Grow That Local

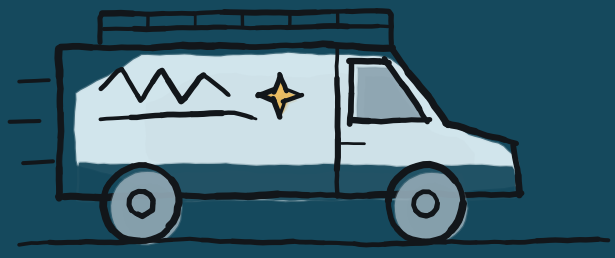
a free guide

Do it yourself or hire it?

Every kind of local marketing on one sheet: the time, the cost and the results, so you can decide fast.

For owners who think they could do it themselves.

- 10 short sections in 5 parts
- 40 things you can do in the next 24 hours
- An example in every section
- Sources for every figure



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Before you start

Plenty of owners do their own marketing, and some do it well. This guide helps you pick which parts to keep and which to hand off. It starts with one number, the price of your own hour, then gives each of the nine kinds of local marketing its own short sheet: the job, what doing it yourself takes, what hiring it takes, and when each one makes sense.

We sell all nine, so we've tried to be fair. Where doing it yourself is the better choice, we say so.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every number has a public source you can check, listed at the end. When we didn't have one, we say "GTL estimate" and tell you why we think it. The hours on each sheet are GTL estimates.
- Every example is made up to show the idea. None of them are real customers or results.

Our own monthly prices are in the list at the end of this guide.



Part 1

Start here

1 Put a price on your own hour

The idea. Doing it yourself isn't free. It costs hours, and your hours have a price. Once you know that price, every sheet in this guide becomes simple math: the hours it takes you, times your hour, against what it costs to hire.

There are two honest ways to price your hour. Pick the higher one.

- **What you take home.** Your yearly take-home pay divided by the hours you work in a year.
- **What the hour could earn.** If an hour of marketing means an hour off the job, what would that hour of work have billed?

Example (sample numbers). A made-up roofer takes home $90,000 a year and works about 2,500 hours. That's $36 an hour. But an hour on a roof bills $85. So their hour is worth $85. Four hours a month of posting photos costs them $340 in lost work, before any tool.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down last year's take-home pay and a rough count of the hours you worked.
- [ ] Divide one by the other.
- [ ] Write down what one hour of your own work bills.
- [ ] Keep the higher of the two numbers on your phone. You'll use it on every sheet.



Part 2

Get found

2 Websites

The job. A site that loads fast on a phone, says what you do and where, shows your real work, and makes calling easy. Speed matters: Google's research found that 53% of mobile visits are abandoned when a page takes longer than 3 seconds to load (Think with Google, thinkwithgoogle.com).

Do it yourself. About 10 to 20 hours to build the first time, then about an hour a month to keep it current. Plus a website builder's plan and your domain. Where it goes wrong: heavy templates and big photos that load slowly on a phone, and a site nobody updates after launch.

Hire it. About an hour of your time to send photos and answer questions, then a text when something changes. A monthly fee.

Do it yourself if you enjoy it, you'll update it every season, and you'll test it on your own phone. **Hire it if** your site hasn't changed in a year, it's slow on your phone, or you don't have one.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Open your site on your phone with Wi-Fi off. Time how long it takes to load and to find your number.
- [ ] Test it at pagespeed.web.dev on the mobile setting.
- [ ] Write down how many hours you'd need to fix what you found, and multiply by your hour from section 1.
- [ ] Compare that with the website price at the end of this guide.

3 Google Business Profile

The job. Your profile is what shows in the map when neighbors search for your trade. The work is getting the basics right (name, category, hours, service area), then adding photos and updates every week and replying to reviews.

Do it yourself. About 1 to 2 hours to fix the basics, then about an hour a week. The tool is free. This is one of the best things to do yourself if you'll keep it up. Where it goes wrong: it stops after busy season starts, and the profile goes quiet for months.

Hire it. A few minutes a week to send photos from your phone. A monthly fee.

Do it yourself if you'll post photos every week, all year. **Hire it if** your last photo is months old, or you've never set your categories and service area.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Look up your business on Google from your phone and find your most recent photo. Write down its date.
- [ ] Upload ten job photos today and time how long it takes.
- [ ] Multiply that time by four, for a month, and by your hour from section 1.
- [ ] Compare that with the Google Business Profile price at the end of this guide.

4 SEO

The job. Showing up on Google for the searches that bring in jobs: a page for each service and town, your business listed the same way everywhere, and checking where you rank each month.

Do it yourself. About 5 to 10 hours a month once you know how, and a lot more while you learn. Results take months, so it's hard to tell if it's working. Paid tools that track rankings add cost. Of the nine, this is the hardest to do well on your own.

Hire it. Little of your time beyond answering questions about your services and towns. A monthly fee. It's also the hardest to judge when you hire it, so ask for a plain monthly report that shows where you rank for named searches.

Do it yourself if you like writing about your work, have regular evening hours, and can wait months. **Hire it if** you want a page for every service and town and don't have the hours.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down the three searches you most want to win, like "roof repair" plus your town.
- [ ] Search each one on your phone and write down where you show up, if at all.
- [ ] Count the services and towns that don't have their own page on your site.
- [ ] Multiply the missing pages by two hours each, then by your hour from section 1.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A preview of your new site

Websites start at $1 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Websites: growthatlocal.com/services/websites

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A profile check-up with 10+ fixes

Google Business Profile is $200 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Google Business Profile: growthatlocal.com/services/google-business-profile

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A ranking check and 10 fixes

SEO is $400 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

SEO: growthatlocal.com/services/seo



Part 3

Get chosen

5 Review requests

The job. Asking every happy customer for a Google review, right after the job, and replying to every review. It matters: in BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 97% of consumers said they read reviews for local businesses, and 74% look for reviews from the last three months (BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026, brightlocal.com).

Do it yourself. About a minute per job to send the text, and 1 to 2 hours a month to reply. Free. An owner asking in person is the best ask there is. Where it goes wrong: you forget in the busy weeks, which is when you finish the most jobs.

Hire it. You tell us when a job is done. A monthly fee.

Do it yourself if you see most customers at the end of the job and you'll ask every time. **Hire it if** crews finish jobs without you, or you got fewer reviews last month than jobs you'd be proud of.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Count last month's finished jobs and last month's new reviews.
- [ ] Get your review link from your Google profile and text it to last month's customers.
- [ ] Time how long that took.
- [ ] If you got less than one review for every five jobs, decide whether you'll ask every time or hand it off.

6 Social media posts

The job. Fresh posts every week from your real job photos, so people who look you up see a business that's busy and real.

Do it yourself. About 4 to 8 hours a month for two posts a week. Free, apart from your time. Where it goes wrong: a burst of posts, then nothing for months, which looks worse than a slow steady pace.

What to expect either way. GTL estimate: posts rarely bring calls on their own. They help most when someone has already heard your name and looks you up, so a steady page backs up your reviews and your trucks.

Hire it. A few minutes a week to send photos. A monthly fee.

Do it yourself if you or someone in your family enjoys it and will keep it going. **Hire it if** your last post is more than a month old.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Look at your page and write down the date of your last post.
- [ ] Post one job photo today with one line about the job: what you did, which part of town, and one detail only a pro would notice. Time it.
- [ ] Multiply that by eight, for a month of posts, and by your hour from section 1.
- [ ] Compare that with the social media price at the end of this guide.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first 10 requests sent

Review requests is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Review requests: growthatlocal.com/services/reviews

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Two weeks of posts, ready to go

Social media posts is $200 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Social media posts: growthatlocal.com/services/social-media



Part 4

Get the next job

7 Email newsletter

The job. One useful email a month to past customers, so they remember you when the next job comes up and pass your name on.

Do it yourself. About 3 to 4 hours a month to write it, plus keeping your list clean, plus an email tool. The rules are simple but they matter: under the CAN-SPAM Act, you must honor an unsubscribe within 10 business days (FTC CAN-SPAM guide, ftc.gov). Where it goes wrong: the first issue goes out and the second never does.

Hire it. Send us your customer list once. A monthly fee.

Do it yourself if you like writing and you'll do it every month. **Hire it if** you have past customers' emails and have never written to them.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Count how many past customers' email addresses you have.
- [ ] Write down when you last emailed all of them.
- [ ] Draft one short email with one seasonal tip for your trade. Time it.
- [ ] Multiply by your hour from section 1 and compare with the newsletter price at the end of this guide.

8 Win-back texts

The job. Texting past customers when their next job is due: the roof inspection, the tune-up, the next coat of paint, the spring cleanup.

Do it yourself. About 2 to 3 hours a month to pull the right names and send the texts, if your records have dates. Free, apart from your time. You need consent: federal rules require consent for marketing texts, and you must stop when someone replies STOP (FCC, fcc.gov). Where it goes wrong: records without dates, so you can't tell who's due.

Hire it. Send us your customer list once. A monthly fee.

Do it yourself if your job records are in one place with dates. **Hire it if** they're spread across invoices, notebooks and old phones.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find where your past jobs live: software, a spreadsheet, invoices or a notebook.
- [ ] Try to pull 25 customers from more than a year ago, with their phone numbers. Time it.
- [ ] Check which of them have agreed to texts.
- [ ] If pulling the list took more than an hour, that's your answer.

9 Neighborhood postcard

The job. Your ad in mailboxes on the streets you want to work.

Do it yourself. About 4 to 8 hours per mailing to design the card, pick the routes, get it printed and drop it at the post office. Postage for USPS Every Door Direct Mail retail is $0.26 a card, plus printing (USPS Notice 123, pe.usps.com). Where it goes wrong: one mailing, few calls, and you give up before the card has a chance to build on itself.

Hire it. Ours is a shared card: your ad sits on one card with other local businesses. You approve the design. A monthly fee.

Do it yourself if you want your own card to your own routes, and you'll mail the same streets several times. **Hire it if** you want a steady presence in mailboxes without doing the mailing.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pick the streets around your last ten jobs.
- [ ] Count roughly how many homes are on them.
- [ ] Multiply by $0.26 for postage, then add a printing quote.
- [ ] Add your design and drop-off hours, times your hour from section 1, and compare with the postcard price at the end of this guide.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first newsletter, written

Email newsletter is $50 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Email newsletter: growthatlocal.com/services/email-newsletter

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first 25 customers texted

Win-back texts is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Win-back texts: growthatlocal.com/services/win-back-texts

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your ad, designed and shown on the card

Neighborhood postcard is $400 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Neighborhood postcard: growthatlocal.com/services/neighborhood-postcards



Part 5

Keep score

10 Monthly report card

The job. Once a month, see how you stack up against the top three in your trade and town: reviews, rating, photos, where you show up in search, and what changed.

Do it yourself. About 1 to 2 hours a month. Count your reviews and theirs, search your three main searches, and write it down in the same place every month. Free.

Hire it. Ours is free. It arrives each month.

Do it yourself if you like keeping your own numbers. **Get ours if** you'd rather it just showed up. Either way, do it every month.

Do it in 24 hours

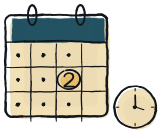
- [ ] Search your main service and town on Google Maps and write down the top three names.
- [ ] Write down each one's review count and star rating, and yours.
- [ ] Write down where you show up for your three main searches.
- [ ] Put a monthly reminder in your phone to do it again.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first report card, this month

The monthly report card is free.

Monthly report card: growthatlocal.com/services/report-card



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you only do five things this week, do these:

- [ ] Work out the price of your own hour (section 1).
- [ ] Time your site on your phone with Wi-Fi off (section 2).
- [ ] Find the date of your last Google profile photo (section 3).
- [ ] Count last month's jobs and last month's new reviews (section 5).
- [ ] Write down the top three in your trade and town, and how you compare (section 10).



The whole sheet on one page

Hours are a month of steady work, once it's set up. They're GTL estimates, explained at the end.

Area	Your hours a month	Do it yourself when	Hire it when
Website	About 1, after 10 to 20 to build	You enjoy it and will test it on your phone	It's slow, old or missing
Google Business Profile	About 4	Free, and you'll post every week	Your last photo is months old
SEO	5 to 10, more while learning	You like writing and can wait months	You need pages for every service and town
Review requests	1 to 2, plus a minute a job	You see customers at the end of the job	Crews finish jobs without you
Social media posts	4 to 8	Someone close to you enjoys it	Your last post is a month old
Email newsletter	3 to 4	You like writing every month	You've never emailed your list
Win-back texts	2 to 3	Your records have dates	Your records are scattered
Neighborhood postcard	4 to 8 a mailing	You want your own routes	You want mailbox presence without the mailing
Monthly report card	1 to 2	You like your own numbers	Ours is free



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local does all nine for local businesses. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Websites — **from $1 a month · 7-day full refund**
A fast, good-looking site that turns visitors into calls. Free sample: a preview of your new site.

Google Business Profile — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Show up in the map when neighbors search for what you do. Free sample: a profile check-up with 10+ fixes.

Review requests — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
More 5-star reviews, without the awkward asking. Free sample: your first 10 requests sent.

Social media posts — **$200 a month · 7-day full refund**
Fresh posts every week, made from your real job photos. Free sample: two weeks of posts, ready to go.

Email newsletter — **$50 a month · 7-day full refund**
Stay top of mind, so past customers call you first. Free sample: your first newsletter, written.

SEO — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Climb Google for the searches that bring in jobs. Free sample: a ranking check and 10 fixes.

Win-back texts — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
Bring past customers back for their next job. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted.

Neighborhood postcard — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Your ad in mailboxes across nice neighborhoods. Free sample: your ad, designed and shown on the card.

Monthly report card — **free**
See how you stack up against local competitors. Free sample: your first report card, this month.

Text us at (423) 924-2014, or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Sources

Every statistic above, with where to check it:

1. Think with Google: 53% of mobile visits abandoned when a page takes longer than 3 seconds to load. thinkwithgoogle.com (section 2)
2. BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (1,002 US adults, published Feb 2026): 97% read reviews for local businesses. brightlocal.com (section 5)
3. Same survey: 74% look for reviews from the last three months. (section 5) (brightlocal.com)
4. USPS Notice 123 price list: Every Door Direct Mail retail, $0.260 a piece for flats up to 3.3 ounces. pe.usps.com (section 9)

Rules and guidance cited (not statistics):

- FTC, CAN-SPAM Act compliance guide for business (honor opt-outs within 10 business days): ftc.gov (section 7)
- FCC, unwanted robocalls and texts, consent and STOP: fcc.gov (section 8)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts. Hours assume someone handy with a phone and a computer, not a marketer.

1. Website: 10 to 20 hours to build the first time, then about an hour a month (section 2). Reasoning: picking a template, writing pages, sorting photos and fixing the phone view each take an evening or two the first time.
2. Google Business Profile: 1 to 2 hours to fix the basics, then about an hour a week (section 3). Reasoning: photos, one update and review replies each take a few minutes, but sorting and choosing photos takes longer than people expect.
3. SEO: 5 to 10 hours a month once you know how (section 4). Reasoning: one or two new pages, a listings check and a rankings check each month, with more time while you learn.
4. Review requests: about a minute per job, plus 1 to 2 hours a month of replies (section 5). Reasoning: the text is saved on your phone, and a thoughtful reply takes a few minutes each.
5. One review for every five jobs as a "hand it off" line (section 5). Reasoning: when every customer is asked, the ratio is usually better than that, so fewer than that suggests the asking isn't happening.
6. Social media posts: 4 to 8 hours a month for two posts a week (section 6). Reasoning: choosing a photo, writing a line and posting takes 30 to 60 minutes once you count the time spent getting started.
7. Posts rarely bring calls on their own (section 6). Reasoning: people seldom hire a trade from a post they scrolled past, but they do check a page after a neighbor names you, and an empty page there costs trust.
8. Email newsletter: 3 to 4 hours a month (section 7). Reasoning: one short email still needs a topic, a draft, a photo and a check of the list.
9. Win-back texts: 2 to 3 hours a month with dated records (section 8). Reasoning: most of the time goes into pulling the right names, not writing the texts.
10. Neighborhood postcard: 4 to 8 hours per mailing (section 9). Reasoning: design, route picking, a print order and a post office trip, each taking an hour or more.

11. Monthly report card: 1 to 2 hours a month (section 10). Reasoning: a few searches and counts, written down the same way each month.

want it done for you?

Every part of this guide is something we do.

Each one starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay. Text us at (423) 924-2014 or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Grow *That* Local