being straight with a builder about what the job really needs — and refusing to be rushed — stays with you. All of it stays yours, start to finish.

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01

CHAPTER ONE

The New Playing Field

A builder ringing round for a waterproofer can't see your past membranes — they're all under tiles. They judge you on what they can reach — and that's where most waterproofers quietly lose the best builders of the year.

Your customer is usually a builder running a job, or a renovating homeowner — and the one thing they're really afraid of is the leak they can't see until it's ruined the finished work. The job goes to whoever gets three things right first:

- 1 **Did you answer — and give a straight steer?** The first waterproofer to pick up and sound like a safe pair of hands wins the look. Let it ring out while you're detailing a shower and they ring the next one — and put them on every job instead of you.
- 2 **Will it leak?** The builder's real fear is the callback — a leak behind the finished tiles means ripping out the bathroom, and it's their problem and their client's. A waterproofer who details it right beats a cheaper one who rushes it, every time.
- 3 **Will you hold up the tiler?** Waterproofing goes in before the tiler and has to cure before they tile. Turning up on time, and refusing to let anyone tile before it's cured, is what keeps the builder's program moving and keeps you on the job.

Notice what none of those are about? Being the cheapest price. 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 waterproofing — 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 waterproofer can now look and perform like the national outfit — without the overheads, and without a builder ever getting a voicemail when they need someone in before the tiler.

“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 waterproofer, who talk a builder through areas, details and cure times 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 builder's call. Someone works out the areas, the details and the coats. Someone tracks the cure times, the pre-tile handovers, 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 offside: say the outcome, let it work out the steps. One owner reorders product by sending one message from the supplier counter — “grabbing membrane and primer 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 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 prep, the corner and penetration detailing, the falls and the cure time — and that you never give a firm figure on an area you haven't seen, and never let the tiler start before it's cured — 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
Builder rings while you're detailing a shower	Voicemail. They ring the next waterproofer.	Answered and qualified, the look booked — a straight figure drafted by morning.
The tiler wants to start before it's cured	You cave to keep the peace, and risk the leak.	The cure time is on the job file and the builder's told the date it's safe to tile.
Supplier price-list update lands	Buried under 200 emails. Old rates on your next quote.	Extracted, applied to your rates — “membrane up on two lines.”
A job's done	Photos on the phone, handover never sent.	Pre-tile handover pack + photos sent, the next job chased from the builder.

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 waterproofing lead is perishable in a quiet way: a builder needs someone in before the tiler, rings a couple, and books whoever answers first and sounds like they won't cut the corner — the slow one never hears back. The call buzzes at 4pm while you're on your knees detailing a corner. It rings out. That builder rings the next waterproofer, books them, and now they're on every job that builder runs. Gone — and not just this bathroom, maybe every job that builder has for years.

First in

wins the builder

A builder needs a waterproofer in before the tiler and rings whoever picks up and sounds safe. A missed call isn't a deferred sale — it's the job, and often a standing spot on every job 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 builder relationships 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 areas, how many wet areas, whether it's internal or a balcony/deck, the substrate, and when they need it done before the tiler — 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 waterproofer who books the look while the others are still on voicemail.

Problem two — the builder nobody kept

A waterproofing business isn't won on one bathroom — it's won on becoming the waterproofer a builder puts on every job. Most waterproofer do a job and never think past it. The one who answers first, details it so it never leaks, and never holds up the tiler is the one that builder calls for the next job, and the one after, and passes to every other builder and tiler they work with.

- ✓ Every enquiry answered in your business's name — including 6pm, including the weekend, including the week every builder in town needs a waterproofer before their tiler.
- ✓ A searchable record of every job — “what did we detail and quote at the Rossi bathroom, and when did it cure?”
- ✓ Follow-ups that keep you in front of the builders who matter — so when their next job needs waterproofing, you're the one they ring, not a number they've lost.
- ✓ Job details from the enquiry — the areas, the substrate, the timing before the tiler — flow straight into the job, not re-typed three times.

The phone stops being the thing that costs you the best builders and becomes the thing that books the look — and keeps you the waterproofer they put on every job.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Quote It Straight — Detailing and All

Waterproofing has a quoting shape most trades underestimate: the value isn't the membrane you can see going on — it's the invisible detailing underneath it that decides whether it leaks. And none of it can be judged down a phone line.

The detailing, not just the coats

and the cure is the tell

A waterproofing job is a scope, not a per-area rate: preparing and priming the substrate, detailing every corner and penetration (the waste, the drain, the tap), building and checking the falls so water actually reaches the drain, the right number of coats, and the full cure before anyone tiles. The cowboy skips the detailing and the cure to be fast and cheap, tiles get laid over it, and the failure is invisible until it's a ceiling stain and a demolished bathroom. Detail it right, set the falls, let it cure, and price that straight — and you're the waterproofer a builder never worries about.

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 waterproofing properly without seeing the area, the substrate, the falls and the penetrations. The honest move is to give a rough steer, then look at the job — check the substrate, the falls, how many wet areas and penetrations — 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 waterproofing business today.

- ✓ **It asks the right questions first.** From the enquiry, the AI works through what actually sets the price — how many wet areas, internal or a balcony/deck, the substrate, whether the falls need building, and when it's needed before the tiler — 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 detailing time — and drafts a straight figure with the prep, detailing and cure named, not a flat per-area number that hides them.
- ✓ **It catches what a tired quote drops.** It doesn't forget the penetration detailing, the falls, the coats, or the fact that the tiler can't start until it's cured.

The invisible detail

the shortcut that leaks

Here's the trust-killer of this trade: the buyer literally cannot see the work — once it's tiled over, a rushed job and a perfect one look identical, until one leaks. The cowboy skips the corner and penetration detailing, doesn't build the falls, and lets the tiler start before it's cured — takes the cheap price — and is long gone when the leak shows up behind the finished wall and the whole bathroom has to come out. The honest waterproofer says it plainly up front: the corners, the penetrations, the falls to the drain and the cure are exactly what stop the leak, and skipping them is why cheap jobs fail. Refusing to rush it isn't you being difficult. It's the whole reason a builder should pick you.

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

For any area, the move is to give a rough steer, book the look and check the substrate and falls before you commit the number. Framed right, that's not a delay — it tells a builder you won't under-quote their job and then cut a corner on the detailing to make it work. “I'll give you a ballpark now, and a firm price once I've seen the area and the falls, so the membrane I put down never comes back on you” turns your care into the reason they picked you.

Then the bit everyone skips — staying in front of the builder. One message after a job: “All detailed, cured and ready for your tiler — handover pack's with you. What's the next one?” That single habit wins more standing-spot-on-every-job than dropping your rate ever will. At 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: look at the job, detail every corner and penetration, set the falls, let it cure, and be the waterproofer whose jobs never leak. A waterproofer 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 in waterproofing you're often one trade among many on a builder's job, waiting on progress claims, with the odd variation when the substrate turns out to need more work.

Claim on time

no surprise variation

The single most reassuring thing you can do for a builder is be straight and steady on the money: a clear price for the scope, a progress claim when the membrane's in and cured, and any variation — a substrate that needs more prep, falls that have to be rebuilt — had as a *conversation before the work*, not sprung after. A surprise “extra” on the bill is the exact thing that turns a repeat builder into a one-off. Steady, predictable billing isn't just fair — it's your strongest reason to be kept on every job.

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

- 1 Price the scope clearly.** A clear, itemised quote when the job's booked and looked at beats a vague number — and it's what a builder needs to put you in their program.
- 2 Claim the moment it's cured and handed over.** A progress claim with the pre-tile handover pack the day it's cured beats “I'll invoice later” — and it's tied to a milestone the builder can see.
- 3 Flag the variation before it bites.** If the substrate needs more prep or the falls have to be rebuilt, the builder 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.

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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 builder confirming a start date, a tiler asking when they can tile, product data sheets, a photo of a substrate to look at, a review notification, a past builder with the next job — all mixed in with junk, all landing while you're on your knees with a roller in one hand. 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."

At-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 tiler wanting to know when he can start."
- ✓ **Drafted.** Routine replies — "yes, we detail all the penetrations", "it'll be cured and ready for your tiler Thursday" — written and waiting. You glance, tweak, send.
- ✓ **Answered on demand.** "What did we quote the Rossi bathroom, and when did it cure?" — 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 waterproofing 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 job's cured and ready for the tiler, which builder should get a follow-up today, who to chase for a progress claim, and the one thing — a cure time, a substrate to re-check — 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 and job attaches itself to the right job — so when the builder rings in three months for the next one, the whole history's there. The areas, the substrate, the detailing you did, the cure date, the pre-tile handover — all in one place, and proof it was done right if a leak ever gets blamed on the membrane.

The paperwork without the dread

The quote, the pre-tile handover record, the cure-time note, the photos of the detailing before it's tiled over, the invoice — drafted, sent, and kept where you can find it. Never a substitute for your eye or your detailing — just stopped from going missing, and there to protect you if a leak ever gets pinned on your membrane by mistake.

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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 waterproofer who won't leave a leak” — 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 photos of the detailing before it's tiled over, the same pre-tile handover records, and the same real reviews from builders. In a trade where a builder is trusting you with the one thing that can wreck their whole job, the small operator who looks careful and organised gets trusted like the big one — and kept on every job.

The referral flywheel — on purpose, not by accident

- 1 **Retain** — answer first, detail it right, never hold up the tiler, so you're the waterproofer that builder puts on the next job without shopping around.
- 2 **Review** — ask for the Google review the moment a builder's happiest, the day you hand over a cured, ready area on time, automatically, with the link. Reviews and fast response lift your ranking — and a builder choosing a waterproofer leans on both.
- 3 **Refer** — in a trade defined by failures, the operator whose jobs never leak becomes the name builders and tilers pass around. The builder who never got a callback from you tells the next builder and every tiler you work behind.
- 4 **Resell** — this is the whole game. One good builder isn't a bathroom, it's a standing spot on every job they run: the next one, and the one after. It's all in the job file. A follow-up at the right time turns one job into years of work.

START TODAY — EVEN WITH ZERO TECH

Ask every builder for a review the day you hand over a cured area on time, and always leave the door open — “put me on the next one, and send me to the builders and tilers you work with.” A builder who just watched you detail it right and not hold up their tiler 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 waterproofers 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. 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 prep, detailing and 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.** A clear scoped price, a progress claim the moment it's cured and handed over, 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 cure/handover records building themselves, reviews asked automatically, the next job chased from the builder network.

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 well-detailed job. The job becomes the cured handover, the progress claim, and the next job from the same builder.

The trust dial — how to hand over without losing sleep

You don't hand a new offsider a whole job 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 builders, and anything with weight — quotes, cure dates, variations — 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 waterproofers 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 — the build sequence: “we'll get it in and cured so your tiler starts on schedule” — so use that honest one.
- ✓ **Competing on price.** The moment you win by being the cheapest, you're the one who has to skip the detailing or rush the cure to make the money work — and that's the job that leaks. A builder pays for a membrane that never comes back on them — being trusted not to leave a leak wins every job, not the lowest price.



BEFORE YOU PUT THIS DOWN

The 2-Minute Leak Audit

Most waterproofers aren't short of skill — they're losing builders. Your money isn't in winning strangers on a cheap price; it's in becoming the waterproofer a builder puts on every job, because one good builder is a standing spot on all their work and their referral to every builder and tiler they know. That's the tell: answer first, detail it right, never hold up the tiler, never leave a leak. Be honest — tick the ones that are true right now.

- ✓ I'm often slow to answer calls — and I don't know how many builders the delay has cost me.
- ✓ A builder's call has rung out and I never knew, and they put the next waterproofer on the job.
- ✓ I've given a firm price down the phone on an area I hadn't seen — and worn the loss.
- ✓ I've won a job on a cheap price that left the detailing or the falls skimped.
- ✓ I've let a tiler start before the membrane was properly cured to keep the peace.
- ✓ I've had a leak come back on me and known it was a corner or penetration I rushed.
- ✓ I don't stay in front of good builders, so they put someone else on the next job.
- ✓ My quotes, cure dates and detailing photos live in my head and my phone, not in one place.
- ✓ My inbox stresses me out, and important stuff — a tiler asking when he can start — gets buried.
- ✓ If a builder blamed a leak on my membrane, I couldn't quickly show the detailing was done right.

0–2

Tight ship. A few tweaks and you're the waterproofer on more builders' every job.

3–6

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

7+

Mate, you're doing the careful work and handing the builder 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, detailing it so it never leaks, and turning each builder into a standing spot on every job and referrals to every builder and tiler they know. 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 builder rings, qualifies the job and books the look, drafts a straight quote with the prep, detailing and cure named honestly, claims the moment it's cured and flags a variation before it bites, keeps the cure-time and pre-tile handover records that protect you if a leak's ever blamed on your membrane, and chases the next job from every builder who's learned your work never leaks — all in one, working in your waterproofing business this week — that's what we build. It's called [the-everything-app](#).

- ✓ 14-day free trial. Cancel anytime. No fixed contracts, no catch.
- ✓ Nothing important — a quote, an invoice, a builder'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 detail the corners, set the falls, or decide when a membrane's cured — that's still you, your eye, and your craft. What it fixes is the office job you've been doing for free after dark.