

# Work Smarter, Not Harder

# How Small Companies Use TODD

**A** Seattle-based fireplace repair company had built its reputation the right way—through years of quality work, strong customer relationships, and glowing Yelp reviews. The owners took pride in their craft, and word-of-mouth referrals kept business steady.

But behind the scenes, running the company was exhausting. Every day, they handled everything—answering calls, scheduling jobs, writing estimates, chasing payments, and following up with customers. The actual repair work was only half the battle. The rest was administrative tasks that ate up hours and left them feeling stretched thin.

They weren't looking to grow. In fact, they had talked about retiring early because the daily workload was wearing them down. The idea of hiring more help seemed impossible—not because they couldn't afford it, but because they couldn't find skilled workers who met their standards. With no clear solution, they assumed this was just the reality of running a small service business.

To them, technology sounded like more work, not less. Automation felt like something built for big corporations, not for a mom-and-pop shop with a handful of employees. They didn't see how a web app, AI-powered scheduling, and automated invoicing could replace the time-consuming tasks that were holding them back.

But when they made one small shift—implementing a system that handled customer interactions, scheduling, and payments—their business changed overnight. They worked fewer hours, eliminated paperwork, and even took on more jobs without hiring a single extra worker.

This case study explores how a small service business discovered that automation isn't about growing for growth's sake—it's about making life easier.

## Client Background

This Seattle-based fireplace repair company had been serving the community for years, earning a solid reputation for reliable service and expert craftsmanship. Their work ranged from routine maintenance to complex fireplace repairs, and their attention to detail kept customers coming back.

Despite their success, the owners were overwhelmed. They managed everything themselves—answering phones, scheduling jobs, providing estimates, invoicing, and chasing payments. Their business had no front desk staff, no dedicated customer service team, and no automated systems to lighten the load.

Their website was nothing more than a digital business card. Customers could see their phone number and email, but there was no way to book a service, request a quote, or pay online. Every interaction required a phone call, which often led to missed opportunities when they were too busy working in the field to answer.

The biggest challenge? They didn't want to grow, but they also couldn't afford to stay the same. They had already discussed the possibility of retiring early, not because business was slow, but because the workload had become too much. Hiring help wasn't an option either—finding skilled workers who met their standards was nearly impossible.

They didn't think automation could help them. To them, technology meant more complexity, not less. They assumed that adopting new tools would add to their to-do list, requiring more effort to manage instead of solving their biggest pain points.

What they didn't realize was that technology wasn't about making their business bigger—it was about making their work easier.

# Challenges

The owners of this Seattle-based fireplace repair company faced several challenges that prevented them from expanding or improving their efficiency, even though their business was thriving in terms of reputation and referrals.

## 1. Limited Workforce & Hiring Struggles

The company's owners found it increasingly difficult to hire skilled workers. The demand for quality employees was high, but the available labor pool was not up to their standards. They couldn't afford to expand because they simply didn't have the right people to help with the work. The business was running at full capacity with the same small team, and there was no way to take on more customers without overloading themselves.

## 2. Time-Consuming Manual Work

The owners were responsible for every aspect of the business—calls, scheduling, estimates, invoicing, follow-ups, and customer service. They spent more time behind the desk than out in the field doing the work they loved. While they were skilled craftsmen, the administrative tasks weighed heavily on them, leaving little room for growth or rest.

## 3. Missed Opportunities Due to Lack of Automation

The company's website, which was essentially just an online business card, didn't allow customers to book appointments or request quotes online. Customers had to call or email, and the owners often missed those inquiries because they were out in the field working. The company lost potential business due to slow response times and the inability to schedule jobs efficiently.

## 4. Fear of Growth = More Work

Perhaps the biggest challenge was the owners' belief that growth meant more work. They were hesitant to expand because they thought hiring more people would only add more complexity. They didn't see how technology could streamline operations and reduce their workload. Instead of imagining automation as a way to handle administrative tasks and free up time, they saw it as another set of tools to learn and manage, adding to their stress rather than alleviating it.

These challenges left the owners stuck in a cycle where they couldn't grow the business without burning out, but they also couldn't stay at their current capacity without risking overwork and burnout.

## Approach

The fireplace repair company didn't need to hire more workers, overhaul their entire business model, or take on extra complexity to fix their biggest challenges. What they needed was a system that handled the repetitive, time-consuming tasks—so they could focus on the work that actually mattered.

TODD was implemented with one goal: to reduce the owners' workload, not add to it. The solution streamlined scheduling, customer management, and payments—all without requiring them to change how they did business.

### 1. Automated Scheduling & Customer Management

- Before: Customers had to call or email, wait for a response, and go back and forth to find an available appointment.
- With TODD: Customers could book directly through the website, choosing from real-time availability—no calls, no delays.
- Impact: Fewer missed opportunities and more time saved every day.

### 2. AI-Driven Quote Generation

- Before: The owners manually created every estimate, often delaying responses because they were busy on job sites.
- With TODD: Customers could enter details online and receive an instant estimate, eliminating unnecessary back-and-forth.
- Impact: Faster responses, fewer wasted calls, and more serious inquiries.

### 3. Seamless Invoicing & Payment Collection

- Before: The company had to send invoices manually and follow up on late payments.
- With TODD: Invoices were generated automatically after a job, with reminders for overdue payments.

- Impact: More consistent cash flow without the hassle of chasing down payments.

#### 4. Smart Follow-Ups & Review Requests

- Before: Follow-ups were inconsistent, and they rarely asked satisfied customers to leave Yelp reviews.
- With TODD: The system automatically sent follow-up messages and review requests, keeping engagement high.
- Impact: A steady stream of positive reviews, improving their online reputation without any extra effort.

#### 5. A Website That Works Like a Digital Employee

- Before: Their website was just a placeholder with a phone number and email.
- With TODD: The website became an interactive web app where customers could book, get quotes, and pay—reducing phone calls and manual work.
- Impact: The website transformed from an expense into a business tool that actively brought in new customers.

Results: A Business That Runs More Smoothly, Without More Work

TODD didn't change what the owners did—it took over the busywork, allowing them to focus on what they do best. Instead of feeling trapped by their workload, they finally had the flexibility to control it.

## Results and Impact

By integrating TODD into their daily operations, the fireplace repair company experienced immediate and measurable improvements. The goal was never to grow for the sake of growth—it was to make their workload more manageable while keeping the business running efficiently. TODD delivered exactly that.

### 1. More Jobs Without More Stress

- ✓ 30% more jobs completed without increasing hours worked.

- With automated scheduling, the owners could book jobs more efficiently, eliminating wasted time between appointments.
- Customers scheduled themselves, reducing the back-and-forth of phone calls and emails.

## 2. Faster Response Times, More Customers Served

✓ Response time dropped from 48 hours to instant with AI-driven quotes and booking.

- Before TODD, customers often had to wait for responses because the owners were busy on job sites.
- Now, customers could receive quotes and schedule jobs online, ensuring they didn't go elsewhere.

## 3. Increased Revenue Without Expanding the Team

✓ Revenue increased by 25% without hiring additional employees.

- More jobs got booked because the owners weren't spending time on admin work.
- Automated invoicing ensured that payments were collected promptly, improving cash flow.

## 4. Less Time Spent on Administrative Work

✓ 70% reduction in time spent on scheduling, invoicing, and follow-ups.

- The owners used to spend hours each week handling paperwork. Now, TODD took care of it.
- Freed from administrative tasks, they could either take on more jobs or enjoy more personal time.

## 5. Stronger Online Presence Without Extra Effort

✓ 20% increase in new customers from Yelp and Google searches.

- Automated review requests led to more positive ratings, boosting visibility.

- A functional website turned casual visitors into paying customers, without the owners lifting a finger.

## The Bottom Line

Before TODD, the owners felt trapped—stuck in a business that demanded more time than they had to give. They thought their only options were to stay small or work harder.

With TODD, they realized a third option: work smarter. They didn't have to hire more people, take on more stress, or work longer hours. They just had to let technology handle the tasks that were draining their time and energy.

## Lessons Learned

The fireplace repair company didn't adopt TODD because they wanted to grow—they did it because they needed a way to lighten their workload without sacrificing quality. Along the way, they discovered a few key lessons that changed how they viewed their business.

### 1. Automation Doesn't Mean More Work—It Means Less

- The biggest fear was that technology would add complexity. Instead, TODD eliminated the most time-consuming tasks.
- Instead of manually scheduling, chasing payments, and answering the same questions over and over, the system handled it all automatically.

### 2. A Website Can Be a Business Tool, Not Just a Digital Card

- Before, their website was an expense—something they had just to “look professional.”
- Once TODD transformed it into a booking, payment, and customer management system, it became a profit-generating tool.

### 3. Scaling Doesn't Have to Mean Hiring

- The owners assumed that more jobs = more employees.
- By automating admin tasks, they increased revenue by 25% without adding staff.

## 4. Customers Expect Convenience

- People are used to booking services online—if they can't do that, they move on to someone who offers it.
- TODD met modern customer expectations while reducing the company's workload.

## 5. The Right Technology Gives Business Owners Control Over Their Time

- Before TODD, the owners felt like they were constantly reacting—answering calls, chasing payments, handling admin.
- After TODD, they could focus on their craft instead of being buried in paperwork.

Their biggest realization? They weren't resisting technology—they were resisting change. Once they saw how automation could reduce their stress rather than add to it, they wished they had made the shift years earlier.

## Conclusion

This Seattle-based fireplace repair company never set out to grow—they just wanted to make their daily operations easier. They thought about retiring early, frustrated by the endless cycle of scheduling, invoicing, and administrative tasks that took up just as much time as the actual work.

They assumed automation was something for big companies, not small businesses like theirs. They believed that adding technology would create more work, not less. But TODD proved them wrong.

By automating scheduling, invoicing, and customer follow-ups, they were able to:

- Work fewer hours without losing income.
- Increase revenue by 25% without hiring anyone.
- Book 30% more jobs without lifting a phone.
- Reduce admin work by 70%, giving them back their time.



Technology didn't force them to change how they worked—it simply removed the tasks that were getting in their way. Instead of feeling trapped in a business that demanded more than they could give, they finally had control over their workload.

For the first time in years, they had options:

- Take on more jobs without more stress.
- Spend more time away from work without worrying about missed calls.
- Focus on what they do best—fixing fireplaces, not paperwork.

TODD didn't grow their business. It gave them back their time—and that was more valuable than anything else.