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AI for Electricians

The no-hype guide to getting more customers and running your shop – real tools and real costs, not just ChatGPT prompts

Read it or listen to it

Short on time to sit and read? Your phone can read this whole book out loud to you, free, while you drive or work. Here’s how to turn it on.

On an iPhone: Open Settings, tap Accessibility, then Spoken Content. Turn on “Speak Screen.” Now

open the book, swipe down from the top of the screen with two fingers, and it reads the page aloud. You can speed it up or slow it down.

On an Android phone: Open Settings, tap Accessibility, then “Select to Speak.” Turn it on. Open the book, tap the Select to Speak icon, then tap the text or drag to select it, and it reads to you.

Either way costs nothing and works on the book you’re holding right now. Read it, listen to it, whatever fits your day.

The tool is not the business

A new meter doesn’t make you a master electrician. You do.

Same with AI. Buying it doesn’t grow your business. Using it right does.

That’s the whole idea behind this book.

You’ve heard the noise by now. AI will 10x your sales. AI will run your shop while you sleep. Most of that is a sales pitch, and the folks selling it get paid whether your business grows or not.

This is the honest version. No magic beans.

Here’s what AI actually is for a shop like yours. It’s a helper. It answers the phone when you can’t. It writes the quote faster. It chases the customer who went quiet. It takes the paperwork you hate off your plate.

What it won’t do is think for you. It can’t pull a permit, size a panel, or put its name on your license. That part is still you.

And a big part of this book is the other side of the coin: getting more customers in the first place.

That’s marketing. We’ll walk it the same way, one easy step at a time. How to get a simple website up. How to set up your free Google listing so people find you. And the AI tools that help you get found and book more work. Some of it is just good habits you can start on your own, no app needed.

So we’ll keep this simple. Each chapter takes one real headache and shows you the tool that helps, what it runs, and where it can bite you.

And you don’t need ten tools. Most of what’s in here runs on one main app, a \$20 helper, and a free Google listing. We’ll get to all three.

One promise from me. Don’t try to do everything at once. Pick one thing from this book and put it to work this week. That’s how it pays off.

There’s also a chapter later on where AI will burn you – code, load calcs, licensing, safety. Read that one twice. It’s your license on the line, not the software’s.

One tool, or many?

Before we name a single tool, you need to know there are two kinds. Choosing between them is one of the biggest calls you’ll make, so let’s get it clear right now.

The first kind is a specialized tool. It does one job and does it well. An app that only answers your phone, for example. These are usually low-cost and quick to set up.

The second kind is an all-in-one tool. One app that does a bunch of jobs. It answers the phone, sends quotes, books jobs, and bills customers, all in one place.

Here’s the trade-off.

Specialized tools are cheaper and simpler, one at a time. But grab one for calls, one for reviews, one for quotes, and one for scheduling, and you've got five or six apps. That's five or six logins, five or six bills, and none of them talk to each other.

An all-in-one costs more up front and takes more to learn. But it's one login and one bill, and everything shares the same info. The customer who called is the same customer who gets the quote and the review request.

Neither one is the right answer. It depends on you.

Some of you just want the phone answered and nothing else. A specialized tool is perfect for that.

Some of you want the whole shop running in one place. Then an all-in-one earns its keep.

So here's how we'll do it in this book. For each job, we start with a specialized tool, the simple, low-cost way to solve that one thing. Then we point out the all-in-one apps that also do it.

At the end, we'll lay the two side by side, so you can decide what fits your shop. No pressure either way.

Now let's get you more customers.

Chapter 1 — Never miss a call again

A missed call is a missed job. Simple as that.

You're up a ladder or under a house. Your phone's stuck in your pocket, your hands are busy. It rings, and you can't get it, and the customer moves on to the next name on the list.

You didn't lose that job on price. You lost it on a ringtone.

Here's the fix. AI can text the caller back the second you miss them, or even answer for you.

Missed-call text-back means an automatic text goes out to anyone whose call you don't pick up. Something like: "Sorry we missed you, this is Dave's Electric. What do you need?" Now the customer is talking to you instead of dialing the next name.

Some tools go further and answer the call themselves. They can book the job, give your hours, and take down the details, day or night.

Maybe you already have someone answering the phone, or you pay an answering service. Good. But that person clocks out at five, and they're gone all weekend.

Your customers aren't. A breaker trips on a Saturday night, the lights are out, and they start working down the list of names. Whoever picks up gets the job.

That's where AI earns its keep. It never clocks out and never takes a weekend. Nights, Sundays, holidays, it answers or texts back every time, with no extra payroll.

And once the phone is always covered, you can advertise it. Put "We answer 24/7" on your truck, your website, and your Google listing. That line wins jobs on its own, because the other guy's voicemail doesn't.

It's not just that AI answers, though. It answers well.

Think about the last time you called a company and got an answering service. The person on the line had no idea what the shop did, where it was, or how it could help you. They took your name and promised a callback.

An AI tool doesn't have to work that way. You set it up with your own details, your services, your service area, your hours, even your rough pricing. So it actually helps the caller instead of just taking a message.

So the phone gets answered around the clock, and answered well. The next question is which app does it for you.

Chapter 2 — Set up your AI answerer

In the last chapter we set the goal: your phone gets answered, day or night. Now let's pick a tool and set it up, start to finish.

Remember the two kinds of tools. We start with a specialized one, because all you need right now is the phone answered. (If you'd rather have one app do calls, quotes, scheduling, and billing, hang on. We cover those all-in-one apps near the end of the book.)

Our pick is [Smith.ai](#).

Here's why. Of the phone tools out there, it's the one with a real track record. Plenty of reviews from real businesses, and it's been around since 2015. It also has live people standing behind the AI, so a tricky call doesn't dead-end with a robot.

And the best part for you: you can start it for free.

What it costs

The free plan is \$0 a month. It covers 25 answered calls a month. After that, it's \$3 a call.

For a small shop, 25 answered calls a month may be all you need to start. So you can run this for nothing while you see if you like it.

They do ask for a card at signup. But they don't charge it unless you turn on "overages" yourself. Overages just means paying for calls past your 25. So the card sits there. It doesn't get billed on the free plan unless you say so.

If you grow and need more, the next plan up is \$150 a month. But start free.

And notice what you're paying for here. This tool just answers the phone. You're not buying scheduling or billing you didn't ask for. That's the point of starting specialized.

Keep your own number

This part is easier than you'd think. It's also easier than the all-in-one apps.

Smith.ai gives you a phone number of its own. That's the AI's line.

You don't hand that number out. You keep your business number on your truck and your cards, just like always.

Then you forward your calls to the AI's number. Call forwarding is a phone feature. It means: when I don't pick up, send the call somewhere else. Here, "somewhere else" is the AI.

So a customer dials your usual number. You don't answer. The call slides over to Smith.ai, and it picks up. The customer never knows.

You set up forwarding through your phone company. Most carriers have a simple setting or short code for "forward when I don't answer." Smith.ai has step-by-step guides for the common phone services, and their support will walk you through yours.

If you'd rather, Smith.ai can also take over your number for good. That's called porting. But plain forwarding is the simple path, and it keeps everything where it is.

This forwarding step is the fiddliest part. Take it slow, and lean on Smith.ai's support to walk you through it for your phone.

Step 1 – Sign up free

Open your web browser and go to this address. You can tap it or type it in:

smith.ai/pricing/ai-receptionist

Pick the Free plan and click Get Started. Fill in your basic info, set a password, and you're in. The whole setup runs about 15 minutes.

Step 2 – Tell it about your shop

In your dashboard, open the Business Info page. Add your business name, address, hours, and what you do. Then add your common questions and answers. These are your FAQs. Things like “Do you do panel upgrades?” or “What’s your service area?”

This step matters most. The more the AI knows about your shop, the better it answers. Feed it well and it sounds like you. Skip it and it sounds like a robot.

Step 3 – Tell it what to do with a call

You choose what happens on each call. The AI can:

- Answer questions and take a message.
- Ask a few questions to size up the job. (That’s called qualifying the lead.)
- Book the appointment, if you use a calendar it connects to.
- Or hand the call to a real person.

Set it up the way you’d want a good office helper to handle the phone.

Step 4 – Handle the emergencies

You can have Smith.ai send certain calls to a live human, any hour. That’s your safety net for a real emergency.

Two things to know here.

First, when the AI passes a call to a live person because you set it to, that call costs an extra \$3. So turn it on for what matters, like emergencies, not for every call.

Second, you can send emergencies straight to your own phone instead of Smith.ai’s team. If you do, use your personal cell, not your business number. Your business number is set to forward to the AI. So an emergency sent there would just loop back to the AI. Your personal cell isn’t forwarded, so the call rings through to you.

Step 5 – Test it before you go live

You can try it for free before a single real customer calls.

Smith.ai gives you free test calls. Call in, talk to your AI like a customer would, and hear how it does. They don’t bill these. Just mark them as tests afterward in your call history.

There’s also a practice area for running pretend calls. Use it. Tune the greeting and the answers until it sounds like your shop.

Step 6 – Go live and watch it work

Once you like how it sounds, turn on the call forwarding from the “Keep your own number” step. Now you’re live.

Every call gets recorded, written out, and summed up for you. Read a few of the first ones. Fix anything that sounds off.

Keep the bill from surprising you

A few notes so nothing sneaks up on you.

The free plan is 25 calls. Past that it's \$3 a call, and only if you turned on overages.

The live-person handoff adds \$3 to a call, and only when you set it to. Leave it off and you won't see it.

Junk and spam calls get filtered out. And if spam slips through, you can pull up to 10% of your calls off the bill.

They also offer a 30-day money-back guarantee if you're new and it turns out it's not for you.

The all-in-one option (for later)

Maybe someday you'll want one app that answers calls AND runs your schedule, quotes, and invoices. The all-in-one apps do that too. [Jobber](#) and [Housecall Pro](#) both answer the phone as one of their many features.

We line those up in the all-in-one chapter near the end. For now, if all you need is the phone covered, Smith.ai does it for as little as nothing.

So, does it fit you?

If you miss calls, this is about the easiest win in the book. It's free to start, it keeps your number, and it puts a real person behind the AI for the calls that matter.

The one bit of work is the call forwarding. Do that, and your phone stops going to voicemail for good.

Or don't. If the setup is more than you want to take on, a local pro can do it all for you. (Find a local AI pro for electrical shops at the Electrician AI Index, electricianaiindex.com.)

Either way, you stop losing jobs you never knew called.

Chapter 3 — Your \$20 helper

Most of this book points you at a tool for one job. This chapter is different. It's about one cheap helper that does a little bit of everything.

It's a general AI assistant. You've heard the names: [ChatGPT](#), [Claude](#), [Gemini](#). You type in plain English, and it writes back.

For a shop like yours, it's the handiest thing in the book. It writes the text to the customer. It turns your scribbled notes into a clean quote. It writes your Google profile. It drafts a reply to a review. It explains a repair in words a homeowner gets.

Think of it as a helper who's good with words and never sleeps. You still make the calls. It just does the typing you hate.

Which one to get

Good news: it barely matters. ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini all do this job well.

Pick one and go. If you live in Gmail and Google already, Gemini fits right in. If you want the name everybody knows, that's ChatGPT. Claude is a strong writer too.

All three have a free version, and that's plenty to start. The paid version runs about \$20 a month if you want more. Prices move, so check the site.

We'll use ChatGPT here, since it's the one most folks have heard of. The others work the same way.

Step 1 – Sign up free

Open your web browser and go to:

chatgpt.com

Make a free account. Then get the app on your phone from the App Store or Google Play, so it's with you on the job.

Step 2 – Learn the one skill that matters

Using it is simple. You type what you want, like you're texting a helper. That's called a prompt.

The trick is to be clear and give it the details. The more you tell it, the better it does.

Here's a weak prompt: "write a text to a customer."

Here's a strong one: "Write a short, friendly text to a customer named Mrs. Lopez. Tell her I'm running about 30 minutes late to her 2 o'clock, and that I'm sorry. Keep it under three sentences."

Same tool. Way better answer.

Step 3 – Put it to work

Here are real jobs you can hand it today. Copy these, swap in your own details, and go.

- "Turn these rough notes into a clean, plain quote description for a customer: replaced 100-amp panel, added two circuits, hauled away the old panel."
- "Write a short description of my electrical business for my Google profile. We do residential service, panel upgrades, and rewires in the Tampa area. Plain and friendly, no hype."
- "Write a polite reply to this 5-star review: [paste the review]."
- "A customer left a 2-star review saying we showed up late. Write a calm, professional reply that owns it and offers to make it right."
- "Explain in simple words, for a homeowner, why a flickering light might mean a loose connection, and why that's worth fixing."

Read what it gives you. Tweak it. Send it.

Step 4 – Make it sound like you

Out of the box, it can sound a little stiff. Fix that in one move.

Tell it how you talk. Try: "Rewrite that the way a friendly local electrician would say it. Short sentences. No fancy words."

Even better, paste in a text you've actually sent and say: "Match this style." Now it sounds like you, not a robot.

The one warning (read this)

It will make things up, and it'll do it with a straight face.

So never trust it on the stuff that matters: code, load calcs, wire sizes, permits, or prices. It can hand you a wrong number and sound sure of it. That's your license on the line, not the app's.

Use it for words, not for facts. Anything technical, you check yourself. There's a whole chapter later on where AI will burn you. For now, just remember: it writes, you verify.

The all-in-one note

Some all-in-one apps have their own built-in AI for writing quotes and replies. Handy, but it only writes inside that app.

A \$20 general helper is more flexible. It'll write anything you ask, anywhere. Most shops keep one around no matter what else they use.

If you want a hand getting started

This one's simple enough that most folks pick it up in an afternoon.

But if you'd rather have someone sit down and show you how to use it for your shop, a local pro can. (Find a local AI pro for electrical shops at the Electrician AI Index, electricianaiindex.com.)

Chapter 4 — Get found on Google

When someone needs an electrician, here's what they do. They pull out their phone and search “electrician near me,” or they ask Google Maps.

Up pops a short list of shops, right on the map, with star ratings, hours, and a call button. That listing is a Google Business Profile. It's free. And if you don't have one, you're not on that list at all.

So this is step one for getting found. Let's set yours up. Then, in the next chapter, we'll get you the reviews that make it work.

What Google does with your profile

Your profile is how Google shows you off. Fill it in, and Google puts you on the map and in search results, with your phone number, your hours, the areas you cover, your photos, and your reviews.

Google's AI uses it too. In 2026 Google added a feature called Ask Maps. People ask it plain questions, like “find an electrician who can come out tonight,” and it answers by pulling from business profiles and reviews.

Nobody knows Google's exact recipe for who gets named. But this part is clear: the more complete and well-reviewed your profile is, the more Google has to work with. In search, on the map, and in those AI answers.

One thing Google is upfront about: you can't pay for a better spot. It comes down to how relevant you are, how close you are, and how complete and trusted your profile looks. So a full profile and real reviews are your levers. Let's pull them.

Step 1 – Start your profile

You'll need a free Google account. If you use Gmail, you already have one.

Open your web browser and go to:

google.com/business

Search your business name. If Google already shows a listing for you, claim it. If not, add it as new.

Step 2 – Name it and pick your category

Use your real business name. Don't stuff in extra words like “best electrician Tampa.” Google can suspend a profile for that.

Then pick your category. Choose “Electrician.” That one word tells Google what you are.

Step 3 – Hide your address, set your service area

This part matters for a shop run from home or a truck.

If customers don't come to a storefront, you don't have to show your home address. Instead, you set your service area, the towns or zip codes you cover. Google built this in for trades like yours.

You can list up to 20 areas, as long as they're within about a two-hour drive. So set the places you actually work, and leave your home address hidden.

Step 4 – Verify it's really you

Google makes you prove the business is yours before it goes live.

These days that's often a short video. You show your van, your tools, and your signage, either on a live call or a recording. Google may instead offer a phone code, an email, or a postcard in the mail.

Heads up: this takes time. The review can run up to 5 business days, and a mailed postcard can take two weeks. It's a wait, but don't skip it. An unverified profile barely shows up.

Step 5 – Fill it out all the way

Now finish it, because Google shows complete profiles more than empty ones.

Add your services, like panel upgrades, rewires, and service calls. Add your hours. Write a short, plain description of what you do. And add real photos of your work, not stock pictures.

Skip the sales talk and keyword stuffing. Just accurate, complete info. That's what Google rewards.

Your profile is your foundation

That's it. A complete, verified Google profile is the best free thing you can do to get found. Everything else in the marketing chapters builds on top of it, starting with reviews in the next chapter.

If this is more than you want to take on

Setting up and verifying a Google profile is a fair bit of clicking, and the verification can drag. If you'd rather not deal with it, a local pro can set it up for you. (Find a local AI pro for electrical shops at the Electrician AI Index, electricianaiindex.com.)

Chapter 5 — Get more reviews

You're on the map now. Reviews are what tip a searcher toward you instead of the shop next to you. They also help you rank higher.

Here's the catch. Happy customers rarely think to leave one. You have to ask, and asking one by one is easy to forget.

So let a tool ask for you. After every job, it texts and emails the customer for a review, nudges once or twice, and stops the moment they leave one.

One rule before you start asking

Ask everyone the same way. Every customer, every job.

Don't ask only the happy ones. And don't route the unhappy ones to a private form to keep them off Google. That's called review gating, and Google bans it. Since 2024, the government can fine you for gaming reviews too.

No bribes, either. No discounts or gift cards for a review. Do good work and ask everybody.

That's the rule, and it's also what keeps your reviews real, which is the whole reason customers trust them.

The pick: NiceJob

For a shop your size, reach for [NiceJob](#). It runs \$75 a month, and it's built for trades like yours.

It's got the strongest track record of the review tools, with plenty of real businesses behind it. You get a 14-day free trial, no credit card, no contract.

Step 1 – Start the free trial

Go to:

[nicejob.com](#)

Start the free trial and make your account. Most shops are set up in under half an hour.

Step 2 – Connect your Google

You already built your Google profile, so connect it here.

In the app, go to Settings, then Review Sites, and click Connect next to Google. Log in and pick your business. Give it a few minutes.

Step 3 – Get your customers in

NiceJob can only ask people it knows about. So it needs each customer's name, and their phone or email.

If you use job software like [Jobber](#) or [Housecall Pro](#), connect it, and NiceJob asks on its own each time you close a job.

If you don't, you add customers yourself. Type one in when you finish a job, or upload a list from a spreadsheet.

Step 4 – Turn on the asking

NiceJob comes with the review campaign already on. It texts your customer, then sends a couple of email reminders over two weeks, and stops the second they review.

You can change the wording and timing to sound like you. The default works fine on day one.

Step 5 – Reply to your reviews

Replying shows you care, and Google likes to see it.

NiceJob writes a reply for you, in your voice. You read it, tweak it, and send. On the \$125 plan, it can reply on its own.

Step 6 – Test it on yourself

Add your own name and cell as a customer, and send yourself the invite. Now you see what your customer sees. Fix the wording until it sounds like you.

If you already run an all-in-one app

If you're on Jobber or Housecall Pro, they can ask for reviews too, built in. They already have your customers, so nothing extra to connect. We cover those apps in the all-in-one chapter near the end.

If this is more than you want to take on

Setting up review requests is a fair bit of clicking. If you'd rather not do it yourself, a local pro can set the whole thing up for you, the right way. (Find a local AI pro for electrical shops at the Electrician AI Index, electricianaiindex.com.)

The payoff

Get on the map, then let the reviews stack up. It's free work you already did, turned into proof for the next customer.

Do good work. Ask everyone, every time. And let Google and the tools do the rest.

Chapter 6 — Get a simple website up

You need a website. Here's why.

When someone's about to call an electrician, they look you up first. No website, and you look small, or worse, not real. A simple site tells them you're a real business.

Your Google profile wants one too. A website is one of the things Google shows, and it helps you get found.

Good news: it doesn't have to be fancy. Your name, what you do, where you work, your phone, and a few photos of real jobs. That's it. And AI can build the whole thing in about a minute.

The pick: Durable

For a shop your size, the builder to reach for is [Durable](https://durable.com). It's made for local trades, and it builds you a full site from a few questions, in about a minute.

It runs about \$25 a month, and you can start free to see it first. Of the builders we compared, it's the best-rated, with hundreds of real reviews behind it.

One thing sets it apart. It includes your web address and hosting for as long as you pay. A lot of builders dangle a free web address for the first year, then jump the price. Durable doesn't play that game.

Two catches. It won't write your legal pages for you (we'll handle that below). And down the road, you can't easily move the site to another company, so know that going in.

Step 1 – Build it free

Open your web browser and go to:

durable.com

Start free, no card. It asks a few questions: your trade, your business name, your city, and what you do. Answer them, and it builds your site in about a minute. It's something to watch.

Step 2 – Fix the important stuff

The AI's first draft is a starting point, not the finish. Go through and set the things that matter:

- Your business name and phone number.
- The towns or areas you serve.
- Your services, like panel upgrades, rewires, and service calls.
- A short "about" in your own words.
- Real photos of your work. Not stock photos. Yours.

Step 3 – Add a privacy policy and a terms page

Every real business site has two little legal pages: a Privacy Policy and a Terms page. They make you look legit, and some services ask for them.

Durable won't write these for you. No sweat. Use a free policy generator online. [Termly](#) and [TermsFeed](#) are two of them. You answer a few questions, they spit out the text, and you paste it into a new page on your site.

Ten minutes, and it's done.

Step 4 – Get your web address

Your web address is your domain, like yourshopname.com.

On a paid Durable plan, one is included, and Durable keeps it as long as you pay. Pick one close to your business name, so it's easy to say and easy to remember.

Step 5 – Hook it to your Google profile

Remember the Google Business Profile you set up earlier? Put your new web address in it.

Now the two work together. Google shows your site, and your site backs up your listing. That's the combo that gets you found.

Step 6 – Check it on your phone

Most customers will see your site on a phone, not a computer.

So pull it up on yours. Is your phone number easy to tap? Does it load fast? Does it look right? Fix anything that's off, and you're live.

If you already run an all-in-one app

Some all-in-one apps, like [Jobber](#), come with a website built in. Fine if you want one bill for everything. We cover those in the all-in-one chapter near the end.

But for just a website, a builder like Durable is simpler and cheaper, and it's built to do this one thing well.

If this is more than you want to take on

Building the site yourself is doable, and kind of satisfying once it clicks. But it's still an afternoon of fiddling.

If you'd rather hand it off, a local pro can build it for you, legal pages and all. (Find a local AI pro for electrical shops at the Electrician AI Index, electricianaiindex.com.)

The payoff

A clean, simple site does two jobs. It makes you look real to the customer checking you out, and it feeds your Google listing so more of them find you in the first place.

You don't need fancy. You need up.

Chapter 7 — Scheduling and quotes

This is the one chapter where I steer you the other way.

For most of this book, a cheap specialized tool beats a big all-in-one. For scheduling and quotes, it flips. Going the other way here saves you money and headaches.

What good scheduling really does

Think past just “picking a time.” A real scheduling setup for a shop like yours should:

- Let a customer book you online, day or night, with no phone tag.
- Cut no-shows with automatic reminders.
- Send the job to your phone with the address, the notes, and the customer’s history.
- Track whether the job is booked, on the way, or done.
- Fire off an “on my way” text so the customer’s ready when you pull up.

The booking link, and where it stops

You can find simple tools that let a customer pick a time online. [Calendly](#) and [Setmore](#) both do that, and both have free versions.

For grabbing a slot, they’re fine. If you’re a solo just trying to stop playing phone tag, a free [Calendly](#) link on your website and Google profile is a quick win.

But they stop at the calendar. They can’t send the job to your phone with the address and notes. They can’t track it. They can’t turn the visit into a quote, an invoice, and a payment.

That “out in the truck” work is the whole job for an electrician. And the tools that do it are the all-in-ones: [Jobber](#), [Housecall Pro](#), and [Workiz](#). The real scheduling AI lives in them, the same apps that answer your phone back in Chapter 2.

So: a free booking link for a solo who just needs slots filled. An all-in-one when you want scheduling that runs your whole day. We compare those apps at the end of the book.

Quotes: speed wins the job

Here’s a truth about quotes. The fast one wins.

Get a quote out the same day and you often land the job. Make them wait a week, and they’ve already called someone else. So the goal is quotes that go out fast and look sharp.

For most shops, that lives in your all-in-one too. [Jobber](#) and [Housecall Pro](#) build a quote from your templates and past jobs, send it by text, and even nudge the customer if they don’t answer.

If you want a simple standalone just for estimates and invoices, [Joist](#) is a longtime favorite with contractors, and it has a free version.

The one AI estimator worth a look

There’s one newer tool that does something different: [Contractor+](#). It runs \$29 a month, with a free tier to try.

Its “Estimatic AI” lets you snap a photo or upload a plan, and it drafts a line-by-line estimate with material prices. For a shop where writing estimates eats your evenings, that could be a real time-saver.

Two things to know. It’s newer, so it doesn’t have the long track record the other apps do. And you always check its numbers yourself, because a wrong estimate comes out of your pocket. Try it, don’t trust it blind.

The takeaway

Don’t stack up a separate scheduling app, a separate quoting app, and a separate everything. For these two jobs, most shops land on one all-in-one that does them together. We lay those out near the end.

The standalones worth trying on their own: a free [Calendly](#) link if you just need online booking, and [Contractor+](#) if estimates are the part slowing you down.

If this is more than you want to take on

Picking and setting up the right app for your shop is a real decision. If you'd rather have a hand, a local pro can help you choose and set it up. (Find a local AI pro for electrical shops at the Electrician AI Index, electricianaiindex.com.)

Chapter 8 — Keep the books straight

This one's dull, but skipping it costs you at tax time. So let's make it quick and clear.

What bookkeeping software does for you

Good bookkeeping software isn't just a checkbook. It should:

- Track every dollar in and out, straight from your bank.
- Send invoices and take card payments.
- Snap and file your receipts from a photo.
- Track the miles you put on the truck.
- Handle sales tax and spit out the reports your accountant needs.

Here's the part people miss. Even if your all-in-one app sends invoices, it is not your books. It doesn't handle your full finances, your sales tax, your 1099s, or your year-end. For that you want real bookkeeping software, and it feeds off your job app.

The picks

The standard is [QuickBooks Online](#). It starts around \$38 a month. Most accountants already use it, so if you've got one, this is the easy call. They can log right in.

It has AI built in now. It reads your receipts from a photo, sorts your transactions into the right buckets, and flags tax deductions. That's hours of shoebox math, gone.

Cheaper options, depending on you:

- [Wave](#) – free for the basics. Best if you're a true solo watching every dollar.
- [FreshBooks](#) – around \$23 a month, and the easiest for sending clean invoices. Well-liked by small operators.
- [Xero](#) – a solid middle choice if you're picking freely.

Any of them work. QuickBooks is just the one your accountant most likely speaks.

How to start (keep it simple)

You don't need to become an accountant. Here's the short path.

1. Pick one. [QuickBooks](#) if you have an accountant, [Wave](#) if you're solo and thrifty. Start a free trial or the free plan.
2. Connect your business bank account and card. The software pulls in your transactions on its own.
3. Let the AI sort them. It learns your buckets over time. You just check its work now and then.
4. Connect it to your job app. [Jobber](#) and [Housecall Pro](#) both sync to QuickBooks, so your invoices flow in without double entry.
5. Get an accountant for year-end. A good one saves you more than they cost, and clean books make their bill smaller.

Once you hire: payroll, taxes, and benefits

The day you put someone on the payroll, a new pile of rules lands on you.

You have to withhold and file payroll taxes, and not just federal. There's state, and in a lot of places a city or local tax too. You'll owe workers' comp insurance, which most states require the moment you have an employee. And if you want to keep good help, you'll think about benefits: health insurance, a retirement plan, paid sick days.

Your bookkeeping software won't do all that on its own. Payroll is its own service, either an add-on or a separate app. The good news is the right one handles the hard parts for you.

Here are the ones that fit a small shop. Each files your federal, state, and (on the right plan) local taxes, sets you up with pay-as-you-go workers' comp through a partner, and handles your W-2s and 1099s at year-end.

- [OnPay](#) – about \$49 a month plus \$6 per worker. The best all-around fit. One flat plan, and local taxes and year-end forms are included, not an upsell. It'll set up health insurance and a 401(k) too, if you want them.
- [QuickBooks Payroll](#) – best if you already keep your books in QuickBooks, since it's built right in. One catch: if your city has a local tax, you need the Premium plan for it to file that automatically.
- [Patriot Payroll](#) – the low-price full-service option, around \$37 a month plus \$5 per worker. Just pick "Full Service," not Basic, or you're back to filing taxes yourself.
- [Gusto](#) – a popular, friendly choice with strong benefits and a built-in 401(k).

Two flags, because these two trip people up.

Workers' comp rules are set by your state, not the feds, and they vary. Most states require it once you have even one employee. Check your state's rules, and don't skip it. Going without can bring real penalties.

And if you're in a state with local city taxes, like Pennsylvania, Ohio, or Kentucky, make sure the payroll tool actually files for your exact town before you sign up. Not every tool covers every locality, and this is the detail that bites trade shops.

This is also the point where a good accountant or payroll service earns their fee. Getting payroll and workers' comp wrong is expensive. Getting it set up right, once, is worth paying for.

A note on price

These tools love a teaser deal, like 90% off for three months, then the real price kicks in. Know the regular price before you sign up, so the jump doesn't catch you.

If this is more than you want to take on

The books are the one job most owners are glad to hand off. A bookkeeper or accountant can set this up and run it for you, and it's money well spent. For help wiring the software together, a local AI pro can pitch in too. (Find one at the Electrician AI Index, electricianaiindex.com.)

Chapter 9 — The all-in-one apps

By now you've seen a tool for each job. Answer the phone. Get reviews. Send quotes. Keep the books. That's the specialized way, and it's a fine way to start.

But maybe you're looking at four or five apps and thinking, isn't there just one that does most of this? There is. They're called all-in-one field-service apps.

This chapter helps you decide if one is right for you, and which. I won't walk you through the setup here like we did with the single tools. The point of this chapter is the choice.

What an all-in-one does

One app that runs the shop. It answers calls, books jobs, sends quotes, invoices customers, takes card payments, and asks for reviews. All in one place, one login, one bill.

The big win is that everything shares the same info. The customer who called is the same one who gets the quote, the invoice, and the review request. You're not typing the same name into five apps.

When it's worth it, and when it's not

An all-in-one earns its price when you're juggling several of these jobs at once. Or when you add a helper or a second truck and need to see everyone's day in one place.

Here's the flip side. If the only thing you really need is your phone answered while you're up a ladder, you don't need one of these. A specialized answering tool, back in Chapter 2, is cheaper and simpler.

Don't pay \$60 to \$300 a month for a whole platform to solve one problem. Buy the all-in-one when you're ready to run the whole shop from one app, not before.

The three to look at

Jobber – the best all-around.

Prices run from \$49 a month, as low as \$29 if you pay yearly, up to \$199 for the fuller plans. There's a 14-day free trial, no card.

It's the most polished of the three, with the biggest pile of good reviews and strong quotes. Its AI phone answerer, "Jobber Receptionist," is a \$29 add-on. Two things to know: reviews are an add-on, not built in, and to sync with QuickBooks you need the middle "Connect" plan, not the cheapest one.

Best for: a small shop that wants the cleanest tool and the best support.

Housecall Pro – reviews included from day one.

Starts at \$59 a month paid yearly, with bigger team plans above that. Also a 14-day free trial.

It's built for home-service field work, and it's the only one of the three that includes review requests in its starter plan. Its AI answering, "HCP Assist," costs extra. Heads up: to sync QuickBooks you need the \$149 plan, so it's pricier than Jobber for that.

Best for: a shop that wants reviews handled from the start and plans to grow into a team.

Workiz – built around the phone and dispatch.

Workiz grew up as a phone-and-scheduling tool, so its call handling and dispatch are its strength. Its AI answerer is called "Genius."

One catch: Workiz doesn't publish its prices. You have to request a quote, and the phone and AI features cost extra on top. For a one-truck shop, having to call a salesperson just to learn the price is a mark against it.

Best for: a busier shop with heavy call and dispatch volume, if you don't mind asking for a quote.

How to pick

- **Just starting, watching every dollar:** [Jobber](#) Core is the cheapest way in.
- **Want the most polished tool and the best help:** [Jobber](#).
- **Want reviews handled from day one:** [Housecall Pro](#).
- **Heavy phones and dispatch, and you'll sit through a sales call:** [Workiz](#).

Whatever you lean toward, use the free trial first. Run a few real jobs through it before you pay. And remember, you can start with the single tools and move up to an all-in-one later, once you've outgrown juggling them.

If this is more than you want to take on

Picking the right platform, and moving your business onto it, is a real project. If you'd rather have a hand, a local pro can help you choose one and get you set up. (Find a local AI pro for electrical shops at the Electrician AI Index, electricianaiindex.com.)

Chapter 10 — Where AI will burn you

Read this one twice. It's the chapter that keeps you out of trouble.

Everything in this book treats AI as a helper. It writes, it answers, it organizes. But it has a dangerous habit you have to understand: it makes things up, and it does it with total confidence.

The tech folks call this “hallucination.” In plain terms, AI will hand you a wrong answer that sounds exactly like a right one. No hint that it's guessing. No “I'm not sure.” Just a clean, confident, wrong answer.

For a lot of jobs, that's no big deal. A clunky sentence in a text, you catch and fix. But in your trade, a confident wrong answer can hurt somebody. So here's where you never trust it.

Never trust AI on the technical work

Not code. Not load calcs. Not wire or breaker sizing. Not clearances.

Ask AI what size wire a run needs, and it might give you a number, fast and sure. It might also be wrong, and it won't warn you. It doesn't know your job, your panel, or the code in your town.

That's your work. It comes from your training, your license, and the code book, not a chatbot. Use AI to write the customer a plain note about the job. Never to size the job.

Never trust it on permits and licensing

The rules for permits and licenses change by state, by county, sometimes by city. AI often works off older information, and it can hand you a rule that's out of date or just plain wrong.

When you need to know what's required, check with your local building department, your permit office, or your state board. Those are the people who actually decide. Not the app.

Never trust it on the numbers you send out

AI can draft a quote, and that's handy. But it can also plug in a price or a part that's wrong.

Read every number before it goes to a customer. A wrong quote is money out of your pocket, or a promise you can't keep.

Never let it speak for you unread

AI can write your texts, your emails, and your review replies. Good. But read them before they send.

It can get a name wrong, promise something you didn't mean, or just sound off. It's your name on it, so it's your job to check it.

Why this matters so much for you

Here's the part to sit with. When AI gets it wrong, you're the one holding the bag. Not the software.

It's your license. Your name on the truck. Your customer's house, and their safety. An app can't be sued or shut down. You can.

A while back, people used AI to crank out mushroom-foraging guidebooks, and some of them gave advice that could get a reader killed. Same tool, same confident wrong answers, just a different trade. Picture that in yours.

The one rule that keeps you safe

Here it is. The whole chapter in a line.

Use AI for words. Do the technical thinking yourself.

Let it write, draft, summarize, and organize. Then you check anything that touches code, safety, money, or the law. It writes, you verify. Every time.

Do that, and AI is one of the best helpers you'll ever have. Skip it, and it's a fast way to get burned.

Chapter 11 — Start small this week

You've got a whole book of tools now. Here's the most important thing I can tell you: don't try to do all of it.

If you try to set up ten tools this month, you'll finish none. The shops that win with this stuff pick one thing, get it working, and move to the next when they're ready.

So pick one. Here's the order I'd go in.

1. **Get on Google.** Set up your free Google Business Profile (Chapter 4). It costs nothing, and it's how customers find you. Start here.
2. **Stop missing calls.** Turn on an AI answerer or missed-call text-back (Chapter 2), so a missed call stops meaning a missed job.
3. **Stack up reviews.** Turn on automatic review requests (Chapter 5), so your Google profile fills with proof.
4. **Get a simple website** (Chapter 6), so you look real and Google has more to show.
5. **Then the back-office stuff** – quotes, scheduling, the books – as you grow into needing it.

Don't overthink the order. If the phone is the bleeding wound, start there. If nobody can find you, start with Google. You know where it hurts most.

Your one move this week

Pick one item off that list. Put an hour on the calendar. Do it.

Not five. One. Get it working, feel the win, and come back for the next one when you're ready.

The whole book, boiled down

Carry these with you:

AI is a helper, not your business. The tool doesn't make the electrician. You do.

Start with one specialized tool for one job. Add an all-in-one later if you outgrow juggling them.

And it writes, you verify. Always.

You don't have to do it alone

If any of this is more than you want to take on, that's fine. It doesn't make you behind the times. It makes you a busy electrician.

A local pro can set up any of these tools for you, the right way, so you can get back to the work you actually do. (Find a local AI pro for electrical shops at the Electrician AI Index, electricianaiindex.com.)

Now go get more customers.

A quick note

This book is general guidance to help you run and grow your business. It is not electrical, legal, or tax advice. Codes, licensing rules, and laws change and vary by place, so check anything technical or legal for your own situation, the way we talked about in Chapter 10.

Prices and tools change too. The numbers here were right when this was written. Check each tool's own site for today's pricing before you buy.

About the author

James Mills runs the Electrician AI Index (electricianaiindex.com) and The Agentic AI Index (theagenticai-index.com) – free directories of AI tools and the local pros who set them up for trade shops. He writes about AI for small businesses in plain English, with no hype.