Respond while interest is fresh

A practical inquiry-response checklist

1. Trace five recent inquiries

Choose five real inquiries across phone, email, website, and social. Record arrival time, first human response, owner, and next step. An automatic acknowledgment is not the same as a useful answer.

2. Give every inquiry an owner

Name a primary responder and a backup. Decide who checks each channel and how a handoff is confirmed. Keep one shared record so two people do not follow up blindly.

3. Set an honest response standard

Choose a response target your team can meet during staffed hours. Tell customers what to expect outside those hours. Do not promise immediate service when nobody is available.

4. Make the first reply useful

Acknowledge the specific need, ask one question that helps you understand it, and offer a clear next step. For example: "Thanks for reaching out about [need]. What are you hoping to accomplish, and when would you like it resolved?"

5. Measure and adjust

Track response times during staffed hours, inquiries with a named owner, and inquiries with a scheduled next step. Review exceptions weekly. Add automation only after the team agrees on the process.

FIRST CHANGE: _____

OWNER: _____ REVIEW DATE: _____

Coach your team to distinguish a fast acknowledgment from a helpful response.