

Last Word

How I Stopped Letting Summer Break My Business

Best practice tips to prepare for the summer surge. Uncover 5 proven strategies to navigate the chaos and achieve success.

Alyssa Rogers

Every contractor knows the chaos of summer — ringing phones, booked-out schedules, long days in sweltering heat, and the scramble to keep up. Even though we plan for it all year, it somehow always hits like a freight train.

This is my eighth summer in the trades, and every one before this felt like it nearly broke us. No matter how much we prepped, it always seemed like the busiest month of the year brought more than just heat — it brought stress, burnout, and surprise resignations at the worst possible time.

But this summer? It's different. I'm calmer. I've enjoyed a weekend in the sun without the weight of the business pressing on my shoulders. I'm not just surviving summer — I'm leading through it. And it's not because the chaos has disappeared. It's because I finally learned how to prepare for it.

It took seven hard summers to figure it out, but we've found a rhythm that works. If you're still in the thick of it, overwhelmed and exhausted, I want to share the five things we started doing that changed everything for us. It's not a magic fix, but it is a formula — and it works.

Prep in the Off-Season Like It's Go-Time

The off-season isn't a break; it's your training camp. What you do between September and April determines

whether you collapse or thrive in May, June, July, and August.

Ask yourself:

- Have you built the structure to support an influx of installs and service calls?
- Do your people know what's expected of them when things get busy?
- Are you implementing new tools — CRMs, processes, SOPs, training programs — when you actually have time to roll them out right?

Fail to prepare, and you've already prepared to fail. The businesses that win in summer are the ones that did the hard work months ago.

Set Clear Goals — and Share Them Relentlessly

If your summer goal is simply "do better than last year" or "survive," that's exactly the vague outcome you'll get. Get specific.

- What are your targets?
- How many installs do you need?
- How many service calls?
- How many CSRs and techs do you need to support that?

Once you know those numbers, share them. Post them. Talk about them daily. Your team should know the goals — and their role in reaching them. Break it down to individual daily metrics so every person knows what success looks like for them. Clarity fuels performance.

Support Your Team When It's Hardest

This one sounds obvious, but it's easy to miss when you're in the trenches. Summer doubles the pressure on everyone. CSRs handle twice the calls. Techs run nonstop from job to job. Installers crawl into attics that feel like ovens.

They might know the process, but they still need you. They need your encouragement, your appreciation, and your presence.

Bring lunch. Write thank-you notes. Celebrate wins. Small gestures go a long way. Don't let a single team member feel unseen during your busiest time of year.

Trust the Team You Built

This one's tough, especially for owners who've built their business from the ground up. But if you want to win the summer, you have to trust your people.

Trust that they'll take care of the customer and follow the process you established and trained them on. Trust that if a mistake happens, it's an honest one — and they'll fix it.

Without trust, you'll micromanage your way into burnout. You'll question decisions, create bottlenecks, and suffocate growth. Trust isn't just a feel-good concept. It's a leadership discipline.

Don't Get Comfortable Just Because the Phone's Ringing

It's easy to feel like you're winning in Q3 when the phones won't stop ringing. But here's the danger: If you let your foot off the gas now, Q4 will catch you slipping.

Keep selling. Keep marketing. Keep recruiting. Think beyond today.

The worst possible year is one where you lose money in Q1, break even in Q2, crush it in Q3, and crash in Q4.

End the year strong. The companies that win are the ones that treat summer not as a finish line, but as a launchpad.

The Shift

The biggest shift in our business didn't come from a new software or a better sales script. It came from how we prepared, how we communicated, and how we showed up for our people.

We finally stopped treating summer like a surprise and started treating it like a test we could pass — with the right prep, the right leadership, and the right mindset.

You don't have to break every summer to figure this out. Learn from the ones who have — and build your business to withstand the heat.

Alyssa Rogers is vice president of Rogers Heating, Cooling, Electrical, with offices in Lynchburg and South Boston, Virginia.