Grow That Local

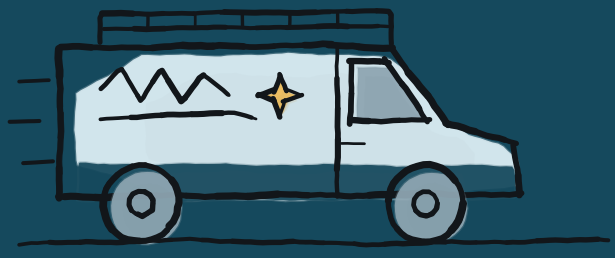
a free guide

What customers love and hate about plumbers

We studied 11,304 Google reviews of 47 plumbing 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 plumbing business owners writing ads or a website.

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



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Contents

Before you start: how this guide works 3

Part 1 **What plumbing customers praise** 4

1 The praise, in one table 4
2 "Who's coming into my house?": answer it before you knock 5
3 "Explained": show the problem before you fix it 5
4 Speed: say when, then beat it 6
5 Use their words on your website and in your ads 7

Part 2 **What plumbing customers complain about** 8

6 The complaints, in one table 8
7 Price: say the fee on the phone, and the price before the wrench 9
8 "They tried to sell me a new one": two prices, every time 10
9 Waiting: keep the window, and text when you're late 10
10 Silence: a call-back rule, and a manager who calls 11
11 Fixes that didn't last: a written warranty and a three-day check 12
12 Mess and damage: the leave-it-cleaner checklist 12

Part 3 **Answering bad reviews** 14

13 How plumbers reply, and how fast 14
14 Angry plumbing reviews are long, so your reply must be specific 14

Part 4 **Your own review audit** 16

15 Read your last 30 reviews the way we did 16

Part 5 **How we got these numbers** 17

16 The method and its limits 17

Your first 24 hours, in one list 18

Where to go next 19

If you'd rather hand it off 20

Sources 21

GTL estimates 21

Before you start

Happy plumbing customers write about the plumber: polite, quick, and explained what was wrong. Angry ones write about the bill. Money came up in more bad plumbing reviews than in any other trade we studied. We counted which topics show up in each, so you can fix the ones that cost you stars before the next call.

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 11,304 reviews of the 47 plumbing companies among them, 9,183 of which have text. We picked plumbers from the map's top 3, from spots 4 to 20 and from below 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. Only 3.0% of the newest plumbing reviews we pulled were 1 or 2 stars, and 94.0% 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."
- 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 plumbing customers praise

1 The praise, in one table

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

Topic	Share of 5-star plumbing reviews
The plumber and staff	57.9%
Know-how and explaining the work	35.4%
Scheduling and speed	33.7%
The quality of the work	31.9%
Showing up on time	14.4%
Price and value	12.2%
Communication	11.9%

The plumber is the review. 57.9% of 5-star plumbing reviews talk about the person who came, the highest share of the six trades we studied. Know-how is second. A homeowner can't judge a solder joint, but they can judge whether the plumber was polite and explained the problem.

Happy plumbing customers also write short reviews. The typical 5-star one with text ran 20 words, the shortest of the six trades. So the words they pick matter (section 5).

Example. A made-up plumber reads their last 20 five-star reviews. Fourteen talk about the plumber, eight say "explained," and five mention same-day service. Two mention the price. That tells them to sell the person and the speed, not the price.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Open your Google profile and read your last 20 five-star reviews.
- [ ] Tally how many mention the plumber, explaining, speed, quality and price.
- [ ] Circle the topic that comes up most. That's what your website should lead with.

2 "Who's coming into my house?": answer it before you knock

The idea. "Courteous," "polite," "friendly" and "professional" were all among the words most typical of 5-star plumbing reviews. 38.9% of 5-star plumbing reviews mention a staff member by first name, against 11.9% of bad ones (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). A stranger is coming into the house, often in an emergency. Customers praise the plumber who made that feel safe.

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. Tell the customer who's coming before the van arrives.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Polite, friendly and professional from start to finish.
On-my-way text:
"Hi [first name], it's [business]. [plumber name] is on the way and should be there by [time]. Photo attached so you know who's at the door. Questions? [phone]"

At the door (made-up example, use your own words):
Before stepping in:
"Hi, I'm [plumber name] with [business]. I'll put these shoe covers on. Can you show me where the water's coming from, and where your shut-off is?"

Example. A made-up plumber adds each plumber's photo to the on-my-way text and hands over a card with their first name at the door. No one asks for a name in a review. Over the next few months, more reviews mention the plumber by name on their own.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Take a clear, friendly photo of each plumber in uniform.
- [ ] Save the on-my-way text with a slot for the photo.
- [ ] Put a box of shoe covers in every van.
- [ ] Check your review ask: an honest review, no names or words requested, no staff targets.

3 "Explained": show the problem before you fix it

The idea. Know-how and explaining came up in 35.4% of 5-star plumbing reviews, and "explained," "knowledgeable," "thorough" and "problem" were among the most typical 5-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). Customers trust what they see: the camera video of the sewer line, the corroded fitting, the old flapper in your hand.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Explained the problem in plain words and showed photos of what they found.

The fix is a show-then-fix rule for every job.

1. Find the problem.
2. Show it: a photo, the camera video, or the part.
3. Say what it is in one plain sentence, with no trade words.
4. Give the price before you start (section 7).
5. Fix it, then show the "after" and hand back the old part.

Example. A made-up plumber texts the customer a 20-second camera clip of the root mass in their sewer line, with "This is what's backing up your drain." The customer approves the job on the spot. Their review says "explained everything."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Make "photo before, photo after" a rule for every plumber.
- [ ] Practice saying three common problems in one plain sentence each.
- [ ] Keep a small bag in each van for handing back old parts.

4 Speed: say when, then beat it

The idea. Scheduling and speed came up in 33.7% of 5-star plumbing reviews, and on-time arrival in 14.4%. "Quickly," "quick," "fast," "prompt" and "efficient" were all among the most typical 5-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). A plumber who comes the same day earns a review. A plumber who says "this afternoon" and comes this afternoon earns one too.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Called in the morning and someone was here the same day.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Fit us in fast when it was an emergency.

The fix is to give an honest arrival window on the phone and send the on-my-way text (section 2). If you can't come today, say so and give the shut-off step.

The booking line (use your own words):
On the phone:
"We can be there between [time] and [time] today. [plumber name] will text you when they're on the way. Until then, turn the valve under the sink clockwise to stop the water."

Example. A made-up plumber stops giving four-hour windows and gives two-hour ones, with the on-my-way text. Reviews start saying "right on time" instead of "finally showed up."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Decide the shortest arrival window you can keep, and use it from today.
- [ ] Write the shut-off steps for the five calls you get most.
- [ ] Use the booking line on your next call.

5 Use their words on your website and in your ads

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

Most typical of 5-star plumbing reviews	Most typical of 1-star plumbing reviews
professional, knowledgeable, friendly, explained, quickly, courteous, polite, thorough, efficient, fast, prompt	called, never, charge, charged, paid, quoted, fee, replace, manager, money, nothing, already

The 1-star list is a list of money words: charge, charged, paid, quoted, fee, money. "Replace" is there too, the customer who felt pushed into a bigger job.

Don't paste the 5-star adjectives onto your site. Every plumber says "professional." Show the proof.

- **"Explained":** "We show you a photo of the problem before we fix anything."
- **"Courteous":** "Shoe covers on, every time. You'll get a photo of your plumber before they arrive."
- **"Prompt":** your real arrival window, and the hours you really answer.
- **Against "fee" and "quoted":** say your service fee on the website and on the phone, and "you'll get the price before we start."

Example. A made-up plumber swaps "Professional, courteous plumbers" for "You'll know your plumber's name, see the problem, and get the price before we start." The new headline answers the worries in the 1-star list.

Do it in 24 hours

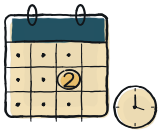
- [ ] Read your homepage and cross out every adjective a competitor could also use.
- [ ] Replace each one with a fact, a photo or a rule you keep.
- [ ] Add your service fee and "price before we start" to your website.

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 plumbing customers complain about

6 The complaints, in one table

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

Topic	Share of bad plumbing reviews	Share of 5-star plumbing reviews
Price, quotes and value	69.5%	12.2%
Scheduling and speed	43.4%	33.7%
Communication	28.5%	11.9%
The plumber and staff	27.8%	57.9%
Honesty and sales pressure	22.1%	5.5%
Know-how	19.9%	35.4%
Showing up on time	16.7%	14.4%
The quality of the work	15.1%	31.9%
Follow-through	10.8%	3.4%
Payment, deposits and refunds	10.5%	0.6%
Warranty	8.1%	1.1%
Cleanup	3.8%	3.3%
Damage to the property	3.7%	0.2%

Price came up in 69.5% of bad plumbing reviews, the highest share of the six trades we studied. That's more than five times its share of 5-star ones. "Price" here includes fees, quotes, refunds and billing, not only "too expensive." In plumbing it's mostly service fees, after-hours charges and bills that didn't match what was said on the phone.

Honesty is the other big gap: 22.1% of bad reviews and 5.5% of good ones.

Damage is hard for our tags to spot, so its real share is probably higher than 3.7%.

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: say the fee on the phone, and the price before the wrench

The idea. Price came up in 69.5% of bad plumbing reviews. "Charge," "charged," "fee" and "quoted" were all among the most typical 1-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). The story is almost always a surprise: a fee nobody mentioned, or a bill bigger than the number on the phone.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Was charged a service fee just for the visit, then quoted far more than other companies for the same repair.

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

The fix has three steps: the fee on the phone, the price in writing before work, and a yes from the customer.

The phone script (use your own words):
When they book:
"Our service fee is [amount]. That covers the plumber coming out and finding the problem. If you go ahead with the repair, [it's applied to the job / it's separate]. Before any work starts, you'll get the full price and you decide."
After-hours:
"After [time] and on weekends, the service fee is [amount], because a plumber is leaving home to come to you. Do you want us tonight, or first thing tomorrow at the regular fee?"
Price approval text:
"Hi [first name], here's the price for today's job: [job] for [amount], including parts and labor. Reply YES to go ahead, or call [phone] with questions."

How to explain price (script):
When they say it's too much:
"I understand. Here's what's in it: [parts], [labor], and our [length] warranty on the work. If you'd like a second opinion, that's fine. The service fee covers today's visit either way."

Example (sample numbers). A made-up plumber says "$89 service fee, applied to the repair if you go ahead" on every call. A customer with a running toilet approves a $240 repair by text. The bill says $240. The review says "price matched exactly."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write your service fee and after-hours fee on a card by every phone.
- [ ] Save the price approval text and make it a rule before any job over [amount].
- [ ] Put your service fee on your website.
- [ ] Practice the "too much" script once out loud.

8 "They tried to sell me a new one": two prices, every time

The idea. Honesty and sales pressure came up in 22.1% of bad plumbing reviews and 5.5% of 5-star ones. "Replace" was among the most typical 1-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). Water heaters, toilets and sewer lines are where it happens: the customer called about a repair and heard about a replacement.

Paraphrase, not a real review: What they said on the phone was not what happened at the house.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Told us the repair could wait and saved us money.

The fix is a rule: whenever you suggest a replacement, give the repair price next to it, and say honestly how long the repair should last.

The two-price script (use your own words):
Repair or replace:
"You have two choices. I can replace the [part] today for [amount]. With a [age]-year-old water heater, that should get you about [time]. Or a new one is [amount], with a [length] warranty. Both are fair. Which works for you?"

Example. A made-up plumber's techs write both prices on every quote where replacement comes up. Some customers pick the repair. The ones who pick replacement do it because they chose, and their reviews say "no pressure."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Make "repair price next to replacement price" a rule for every plumber.
- [ ] Add a second price line to your quote form.
- [ ] If you pay techs on sales, check whether it pushes replacements a customer didn't need.

9 Waiting: keep the window, and text when you're late

The idea. Scheduling and speed came up in 43.4% of bad plumbing reviews, and on-time arrival in 16.7% (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). Speed is also high in 5-star reviews (33.7%). The bad ones are about a window that was missed or a visit cancelled without warning.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Took a day off work for the appointment window and they cancelled at the last minute.

Paraphrase, not a real review: No call or text to say the tech was running hours late.

The fix is one text, sent the minute you know you'll miss the window.

Running late:
"Hi [first name], it's [business]. I'm sorry, [plumber name] is running late on an emergency. New time: [time]. If that doesn't work, reply and we'll set another today."

Can't come today:
"Hi [first name], it's [business]. I'm sorry, we can't make it today. The first time we can be there is [day, time]. Reply YES to keep it, or call [phone]. Turn off the valve under the sink until then."

Example. A made-up plumber's dispatcher checks the board at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and texts every customer whose window is at risk. The "never showed up" reviews stop, because nobody is left waiting without a word.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Save the two texts as shortcuts on the dispatch phone.
- [ ] Set two board checks a day to catch late windows early.
- [ ] Make it a rule: nobody waits past their window without a text.

10 Silence: a call-back rule, and a manager who calls

The idea. Communication came up in 28.5% of bad plumbing reviews. "Called," "call," "phone" and "manager" were among the most typical 1-star words (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). After a job goes wrong, the customer calls to complain, asks for a manager, and doesn't hear back. Then they write the review.

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

Paraphrase, not a real review: Answered every call and question quickly.

The fix is a rule for complaint calls: the owner or a manager calls back the same day, before the customer has to ask.

After a complaint:
"Hi [first name], it's [your name], the owner at [business]. I heard about [problem]. I'm sorry. I'd like to make it right. When's a good time today for a quick call?"

Example. A made-up plumber's office writes every complaint on a whiteboard. The owner calls each one back before 5 p.m. Customers who expected to fight get an apology and a date for the fix.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Decide who calls back complaints, and by when.
- [ ] Save the complaint text above for when you can't call right away.
- [ ] Call back every complaint from the last two weeks that didn't get a reply.

11 Fixes that didn't last: a written warranty and a three-day check

The idea. Quality came up in 15.1% of bad plumbing reviews, follow-through in 10.8% and warranty in 8.1%. Warranty came up in only 1.1% of 5-star plumbing reviews (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). The story: the leak came back, and the customer was charged again to fix it.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Still leaking a few days after the repair.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Paid for a fix that did not last and was charged again to come back.

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

The fix has two parts. Write your warranty on every invoice, in one sentence. And send a check-in text three days later.

Three days after the job:

"Hi [first name], it's [business]. Checking on the [repair] from [day]. Any drips or anything not right? If so, reply here and we'll come back. It's covered."

Example. A made-up plumber adds "Labor on this repair is covered for [length]. If it leaks, we come back free" to every invoice. When a compression fitting weeps after two days, the customer texts back instead of posting a review.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write your warranty in one sentence and add it to your invoice template.
- [ ] Send the three-day text to every customer from the last three days.
- [ ] Decide what's covered and for how long, and tell every plumber the same answer.

12 Mess and damage: the leave-it-cleaner checklist

The idea. Cleanup came up in 3.8% of bad plumbing reviews and damage in 3.7%. Payment and refunds came up in 10.5% of bad ones and 0.6% of 5-star ones (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). Damage is the topic our tags miss most, so treat 3.7% as a floor. A wet cabinet, a scratched floor or a muddy carpet stays in a customer's mind long after the leak is fixed.

Paraphrase, not a real review: The crew damaged something at the house and never made it right.

Paraphrase, not a real review: Covered and protected everything so there was no damage at all.

The leave-it-cleaner checklist (every job):

- [ ] Shoe covers on at the door.
- [ ] Drop cloth or towel under every work area.
- [ ] Old parts and boxes go out to the van.
- [ ] Wipe down the cabinet, floor and fixture.
- [ ] Run the water with the customer watching, and check for drips.
- [ ] If anything got damaged, say so before you leave, and say how you'll fix it.

Example. A made-up plumber's tech nicks a vanity door while removing a trap. They point it out, take a photo and book a touch-up. The customer's review mentions the honesty, not the nick.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Put the checklist on a card in every van.
- [ ] Stock towels and drop cloths in every van.
- [ ] Tell every plumber: say it before the customer finds it.

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 plumbers reply, and how fast

The idea. Plumbers are the fastest repliers of the six trades we studied. In our reply sample, they answered 88.7% of 5-star reviews and 66.1% of 1- and 2-star ones. The typical reply came 12 days after the review, and 31.5% came within a week (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026).

That's the best of the six trades, and still far from what customers expect. 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).

The bad reviews are the ones left waiting: a third of them got no reply at all. Reply to those first, and 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 168 of them were bad plumbing reviews. Treat the numbers as a direction, not an exact rate.

Example. A made-up plumber turns on review alerts and replies to bad reviews the same afternoon, after calling the customer. The reply goes up while the customer is still deciding whether to edit their stars.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Turn on review alerts in your Google profile, so new reviews reach your phone.
- [ ] Reply to every unanswered 1-, 2- and 3-star review, oldest first.
- [ ] Put a daily 15-minute reply slot on your calendar.

14 Angry plumbing reviews are long, so your reply must be specific

The idea. The typical bad plumbing review ran 89 words. The typical 5-star one ran 20 (GTL analysis of 55,042 Google reviews, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). The angry customer lists the fee, the quote, the time they waited and who they talked to. A two-line "Sorry, please call us" tells the next reader you didn't read it. 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. Explain calmly, so the next reader understands, then say what you're doing about it.
4. Take it offline, with a name and a number.

Example. A made-up reply to a 1-star review about a service fee:

> **Thanks for telling us, and I'm sorry the fee was a surprise. Our service fee covers the plumber's trip and finding the problem, and we should have said so clearly when you booked. That's on us, and we've changed how we explain it on the phone. I'd like to talk it through. I'll call you today. [your name], owner**

Never mention the customer's address, the bill amount or what was wrong in their home. Keep private facts private.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pick your oldest unanswered bad review and rewrite your reply with the four parts.
- [ ] Call the customer before you post it.
- [ ] 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 47 plumbing companies. Yours will be different. In 20 minutes you can run the same check on your own profile and know which fix to do first.

The audit (a sheet of paper is enough):

1. Write the topics down the side: the plumber, know-how, speed, quality, on time, price and fees, honesty, communication, follow-through, payment, warranty, cleanup, 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 plumber's audit: the plumber in most of their 5-star reviews, and fees in four of their six bad ones. They start with the phone script in section 7.

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. Plumbers: 47 (20 top-3, 20 from spots 4 to 20, 7 below 20).
- **The reviews:** for each business, the newest 180 reviews plus the 70 lowest, or every review if it had fewer than 250. Plumbers: 11,304 reviews, 9,183 with text, 2,176 of them 1- or 2-star and 6,472 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 plumbing reviews, 98.0% 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, 2,350 plumbing reviews in all.

The limits:

- **Southeast only,** and only businesses that show up on Google Maps. Not a national random sample.
- **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.** Google's "most relevant" order favors reviews with replies, and the sample had only 168 bad plumbing reviews.
- **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).
- [ ] Put your service fee by every phone and on your website, and start the price approval text (section 7).
- [ ] Make "repair price next to replacement price" a rule (section 8).
- [ ] Save the running-late text and the on-my-way text with a photo (sections 2 and 9).
- [ ] Turn on review alerts and reply to every unanswered bad review with the four parts (sections 13 and 14).

Tomorrow, add your warranty line to every invoice and send the three-day check (section 11). 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, including "too expensive." 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 plumbers. The Plumber Marketing Playbook covers the rest: your website, your Google profile, emergencies and freezes.

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 plumbers 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. Plumbing figures come from the 11,304 reviews of 47 plumbers (9,183 with text; 2,176 1- or 2-star and 6,472 5-star with text). Topic tags checked by hand on 1,200 reviews (96.2% of tags right, 90.6% of topics caught overall; plumbing 98.0% and 93.9%). Owner replies from the first 50 reviews per business in Google's "most relevant" order (2,350 plumbing reviews, 168 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 2)
- 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