

SETUP GUIDE

One number for calls *and* for texts.

Bring Your Own Carrier: a phone number **you own in Twilio**, answered by an AI agent in Retell, and texting from the same number on your approved A2P campaign. About an hour of configuration and no code — once you know which of the fields go where.

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EDITION

One — September 2026

SCOPE

Twilio Elastic SIP Trunking into Retell, US numbers

STATUS

Working reference — built on our own account and read back through both APIs

THE TWO-NUMBER PROBLEM

Every tutorial ends with two phone numbers.

Calls answered on the voice platform’s number, texts sent from a different one. To the customer, that reads as spam.

When you buy a number inside a voice platform, it lives in **the platform’s** Twilio account, not yours. It answers calls well. But your A2P campaign is registered on *your* Twilio account, and a number in somebody else’s account cannot join it. So the booking confirmation goes out from a second number — one the caller never dialled.

BYOC fixes that by reversing who owns the number. The number sits in your Twilio account. Calls reach the AI agent over a SIP trunk; texts go out on your approved campaign. One number, two pipes, and you own both ends.

What you get

BENEFIT	WHY IT MATTERS
One number	The number a customer calls is the number that texts them back. No “who is this?”
You own it	Change voice platforms later and the number stays put. For client work it lives in the <i>client’s</i> account, so it stays theirs
Your own A2P campaign	The texts ride the brand and campaign you already registered — no second registration through the platform
Cheaper telephony	The platform stops billing you for the phone line; Twilio does, at wholesale rates (page 10)

WHEN YOU DO NOT NEED THIS

A **voice-only** receptionist that never sends a text is fine on a platform number. BYOC earns its hour when the same line has to call *and* text, or when the number must outlive the platform.

THE WORDS NOBODY DEFINES

Seven terms, and the whole console reads normally.

Every field you will fill in uses these as though you already know them.

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS
SIP	The protocol that sets up and tears down internet phone calls. SIP is to calls what HTTP is to web pages — it carries <i>ring, answer, hang up</i> ; the audio travels separately
SIP trunk	A phone line delivered over the internet instead of copper. Here, the pipe that hands calls between Twilio and Retell
Origination	Inbound. Twilio receives a call on your number and hands it to your system
Termination	Outbound. Your system hands a call to Twilio, which completes it on the phone network
URI	An address that names something. SIP's spec calls its addresses URIs — <code>sip:sip.retellai.com</code> — so every console does. Treat it as "URL"; nothing you type changes
E.164	The international number format: plus sign, country code, digits, nothing else — <code>+16095550123</code>
Credential list	A username and password the trunk demands before it accepts an outbound call. The alternative is an IP allowlist

WHY ORIGINATION AND TERMINATION FEEL BACKWARDS

They are named from **the carrier's** point of view, not yours. A call *originates* on the phone network and reaches you; your call *terminates* on the phone network. Once you know whose side the words describe, they stop being confusing.

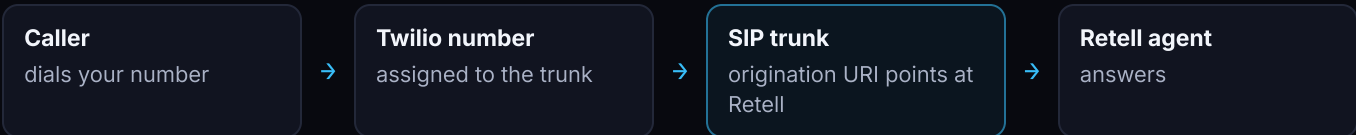
A receptionist that only answers calls strictly needs origination. Termination is what lets the agent call out — and, depending on the platform, transfer a caller.

ONE NUMBER, TWO PIPES

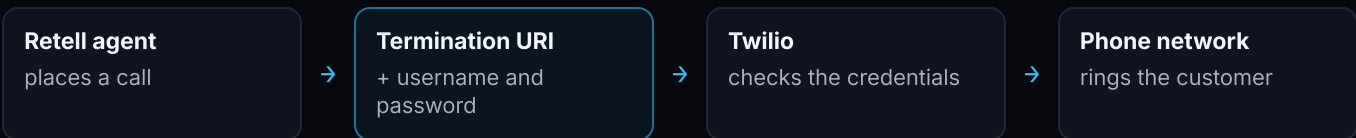
What connects to what, before you start clicking.

The number does two unrelated jobs, and each job has its own attachment. Neither knows the other exists.

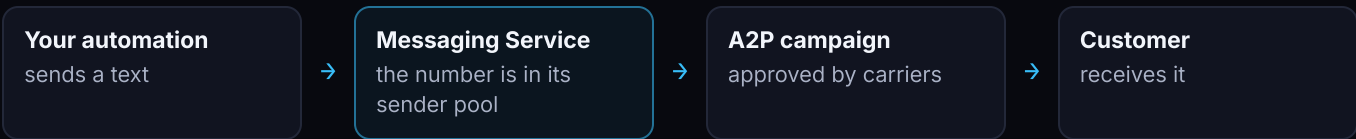
CALLS IN — ORIGINATION



CALLS OUT — TERMINATION



TEXTS — A SEPARATE PIPE ENTIRELY



So the number gets attached twice

ATTACHMENT	WHAT IT CONTROLS
SIP trunk	Voice. Where calls go, and how the agent calls out
Messaging Service	Texts. Whether carriers deliver them, under your approved campaign

Both attachments are Twilio. The split is not “Twilio versus Retell” — it is calls versus texts. This guide covers the voice side; the text side is the last step of A2P registration, covered in our Twilio A2P setup guide.

PREREQUISITES

Three things to have, and one menu to find.

None of these take long, but the last one costs everybody ten minutes the first time.

- ❑ **An upgraded Twilio account.** Off the trial, with funds. Trial accounts are too restricted to prove anything with a real caller
- ❑ **A Twilio number with Voice capability.** Check the Voice icon on the Active Numbers page. SIP trunking is a voice mechanism — a text-only number cannot be trunked. If you already own one, use it; there is no need to buy another
- ❑ **A Retell account** with an agent to answer. The agent can come later — the connection can be built and verified without one

Where Elastic SIP Trunking actually lives

It is **not in the sidebar** of a new Twilio account. Open *Explore products*, find **Elastic SIP Trunking** under voice, and pin it. The same is true of other products you will need eventually — **Trust Hub**, where A2P identity lives, is reachable in practice only through the console's search.

A NUMBER BOUGHT INSIDE RETELL CANNOT BE USED

It lives in Retell's Twilio account, not yours, so it can never be attached to your trunk or to your campaign. BYOC always starts from a number **in your own Twilio account** — either one you buy there, or one you port in.

The order this guide follows

#	STEP	WHERE
1	Create the trunk and its termination side	Twilio
2	Add origination and assign the number	Twilio
3	Import the number	Retell
4	Read it back, then test	Both

TWILIO • THE OUTBOUND HALF

Create the trunk, then its termination side.

Two of the four values Retell asks for are created here. Nothing exists until you make it — there is no pre-existing URI to go looking for.

- 1 **Elastic SIP Trunking → Create a SIP Trunk.** Give it a friendly name, such as `retell-yourbrand`. The trunk opens with a tab list: General, Termination, Origination, Numbers
- 2 **Termination tab → Termination SIP URI.** Type a subdomain you choose — your brand name — and the console shows *Available* if nobody has it. You get `yourbrand.pstn.twilio.com`
- 3 **Open *Show Localized URIs* and pick the nearest edge.** This is the version you will give Retell
- 4 **Authentication → Credential Lists → +.** Name the list, then create a username and a password. **The password needs 12+ characters** with upper case, lower case and a digit. **The trunk will not save without an authentication scheme**

EDGE	LOCALIZED URI
North America • Virginia	<code>yourbrand.pstn.ashburn.twilio.com</code>
North America • Oregon	<code>yourbrand.pstn.umatilla.twilio.com</code>
Europe	<code>...dublin</code> • <code>...frankfurt</code>
Elsewhere	<code>...sao-paulo</code> • <code>singapore</code> • <code>tokyo</code> • <code>sydney</code>

For a US build, Ashburn matches Twilio's default US1 region. The bare `.pstn.twilio.com` address also works and routes to US1 anyway — the localized one is a latency choice. A far-away edge is a commonly reported cause of choppy outbound.

WHY THE PASSWORD IS MANDATORY: TOLL FRAUD

Your termination URI is reachable from the open internet. Without authentication, **anyone who finds it can place calls billed to your account** — the classic way a SIP account runs up thousands overnight. That is why Twilio refuses to save a trunk with neither a credential list nor an IP allowlist.

TWILIO • THE INBOUND HALF

Tell Twilio where calls go, then hand it the number.

This half is configured only in Twilio. Retell never asks for it, because it is Twilio's job to know where to send an incoming call.

Origination tab → Add new Origination URI

FIELD	VALUE
Origination SIP URI	sip:sip.retellai.com · Retell's documentation
Priority	10 — leave the default
Weight	10 — leave the default
Enabled	On

Priority is the order Twilio tries destinations in — lower goes first. **Weight** splits traffic between destinations that share a priority. Both only matter when you have a second destination for failover. With one, they do nothing.

SKIP THIS AND INBOUND FAILS SILENTLY

A trunk with termination and a number but **no origination URI** looks finished in the console. An incoming call reaches Twilio and has nowhere to go. It is the step easiest to forget, because nothing else in the flow asks for it.

Numbers tab → Add a number → existing number

Choose **add an existing number**, not *Buy a number*, and select yours. The Active Numbers page then shows *Voice: SIP Trunk* beside it.

THE OLD VOICE WEBHOOK IS STILL THERE. THAT IS FINE

If the number used to point at a webhook — Twilio's demo recording, for example — the number's settings may still show that URL. **Once it is on a trunk, the trunk wins and the webhook is never consulted.** You do not need to clear it, and "fixing" it changes nothing.

RETELL • THE IMPORT

Four fields, and every one of them comes from Twilio.

Phone Numbers → + → *Connect to your number via SIP trunking.*

RETELL FIELD	WHERE THE VALUE COMES FROM
Phone Number	Your Twilio number in E.164 — +16095550123. Keep the dropdown on Format to E.164
Termination URI	The localized termination URI from step 1 — <code>yourbrand.pstn.ashburn.twilio.com</code> . Not Retell's own SIP address
SIP Trunk User Name	The username inside the credential list
SIP Trunk Password	That credential's password
Nickname	Optional — anything that tells you which number this is
Outbound Transport	TCP — leave the default

Three traps, each one documented

TRAP	WHAT HAPPENS
Username vs list name	A list called <code>retell-trunk</code> holding a user <code>agent-sip</code> wants <code>agent-sip</code> . Retell's own docs warn about this, because people paste the list's name
A trailing space	A space pasted after the termination URI makes outbound fail. Nothing flags it
TLS without secure trunking	TLS only works when the trunk's Secure Trunking setting is on, and it is off by default. The mismatch fails in a way that looks like bad credentials, which sends you debugging the wrong thing

Once saved, bind an agent to the number for inbound calls. **Until an agent is bound, a call reaches Retell with nothing to answer it** — the connection is correct but the line is dead. That is expected if the agent is still being built.

READ IT BACK

Do not trust the Save button. Read both sides back.

A console that accepted your input has not proved the input is right. Check each value where it landed, then make a call.

The checklist

WHERE	WHAT SHOULD BE TRUE
Twilio · Termination	URI set, credential list attached, secure trunking off (if you chose TCP)
Twilio · Origination	sip:sip.retellai.com, enabled
Twilio · Numbers	Your number listed; Active Numbers shows <i>Voice: SIP Trunk</i>
Retell · Number	Termination URI, transport and username identical to Twilio's
Retell · Agent	An agent bound for inbound

What no screen can prove

- **The password.** Retell never shows it back, so only a real outbound call tests it
- **That calls actually arrive.** Only calling the number from a phone proves inbound

When a test fails

SYMPTOM	MOST LIKELY CAUSE
Inbound: rings then fails, or silence	No origination URI, or no agent bound in Retell
Inbound works, outbound fails	Username is the list name; trailing space in the URI; wrong password
Outbound fails with TLS selected	Secure trunking is off on the trunk — switch to TCP
Outbound connects but is choppy	A distant localized edge — use the nearest

Prove inbound first. It is the half a receptionist depends on, and outbound SIP is the flakier of the two in community reports — do not get drawn into debugging outbound before calls are reliably arriving.

TEXTS, COST AND CONSOLE NOISE

Finishing the other pipe, and what to ignore.

Voice is done. These are the loose ends people ask about next.

Attach the number for texts

Add the number to the **Messaging Service linked to your approved campaign**. Its status reads *Pending Registration* at first: the link being pushed to the carriers. It needs no action and usually settles within 24 hours — ours took about two. It is not the weeks-long review, which was the campaign itself. It affects texts only, so the voice setup does not wait for it.

What it costs

ITEM	PLATFORM NUMBER	BYOC VIA TWILIO
Phone number	\$2.00 / month	\$1.15 / month
Telephony	~\$0.015 / min, on the platform bill	\$0.0034 / min inbound · ~\$0.01 / min outbound, on the Twilio bill

US figures, September 2026: Twilio from its pricing page, Retell's from its published rates. The AI minutes themselves — speech, model and voice — are billed by the platform either way, and they are almost all of a real bill.

Two console warnings you can ignore

BANNER	WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANS
"A2P 10DLC registration required"	Static text shown on every US local number, whatever its state. If your number reads <i>Registered</i> in the Messaging Service, it is wrong about you
"Add an emergency address, or \$75 per emergency call"	Real, but registering costs \$0.75 per number per month to cover a 911 call an inbound AI receptionist never makes. Worth it only if the line can place calls a human could redirect to emergency services

FOR CLIENT WORK

Build all of this **in the client's own Twilio and Retell accounts**, as an invited user rather than with their password. The number, the trunk and the campaign then belong to them — which is the whole point of bringing your own carrier.