

FREE GUIDE FOR LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS

The Local Business *Marketing* Playbook

Where to spend your marketing dollars to get found, get calls, and beat bigger competitors.

Get found

Google Maps & your
Business Profile

Get calls

A website that turns visits
into leads

Stop leaks

Google & Facebook ads
that pay

Know your numbers

A simple 1-page scorecard

Most local businesses don't have a lead problem. They have a leak problem.

Money goes in. Some calls come out. Nobody is quite sure which part is working. This playbook helps you find the leaks and fix the cheap ones first.

How to use this guide

- Grab a pen. Every section has a checklist.
- Check off what you already do well.
- Circle the 3 boxes you **can't** check. Those are your next 30 days.
- Don't try to fix everything at once. Order matters.

Who it's for

Owners who sell to people nearby: contractors, realtors, lenders, insurance agents, med spas, restaurants, dentists, auto shops, and more. If customers search for you on their phone, this is for you.

What's inside

#	Section	What you'll walk away with
1	The 4 Assets	A 2-minute self-score of where you stand today
2	Win the Google Maps 3-Pack	The exact Business Profile steps to show up on the map
3	A Website That Converts	The 6 things every local site needs to turn visits into calls
4	Google Ads: Stop the Leaks	A 10-minute leak check you can run today
5	Facebook & Instagram Ads	What actually moves results (hint: it's the offer)
6	Small Budget? Spend Here First	A priority ladder from \$0 to \$3k+ a month
7	Speed-to-Lead	A follow-up plan so good leads don't go cold
8	Track What Matters	A 1-page scorecard for cost per lead and cost per job

The big idea: customers judge you in seconds, on their phone, before they ever call. Your Google profile, your reviews, your website, and your ads all have to say the same thing: **"These people are good, and they're easy to reach."**

The 4 Assets That Decide If a Customer Picks You

Before anyone calls, they check these four things. Score yourself honestly.

ASSET 1

Google Business Profile

Your listing on Google Maps. Often the first thing people see.

ASSET 2

Website

Where people decide if you're legit and easy to reach.

ASSET 3

Reviews

Proof from real people. How many, how recent, how you reply.

ASSET 4

Ads

Paid reach. Fast, but only pays when the first 3 are solid.

Self-score: give yourself 1 point for every "yes"

Yes?

Profile: I've claimed and verified my Google Business Profile

☐

Profile: My hours, phone, services, and photos are complete and current

☐

Profile: I show up on the map when I search my main service + my city

☐

Website: It loads fast on a phone and the phone number is one tap to call

☐

Website: A stranger can tell what I do, where, and how to reach me in 5 seconds

☐

Website: I know how many calls and form fills it got last month

☐

Reviews: I got at least one new Google review in the last 30 days

☐

Reviews: I reply to every review, good and bad

☐

Ads: I know what I pay for each lead, not just each click

☐

Ads: Someone looked at my ad account (search terms, settings) in the last 30 days

☐

0-4: Leaky. Fix your profile and website before you spend more on ads.

5-7: Solid base. Now focus on reviews and tighten your ads.

8-10: Ready to grow. You can scale ads with confidence.

Order matters. Ads send people to your profile and website. If those are weak, ads just pay to show more people a weak first impression. Fix in this order: **Profile → Website → Reviews → Ads.**

Win the Google Maps 3-Pack

The "3-pack" is the map with three businesses that shows up when someone searches "near me." Here's how to earn a spot.

How Google decides: Google says local results are based mainly on **relevance** (do you match the search?), **distance** (how close are you?), and **prominence** (how well known and trusted are you?). You can't move your building. You *can* control relevance and prominence.

1 Pick the right primary category

This is the single biggest relevance signal. Choose the one that matches your main money-maker ("Roofing contractor," not "Contractor"). Search your top competitors and see what they use.

2 Add every fitting secondary category

Only add ones you truly do. Each one helps you show for more searches.

3 List all your services

Add each service with a short, plain description. Use the words customers type, like "water heater repair," not your internal jargon.

4 Upload real photos, often

Your team, your work, your storefront, your vehicles. Real beats stock. Add new ones every month so the profile looks alive.

5 Post weekly

Share an offer, a recent job, a tip, or an event. Posts show customers you're active and give them a reason to click.

6 Answer the common questions

Think of the 5 questions you hear on every call (price range, area served, hours, insurance, how fast). Make sure your profile and website answer them clearly.

7 Fill in every field

Hours (including holidays), service area, booking link, attributes, opening date, business description. Blank fields are free points left on the table.

8 Use the right website link

Link your profile to the page that best matches your main service and city. That page should repeat your name, address, and phone exactly as your profile shows them.

Your Business Profile checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Profile claimed and verified | ☐ Primary category matches my main service |
| ☐ All fitting secondary categories added | ☐ Every service listed with a description |
| ☐ New photos added this month | ☐ A post published this week |
| ☐ Hours, holiday hours, and service area set | ☐ Website link goes to the best-matching page |

Reviews, Consistency & Local Pages

These build "prominence," the trust part of Google's formula. They're also what customers read before they call.

Review velocity

A steady flow of new reviews beats a big burst once a year. Recent reviews tell customers (and Google) you're still busy and still good.

- Ask every happy customer, right after the job
- Send a direct review link by text
- Make asking part of your process, not a memory test

Reply to every review

Future customers read your replies. Thank people by name and mention the service.

- Good review: thank them, mention the job
- Bad review: stay calm, own it, take it offline
- Never argue in public. Ever.

Keep it honest

Google bans fake reviews and paying for reviews. Getting caught can hurt your profile.

- No fake or bought reviews
- No "review for a discount" deals
- Just ask real customers, every time

NAP consistency

NAP = **N**ame, **A**ddress, **P**hone. It should match *exactly* everywhere: Google, your website, Yelp, Facebook, Apple Maps, Bing, industry sites, and your chamber listing.

- ☐ Search your business name and check the top listings
- ☐ Fix old phone numbers and old addresses
- ☐ Pick one spelling ("St." or "Street") and stick to it

Local & service pages

One page that lists "everything we do, everywhere" won't rank for much. Give each main service its own page. If you serve several towns, build real pages for your key areas.

- ☐ One page per main service
- ☐ Pages for key cities you serve, with real local detail
- ☐ No copy-paste pages with only the city name swapped

Quick test you can do tonight

On your phone, search "[your service] near me" and "[your service] [your city]." Are you in the map? Who is? Open their profiles and count their reviews, photos, and posts. That's the bar you need to beat.

A Website That Converts

Your website's job isn't to look pretty. It's to make the phone ring. Pull it up on your phone and check these six things.

1 • SPEED

Fast on a phone

Slow sites lose people before they see anything. Shrink big images, cut extra plugins and pop-ups, and test with Google's free PageSpeed Insights tool.

2 • CLICK-TO-CALL

One tap to call

Your phone number should be at the top of every page and tappable on mobile. A sticky "Call Now" button at the bottom of the screen helps too.

3 • ONE CLEAR OFFER

Above the fold

The first screen should say what you do, where you do it, and what to do next. Example: *"Roof repair in Modesto. Free inspection this week. Call now."*

4 • TRUST SIGNALS

Prove you're real

Real reviews, real photos of your team, licenses, years in business, guarantees, and local ties. Show these near your call buttons, not buried at the bottom.

5 • FORMS

Short and simple

Ask only what you need to call them back: name, phone, what they need. Every extra field gives people a reason to quit.

6 • TRACKING

Know what works

Set up Google Analytics, track calls and form fills as conversions, and use call tracking numbers so you know which channel sent each lead.

The 5-second phone test

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I can tell what they do right away | ☐ I can see what area they serve |
| ☐ I can call with one tap | ☐ I see a reason to act now |
| ☐ I see proof (reviews, photos, credentials) | ☐ Nothing covers the screen when it loads |

Common website leaks to fix first

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone number is a picture, so it can't be tapped • Home page tries to sell five things at once • No reviews or photos anywhere near the top | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact form emails an inbox nobody checks • Ads send people to the home page • Old hours, old phone, or old address |
|---|--|

Google Ads: Stop the Leaks

Google Ads can be the fastest way to get calls. It can also burn money quietly. Most waste comes from a few common settings.

1 Read your search terms

This report shows what people *actually* typed before clicking. You'll likely find junk: jobs, DIY, free, wrong services, wrong cities.

2 Add negative keywords

Block the junk so you stop paying for it. Check weekly at first, then monthly.

3 Use tighter match types

On a small budget, phrase and exact match keep you closer to real buyers. Broad match can work, but only with solid conversion tracking and close watching.

4 Fix your location setting

Choose "**Presence: people in or regularly in your locations.**" The other option also shows ads to people who are only *interested* in your area, who may live far away.

5 Track calls and real leads

Count calls, forms, and bookings as conversions. Not page views. If Google can't see real leads, it can't find more of them.

6 Match ads to hours and pages

Run ads when someone can answer the phone. Send each ad to a page about *that* service, not your home page.

The 10-Minute Leak Check

Log in and check each box

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Search terms reviewed in the last 30 days | ☐ Negative keyword list exists and is growing |
| ☐ Location set to "Presence," not "Presence or interest" | ☐ Search Partners and Display turned off in Search campaigns (unless tested) |
| ☐ Conversions = calls, forms, bookings (no page views) | ☐ Call tracking is on (calls from ads and the website) |
| ☐ Ad schedule matches when you answer the phone | ☐ Each ad group points to a matching service page |
| ☐ Auto-applied recommendations reviewed or turned off | ☐ You know your cost per lead, not just cost per click |

Careful with "recommendations." Google's suggestions can raise your spend or loosen targeting. Read each one before you click Apply.

Cheap clicks aren't the goal. A \$3 click that never calls costs more than a \$15 click that books a job. Judge ads by cost per lead and cost per job.

Facebook & Instagram Ads

05

Google catches people already searching. Facebook and Instagram interrupt people who aren't. So the rules are different.

What matters most, in order

#1

The offer

Why should someone stop scrolling and act *now*? A free inspection, a seasonal special, a clear price, a limited spot. A weak offer can't be saved by a great ad.

#2

The creative

Real photos and short phone videos of you, your team, and your work often beat polished stock. Lead with a hook in the first line or first 3 seconds.

#3

The audience

Start broad within your service area and let the system learn. Tight interest targeting matters less than it used to. Your offer does the filtering.

Lead form or landing page?

Instant lead forms (inside Facebook) are easy to fill out, so you get more leads, but often lower quality.

Landing pages take more effort, so fewer people finish, but they're often more serious.

Tip: using lead forms? Choose the "higher intent" option and add one qualifying question.

Retargeting

Most people won't buy the first time they see you. Show ads to people who:

- Visited your website (needs the Meta Pixel)
- Watched your videos
- Opened your lead form but didn't finish

Keep it cheap and use reviews or a reminder of your offer.

Speed-to-lead matters most here. Social leads weren't searching for you. They forget fast. Call or text within minutes, not tomorrow.

Test creative, not tiny settings. Run 3–5 different ads. Keep the winners, cut the losers, add new ones every few weeks so ads don't go stale.

Realtors, lenders, insurance & financial pros: Meta may require a "Special Ad Category" for housing, credit, or financial ads. That limits targeting options, so plan for it.

Where to Spend First

Every business is different, but the order rarely changes: fix the free stuff, then buy traffic, then scale what works.

\$0

Your time only

- Claim, verify, and fully complete your Google Business Profile
- Start a review-ask habit and reply to every review
- Fix your name, address, and phone everywhere
- Make your phone number tappable on your website

Under \$1k

per month

- Fix your website basics first: speed, clear offer, click-to-call, tracking
- Call tracking so you know where leads come from
- One tightly focused Google Search campaign on your top service, in your core area
- Skip spreading thin across five platforms. Pick one and do it well.

\$1k–\$3k

per month

- Grow Google Search to your next 1–2 services
- Build service and city pages to support Maps and ads
- Add Facebook/Instagram retargeting to stay in front of past visitors
- Set up a speed-to-lead system (instant text-back, follow-up steps)

\$3k+

per month

- Add Facebook/Instagram prospecting with a strong offer
- Ongoing SEO and local content to lower cost per lead over time
- Test new channels one at a time (Local Services Ads, YouTube, etc.)
- Judge everything by cost per booked job, not clicks or likes

Honest truth: more budget won't fix a weak offer, a slow website, or a phone nobody answers. Fix those first, and every ad dollar works harder.

These ranges are a starting point, not a rule. Your market, your competition, and the value of a new customer change the math. That's what a strategy session is for.

Speed-to-Lead: Don't Let Good Leads Die

Lots of leads aren't lost to competitors. They're lost to voicemail, slow replies, and "I'll call them tomorrow."

Why speed wins

When someone fills out a form, they're often contacting two or three businesses at once. The first one to respond helpfully usually gets the conversation. A few hours later, they've moved on, booked someone else, or forgotten why they reached out.

Goal: a real reply within minutes during business hours, and an automatic text right away after hours.

Easy wins this week

- ☐ Turn on missed-call text-back
- ☐ Send new form leads to your phone instantly (text, not just email)
- ☐ Decide who owns new leads, by name
- ☐ Write a short text and voicemail script
- ☐ Answer calls live during ad hours

A simple follow-up plan

When	What to do
Right away	Auto-text: "Hi [Name], this is [You] from [Business]. Got your request. Calling you shortly. Anything I should know first?"
Within minutes	Call. If no answer, leave a short voicemail and send a text.
Same day	Second call attempt at a different time of day.
Day 2-3	Text with something useful: a photo of similar work, an answer to a common question, or your offer.
Day 5-7	Final check-in: "Still need help with [service]? Happy to help whenever you're ready."
Monthly	Add unbooked leads to a simple email or text list. Many buy later.

Missed-call text-back

"Sorry we missed your call! This is [Name] at [Business]. What can we help you with? We'll call you right back."

After-hours form reply

"Thanks, [Name]! We got your request. Our office opens at [time] and we'll call you first thing. Reply here if it's urgent."

Note: follow texting and calling rules for your industry and state, and get consent before sending marketing texts.

Track What Matters

Clicks and likes don't pay bills. These three numbers tell you if your marketing is working.

NUMBER 1

Cost per lead

Spend ÷ leads. What you pay for each call or form. Useful, but not the whole story.

NUMBER 2

Cost per booked job

Spend ÷ booked jobs. The number that really matters. Cheap leads that never book aren't cheap.

NUMBER 3

Close rate

Jobs won ÷ leads. If it's low, the fix may be follow-up or sales, not more ads.

Your 1-page monthly scorecard

Month: _____

Channel	Spend	Leads	Cost / lead	Booked jobs	Cost / job	Revenue
Google Ads						
Google Maps / Profile						
Facebook / Instagram						
Website (organic)						
Referrals						
Other: _____						
TOTAL						

Close rate this month

Jobs won _____ ÷ Leads _____ = _____ %

Average job value

Revenue _____ ÷ Jobs won _____ = \$ _____

Ask every month

- Which channel had the lowest cost per booked job?
- Where did leads come in but not book? Why?
- What's one thing to fix before next month?

Tip: ask every new customer "How did you hear about us?" and write it down. It fills the gaps your tracking misses.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Want a second set of eyes on your marketing?

Book a **free 30-minute Marketing Strategy Session** with Brad. No pressure. Just a straight look at what's working, what's leaking, and what to do next.

In your session, we'll cover:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Online presence audit
Your Google profile, website, and reviews, the way a customer sees them. | 2 Ad review
A look at your Google or Facebook ads for leaks and wasted spend. |
| 3 Maps & SEO plan
What it would take to show up in the map and in search for your services. | 4 Budget plan
Where your next marketing dollar should go, based on your goals. |



Goldstar bonus: everyone who books a session from the Goldstar event is entered to win a **free website**.

HOW TO BOOK

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BRING TO YOUR SESSION

- Your website address
- Your Google Business Profile link
- Ad account access, if you run ads (optional)
- Your rough monthly marketing budget
- Your #1 goal for the next 90 days