

Four windows. One written standard.

How fast a 1 to 50 team should reply, by channel. A cover summary, then one page per window with the reason, the cost of missing it, and a blank for the standard your team decides to keep.

CHANNEL	REPLY WITHIN	WHY THIS WINDOW	OUR TEAM'S STANDARD
01 Inbound web form	5 minutes	The prospect is mid-decision and comparing you in the same browser session. The first reply often sets the frame for the whole deal.	
02 New sales email	1 business hour	A new sales email still has to earn the reply. An hour reads as attentive. A day reads as an afterthought, and the warm lead cools.	
03 Existing-client email	4 business hours	The relationship already carries trust, so the clock runs slower. Four business hours keeps the client from wondering, without turning every email into a fire drill.	
04 DM or WhatsApp	2 hours	A message on a chat channel feels personal and immediate. Two hours matches the medium: quick and human, without the pressure of always-on.	



[MAKE IT YOUR TEAM'S STANDARD]

Pick a window per channel and write it in the last column. Until it is written down, fast enough stays a moving target set by guilt. Once it is on the wall, the rule answers for you, and the next inbound that sits waiting has a line the whole team keeps, not one person's reflex. Business-hours windows, not 24/7 heroics.

Clients stay with the team that answers, not the team with the longest feature page.

01 • INBOUND WEB FORM

Reply within 5 minutes

[WHY THIS WINDOW]

The prospect is mid-decision and comparing you in the same browser session. They filled out your form and a few others, and they are reading answers as they arrive. The first useful reply often sets the frame for the whole deal, and after a few minutes the attention has moved on.

[THE COST OF MISSING IT]

Wait an hour on a fresh web lead and you are no longer first. You are following up on a conversation someone else already started, and the frame is already theirs.

[IN PRACTICE]

A form lands at 2:12. A reply by 2:17 reaches them while your tab is still open. By 3:00 they are on a call with whoever answered first.

[OUR TEAM'S STANDARD]

Write the window your team commits to for this channel, then post it where everyone can see it. A window on the wall is a standard the team keeps, not one person's reflex.

Clients stay with the team that answers, not the team with the longest feature page.

02 • NEW SALES EMAIL

Reply within 1 business hour

[WHY THIS WINDOW]

A new sales email still has to earn the reply. The sender does not know you yet, so speed is the first proof you are reliable. Inside a business hour reads as attentive and organized. A day later reads as an afterthought, whatever the reply actually says.

[THE COST OF MISSING IT]

A warm new lead cools fast. The longer the gap, the more the message reads as low priority, and the more likely the prospect has already moved the decision forward without you.

[IN PRACTICE]

A lead emails at 9:40. A reply before 10:40 keeps the thread warm. A reply tomorrow starts the whole thing from cold.

[OUR TEAM'S STANDARD]

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Reply within 4 business hours

[WHY THIS WINDOW]

An existing client already trusts you, so the clock runs slower than a cold lead. Four business hours is fast enough that nobody wonders whether they were heard, and slow enough that not every email turns into a fire drill. It protects the relationship and the operator at the same time.

[THE COST OF MISSING IT]

Miss it often enough and the trust you built starts to thin. Silence from a vendor they pay reads as being taken for granted, and quiet clients are the ones who leave without a complaint.

[IN PRACTICE]

A client emails Tuesday at 11:00. An answer by 15:00 keeps the day calm. Friday-for-Tuesday is how good accounts quietly drift.

[OUR TEAM'S STANDARD]

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04 • DM OR WHATSAPP

Reply within 2 hours

[WHY THIS WINDOW]

A message on a chat channel feels personal and immediate, closer to a text than an email. Two hours matches that expectation: quick and human, without committing the team to answering the second a phone buzzes. The channel promises fast, so the window keeps the promise on business terms.

[THE COST OF MISSING IT]

Leave a chat message sitting all day and it reads as ignored, because the medium itself signals fast. Instant-or-nothing is a trap, though. Two hours is the honest middle that a small team can actually keep.

[IN PRACTICE]

A WhatsApp at 4:30 answered by 6:30 still feels prompt. Answered next morning, the same reply reads as ignored.

[OUR TEAM'S STANDARD]

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Clients stay with the team that answers, not the team with the longest feature page.