Grow That Local

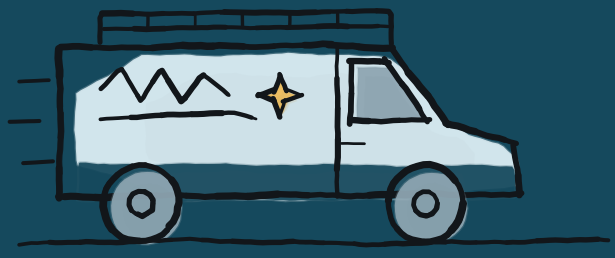
a free guide

The marketing mistakes painters make

The ten that cost painting 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

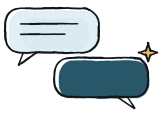
These are the ten marketing mistakes we see cost painters the most money. Some lose the estimate before you've seen the house. Some make your quote look like everyone else's. One, about older homes, can break federal law.

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, painters 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 8 has the details.



Part 1

Mistakes that lose the estimate

1 Calling back after the homeowner has booked three other painters

What it looks like. You're on a ladder with a brush in your hand. The phone buzzes in your pocket and you let it go. You call back after work, and the homeowner has already booked estimates with three other painters for this week.

What it costs. Homeowners are told to shop around. Benjamin Moore's advice to homeowners is to "plan three consultations and get quotes from each" (Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.com). So you're often one of three, and the slow reply can make you the fourth, the one who doesn't get a visit. 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 (HBR, "The Short Life of Online Sales Leads," 2011, hbr.org).

> **Example (sample numbers).** A made-up painter misses five calls a week in spring. If they lose one exterior a month to a faster painter, at $6,500 a job and 35% margin, that's about $2,300 of gross profit a month gone to voicemail.

The fix. Turn on missed-call text-back, and ask for photos of the rooms or the house so you can give a rough range before the visit. Reply for real within minutes. GTL estimate: aim for five minutes in work hours, because homeowners booking three estimates tend to book them in the order painters reply.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back with: "Sorry we missed you, we're on a ladder. Inside, outside or cabinets? Send a few photos and we'll text you back today."
- [ ] Decide who checks texts during the day, and how often.
- [ ] Offer two estimate times in your first reply.
- [ ] Call back every missed call from last week today.

2 "Just checking in" on estimates that stalled for a real reason

What it looks like. You send the estimate. A week later you text "Just checking in" and hear nothing. You give up.

What it costs. Painting estimates go quiet for reasons that have nothing to do with you: they can't pick a color, one partner wants to wait, the HOA hasn't approved the color yet, or it's November and they're thinking about spring. A generic nudge doesn't move any of those, so the job sits until another painter solves the real hold-up.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter sends 20 estimates a month and books 7. Thirteen go quiet. If follow-ups that solve the real hold-up win back two interior jobs a month at $3,000 each, that's $6,000 of work they had already done the estimates for.

The fix. Ask what's holding it up, then solve that. Offer sample boards for color, send the HOA form already filled in, or book a spring start date now. GTL estimate: three follow-ups over about three weeks, then one more when the season turns.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pull every estimate from the last 90 days that didn't book, and write next to each what you think the hold-up is.
- [ ] Text each one today, if they've agreed to texts, about that hold-up: "Still deciding on the color? I can paint two sample boards for you to try in your own light."
- [ ] Set reminders for day 3, day 10 and day 21 on every new estimate.
- [ ] Mark every winter exterior estimate for a text six weeks before spring.

3 Buying shared leads and not knowing which job type they bring

What it looks like. You buy painting leads from a lead site. Most are single rooms and small touch-ups, priced against four other painters. You wanted cabinets and exteriors. At month's end you know the bill, but not which jobs it bought.

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). You pay to compete with up to four others, and the leads may not be for the work that pays you best per crew-day.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter spends $1,500 a month on 30 leads. They book 5 jobs, all single interior rooms at $600. That's $300 in lead cost for each $600 room. A cabinet job from a referral at the paint store would have paid more for one crew week than all five.

The fix. Shared leads can pay, but only if you count them by job type. Track every lead from first contact to paid invoice, split into interior, exterior and cabinets. Narrow your lead settings to the job you want more of. 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, job type, booked, invoice amount.
- [ ] Fill it in for every lead from the last 60 days.
- [ ] Work out cost per booked job for each source and each job type.
- [ ] 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 and Google profile

4 A site that says "Painting" and never shows the prep

What it looks like. Your homepage says "Quality painting at fair prices" over a stock photo of a paint roller. It doesn't split inside, outside and cabinets, and it never shows scraping, sanding, caulking or masking.

What it costs. When every site looks the same, homeowners compare painters on the one thing they can see: the price. Two quotes for the same house can be far apart, and the difference is mostly prep. If you don't show your prep, your higher quote just looks higher.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter sends 20 exterior quotes a season at $6,500 and loses ten on price. If showing the prep wins back just two, that's $13,000 of work at the price they wanted.

The fix. Give the first screen three doors: inside, outside and cabinets, each with a real photo. Add a short "how we prep" section with photos from real jobs. Say what you do that the cheaper quote skips, and why it keeps paint from peeling in year two.

Example. A made-up painter's prep line:

> **Every exterior gets washed, scraped, sanded where it's rough, caulked at every gap and primed on bare wood before any paint goes on. That's most of the time we spend at your house, and it's why the paint lasts.**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Open your site on your phone. Can a visitor see in five seconds that you do inside, outside and cabinets?
- [ ] Pick ten prep photos from your phone: scraping, caulking, masking, floor protection.
- [ ] Write a five-sentence "How we prep" section and add it with those photos.
- [ ] Swap any stock photo on the first screen for your crew or a finished house.

5 A Google profile that says "Painter" and nothing else

What it looks like. Your profile name is "(Your Name) Painting | Cabinet Painting | Best Painters." The category is "Painter," and the services list is empty. No mention of cabinets, decks, drywall repair or color help.

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 breaking them can get a profile suspended. An empty services list means you miss the people searching for exactly the job they want, like "cabinet painting" or "deck staining." Google says to put jobs where they belong, not to "select a category for every product or service" (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com).

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter adds cabinet painting and deck staining as services and starts showing up for those searches. Two extra cabinet jobs a winter at $5,000 each is $10,000 in their slowest months.

The fix. Use your real name only. Keep "Painter" as the primary category, and check the list for others that fit work you really do. Add each job as its own service with one line: interior painting, exterior painting, cabinet painting, deck staining, drywall repair, color consultation.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Take screenshots of your profile today, so you have a record.
- [ ] Remove every keyword from your business name.
- [ ] Add every job you do as a service, each with a one-line description.
- [ ] Caption five profile photos with the job type and the color name.
- [ ] Make one change at a time, a day or two apart.

6 Advertising work on older homes without lead-safe certification

What it looks like. Your site says "We paint homes of every age," and your crews scrape and sand houses built in the 1950s. Nobody at the company is lead-safe certified, and nobody hands out the lead pamphlet.

What it costs. It breaks federal rules. EPA says anyone paid to do work that disturbs paint in homes built before 1978 must be certified, "even sole proprietorships," and firms "cannot advertise or perform renovation activities covered by the RRP Rule" in those homes without firm certification (EPA RRP for contractors, epa.gov). It's also a lot of houses: EPA cites a 2021 analysis estimating 30.9 million pre-1978 homes still contain lead-based paint (EPA fact sheet, 2024, epa.gov).

The fix. Get your firm and at least one renovator certified, follow the lead-safe work practices, and then say so. Done right, it's one of the strongest trust lines a painter can put on a site. EPA also runs a public search of certified firms, so homeowners can check you.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Check whether your firm is certified in EPA's lead-safe firm search.
- [ ] If not, look up the certification course and firm application for your state today.
- [ ] Until you're certified, remove any wording that offers work on pre-1978 homes.
- [ ] Ask the year built on every estimate, and write it on the job sheet.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A preview of your new site

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

Websites: growthatlocal.com/services/websites



Part 3

Mistakes with reviews and past customers

7 Asking for reviews only after summer exteriors, or paying for them

What it looks like. You ask for a review after the big exterior jobs, so reviews bunch up in summer and stop in October. In March, when exterior shoppers arrive, your profile looks quiet. Or you try to catch up with "a free accent wall for a 5-star review."

What it costs. 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). In early spring those three months are winter. 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. Ask at the moment you hand over the touch-up kit, on every job: interiors, cabinets and exteriors alike. Interior and cabinet work in winter keeps reviews coming. Offer nothing in return. GTL estimate: at least two new reviews every month, all year, including the three months that end in March.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Get your Google review link from your profile (look for "Ask for reviews").
- [ ] Text it to every customer whose job you finished in the last 60 days.
- [ ] Remove any free work, discount or crew bonus tied to reviews.
- [ ] Put a card with the review link in every touch-up kit.

8 Losing every customer's colors, and never calling them back

What it looks like. A year after the job, the homeowner needs a touch-up or wants the hallway done to match. Nobody remembers the color. They peel a chip off the wall, take it to the paint store, and ask the person at the counter for a painter's name.

What it costs. You lose the easiest repeat job you'll ever get. InterNACHI's chart puts exterior paint at 7 to 10 years and interior paint at 10 to 15 (InterNACHI, nachi.org), so your old jobs 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. Keep a color record for every job: room, brand, color name, sheen. Send it to the customer when you finish, and tell them you kept a copy. Text or email past customers who agreed to hear from you as their paint ages. 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

- [ ] Make a one-page color record template: room, brand, color name, sheen, date.
- [ ] Fill it in for your last ten jobs from your invoices and photos, and send each customer theirs.
- [ ] Pull every exterior you painted six or more years ago, and check who agreed to texts.
- [ ] Send a check-in: "Hi, it's (your name) from (company). We painted your house in (year). Want us to take a look at the trim before spring? 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 and the seasons

9 Pulling the yard sign the day you leave, and mailing once

What it looks like. The crew finishes a fresh exterior, loads the trailer and takes the sign with them. Later you send one postcard blast across town, get a few calls, and decide mail doesn't work.

What it costs. A freshly painted house is your best ad while it still looks brand new, and the whole street is asking "who did that?" GTL estimate: an exterior repaint keeps your crew visible on one street for three to six working days, and the attention lasts longer than that. A single mailing brings only a few calls per thousand cards, because only the few homes already thinking about painting act that month.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up painter spends $4,000 on one town-wide mailing and books two jobs. The next year they spend the same mailing the 150 homes around each finished exterior, twice each, with the color named on the card, and leave each yard sign up for two weeks.

The fix. Ask every customer if the sign can stay for two weeks after the job, and come back for it. Mail the streets around each finished exterior, more than once. Homes in the same subdivision were often painted by the builder at the same time, so many are fading together. Name the color on the card.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Add "OK to leave our sign up for two weeks after we finish?" to your contract.
- [ ] Pick your last three exteriors and circle 100 to 200 homes around each on a map.
- [ ] Write a two-line card: "We just painted the house at the corner in (color name). Thinking about yours?"
- [ ] Get a quote from a local printer or the post office's Every Door Direct Mail service, and plan two or three mailings.

10 Letting the weather decide what you sell

What it looks like. You sell exteriors until the first cold snap, then scramble for interior work. In February you start thinking about spring exteriors. Every season starts with an empty calendar.

What it costs. Slow weeks for the crew, and missed jobs that pay well. Cabinet painting is a strong winter job, and the pitch is simple: even a minor midrange kitchen remodel averaged $28,458 nationally in 2025 (JLC Cost vs Value 2025, jlconline.com). But the page that wins "cabinet painting (town)" in January has to exist long before January. GTL estimate: a new page can take a few months to settle in Google's results.

The fix. Market each season about six weeks before it starts. Push interiors and cabinets in early fall, and book spring exteriors in late winter. Build each season's web page while you're busy with the other season.

Do it in 24 hours

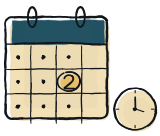
- [ ] Mark your slowest three months from last year's invoices.
- [ ] Put a marketing start date six weeks before each one in your calendar.
- [ ] If you don't have a cabinet painting page, list ten cabinet photos you'd put on it.
- [ ] Draft a "book your spring exterior" text for past customers, to send in late winter.

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 for photos (section 1).
- [ ] Text every quiet estimate about its real hold-up (section 2).
- [ ] Add a "How we prep" section with real photos to your site (section 4).
- [ ] Add every job you do as a service on your Google profile (section 5).
- [ ] Check your lead-safe certification before your next pre-1978 house (section 6).

Next week, check three numbers: replies within an hour, estimates that answered, and new reviews.



Where to go next

Every fix here comes from The Painter Marketing Playbook, our free 31-section guide to the whole job of getting more painting calls: your website, your Google profile, reviews, posts, email, search, follow-up, yard signs, color consultations, older homes, cabinets, agents, HOAs and tracking.

When every quote looks the same, the website is where you stop looking the same, so that's where we'd start.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A preview of your new site

Made before you pay anything. Websites start at $1 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Websites: growthatlocal.com/services/websites



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local fixes these for painters 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. EPA, "Understanding EPA's Lead-Based Paint Dust Rule" fact sheet (October 2024): a 2021 analysis estimated 30.9 million pre-1978 houses still contain lead-based paint. epa.gov (section 6)
3. BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026: 97% of consumers read reviews for local businesses. brightlocal.com (section 7)
4. Same survey: 74% look for reviews written in the last three months. (section 7) (brightlocal.com)
5. InterNACHI Standard Estimated Life Expectancy Chart: exterior paint 7 to 10 years. nachi.org (section 8)
6. Same chart: interior paint 10 to 15 years. (section 8) (nachi.org)
7. JLC Cost vs Value Report 2025: minor kitchen remodel (midrange), national average job cost $28,458. jlconline.com (section 10)

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

- Benjamin Moore, "How to Find and Hire a Painting Contractor" (plan three consultations and get quotes from each): benjaminmoore.com (section 1)
- 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)
- 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)
- EPA Renovation, Repair and Painting Program for contractors (certification for paid work disturbing paint in pre-1978 homes; no advertising covered work without firm certification): epa.gov (section 6)
- EPA search for lead-safe certified firms: cdxocsppapps.epa.gov (section 6)
- 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)
- 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 8)
- 47 CFR 64.1200(a)(10), revoking consent by any reasonable means, honored within ten business days: law.cornell.edu (section 8)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. Reply to new leads within five minutes in work hours (section 1). Reasoning: homeowners booking three estimates tend to book them in the order painters reply.

2. Three follow-ups over about three weeks, then one when the season turns (section 2). Reasoning: painting is rarely urgent, so one message is easy to ignore, but more than three in a row feels pushy.
3. Aim for at least two new reviews a month, all year (section 7). Reasoning: shoppers look at the last three months, so you need fresh reviews in every three-month window, including the one that ends in March.
4. An exterior repaint keeps your crew visible on one street for three to six working days (section 9). Reasoning: prep, two coats on body and trim, and weather days add up.
5. A single postcard mailing brings only a few calls per thousand cards (section 9). Reasoning: only the few homes already thinking about painting act that month.
6. A new page can take a few months to settle in Google's results (section 10). Reasoning: Google has to find it, read it and weigh it against older pages that already rank.

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.

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