Grow That Local

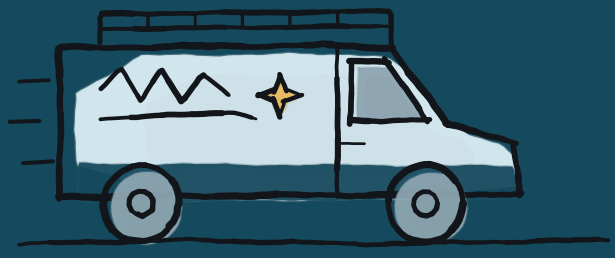
a free guide

The marketing mistakes HVAC owners make

The ten that cost heating and cooling companies the most, what each one costs you, and the fix for each.

Check these before the next dollar goes out the door.

- 10 short sections in 4 parts
- 41 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

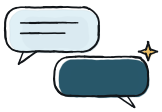
These are the ten marketing mistakes we see cost HVAC companies the most money. Some lose the calls a heat wave sends you. Some lose trust on the replacement quote. One is a tax-credit line that's now simply wrong.

Each one has four parts: what the mistake looks like, what it costs, the fix, and a short checklist you can finish in 24 hours. Read the list, find the two or three you're making, and fix those first.

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, companies or results.

One note on texting. Several fixes below use texts to customers. A marketing text needs the customer's OK first, should say who it's from, and must stop when they reply STOP. Section 9 has the details.



Part 1

Mistakes that lose the calls the weather sends you

1 Letting calls ring out on the hottest day of the year

What it looks like. It's 98 degrees, the phones won't stop and your techs are in attics. Calls roll to voicemail. The family with no AC and a toddler at home hangs up and calls the next company on the map.

What it costs. Speed decides who gets the job. In a well-known Harvard Business Review study, companies that contacted a lead within an hour were nearly seven times more likely to qualify it than companies that waited longer, and 23% never responded at all (HBR, "The Short Life of Online Sales Leads," 2011, hbr.org). The study is older and wasn't about HVAC, but the lesson fits.

> **Example (sample numbers).** A made-up HVAC company misses 25 calls during a four-day heat wave. If ten are no-AC repairs at $450 and they lose half, that's $2,250 in repairs gone. Worse, a few of those units were 15 years old, and the company that fixed them is now first in line for a $12,000 replacement.

The fix. Turn on missed-call text-back, and make it ask the question that sorts the calls: is anyone at risk from the heat or cold? Reply for real within minutes. GTL estimate: aim for five minutes in work hours, because a family with no heat or AC often calls two or three companies in a row. When you can't get there today, say when you can.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back on your business line.
- [ ] Set the text to: "Sorry we missed you, our techs are out on calls. Is your system out completely? Is anyone in the home elderly, very young or unwell? Reply here and we'll get back to you fast."
- [ ] Decide who reads and answers texts during a heat wave or cold snap.
- [ ] Call back every missed call from last week today.

2 Quoting a new system and never following up

What it looks like. You quote a replacement while the old unit is still limping along. The homeowner says they'll think about it. You never hear back, and you never ask. When it finally quits in August, they call whoever answers first.

What it costs. A replacement is your biggest ticket. The homeowner who didn't answer is usually comparing quotes, waiting on a rebate, or hoping the old unit makes it one more season.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up company sends 15 replacement quotes a month and wins 5. Ten go quiet. If follow-ups win back one $12,000 system a month, that's about $4,200 of gross profit at 35%.

The fix. Follow up three times over a month, then once more right before the next hot or cold season. GTL estimate: one message is easy to miss, more than three in a month feels pushy, and the first heat or frost makes people think again. Send the photos of what you found, and the repair price next to the replacement price.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pull every replacement quote from the last six months that didn't book.
- [ ] Text each one today, if they've agreed to texts: "Checking in on the quote for your system. Any questions? Happy to walk you through the repair option too."
- [ ] Set reminders for day 2, day 7 and day 30, plus one six weeks before the next season.
- [ ] Write down the reason each one gives for waiting.

3 Buying shared leads and never counting which ones booked

What it looks like. You buy AC repair and replacement leads from a lead site. In summer they pour in, half are already booked elsewhere, and you're racing several other companies to call. You know the monthly bill but not how many systems it sold.

What it costs. On Angi, for example, "each time a homeowner submits a project request, we will match them with no more than five pros" (Angi pro help, intercom.help). The same homeowner can hear from you and four other companies, and you pay for the lead either way.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up company spends $3,600 a month on 60 leads at $60 each. Twenty were replacement leads: $1,200 for one sold system. Forty were repair leads: $2,400 for 12 repairs, about $200 of lead cost on each $450 repair. They only saw it once they wrote it down.

The fix. Shared leads can pay, but only if you count them. Track each lead from first contact to paid invoice, and judge every source by cost per booked job and per sold system. Reply within minutes, since you're one of several. Angi says "in some cases, you can request a lead credit" (same page), so ask for one on leads outside your area or for work you don't do.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Make a sheet with one row per lead: date, source, cost, minutes to reply, booked, repair or replacement, invoice amount.
- [ ] Fill it in for every lead from the last 60 days.
- [ ] Work out cost per booked repair and cost per sold system for each source.
- [ ] Request credits on every lead that doesn't fit.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first 25 customers texted

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

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



Part 2

Mistakes on your website, Google profile and quotes

4 Still advertising the federal heat pump tax credit

What it looks like. Your homepage, your ads or your quotes still promise money back on a heat pump "with the federal tax credit." It was true for three years, so nobody took it down.

What it costs. It's wrong now. The IRS says the energy efficient home improvement credit, which offered up to $2,000 a year for qualified heat pumps, covers property placed in service from January 1, 2023, before December 31, 2025 (IRS, irs.gov). The residential clean energy credit, which covered geothermal heat pumps, also ended for property placed in service after that date (IRS, irs.gov). A customer who counted on that money and doesn't get it remembers who told them.

The fix. Search everything you've published for "tax credit," "25C" and "rebate," and take down anything that promises federal money. Replace it with what's true where you work: state or utility rebates you've checked, and a line telling customers to check with their tax preparer.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Search your website, Google posts, ads and quote templates for "tax credit."
- [ ] Remove or rewrite every line that promises the federal credit.
- [ ] Check your state energy office and your local utility for rebates that are live today.
- [ ] Tell your comfort advisors and office staff what changed, so they stop saying it on calls.

5 A keyword-stuffed Google name, and holiday hours nobody updated

What it looks like. Your profile name is "(Your Name) Heating & Air | AC Repair | Furnace Repair." The primary category is general. And on the day after Thanksgiving, Google says you're open while the phones go to voicemail, or says you're closed while you're on call.

What it costs. Google's rules say "including unnecessary information in your business name isn't permitted" (Google Business Profile guidelines, support.google.com), and a profile that breaks them can be suspended and drop out of the map. Google also says not to "select a category for every product or service" (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). Wrong holiday hours cost you the calls on the exact days a furnace is most likely to quit.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up company's Google hours say closed on the Friday after Thanksgiving, while they're on call. The first cold morning brings 12 no-heat searches that see "Closed." If they'd have booked half at $450, that's $2,700 lost in one day.

The fix. Use your real name only. Set the primary category to "HVAC contractor," and add a few others only for work you really do, such as air conditioning contractor or furnace repair. Put individual jobs in your services list. Set special hours for every holiday: Google says they're for "holidays, special events, and other unusual situations" so your regular hours stay the same (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com).

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Take screenshots of your profile today, so you have a record.
- [ ] Remove every keyword from your business name.
- [ ] Set "HVAC contractor" as your primary category and remove categories for work you don't do.
- [ ] Enter special hours for every holiday between now and next summer.
- [ ] Make one change at a time, a day or two apart.

6 Selling the new system before showing the repair price

What it looks like. A tech walks in for a no-heat call and walks out with a replacement proposal and no repair price. The homeowner feels cornered. Their review says "they tried to sell me a new system."

What it costs. That review sits on your profile for years, and it lands on your biggest job. A heat pump conversion averaged about $19,484 in 2025 (JLC Cost vs Value, jlconline.com), so homeowners expect to be upsold and read reviews for exactly that worry.

The fix. Do the opposite of what they expect. Show photos of what you found. Give the repair price next to the replacement price, in writing, and let them choose. Tell them honestly how long the repair is likely to buy. The homeowner who chose to repair this time is the one who calls you to replace it later.

Example. A made-up company's same-day text after a repair-or-replace visit:

> **Here's what we found, with photos. Option 1: replace the failed part, today. Option 2: replace the system. Your unit is 16 years old, so the repair may buy a season or two. Either is a fair choice. Reply with any questions.**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Make a quote template with two prices side by side: repair and replace.
- [ ] Ask every tech to send three photos with every repair-or-replace quote.
- [ ] Read your reviews for "upsell," "new system" and "pushy." Reply calmly to each.
- [ ] Remove any sales bonus that pays only for replacements and nothing for honest repairs.

or we can do it for you

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

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

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



Part 3

Mistakes with reviews and past customers

7 Never asking for reviews, or giving something for them

What it looks like. The house is cool again, the customer says thanks, and the tech heads to the next call. Nobody asks. Or the office tries to catch up with "a free filter for a 5-star review," or gives techs a monthly review target.

What it costs. Reviews decide which company gets called. In BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 97% of consumers said they read reviews for local businesses, and 74% look for reviews from the last three months (BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026, brightlocal.com). Paying for reviews is worse than not asking. Google bans offering "payment, discounts, free goods and/or services" in exchange for a review, asking only happy customers, and giving staff review quotas (Google Maps content policy, support.google.com). The FTC's rule on fake reviews has applied since October 21, 2024 (FTC, ftc.gov).

The fix. Text your review link about an hour after every visit, to every customer, and offer nothing for it. Use tune-up season: tune-ups are short, friendly visits, so they keep reviews coming in months when repairs are slow. GTL estimate: at least two new reviews a month, more in tune-up months.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Get your Google review link from your profile (look for "Ask for reviews").
- [ ] Text it to every customer from the last 30 days, repairs and tune-ups alike.
- [ ] Remove any gift, discount or tech quota tied to reviews.
- [ ] Add "send the review link" to the end of every service ticket.

8 No maintenance plan, and tune-ups that wait for the customer to call

What it looks like. You fix the AC and leave. No one mentions a plan. In spring you wait for tune-up calls, and they arrive the same week as the first heat wave, when your techs are already buried in repairs.

What it costs. Feast or famine. Your quiet months stay quiet, and your busy weeks turn away paying work. ENERGY STAR already tells homeowners to get a cooling check each spring and a heating check each fall (ENERGY STAR, energystar.gov), so the customer agrees with the idea. Nobody asked them at the right time.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up company with 300 plan members books 600 tune-ups a year at $150 before each season starts. That's $90,000 of work in what would be quiet weeks. Without the plan, they wait for the phone.

The fix. Offer the plan right after the repair, while the customer remembers how it felt to be without heat or AC. Then book tune-ups before the season: GTL estimate, start four to six weeks before your first usual hot or cold week, because reminders need a few weeks to work and repair calls crowd tune-ups off the schedule once the weather turns.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write a one-page plan sheet: two visits a year, what's checked, what members get.
- [ ] Ask every tech to leave it after every repair, and to mention it once.
- [ ] Put your tune-up push dates in the calendar, six weeks before each season.
- [ ] Add a "pick a time" booking button for tune-ups on your website.

9 Forgetting every system you've ever touched

What it looks like. Your software has every install date, but nobody uses it. There's no sticker on the furnace. When it stops on a cold night, the homeowner walks to it, finds the last company's sticker, and calls them.

What it costs. These are your cheapest calls, going to someone else. InterNACHI's chart puts central air conditioners at 7 to 15 years, heat pumps at 10 to 15 and furnaces at 15 to 25 (InterNACHI, nachi.org), so your records are a calendar of future work. Texting them carelessly has a cost too. Federal law lets people sue for $500 per violation for some unwanted texts, and up to three times that when it's willful or knowing (47 U.S.C. 227, law.cornell.edu).

The fix. Put your sticker on every unit you touch, with your phone number and the service date. Text or email customers who agreed to hear from you when their system reaches the age where problems start. Say who it's from, and stop when anyone replies STOP: the FCC's rule treats replies like "stop," "quit" and "unsubscribe" as an opt-out that must be honored within ten business days (47 CFR 64.1200, law.cornell.edu).

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Order unit stickers with your name, phone number and a space for the service date.
- [ ] Pull every customer whose AC or furnace is 12 or more years old.
- [ ] Check which of them agreed to texts or emails.
- [ ] Send a check-in: "Hi, it's (your name) from (company). Your AC is about (age) years old. Want a tune-up before summer so it's ready for the heat? Reply STOP to opt out."

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

Mistakes that waste money on mail

10 One postcard blast to the whole town

What it looks like. You mail 10,000 cards across town once, in the middle of a mild spring, with a coupon and every service you offer. A few calls come in. You decide mail doesn't work.

What it costs. GTL estimate: a single mailing brings only a few calls per thousand cards. A new system is a rare purchase, so only the few homes with a dying unit that month act, and a mild week is when the fewest units die.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up company spends $4,500 on one town-wide spring mailing and gets 14 calls, mostly tune-ups. The next year they spend the same on the streets around each install in neighborhoods built in the same few years, three times each, timed for the week before the first heat.

The fix. Mail the homes around your installs. Houses built in the same years often got their first systems at the same time, so the neighbors' units are probably close behind. Mail the same streets more than once, and just before the hot or cold season.

Do it in 24 hours

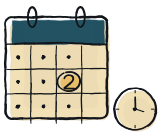
- [ ] Pick your last five system installs.
- [ ] Circle 100 to 300 homes around each, in neighborhoods built about the same time.
- [ ] Write a two-sentence card: what you just installed nearby, and what you'll check for them.
- [ ] Get a quote from a local printer or the post office's Every Door Direct Mail service, and plan three mailings.

or we can do it for you

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

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

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



Your first 24 hours, in one list

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

- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back that asks who's at risk (section 1).
- [ ] Take down every line that promises the federal tax credit (section 4).
- [ ] Enter special hours in Google for every holiday ahead (section 5).
- [ ] Text your review link to every customer from the last 30 days (section 7).
- [ ] Put your tune-up push dates in the calendar (section 8).

Next week, check three numbers: missed calls that got a text, replacement quotes that replied, and new reviews.



Where to go next

Every fix here comes from The HVAC Marketing Playbook, our free 36-section guide to the whole job of getting more heating and cooling calls: your website, your Google profile, reviews, posts, email, search, follow-up, heat waves and cold snaps, maintenance plans, repair or replace, rebates and tracking.

No-heat and no-AC calls start in the Google map, so that's where we'd start too.

or we can do it for you

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

Made before you pay anything. Google Business Profile is $200 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

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



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local fixes these for HVAC companies every month. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: Win-back texts. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted. Win-back texts is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. Harvard Business Review, "The Short Life of Online Sales Leads" (2011): contacting within an hour made qualifying a lead nearly 7 times more likely. hbr.org (section 1)
2. Same study: 23% of companies never responded to the lead. (section 1) (hbr.org)
3. JLC (Journal of Light Construction) Cost vs Value Report 2025: HVAC conversion to a heat pump, national average job cost $19,484. jlconline.com (section 6)
4. BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026: 97% read reviews for local businesses. brightlocal.com (section 7)
5. Same survey: 74% look for reviews from the last three months. (section 7) (brightlocal.com)
6. InterNACHI Standard Estimated Life Expectancy Chart: central air conditioner 7 to 15 years. nachi.org (section 9)
7. Same chart: heat pump 10 to 15 years. (section 9) (nachi.org)
8. Same chart: furnace 15 to 25 years. (section 9) (nachi.org)

Rules and platform terms cited (checked 2026-11-12):

- Angi pro help, opportunities and leads FAQ: a request is matched with no more than five pros; lead credits in some cases. intercom.help (section 3)
- IRS, Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit: up to $2,000 a year for qualified heat pumps, property placed in service from January 1, 2023, before December 31, 2025. irs.gov (section 4)
- IRS, Residential Clean Energy Credit, including geothermal heat pumps: not available for property placed in service after December 31, 2025. irs.gov (section 4)
- Google Business Profile guidelines (no unnecessary information in the name): support.google.com (section 5)
- Google Business Profile Help, choose a business category: support.google.com (section 5)
- Google Business Profile Help, special hours (holidays and unusual situations, up to 6 days closed in a row): support.google.com (section 5)
- Google Maps prohibited and restricted content (bans incentives, asking only happy customers and staff quotas): support.google.com (section 7)
- FTC, questions and answers on its rule against fake reviews (in effect since October 21, 2024): ftc.gov (section 7)
- ENERGY STAR, Maintenance Checklist (spring cooling check, fall heating check): energystar.gov (section 8)
- 47 U.S.C. 227(b)(3), private right of action, $500 per violation, up to three times for willful or knowing violations: law.cornell.edu (section 9)
- 47 CFR 64.1200(a)(10), revoking consent by any reasonable means, honored within ten business days: law.cornell.edu (section 9)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. Reply to new leads within five minutes in work hours (section 1). Reasoning: a family with no heat or AC often calls two or three companies in a row, and the first real reply usually books the visit.
2. Three follow-ups over a month on quiet replacement quotes, plus one before the next season (section 2). Reasoning: one message is easy to miss, more than three in a month feels pushy, and the first heat or frost makes people think again.
3. Aim for at least two new reviews a month, more in tune-up months (section 7). Reasoning: most shoppers look at the last three months, so you need fresh ones in every three-month window.
4. Start booking tune-ups four to six weeks before the first usual hot or cold week (section 8). Reasoning: reminders need a few weeks to work, and once the weather turns, repair calls crowd tune-ups off the schedule.
5. A single postcard mailing brings only a few calls per thousand cards (section 10). Reasoning: a new system is a rare purchase, so only the few homes with a dying unit that month act.

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