Grow That Local

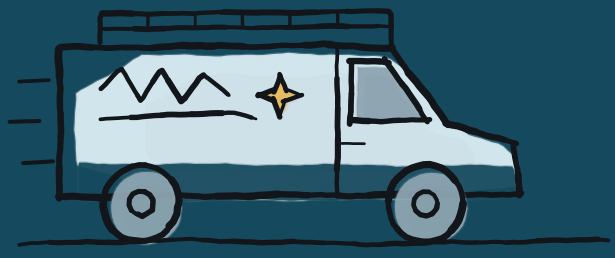
a free guide

What customers love and hate about painters

We studied 5,568 Google reviews of 33 painting companies in 10 Southeast cities. Here's what earns five stars, what earns one, and a fix for each you can put in place this week.

For painting business owners writing ads or a website.

- 16 short sections in 5 parts
- 57 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

Painting customers can see every inch of your work, every day, for years. Happy ones write about how the house looks and how easy the crew made it. Angry ones write about missed spots, a touch-up that never happened, and a crew that stopped answering. We counted which topics show up in each, so you can fix the ones that cost you stars before the next job.

What we did: in November 2026 we pulled 55,042 Google reviews of 265 local trade businesses in 10 Southeast cities: Nashville, Tulsa, Louisville, Huntsville, Lexington, Birmingham, Memphis, Little Rock, Montgomery and Jackson, Mississippi. This guide uses the 5,568 reviews of the 33 painting companies among them, 4,855 of which have text. We picked companies from the map's top 3 and from spots 4 to 20 in each city. Then we tagged 14 topics, such as price, communication and cleanup, in every review with text. We cite it as "GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026."

How to read the numbers:

- **"Share of bad reviews"** means the share of 1- and 2-star reviews with text that mention a topic. **"Share of 5-star reviews"** is the same for 5-star reviews. A topic in a bad review is almost always a complaint. In a 5-star review it's praise.
- Bad reviews are rare, rarer for painters than any other trade we studied. Only 2.3% of the newest painting reviews we pulled were 1 or 2 stars, and 94.8% were 5 stars. We pulled extra bad reviews on purpose so we'd have enough to study, so we never give a share "of all reviews."
- Painting is our thinnest trade. We found only 195 bad painting reviews with text, against 4,455 five-star ones. So the complaint shares below are a fair guide but not precise, and a few reviews either way would move them.
- We checked the tags by reading 1,200 reviews by hand. 96.2% of the tags were right, and they caught 90.6% of the topics a person would spot. So the shares run slightly low, most of all for quality and communication.
- Part 5 has the full method and its limits. The short version: Southeast only, and only businesses that show up on Google Maps.

Some fixes below are texts about a customer's own job. Send them only to customers who gave you their number for that job, say who's texting, and follow the US texting rules in our texting rules guide.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every number comes from our review study or a public source, listed at the end. When we give our own opinion, we say "GTL estimate" and tell you why we think it.
- We never name a business, a reviewer or a staff member. Where we show what customers say, it's our own paraphrase of a pattern we saw many times, never a real review. Every example is made up.



Part 1

What painting customers praise

1 The praise, in one table

The idea. Here's what 5-star painting reviews talk about most (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026):

Topic	Share of 5-star painting reviews
The quality of the work	69.9%
The crew and staff	53.2%
Scheduling and speed	32.3%
Price and value	30.1%
Communication	22.9%
Showing up on time	19.5%
Cleanup after the job	10.5%
Know-how and explaining the work	10.1%

Painters lead the six trades we studied on three kinds of praise: quality (69.9% of 5-star reviews), price (30.1%) and showing up on time (19.5%). Price is the surprise. In most trades, price shows up in good reviews far less than in bad ones. For painters, almost a third of 5-star reviews mention it, usually as a fair estimate that matched the final bill.

Happy painting customers also write the longest 5-star reviews: a typical 36 words. They tell the story of the job, which gives the next customer a lot to read.

Example. A made-up painter reads their last 20 five-star reviews. Sixteen talk about how the rooms look, eleven mention the crew, and seven say the price was fair or matched the estimate. That tells them their estimate is one of their selling points.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Open your Google profile and read your last 20 five-star reviews.
- [ ] Tally how many mention the finish, the crew, the schedule, the price and cleanup.
- [ ] Note the rooms and colors customers name. Those go on your website.

2 Quality they can see: the blue-tape walk-through

The idea. Quality came up in 69.9% of 5-star painting reviews, and "looks," "results" and "pleased" were among the most typical 5-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). The customer is the inspector. A walk-through before you pack up lets them find the misses while you can still fix them.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Paid attention to every little detail.

The walk-through (with the customer, before you pack up):

1. Hand the customer a roll of blue painter's tape.
2. Walk every room or wall together, in good light.
3. They put a small piece of tape on anything they want touched up.
4. Your crew fixes every piece before leaving, or books a time within [number] days.
5. Walk it again and pull the tape together.

Paraphrase, not a real review: The work looks fantastic and was done right the first time.

Example. A made-up painter does the blue-tape walk-through on every job. The customer tapes four spots. The crew fixes them in 40 minutes. The review says the crew "made sure everything was perfect before they left."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Put a roll of blue tape in every crew's kit just for the walk-through.
- [ ] Add the walk-through as the last line on every job sheet.
- [ ] Do it on your next finished job.

3 The crew: the person in the house all week

The idea. The crew came up in 53.2% of 5-star painting reviews, and "team," "crew" and "friendly" were among the most typical 5-star words. 30.8% of 5-star painting reviews mention a staff member by first name, against 16.4% of bad ones (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). A painting crew can be in someone's home for days. The customer gets to know them.

You can't ask for names in reviews. Google's review rules ban asking customers for reviews with specific content, including content that names a staff member, and ban review quotas for staff (Google Maps user-contributed content policy, support.google.com). So earn it. Introduce the crew lead on day one, and keep the same crew through the job.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Polite, friendly and professional from start to finish.

Day-one introduction (made-up example, use your own words):
At the door, first morning:

"Hi, I'm [crew lead name] with [business]. I'll be here every day until you're done. Here's my cell. Each afternoon I'll show you what we did and what's next."

Example. A made-up painter gives each crew lead a card with their first name and cell, and keeps the same crew on a job from start to finish. Nobody asks for names in reviews. Over time, more reviews name the crew lead on their own.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Print a simple card for each crew lead: first name, cell number.
- [ ] Teach the day-one introduction at the next crew meeting.
- [ ] Check your review ask: an honest review, no names or words requested, no staff targets.

4 "Timely" and "easy": a start date and a daily finish

The idea. Showing up on time came up in 19.5% of 5-star painting reviews, and scheduling in 32.3%. "Timely," "process" and "easy" were among the most typical 5-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). The customer is living around the job. They praise the painter who said when, and kept to it.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Called ahead and arrived when they said they would.

The fix is a one-page job plan sent with the signed estimate.

Your job plan (template):

1. **Start:** [date], arriving at [time].
2. **Each day:** working [time] to [time]. We'll tidy up and show you progress at the end of each day.
3. **Order of rooms:** [room], then [room], then [room].
4. **What to move:** small items and wall hangings. We'll move and cover furniture.
5. **Weather (outside jobs):** if rain or cold stops us, we'll text you by [time].
6. **Finish:** [date], with the blue-tape walk-through (section 2).

Example. A made-up painter emails the job plan with every signed estimate. The customer knows the bedroom is day two and sleeps in the guest room that night. The review says "the whole process was easy."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Fill in the template with your real hours and steps.
- [ ] Send it with every signed estimate from today.
- [ ] Add a short "how a painting job works" section to your website with the same six steps.

5 Use their words on your website and in your ads

The idea. These were the words most typical of 5-star painting reviews, and of 1-star ones (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026):

Most typical of 5-star painting reviews	Most typical of 1-star painting reviews
professional, team, crew, pleased, fantastic, timely, process, easy, results, looks, future, friendly	called, later, fix, never, months, contract, missed, spots, warranty, response, text, left

The 1-star list tells the story of a job that ended badly: missed spots, a promise to fix them, a warranty, months of calls and texts. Many bad painting reviews are about what happened after the crew left.

Don't paste the 5-star adjectives onto your site. Show the proof behind them.

- **"Results":** before-and-after photos of real rooms, with the color name.
- **"Process" and "easy":** the six steps from section 4.
- **"Timely":** your real start lead time and daily hours.
- **Against "missed" and "fix":** your walk-through and touch-up rule (sections 2 and 8).
- **Against "warranty":** your warranty in one sentence (section 11).

Example. A made-up painter swaps "Professional, timely painters" for "We walk every room with you and fix every spot before we leave. Your warranty is in writing." The new line answers the 1-star worries.

Do it in 24 hours

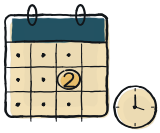
- [ ] Read your homepage and cross out every adjective a competitor could also use.
- [ ] Replace each one with a fact, a photo or a rule you keep.
- [ ] Add your walk-through and your warranty line to your homepage.

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 2

What painting customers complain about

6 The complaints, in one table

The idea. Here's what bad painting reviews talk about most (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). Remember these come from 195 bad reviews, so read them as a guide, not exact figures.

Topic	Share of bad painting reviews	Share of 5-star painting reviews
Price, quotes and value	51.8%	30.1%
The quality of the work	47.2%	69.9%
Communication	40.5%	22.9%
Scheduling and speed	40.5%	32.3%
The crew and staff	37.4%	53.2%
Showing up on time	21.5%	19.5%
Payment, deposits and refunds	20.0%	1.4%
Follow-through	16.9%	7.7%
Cleanup	14.4%	10.5%
Honesty and sales pressure	13.8%	5.9%
Know-how	13.3%	10.1%
Warranty	9.2%	0.7%
Damage to the property	3.6%	0.6%

Three things stand out for painters. Payment came up in 20.0% of bad reviews and 1.4% of good ones. Warranty came up in 9.2% of bad ones and 0.7% of good ones. And cleanup shows up more in bad painting reviews than good ones, the opposite of roofing. Drips, tape left on trim and furniture put back in the wrong place get noticed. "Price" here includes fees, quotes, refunds and billing, not only "too expensive."

Damage is hard for our tags to spot, so its real share is probably higher than 3.6%.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Read your own 1- and 2-star reviews, and the 3-star ones too.
- [ ] Mark each with the topics in the table.
- [ ] Pick the topic that shows up most. Start with its section below.

7 Price: an estimate that says exactly what's painted

The idea. Price came up in 51.8% of bad painting reviews, and "contract" and "given" were among the most typical 1-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). The fights are about scope: was the ceiling included, were two coats included, why is the trim extra. Price also came up in 30.1% of 5-star reviews, so a clear estimate is something customers praise.

Paraphrase, not a real review: The final bill came in well above the quote with no warning.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Gave a clear price up front and the bill matched it.

The fix is an estimate that lists every surface, every coat and every change.

Estimate line	What it should say
Rooms or sides	[each room, or each side of the house]
Surfaces	Walls, ceilings, trim, doors, cabinets: say which are in and which are out
Prep	Patching, sanding, caulking, priming, scraping: what's included
Coats and paint	[number] coats of [paint line], [sheen]
Colors	Chosen by [date], one color per room unless listed
Not included	Moving heavy furniture, wallpaper removal, wood repair, each with its price
Changes	"Any change gets a written price before we do it."
Payment	Deposit [amount], balance on [when] (section 12)
Warranty	[length], what it covers, in one sentence (section 11)

How to explain price (script, use your own words):
When they say another painter is cheaper:
"That's worth checking. Lay the two estimates side by side. Do both include the trim, two coats and the patching? If theirs does and it's lower, I'll understand."

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter's estimate lists "trim and doors: included" and "ceilings: $420, not included." The customer adds the ceilings on day two. The crew lead writes it on a change form, the customer signs, and the bill has no surprises.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Add "in and out" lines for every surface to your estimate template.
- [ ] Add a "not included" line with prices.
- [ ] Print a simple change form for every crew lead.

8 Missed spots: fix it now, and fix it so it can't be seen

The idea. Quality came up in 47.2% of bad painting reviews. "Fix," "missed," "spots" and "left" were among the most typical 1-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). The story: a missed spot behind a door, a patchy touch-up, and a promise to come back.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Missed areas and sloppy edges that had to be redone.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Came back to fix a small issue without being asked twice.

The fix has three parts. The blue-tape walk-through (section 2) catches most misses before you leave. For anything found later, book the fix within a week. And when the fix is on a wall, repaint that wall corner to corner, with the same color and sheen, so the touch-up doesn't show.

The touch-up kit (leave it at every job):

- [ ] A labeled can or jar of each color, with the room, brand, color name and sheen.
- [ ] A small brush and a small roller.
- [ ] A card: "Found something we missed? Text a photo to [phone]."

Example. A made-up painter leaves a labeled touch-up kit after every job. Three weeks later, a customer texts a photo of a scuff behind a door. The crew lead comes on Friday and rolls the whole wall. The customer doesn't post a review about the scuff. They post one about the Friday visit.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Make "corner to corner" your crew's rule for every wall touch-up after a complaint.
- [ ] Put together touch-up kits for every job finishing this week.
- [ ] Answer any open touch-up request today and book it.

9 Silence: four texts on every job

The idea. Communication came up in 40.5% of bad painting reviews. "Called," "calls," "sent," "response" and "text" were among the most typical 1-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). The customer texted about a color or a missed spot and didn't hear

back.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Left several messages and nobody ever called back.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Texted before arriving and kept us updated the whole way through.

The fix is four texts, sent on every job.

Colors confirmed:
"Hi [first name], it's [your name] at [business]. Confirming your colors: [room] in [color], [sheen]. Reply OK, or let me know any change by [date]."

The night before:
"Hi [first name], [business] here. [crew lead name] and the crew start tomorrow at [time]. Please clear small items off the walls in [rooms]."

End of each day:
"Hi [first name], today we finished [rooms]. Tomorrow: [rooms]. Anything you want us to look at in the morning?"

Job done:
"Hi [first name], your job is finished. Your touch-up kit is in [place]. If you spot anything later, text a photo to this number."

Example. A made-up painter's crew lead sends the end-of-day text from the van before leaving. Customers stop calling the office to ask what's happening, and the color mix-ups stop because the colors are confirmed in writing.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Save the four texts as shortcuts on each crew lead's phone.
- [ ] Send the color confirmation for every job starting in the next two weeks.
- [ ] Decide who answers customer texts, and by what time each day.

10 Waiting: show up to the estimate, and give a real start date

The idea. Scheduling came up in 40.5% of bad painting reviews, and showing up on time in 21.5%. "Months," "later," "finally" and "appointment" were among the most typical 1-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). Some of these customers never got as far as a job. The painter missed the estimate appointment, or the start date slid by months.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Never showed up for the scheduled appointment.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Weeks went by before anyone came out to start the job.

The fix is to treat the estimate like a job: confirm it, show up, and give a real start date on the spot.

Estimate reminder:
"Hi [first name], it's [your name] at [business]. See you tomorrow at [time] for your painting estimate. Reply if you need a different time."

Start date slipping:

"Hi [first name], it's [business]. I'm sorry, the job before yours is running long. Your new start date is [date]. If that doesn't work, call me at [phone]."

Example. A made-up painter used to give "sometime next month" start dates in spring. Now they give a week, in writing, and text the moment it moves. Customers who wait still wait, but they don't write "finally showed up after three months."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Save the two texts.
- [ ] Work out your real start lead time and say it on every estimate.
- [ ] Text every customer whose start date has moved and who hasn't heard.

11 Warranty: one sentence in writing, and a one-year check

The idea. Warranty came up in 9.2% of bad painting reviews and only 0.7% of 5-star ones. "Warranty" was one of the most typical 1-star words. Follow-through came up in 16.9% of bad ones (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). The story: peeling or fading months later, and a painter who said it wasn't covered, or never called back.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Charged for work that should have been covered.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Stood behind their work and fixed it under warranty.

The fix is a warranty in one plain sentence on every estimate and invoice, and a check-in before it runs out.

Your warranty line (example, set your own terms): "If our paint peels, blisters or flakes within [length] because of our prep or application, we'll fix it at no charge. Damage from water, impact or settling isn't covered."

One-year check:

"Hi [first name], it's [your name] at [business]. It's been a year since we painted your [rooms / house]. Anything peeling, cracking or not right? Text a photo and we'll take a look."

Example. A made-up painter sends the one-year text to every exterior customer. One replies with a photo of peeling trim over a porch. The crew fixes it under warranty. The customer books the interior next spring.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write your warranty in one sentence and add it to your estimate and invoice.
- [ ] Set a reminder to send the one-year text for every job you finished last year.
- [ ] Give every crew lead the same answer to "is this covered?"

12 Deposits and cleanup: the money rules and the leave-it-better list

The idea. Payment and deposits came up in 20.0% of bad painting reviews and 1.4% of 5-star ones. Cleanup came up in 14.4% of bad ones and 10.5% of good ones (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). A deposit that wasn't refunded when the job fell through, or a final payment demanded before the touch-ups were done, turns into a review. So does paint on the floor.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Still waiting on a promised refund.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Cleaned up so well you could not tell they had been here.

Your money rules (fill in your own terms):

- **Deposit:** how much, when, and what it pays for (paint and materials).
- **If you cancel:** what's refunded, by when.
- **Final payment:** due after the walk-through, once every piece of tape is pulled.

The leave-it-better list (every job):

- [ ] Drop cloths down before any paint is open.
- [ ] Tape pulled from all trim, glass and fixtures.
- [ ] Switch plates and outlet covers back on.
- [ ] Windows opened and closed to check they don't stick.
- [ ] Furniture and wall hangings back where they were.
- [ ] Floors checked for drips, and cleaned.
- [ ] Leftover paint labeled and left in the touch-up kit (section 8).

Example. A made-up painter moves final payment to after the walk-through. Customers who used to argue about paying before the touch-ups now pay at the door with the tape in their hand.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write your money rules and add them to your estimate.
- [ ] Print the leave-it-better list for every crew.
- [ ] Check for any deposit you owe back, and call that customer today.

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

Answering bad reviews

13 How painters reply, and how fast

The idea. Painters are the slowest repliers of the six trades we studied. The typical reply came 45 days after the review, and only 10.9% came within a week. 6.1% of painting companies replied to none of the reviews we checked, the most of any trade. In our reply sample, painters answered 79.5% of 5-star reviews and 61.0% of 1- and 2-star ones (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026).

Customers expect faster. In BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 81% of consumers said they expect a reply within a week, and 19% expect one the same day (BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026, brightlocal.com). Google tells the reviewer when you reply, and they can still edit their review after reading it (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com).

A month and a half is long enough for the next ten customers to read the bad review with no answer under it. Reply within a day.

A note on these reply numbers: they come from the first 50 reviews per business in Google's "most relevant" order, which tends to show reviews with replies. Only 41 of them were bad painting reviews, so the bad-review reply rate is especially rough. Treat all of these as a direction, not an exact rate.

Example. A made-up painter turns on review alerts and replies from the van at the end of each day. Good reviews get a line that names the job and color ("Glad the navy front door came out the way you wanted"). Bad ones get a call first.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Turn on review alerts in your Google profile, so new reviews reach your phone.
- [ ] Reply to every unanswered review, bad ones first.
- [ ] Put a daily 15-minute reply slot on your calendar.

14 Angry painting reviews are long, and the 3-star ones are longer

The idea. The typical bad painting review ran 91 words, and the typical 5-star one 36. The 3-star ones ran longest of all: a typical 110 words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). A 3-star painting review is usually a mixed story: "the crew was great, but." Those customers are close to happy. A specific reply can win them back.

And 50% of consumers say templated replies put them off (BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026, brightlocal.com).

The fix is a four-part reply. Our guide How to Answer a Bad Review goes deeper.

1. Thank them, and name the specific problem.
2. Own what's fair, without blaming the customer.
3. Say exactly what you'll fix, and when.
4. Take it offline, with a name and a number.

Example. A made-up reply to a 2-star review about drips on a hardwood floor and a patchy touch-up:

> **Thanks for telling us, and I'm sorry. Drips on your floor are exactly what our drop cloths are supposed to stop, and you shouldn't be able to see a touch-up. I'll come by this week to clean the floor and repaint that hallway wall corner to corner so it's one even finish. I'll call you today to set a time. [your name], owner**

Never mention the customer's address or bill amount in a reply.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Reply to every 3-star review you have, with the specific fix.
- [ ] Pick your oldest unanswered bad review and rewrite your reply with the four parts.
- [ ] Read How to Answer a Bad Review before the next one lands.

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 4

Your own review audit

15 Read your last 30 reviews the way we did

The idea. Our numbers are an average of 33 painting companies, and our thinnest trade. Your own reviews will tell you more. In 20 minutes you can run the same check on your profile and know which fix to do first.

The audit (a sheet of paper is enough):

1. Write the topics down the side: finish and quality, crew, schedule, on time, communication, price and scope, payment and deposits, follow-through, cleanup, honesty, know-how, warranty, damage.
2. Read your last 30 reviews, plus every 1-, 2- and 3-star review you have.
3. Mark each topic a review talks about. Use one column for 5-star and one for the rest.
4. Circle the topic with the most marks in the bad column. Its section in Part 2 is your first fix.
5. Circle the topic with the most marks in the 5-star column. Put proof of it on your website (section 5).

Example. A made-up painter's audit: the finish in most of their 5-star reviews, and touch-ups in two of their three bad ones. They start with the touch-up kit and the corner-to-corner rule in section 8.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Run the audit tonight.
- [ ] Pick one fix from Part 2 and start it tomorrow.
- [ ] Put a reminder to run it again in 90 days.



Part 5

How we got these numbers

16 The method and its limits

The idea. Here's exactly what's behind every figure, so you know how far to trust it.

- **The businesses:** 265 local trade businesses in 10 Southeast cities, from Google Maps results we gathered in November 2026. In each city and trade we took the two most-reviewed in the map's top 3, the two most-reviewed in spots 4 to 20, and one below spot 20. Painters: 33 (20 top-3, 13 from spots 4 to 20, none below 20). We dropped businesses whose Google category wasn't painting, such as paint-and-sip studios and art shops.
- **The reviews:** for each business, the newest 180 reviews plus the 70 lowest, or every review if it had fewer than 250. Painters: 5,568 reviews, 4,855 with text, 195 of them 1- or 2-star and 4,455 5-star.
- **The topics:** a word-pattern dictionary of 14 topics. We read 1,200 reviews by hand to check it, 200 per trade. For painting reviews, 96.5% of tags were right and they caught 93.9% of topics.
- **Owner replies:** the first 50 reviews per business in Google's "most relevant" order, 1,640 painting reviews in all, only 41 of them bad.

The limits:

- **Southeast only,** and only businesses that show up on Google Maps. Not a national random sample.
- **Our thinnest trade.** 33 companies, none from below spot 20, and 195 bad reviews with text. The complaint shares are a guide, not precise figures, and say more about established painters than new ones.
- **Bad reviews were oversampled on purpose.** That's why every share is "of bad reviews" or "of 5-star reviews," never "of all reviews."
- **Tags slightly undercount,** most for quality and communication. Damage is the weakest: our tags caught only about 60% of damage stories in the hand check.
- **"Price" means the review talks about money,** including fees, quotes, refunds and billing, not only "too expensive."
- **Reply figures are directional,** and very rough for bad reviews (41 in the sample).
- **Staff names are an estimate,** from a list of first names with unclear words removed.

To quote a figure, credit "GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026." Our cross-trade report, What 55,000 Reviews Say About Local Trades, has the same study for all six trades.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Compare your audit from section 15 with the tables in sections 1 and 6.
- [ ] Where your numbers differ from ours, trust yours.



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you only do five things today, do these:

- [ ] Run the review audit on your own profile (section 15).
- [ ] Add "in and out" lines for every surface, and a change form, to your estimate (section 7).
- [ ] Put a roll of blue tape in every kit and make the walk-through the last step (section 2).
- [ ] Write your warranty in one sentence and add it to your estimate (section 11).
- [ ] Turn on review alerts and reply to every unanswered review, 3-star ones included (sections 13 and 14).

Tomorrow, save the four job texts on every crew lead's phone (section 9). Run the audit again in 90 days and see which topic moved.



Where to go next

When a bad review lands, How to Answer a Bad Review has replies for the six most common cases. To get more 5-star reviews from the jobs you already do, 50 Review Request Texts That Get Replies gives you the words, with lines written for painters. The Painter Marketing Playbook covers the rest: your website, your Google profile, colors and seasons.

For the same study across all six trades, read What 55,000 Reviews Say About Local Trades.



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local does this work for painters every month. 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. GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026. 265 local trade businesses in Nashville, Tulsa, Louisville, Huntsville, Lexington, Birmingham, Memphis, Little Rock, Montgomery and Jackson MS, picked from three map bands per city. Painting figures come from the 5,568 reviews of 33 painters (4,855 with text; 195 1- or 2-star and 4,455 5-star with text). Topic tags checked by hand on 1,200 reviews (96.2% of tags right, 90.6% of topics caught overall; painting 96.5% and 93.9%). Owner replies from the first 50 reviews per business in Google's "most relevant" order (1,640 painting reviews, 41 of them 1- or 2-star). Totals only; no business, reviewer or staff member named. (before you start, sections 1 to 16)
2. BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (1,002 US adults, published Feb 11, 2026): 81% expect a reply to their review within a week; 19% expect one the same day. brightlocal.com (section 13)
3. Same survey: 50% are put off by generic or templated replies. (section 14) (brightlocal.com)

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

- Google Maps user-contributed content policy (bans asking for reviews with specific content, including naming a staff member; bans staff review quotas, incentives and asking only happy customers): support.google.com (section 3)
- Google Business Profile Help, "Manage customer reviews" (the reviewer is notified when you reply and can still edit their review): support.google.com (section 13)

GTL estimates

None. Every figure in this guide comes from our review study or the sources above. The fixes are practices, not predictions, so we haven't attached numbers to them.

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