Grow That Local

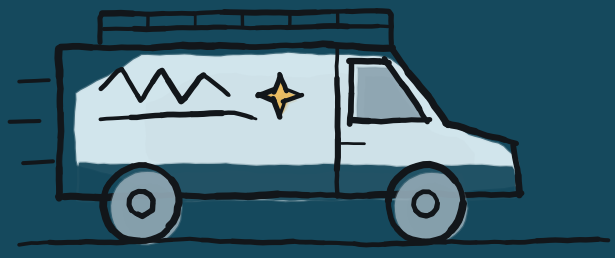
a free guide

How to get your first 50 Google reviews

A 30-day plan: who to ask first, when to ask, what to say, and the rules that keep every review on your profile.

For owners with few reviews.

- 15 short sections in 5 parts
- 60 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

Most owners with only a few reviews don't have unhappy customers. They have customers nobody asked. This guide fixes that in 30 days. You set up on day one, ask everyone from the last few months in the first week, and make asking the last step of every job from then on.

It has 15 short sections in five parts. Each one holds one idea, one example and a short list of things to do in the next 24 hours. Part 5 covers what Google and the FTC don't allow. Read it before you send your first request, because one wrong offer can get reviews taken down.

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.
- Every example is made up to show the idea. None of them are real customers, reviews or results.



Part 1

Get set up

1 Why 50, and where you stand today

The idea. Too few reviews costs you calls before anyone picks up the phone. In BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 47% of consumers said they won't use a business with fewer than 20 reviews, and only 9% would use one with five or fewer (BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026, brightlocal.com). Fresh reviews count too. In the same survey, 74% look for reviews written in the last three months.

So why 50? GTL estimate: 50 is a good first target. It clears the 20 line with room to spare, and at 50 one unfair one-star review barely moves your average.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up landscaper has 9 reviews, all five stars. One angry one-star review drops them to 4.6. A made-up roofer with 50 five-star reviews gets the same one-star review and still shows 4.9.

Our free reviews calculator works out how many five-star reviews you'd need to reach a 4.8 from where you are.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Search your business name on your phone. Write down your review count, your star average and the date of your newest review.
- [ ] Search your main service and your town. Write down the review counts of the top three businesses in the map.
- [ ] Set your target: 50, or the top three's average if that's higher.
- [ ] Count the customers you've worked for in the last 90 days. That's your first list.

2 Get your review link and QR code

The idea. One link takes a customer straight to the box where they write a review. Google makes it for you. On a computer, go to business.google.com, open your profile, select "Read reviews", then "Get more reviews". Copy the link and save the QR code picture (Google: Create a Google link or QR code to request reviews, support.google.com). Google says the QR code can only be made in a computer browser, not on a phone.

Customers have to be signed in to a Google account to leave a review (Google: Tips to get more reviews, support.google.com). Most phones already are. If someone says the link didn't work, that's usually why.

Example. A made-up house cleaner saves the link as a text shortcut, so typing "rvw" pastes the whole link. On an iPhone that's Settings, General, Keyboard, Text Replacement. Most Android keyboards have the same thing under their dictionary or shortcut settings.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Get your link and QR code on a computer.
- [ ] Open the link on your phone to check it lands on your review box. Don't post a review yourself (section 15 says why).
- [ ] Save the link as a text shortcut on every phone that texts customers.
- [ ] Add the link to your email signature, your invoices and your receipts. Google suggests receipts and thank-you emails on the same help page.

3 Make a review card to leave at every job

The idea. A small card with your QR code reaches the customers who'd rather scan than tap a link, and it's still on the counter after you leave. Print it on the back of your business card or on a small card of its own.

Put five things on it: your logo, the first name of the person who did the work, "Tell your neighbors how it went", "Scan to leave a Google review", and the QR code. Leave everything else off. No offer, no discount, and no row of five stars asking for a top score. Ask for an honest review, never a score.

Where the card goes depends on your trade:

Trade	Leave the card
Roofer	With the final invoice at the walk-through
Plumber	Next to the water heater or under the sink you fixed
HVAC	Beside the thermostat, with the visit report
Landscaper	In the door hanger on your next route day
House cleaner	On the kitchen counter after the first clean
Painter	Inside the touch-up kit, on top of the cans

Example. A made-up plumber's card has the plumber's first name and photo, the license number, the QR code and one line: "Tell your neighbors how it went." A customer who keeps the card knows who to name in the review.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Design the card with the five things above.
- [ ] Print a test copy and scan it with two different phones.
- [ ] Pick where the card goes on your jobs, using the table.
- [ ] Put a stack in every truck, van and cleaning kit.



Part 2

Who to ask first

4 Start with the last 90 days, newest first

The idea. The easiest reviews come from people who still remember the job. Start with every customer from the last 90 days, newest first. Then the 90 days before that. Then everyone else from the last year.

Asking is normal now. In BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 78% of consumers said a business asked them for a review in the last 12 months, and 28% said they'll always write one when asked (BrightLocal 2026, brightlocal.com).

Sort by date, never by mood. You can choose who goes first by when you did the job. You can't skip the customers who complained. Google doesn't allow asking only the happy ones (section 13).

Example. A made-up painter pulls 64 customers from last year's invoices. They text the 22 from the last 90 days on Monday, the next 20 on Wednesday and the rest on Friday. Two of the first 22 had a touch-up complaint. They get the same text as everyone else.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down every customer from the last 12 months with their phone, email and job date.
- [ ] Sort the list by job date, newest first.
- [ ] Mark who agreed to texts. Everyone else gets an email.
- [ ] Mark anyone who has already left you a Google review, so you don't ask them twice.

5 Then your regulars and repeat customers

The idea. Your regulars know your work best, and you'll see them again. They're also the easiest to forget, because nothing goes wrong. Ask each one once, at a natural moment in the work you already do for them.

Trade	The natural moment for a regular
Roofer	After a second job, like gutters or a repair on a roof you replaced
Plumber	After a yearly check or a second repair
HVAC	At the end of a plan member's tune-up
Landscaper	After the third or fourth mow, or the first spring cleanup
House cleaner	At the three-month mark
Painter	After a second room or a touch-up visit

Example. A made-up cleaner has 40 regular clients who've never been asked. They ask 10 a week for four weeks, the evening after each client's next clean, and mention the cleaner by first name.

Do it in 24 hours

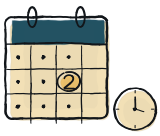
- [ ] List your regulars and repeat customers who haven't left a Google review.
- [ ] Pick their natural moment from the table.
- [ ] Put a reminder in your calendar or job software at that moment for each one.
- [ ] Ask all of them, not only the ones who say nice things to your crew.

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



Part 3

When and how to ask

6 Ask in person, then text the link before you leave

The idea. People say yes to a face and forget a text. So ask out loud when the customer sees the finished work, then send the link within the hour while it's fresh.

Every trade has its moment:

Trade	The moment to ask
Roofer	The final walk-through, with the yard swept clean
Plumber	When the water's running again, before you leave the driveway
HVAC	About an hour after the tech leaves, once the house feels right
Landscaper	After a spring cleanup, a fresh mulch job or a patio reveal
House cleaner	The evening after the first clean
Painter	At the final walk-through, when you hand over the touch-up kit

Example. What a made-up roofer says at the walk-through:

> **In person:**
> **"Would you leave us an honest Google review? It really helps a small company like ours. I'll text you the link now so you don't have to look for it."**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your trade's moment in the table.
- [ ] Practice the line above out loud until it sounds like you.
- [ ] Teach it to every person who finishes jobs for you.
- [ ] Add "ask, then text the link" to your job checklist, right before "collect payment" or "leave".

7 What to write: short, personal and about the job

The idea. A good request is short enough to read at a red light. It names the customer, says who you are, mentions the job and asks for an honest review. Then the link. Asking them to mention the job or the person who came helps the next customer, who wants to know exactly that.

If something might be wrong, say you'll fix it in the same text. The link still goes to everyone, in the same message. That way problems come to you, and nobody is steered away from Google.

Example. A made-up HVAC company's text, sent an hour after the visit:

> **Text:**
> **"Hi [first name], it's [your name] at [business]. Is the house warming up OK? If anything's off, reply here and we'll sort it. Either way, an honest Google review would help us a lot: [review link]"**
>
> **Email subject:**
> **"How did your furnace repair go?"**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write your own text with the five parts: their name, your name, the job, the ask, the link.
- [ ] Read it aloud. Cut anything you wouldn't say to their face.
- [ ] Write a two-line email version for customers you don't text.
- [ ] Save both where your team can copy them. Our pack of 50 review request texts has one for every moment.

8 Send one reminder, then stop

The idea. Plenty of people mean to leave a review and forget. One friendly reminder catches them. More than one starts to feel like nagging.

GTL estimate: send one reminder three to five days after the first ask, then stop. Our reasoning: most people who'll review do it within a day or two of being reminded, and a second chaser to a busy homeowner costs more goodwill than it gains.

Texting has rules. Federal rules require consent for marketing texts, and you must stop when someone replies STOP (FCC, fcc.gov). Since April 2025 a customer can opt out "by any reasonable means", such as "stop texting me", and you have at most 10 business days to honor it (Federal Register, FCC consent revocation rule, federalregister.gov). Treat it as the same day. If you're unsure about your texts, ask a lawyer.

Example. A made-up plumber's reminder, four days later:

> **Reminder:**
> **"Hi [first name], [your name] from [business] again. No pressure at all, but if you get a minute this week, here's that review link: [review link] Thanks either way."**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Decide your reminder day: three, four or five days after the first ask.
- [ ] Write your one reminder text.
- [ ] Mark everyone who reviewed, so they never get the reminder.
- [ ] Take anyone who says stop, in any words, off your text list today.

or we can do it for you

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Review requests: growthatlocal.com/services/reviews



Part 4

Your 30-day plan

9 Days 1 to 7: set up, then ask the last 90 days

The idea. The first week does most of the work. Your link, card and texts are ready by day two. By day seven, everyone you worked for in the last 90 days has been asked once.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up house cleaner starts with 7 reviews and 45 customers from the last 90 days. They ask all 45 in the first week. If one in four leaves a review, that's about 11 new reviews by day 14, with reminders.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Day 1: get your link and QR code (section 2) and write your text (section 7).
- [ ] Day 2: order or print your cards (section 3).
- [ ] Days 3 to 5: text or email your last 90 days, in batches of 10 to 20 a day.
- [ ] Days 6 and 7: reply to every new review the day it comes in.

10 Days 8 to 14: make asking the last step of every job

The idea. The list of past customers runs out. New jobs don't. In week two, the ask becomes part of how every job ends, done by whoever finishes it.

Example. A made-up landscaper adds "ask for the review, text the link" to the end-of-job checklist on the crew lead's phone. Every cleanup and project gets the ask. Mowing customers get theirs on the third or fourth mow.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Add the ask to your job checklist or job software, as the last step.
- [ ] If your software can send a text when a job is marked done, set it to send yours within the hour.
- [ ] Send the reminders to everyone from week one who hasn't reviewed.
- [ ] Count this week's new reviews and write the number down.

11 Days 15 to 21: older customers, by email too

The idea. Now go back further: everyone from three to twelve months ago, and the regulars from section 5. Many of these people you've only ever emailed, so email them. Keep it as short as a text.

Example. A made-up painter emails 40 customers from last spring:

> **Subject:**
> **"A quick favor from [business]"**
>
> **Email:**
> **"Hi [first name], it's [your name] from [business]. We painted your living room and hall back in April. If you have a minute, an honest Google review would help a small company like ours a lot: [review link] Thanks for having us."**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pull your customers from three to twelve months ago who haven't been asked.
- [ ] Send texts to those who agreed to texts, and emails to the rest.
- [ ] Ask the regulars whose natural moment comes up this week.
- [ ] Send week two's reminders.

12 Days 22 to 30: reply to every review, count, and keep the pace

The idea. Reply to every new review, good or bad, ideally the same day. The next customer reads your replies. Then count. You may not be at 50 yet, but the habit will get you there.

GTL estimate: plan on one new review for every three to five people you ask. Our reasoning: 28% of consumers say they'll always write a review when asked (section 4), and a reminder brings in some of the rest. So to get 50 new reviews, plan to ask 150 to 250 people. After day 30, aim for at least two new reviews a month, so every three-month window has fresh ones.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up roofer starts at 11 reviews, asks 120 past customers and 30 new jobs in 30 days, and one in four says yes. That's about 37 new reviews, landing near 48. The end-of-job ask gets them past 50 the next month.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Reply to every review you haven't answered, thanking them for something specific about the job.
- [ ] Count your reviews and compare with the top three from section 1.
- [ ] Turn on review alerts in your Google profile so you see new ones the same day.
- [ ] Put a monthly reminder in your calendar to count reviews and check the ask is still happening.

or we can do it for you

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Review requests: growthatlocal.com/services/reviews



Part 5

What Google and the FTC don't allow

13 Ask everyone: no review gating

The idea. Review gating means asking only the customers you think are happy, or sending a "how did we do?" survey first and the review link only to people who answer well. Google forbids it. Its policy says businesses may not "discourage or prohibit negative reviews, or selectively solicit positive reviews from customers" (Google Maps user-contributed content policy, support.google.com).

The FTC's guidance on its 2024 review rule says the rule has no specific ban on this, but that asking only happy customers "could violate the FTC Act" (FTC: Consumer Review Rule, questions and answers, ftc.gov).

Offering to fix a problem is fine, as long as the link goes to every customer in the same message (section 7). Don't write "if you're happy with us, leave a review". It steers unhappy customers away, which is what the rule is about.

Example. A made-up roofer's old system texted "Rate us 1 to 5" and only sent the review link to people who replied 4 or 5. They switch it off. Now every customer gets the same text with the link, and any complaint that comes back gets a call that day.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Check your texts, emails and any review software for a "rate us first" step. Turn it off.
- [ ] Remove "if you're happy" or "if you loved it" from your request wording.
- [ ] Make sure the complainers on your list get the same request as everyone else.
- [ ] Tell your crew: everyone gets asked.

14 No incentives of any kind

The idea. On Google, you can't give anything for a review. Not a discount, not a free extra, not a raffle entry, not a gift card. Google's policy lists offering "payment, discounts, free goods and/or services" as fake engagement (Google Maps user-contributed content policy, as above). Its review link page says incentives for "posting reviews, changing reviews, or removing negative reviews" are strictly prohibited (Google: Create a Google link or QR code, support.google.com).

The FTC's rule, in force since October 21, 2024, bans offering anything for a review that has to say something positive (or negative), and courts can fine businesses for knowing violations (FTC questions and answers, as above). The FTC rule is narrower than Google's, but Google's applies on Google. So the safe rule is simple: offer nothing.

Example. A made-up lawn company used to print "Leave us a review, get 10% off your next mow" on its door hangers. They reprint without the offer. The card now says only "Tell your neighbors how it went," with the QR code.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Check your cards, door hangers, invoices, website and texts for any offer tied to a review. Remove it.
- [ ] Tell your crew never to promise anything for a review, even as a joke.
- [ ] If you run a referral reward, make sure it has nothing to do with reviews.
- [ ] Thank reviewers with a reply, not a reward.

15 No fake, family, staff or bought reviews

The idea. Only real customers, writing about their own experience. Google doesn't allow reviews "based on a conflict of interest", which it says can include "current or former employment" and "familial relationships", or reviews posted from several accounts at one person's request (Google Maps user-contributed content policy, as above). So don't review yourself, and don't ask staff, family or friends who never hired you.

The FTC rule bans buying fake reviews and writing reviews for people who didn't have the experience. When officers, managers or employees post or ask for reviews, they must disclose the connection (FTC questions and answers, as above). Don't write a review for a customer to post, either. Make it easy for them to write their own.

The same rule bans scaring people off bad reviews: no groundless legal threats, no intimidation and no false accusations against a reviewer (FTC questions and answers). The guide on how to answer a bad review covers what to do instead.

Example. A made-up plumber's cousin offers to post a five-star review. The plumber says thanks, but no. A month later the cousin hires them to replace a water heater. Now the cousin is a real customer and gets the same request as everyone else. It's the cousin's own words, and they mention they're family.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Tell staff and family not to review the business, and why.
- [ ] Never write review text for a customer, even if they ask you to.
- [ ] Ignore anyone who offers to sell you reviews, by email, text or phone.
- [ ] If an employee or relative already reviewed you, ask them to add that they work for you or are family, or to take it down.

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



Your first 24 hours, in one list

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

- [ ] Write down your review count, your newest review's date, and the top three's counts (section 1).
- [ ] Get your review link and save it as a text shortcut (section 2).
- [ ] Ask every customer from the last 90 days, newest first (section 4).
- [ ] Make "ask in person, then text the link" the last step of every job (sections 6 and 10).
- [ ] Remove any "rate us first" step and any offer tied to a review (sections 13 and 14).



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local does this for local businesses: we send the request after every job, follow up once, and reply to your reviews. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: Review requests. Free sample: your first 10 requests sent. Review requests is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

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

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.

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. BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (1,002 US adults, published Feb 11, 2026): 47% won't use a business with fewer than 20 reviews. brightlocal.com (section 1)
2. Same survey: only 9% would use a business with five or fewer reviews. (section 1) (brightlocal.com)
3. Same survey: 74% look for reviews written in the last three months. (section 1) (brightlocal.com)
4. Same survey: 78% were asked to write a review in the last 12 months. (section 4) (brightlocal.com)
5. Same survey: 28% say they'll always write a review when asked. (sections 4, 12) (brightlocal.com)

Rules and guidance cited (not statistics), checked on 2026-11-12:

- Google, Create a Google link or QR code to request reviews (steps, computer only, incentives prohibited): support.google.com (sections 2, 14)
- Google, Tips to get more reviews (customers must be signed in to a Google account): support.google.com (section 2)
- Google Maps user-contributed content policy (bans incentives, discouraging negative reviews or selectively asking for positive ones and conflict of interest): support.google.com (sections 13, 14, 15)
- FTC, Consumer Review Rule: questions and answers (in force October 21, 2024; incentives tied to sentiment, insider disclosure, review suppression, asking only happy customers): ftc.gov (sections 13, 14, 15)
- FCC, unwanted robocalls and texts, consent and STOP: fcc.gov (section 8)
- Federal Register, FCC rule on revoking consent (any reasonable means, honored within 10 business days, in force April 11, 2025): federalregister.gov (section 8)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. 50 reviews is a good first target (section 1). Reasoning: it clears the 20-review line most shoppers use with room to spare, and at 50 a single one-star review moves the average by less than a tenth of a star.
2. One reminder, three to five days after the first ask, then stop (section 8). Reasoning: most people who'll review do it soon after a nudge, and a second chaser costs more goodwill than it brings in.
3. Expect one new review for every three to five people asked (section 12). Reasoning: 28% say they'll always review when asked, and a reminder brings in some of the rest.
4. After the first 50, aim for at least two new reviews a month (section 12). Reasoning: most shoppers look at the last three months, so you want fresh reviews in every three-month window.

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