Analysis of 7,159 Small Business Website Chats Finds 38% Arrived After Hours

Data from 19 U.S. small businesses shows when customers reach out online, what they ask, and how often after-hours visitors leave contact details



38% of small business website chats arrive after hours

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, September 24, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Whether a website chatbot is worth it for a small business depends in part on when customers try to get in touch. New platform data from Small Business Chatbot, a company that builds AI agents that answer website chats and phone calls for small businesses, shows that 38% of 7,159 website chats handled for 19 U.S. small businesses between February 2025 and September 2026 arrived outside 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, measured in each business's local time.

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>
> *Arthur Cockfield*

When customers reach out

Weekends accounted for 18% of all chats. On weekdays, 54% of after-hours chats came between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.

The pattern held across industries. Home service businesses, such as landscapers, HVAC and electrical contractors, and restoration companies, received 40% of their chats after hours and 21% on weekends. Among the 17 businesses with at least 50 chats, the after-hours share ranged from 24% to 51%.

After-hours visitors leave their details

Visitors left a phone number or email address in 63% of after-hours chats, compared with 64% of chats during business hours.

What customers ask

About one in five chats (19%) asked about price, cost, a quote or an estimate, the most common

topic measured. In home services, 24% of chats raised price and 13% asked about scheduling a visit or appointment.
Overall, 36% of chats included at least one buying question about price, scheduling, service area, product availability or an urgent job. Urgent requests, such as leaks, floods and heating or cooling outages, made up 5% of home service chats, and 40% of urgent requests across all businesses arrived after hours.

What the data means for owners

Small Business Chatbot suggests that owners weighing a website chatbot check three things first.
The first is how many after-hours inquiries already arrive, which can be estimated from the timestamps on form submissions, emails and voicemails.
The second is whether prices, service areas and booking rules are written down clearly enough for an assistant to answer them.
The third is who follows up the next morning, since a captured phone number has value only if someone calls it back. On the Small Business Chatbot platform, for example, the business receives an email summary of each chat, including any contact details the visitor left.
The company notes that a chatbot is a weaker fit for businesses whose inquiries almost always need a site visit or custom quote first, and for websites with very little traffic.
"Owners tend to treat the website as a daytime channel," said Arthur Cockfield, co-founder of Small Business Chatbot. "In our data, nearly four in ten chats arrived after closing, and those visitors left a phone number or email just as often."

Context from public data

Small employers continue to report hiring difficulty. In its jobs report for August 2026, the National Federation of Independent Business said a seasonally adjusted 35% of small business owners had job openings they could not fill.
AI use among the smallest firms remains limited. The U.S. Census Bureau reported on May 26, 2026 that fewer than 20% of firms with four or fewer employees were using AI, based on its Business Trends and Outlook Survey from December 2025 to May 2026.

About the data

The analysis covers website chats handled by Small Business Chatbot's AI agents for 19 U.S. small businesses in home services, specialty products and professional services, from February 7, 2025 to September 23, 2026. Internal tests and chats with no visitor message were removed, and timestamps were converted to each business's local time. Question topics were identified by keyword matching on visitor messages, so topic shares are likely conservative. The figures describe businesses using the company's platform and are not a survey of all small businesses.

About Small Business Chatbot

Small Business Chatbot builds AI agents that answer website chats and phone calls for small businesses, collect customer contact details, and book appointments from website chat. The company serves small businesses across the United States and Canada. More information is

available at smallbusinesschatbot.com.

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