

FREE COMPANION GUIDE

# Build an AI Voice Agent That Sounds Human

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The exact prompts and setup from the  
video, ready to copy and paste

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## START HERE

*What this is and how to use it*

This is the companion guide to the video where I build a voice agent for a massage studio. It answers the phone, books appointments into a real calendar, remembers people who have called before, moves an existing booking, and hands the call to a real person when it should.

Everything I typed in that video is in here, word for word, ready to copy and paste. You do not need to write any of it yourself.

### What's inside

- ✓ The calendar setup, step by step
- ✓ Prompt 1: The Build Prompt, the one that creates the whole agent
- ✓ Prompt 2: The Recognise Callers Prompt
- ✓ Prompt 3: The Reschedule Prompt
- ✓ The contact field values, so it remembers people between calls
- ✓ The tests I ran, so you can check yours actually works

#### TIP

You do not need to understand any of the technical parts. If something in here does not work the way it should, open Conductor inside Retell and describe the problem to it in plain English. It will fix it for you. That is what it is for.

## BEFORE YOU START

*Two free accounts*

You need two things, and both have free tiers you can start on:

**Retell AI:** this is where the voice agent lives. Sign up here: [rtll.ai/fabimarkl](https://rtll.ai/fabimarkl)

**cal.com:** this is the calendar the agent books into.

That is it. No coding, no database, no hosting, nothing to install on your computer.

## STEP 1

*Set up the calendar*

The agent needs somewhere to put the appointments it books. That is what cal.com is doing here.

### 1. Create one event type

In cal.com, create a new event type and call it Massage Appointment. Set the length to 60 minutes. You only need one, even though the spa offers five different treatments. The treatment type is something the agent talks about on the call, it is not a separate calendar entry.

### 2. Set your opening hours

Open the Availability tab on that event type and set it to Monday through Saturday, 9am to 7pm.

#### WATCH OUT

Do not skip the availability step. It is separate from whatever calendar you already connected to cal.com. If you leave it on the default setting, your agent will tell callers you are fully booked on days you are actually wide open. This one caught me out and took a while to spot.

### 3. Copy two pieces of information

You need these to connect the agent. The API key lives under Settings, then Developer, then API keys. The event type ID is sitting in the web address of the event type you just made, it is the number in the URL.

**Keep both of these somewhere handy.** Conductor will ask you for them while it is building, and you just paste them in when it does.

## STEP 2

### Prompt 1: The Build Prompt

In Retell, create a new agent. Choose voice agent, then conversational flow, then generate from prompt. Paste the whole thing below into the box and hit generate.

This prompt is longer than you might expect, and that is on purpose. Every line in here is something that goes wrong if you leave it out. You are welcome to start with something much simpler and let Conductor ask you the rest, but this version gets you to a working agent faster.

#### TRY THIS PROMPT

*"Build a receptionist for Serenity Massage and Spa.*

#### *BUSINESS*

*Open Monday to Saturday, 9am to 7pm, Europe/Berlin. Every appointment is exactly 60 minutes and there is only one appointment type. We offer Swedish, deep tissue, hot stone, prenatal, and sports massage. These are conversation only, not separate calendar types.*

#### *WHAT IT DOES*

*Books appointments through cal.com. Transfers the caller to a human for billing questions, complaints, cancellations, anyone asking for a person, or anyone in physical pain, distressed, or needing to be seen the same day.*

#### *BOOKING RULES*

*Put the caller's name and chosen treatment together on the booking name, like Jane Doe - Deep Tissue, so front desk staff can see the treatment.*

*Cal.com requires an email on every booking. Never ask the caller for one and never say the word email out loud. Always use booking@example.com, the same fixed address every time.*

*After a booking succeeds, warmly confirm the treatment and the day and time, mention arriving a few minutes early, then ask if there's anything their therapist should know before the session.*

#### *HOW IT SHOULD TALK*

*Ask one question per turn. Never stack two questions together.*

*Ask which treatment they want, wait for the answer, and only then ask the day and time in a separate turn. Never ask for both at once.*

*Once you have an available slot, confirming the time and asking for the name must happen in ONE single step of the flow, not two separate steps. If those are split apart the call freezes waiting for an answer the caller already gave. Accept whatever name they give straight away, don't repeat it back, don't re-confirm the time again.*

*While a tool is running, say a short fixed line so the caller isn't sitting in silence. Use exactly 'One moment, let me check the schedule.' while checking availability, and exactly 'Just a moment while I finalize that.' while booking. These waiting lines must be fixed static text, exactly as written, not lines the model writes fresh each time.*

*If the caller mentions pain or stress, acknowledge it in one short sentence and move quickly toward getting them booked.*

*If they ask you to repeat something, repeat it. If they say hold on, stay quiet.*

#### **GUARDRAILS**

*Never say booked, confirmed, scheduled, or all set unless the booking tool has actually run and returned success.*

*Never give medical advice about injuries. Suggest they mention it to their therapist.*

*Never quote or invent prices. The front desk confirms pricing.*

*Never invent availability.*

#### **TECHNICAL SETUP**

*Set the booking tool's timeout to 30 seconds. Cal.com regularly takes longer than the default to answer and the call dies in the middle of booking.*

#### **WHAT TO SAVE AFTER EVERY CALL**

*Create exactly these six fields: first\_name, last\_name, treatment\_preference, appointment\_date\_time, last\_booking\_uid, session\_notes.*

*Save the caller's first name, last name, the treatment they booked, the date and time of the appointment, the cal.com booking ID, and anything they mentioned that the therapist should know. Save the appointment date as a full calendar date and time in Europe/Berlin, never as wording like Friday at ten."*

Swap the business name, the hours, and the treatment list for your own. Everything else can stay exactly as it is.



#### **WHY THIS MATTERS (TIME & MONEY)**

A few of these lines look fussy but each one is fixing a real problem. The one about asking for the name in a single turn stops the call freezing halfway through. The one about never saying booked unless the tool succeeded stops it telling people their appointment is confirmed when nothing was actually saved.

Conductor will ask you a few questions before it starts building. One of them is which booking tool you use. Answer cal.com and paste in the API key and event type ID from step 1.

## **STEP 3**

*Let it remember people*

Retell has a contact database built in, so there is nothing to set up or pay for. But you do have to tell it where to file things, and this is the one part Conductor cannot do for you.

### 1. Check what the agent is already saving

Open your agent and look at the post-call fields. There should be one for each thing you asked it to remember in the build prompt: first name, last name, treatment, appointment date and time, booking ID, and session notes. If any are missing, add them here.

### 2. Create matching contact fields

Go to Data, then Contacts, then Manage contact fields. Create one field for each of the four below. The names have to match exactly, or they will not link up.

Set all four to Text, and set the update mode to Accumulate and summarize. Then paste the matching description into each one:

#### treatment\_preference

##### PASTE INTO THE DESCRIPTION BOX

Keep a short summary of treatment preferences, newest first, under 20 words. If this call produced nothing new, keep the existing value unchanged.

#### session\_notes

##### PASTE INTO THE DESCRIPTION BOX

Keep a short note of what the therapist should know, under 30 words. If this call produced nothing new, keep the existing value unchanged.

#### appointment\_date\_time

##### PASTE INTO THE DESCRIPTION BOX

Keep ONLY the most recent appointment date and time. Discard older ones. If this call produced nothing new, keep the existing value unchanged.

#### last\_booking\_uid

##### PASTE INTO THE DESCRIPTION BOX

Keep ONLY the most recent booking UID. If this call produced nothing new, keep the existing value unchanged.

##### WHY THIS MATTERS (TIME & MONEY)

That description box is not just a label. On these fields it is the actual instruction for how to combine what it just learned with what was already saved. That is why the appointment date one says keep only the most recent, otherwise you end up with a contact holding thirty old appointment times.

### 3. Map the name fields

Still on the contact fields page, map the built-in First Name to first\_name and Last Name to last\_name. Set both of these to Fill only if empty.

##### TIP

Accumulate and summarize matters more than it sounds. It means somebody who rings up and hangs up straight away will not wipe out everything you already knew about them.

**⚠ WATCH OUT**

One thing worth checking: open the appointment date field on the agent and read its description. It needs to force a real calendar date. If it looks vague, replace it with the text below, otherwise it saves things like Friday at 11am, which is useless a week later.

**📄 PASTE INTO THE DESCRIPTION BOX**

The appointment date and time booked or rescheduled during this call. Always write it as an absolute date and time in the format YYYY-MM-DD HH:MM, 24-hour, Europe/Berlin. For example 2026-08-24 10:00. Work out the real calendar date from the conversation, never write relative wording like Friday at 10am. If a booking was completed, always fill this in.

**STEP 4**

*Voice, model, and a phone number*

Three quick settings and then you can call it.

**Pick a voice:** scroll through the voice list, preview a few, choose one you like. The built-in ones work fine but the ones from providers like Cartesia sound noticeably more human.

**Pick a model:** choose whichever model works for you from the dropdown.

**Get a phone number:** go to Phone Numbers, buy one, and assign it to this agent. Then open the transfer step in the flow and put in the number you want calls handed off to, your own mobile is fine for testing.

**Outside the US or Canada?** Retell only sells US and Canada numbers. You can still connect a local number through a provider like Twilio, it just takes a few more steps. Ask Retell support and they will walk you through it.

**STEP 5**

*Test it properly*

Call your own agent and run these. Do not skip to the end, each one checks something different.

**1. Book an appointment**

Ask for a treatment and a time. Halfway through the list of treatments, talk over it and interrupt. It should stop mid-word and respond to what you said, not finish reading the list. Then check the appointment actually appears in cal.com, and check the contact record has saved your name and treatment.

**2. Ask for a time you do not have**

Try Sunday evening, or anything outside your opening hours. It should tell you honestly and offer you something else, not go quiet and not invent a slot.

**3. Ask for a human**

Say you have a question about a charge on your card. It should not try to book you in. It should hand you to the number you set in step 4, and that phone should actually ring.

**⚠ WATCH OUT**

Check cal.com after every booking test. If a voice agent says your appointment is confirmed, that is not proof it saved anything. Look at the calendar.

## STEP 6

### Prompt 2: The Recognise Callers Prompt

Your agent has been quietly saving details on every call. This prompt makes it actually use them. Paste this as a follow-up message to Conductor, in the same chat.

#### TRY THIS PROMPT

*“When a caller phones in and we already have their name saved, greet them by name in the opening line and mention the treatment they had last time, in one short sentence. Don't read their whole history back to them.*

*If we have nothing saved on them, greet them normally and never mention any history.*

*And when a caller we already know books an appointment, don't ask for their name again. Confirm the name we have on file instead.”*

Then call back from the same phone you used earlier. It should greet you by name and mention what you booked last time, without you telling it anything.

#### REAL EXAMPLE

Hi Jason, welcome back to Serenity Massage and Spa. I see you were in with us for a hot stone massage last time. How can I help you today?

## STEP 7

### Prompt 3: The Reschedule Prompt

Last one. This lets people move an appointment they already have.

#### WATCH OUT

There is a trap here. The obvious way to build this is to just book the new time. But then the caller has two appointments and the old slot is still sitting on your calendar blocking a booking nobody is coming to. The prompt below avoids that.

#### TRY THIS PROMPT

*“Add a reschedule flow.*

*When a caller wants to move an existing appointment, use the cal.com booking ID we already saved for them, and cal.com's reschedule endpoint, so the original booking is actually cancelled. Do not create a second booking, and do not build a cancel function.*

*The reschedule tool must POST to `https://api.cal.com/v2/bookings/{{last_booking_uid}}/reschedule` and send only the new start time in the body. Set its timeout to 30 seconds as well.*

*Because we already know who the caller is and what they booked, do not ask them for their name or ask them which appointment they mean. Just confirm the appointment we have on file for them and ask what they'd like to move it to.*

*Same conversation rules as before: one question per turn, never ask for an email, and say a short fixed line while the tool runs, use exactly 'Just a moment while I move that for you.'*

*When it's done, confirm the new day and time briefly. Do not tell the caller that staff will clear the old slot, because it has already been cancelled automatically."*

Test it by calling in and asking to move your appointment. It should already know which one you mean. Afterwards, check cal.com: the old slot should be gone, not just sitting there.

## IF SOMETHING DOES NOT WORK

*This is normal, and here is how you fix it*

Read this part before you start, because it will save you a lot of frustration later.

Conductor builds your agent fresh every time. Two people can paste the exact same prompt and end up with small differences in how it wired things together. That is just how these tools work. It does not mean you did anything wrong, and it does not mean the prompt is broken.

When I built this the first time, it took me a few hours and quite a lot of back and forth. The prompts in this guide already fix everything I ran into, so you are starting much further ahead than I did. But you may still hit something.

### WHY THIS MATTERS (TIME & MONEY)

Here is the thing nobody tells you: going back and forth with Conductor is not a sign something went wrong. That IS the process. You describe, it builds, you test, you tell it what was off, it fixes it. Three or four rounds is completely normal and still faster than building any of this by hand.

## How to fix anything

Do not go hunting through settings menus. Just go back to the Conductor chat and describe what happened on the call, in plain English, like you would to a colleague. Be specific about what you heard.

Say what happened, not what you think the technical cause is. Conductor is much better at finding the cause than you are, and you do not need to know how any of it works.

## Examples you can copy

### TRY THIS PROMPT

*"On the last call, after I gave my name, the agent just went silent and never booked anything. Find the step that is waiting and fix it so it moves straight to booking."*

### TRY THIS PROMPT

*"The agent told me my appointment was confirmed but nothing appeared in cal.com. Make sure it can only say booked or confirmed after the booking tool has actually succeeded."*

### TRY THIS PROMPT

*"It asked me for my email address on the call. It should never do that. Always use booking@example.com behind the scenes and never mention email to the caller."*

### TRY THIS PROMPT

*"The booking failed with a timeout error. Increase the booking tool's timeout to 30 seconds."*

### TRY THIS PROMPT

*"It read out some technical code to me while it was checking the calendar. Replace that waiting line with fixed static text that says exactly: One moment, let me check the schedule."*

#### TRY THIS PROMPT

*"When I called back as a returning customer, it asked for my name even though it already knew it. Use the name we have on file instead of asking again."*

## If Conductor gets stuck

Occasionally you will hit something Conductor keeps missing, usually because it is describing what it built rather than actually checking it. Two things that help:

**Ask it to check, not describe:** say something like: do not just tell me what it should do, actually look at the flow and confirm. That alone catches a lot.

**Bring in Claude:** you can export your agent from Retell as a file and hand that file to Claude, then describe the problem. Claude can read the whole thing at once and tell you exactly which step is wrong and what to change. This is genuinely how I fixed the trickiest parts of my own build.

#### TIP

Test after every single change, and test by making a real call. Never trust what the agent says happened. If it says your appointment is booked, go and look at the calendar. That one habit will catch almost everything.

## MAKING IT YOUR OWN

*Changing anything, without touching settings*

This is the part people miss. You do not have to hunt through menus to change how the agent behaves. You just tell Conductor what you want, in normal words, in the same chat.

Things you can change by just asking:

- Make appointments 90 minutes instead of 60
- Add a new treatment to the list
- Change the opening hours
- Make it warmer, or shorter, or more formal
- Have it mention a seasonal offer when somebody books
- Send yourself a text every time somebody books

#### TRY THIS PROMPT

*"Change appointments from 60 minutes to 90 minutes, and update anything in the flow that refers to the old length."*

#### TIP

If something breaks after a change, tell Conductor exactly what happened on the call. Something like: when I asked to reschedule, it asked me for my name even though it already knew it. It will find the step that is wrong and fix it.

## HONEST LIMITS

*Things worth knowing before you build*

**Email is required by cal.com:** there is no way to switch it off. That is why the prompt tells the agent to quietly use a fixed placeholder instead of making callers spell an address out over the phone.

**One appointment length:** sixty minutes for everything. The treatment types live in the conversation, not on the calendar. If you genuinely need different lengths, that is a bigger build.

**Cancellations go to a person:** booking and checking availability are built in. Cancelling is not, so in this build anyone wanting to cancel gets handed to a human.

## WANT THE FINISHED AGENT?

If you would rather not build it from scratch, the exact agent from the video is available to download. You import one file into your own Retell account and it is ready to go, already wired up with everything in this guide.

Download it here: [fabimarkl.com/library/#voice-agents](https://fabimarkl.com/library/#voice-agents)

And if you do not have a Retell account yet, you can start free here: [rtll.ai/fabimarkl](https://rtll.ai/fabimarkl)