Grow That Local

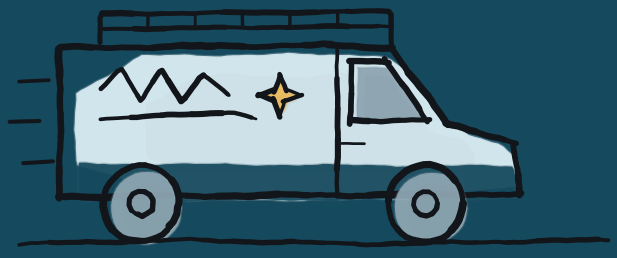
a free guide

How many reviews an HVAC company needs to win

The review counts that put heating and air companies in the map's top 3 across 10 Southeast cities, the star bar, and a plan built on tune-up season.

For HVAC business owners wondering if they have enough reviews.

- 9 short sections in 3 parts
- 29 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

Straight answer first: of the six trades we studied, HVAC has the hardest map to crack on reviews alone. We looked at 999 heating and air businesses on Google Maps in 10 Southeast cities: Nashville, Tulsa, Louisville, Huntsville, Lexington, Birmingham, Memphis, Little Rock, Montgomery and Jackson, Mississippi. Then we counted the reviews at each spot on the map. This guide shows the real numbers, and the order to climb in so the effort pays off sooner.

How we did it, and its limits: we ran one Google Maps search for HVAC from each city in November 2026 and recorded up to 100 results per search. It's a snapshot. The map order changes with where the searcher stands, the words they type and the profile itself, and Google says reviews are only one part of how it ranks, next to relevance and distance (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). So treat these numbers as a target range, not a law.

Part 1 shows the numbers. Part 2 turns them into your own target and a timeline. Part 3 covers why the company with the most reviews doesn't always win.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every number has a source you can check, listed at the end. Our own scrape is cited as "GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026." When we didn't have a source, we say "GTL estimate" and tell you why we think it.
- Every example is made up to show the idea. We never name a real business.



Part 1

What the map's top 3 looks like

1 The review count at each spot on the map, and the cliff at spot 20

The idea. Here's the typical (median) review count at each spot on the HVAC map, across all 10 cities (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026):

Map spot	Typical review count
Top 3	1,204
Spots 4 to 10	768
Spots 11 to 20	225
Spots 21 to 100	22

Two things stand out. First, the drop after spot 20: the typical company in spots 11 to 20 had about ten times the reviews of the ones below. Getting into the top 20 is the first big win, and it's reachable. Second, spots 4 to 10 are crowded with shops holding several hundred reviews each, so the top 3 isn't only about count.

In a typical city, the company with the fewest reviews in the top 3 had 687. That's the real door into the top 3. Section 4 shows you how to find it where your customers live, and it's often lower.

For comparison, here's what the top 3 looked like for trades next to yours, from the same scrape:

Trade	Top 3	Spots 4 to 10
HVAC	1,204	768
Plumbers	1,217	543
Appliance repair	374	106
Electricians	333	62

HVAC and plumbing sit above every other trade we measured, because both run lots of short visits and maintenance plans that bring the same customers back.

Example. A made-up HVAC company has 180 reviews. On the table, they sit just below the typical company in spots 11 to 20. They need about 45 more to look like a top-20 company, and about 500 more to match the smallest top-3 company in a typical city.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Open your Google profile and write down your review count today.
- [ ] Find your row on the table above.
- [ ] Write down the gap to 225. For most shops, the top 20 is the first target.

2 Your city will be different

The idea. Across the 10 cities, the typical top-3 HVAC company had anywhere from 651 to 4,685 reviews. The smallest top-3 company ranged from 201 reviews to 1,729 (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026).

City	Fewest reviews in the top 3	Typical top-3 count
Jackson, MS	201	651
Memphis	458	1,088
Birmingham	476	1,144
Huntsville	531	991
Montgomery	629	1,388
Tulsa	745	1,087
Louisville	812	1,186
Nashville	1,135	1,221
Little Rock	1,177	1,225
Lexington	1,729	4,685

In most of these cities, the top 3 is three big shops. Jackson is the exception, where a company with about 200 reviews made it in. If your town is smaller than these, expect the low end. The only number that counts is the one you find in section 4.

Example. A made-up HVAC company outside Birmingham runs its own searches from its service area. Near the shop, the top 3 had 240, 980 and 1,600 reviews. Their first target is 240, not 1,204.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Find your city, or the one most like yours, on the table.
- [ ] Note both numbers: the fewest in the top 3 and the typical top-3 count.
- [ ] Circle the smaller number. That's your first real target until section 4 gives you your own.

3 The star bar, and the other things the top 3 had

The idea. In our scrape, none of the 30 top-3 HVAC companies (3 in each of 10 cities) had fewer than 4.5 stars. Their typical rating was 4.8. Only 1 of the 30 had no website, while about 20% of all the HVAC businesses we saw had none (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026).

Homeowners hold the same bar. In BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 31% of consumers said they'll only use a business with 4.5 stars or more, and 68% want four stars or more (BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026, brightlocal.com). A family in a 90-degree house picks fast, and stars are what they see first.

Our free reviews calculator works out how many 5-star reviews it takes to reach 4.8 from where you are.

Example. A made-up HVAC company has 120 reviews at 4.7 stars, pulled down by a few "they tried to sell me a new system" reviews. The calculator says 60 more 5-star reviews gets them to 4.8. They also make it a rule that every tech gives a repair price next to any replacement price, so those reviews stop coming.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down your star rating next to your review count.
- [ ] If you're under 4.8, run the reviews calculator and write down the number it gives.
- [ ] Check that your profile links to a working website.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first report card, this month

The monthly report card is free.

Monthly report card: growthatlocal.com/services/report-card



Part 2

Your target and how long it takes

4 Find your own number, in both seasons

The idea. The map a homeowner sees depends on where they're standing and what they type. In HVAC, what they type changes with the weather: "AC repair" in July, "furnace repair" in January. Search both, from where your customers live, and write down what the top 3 has.

Search on your phone, in Google Maps: "AC repair," "furnace repair," "heat pump installation" and "HVAC company near me." Skip anything marked Sponsored. Google says the map itself can't be bought (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com), so ads aren't what you're measuring.

Your target is the smallest review count in the top 3, in the part of your area you most want to work. GTL estimate: that number gets you into the conversation. Match it, keep your stars above 4.8, and the things in Part 3 decide the rest.

Example. A made-up HVAC company runs four searches from three spots: near the shop, in the 1990s subdivision where systems are due for replacement, and in the town 20 minutes north. For "heat pump installation" in the subdivision, the smallest top-3 count was 450. That's where the replacement jobs are. Their number is 450.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pick three spots: near your base, the neighborhood you most want, and the far edge of your service area.
- [ ] From each spot, search "AC repair," "furnace repair," "heat pump installation" and "HVAC company near me" in Google Maps.
- [ ] Write down the review count, star rating and newest review date for each top-3 company.
- [ ] Circle the smallest count in the area you want most. That's your target.

5 How many reviews a month an HVAC company can really get

The idea. HVAC has a built-in review engine: tune-ups. They're short, friendly visits with good news most of the time. GTL estimate: if you ask every customer, expect one review for every three to five people you ask, and plan on one in five, because in a heat wave some asks get missed. BrightLocal's 2026 survey backs the low end: 28% of consumers say they'll always write a review when asked (BrightLocal 2026, brightlocal.com).

GTL estimate: a three-truck shop can plan on about 20 new reviews a month, and a one-tech shop about 10. Our reasoning: three trucks finish around 100 calls and tune-ups a month and one tech around 50, and one in five of those is 20 and 10.

Time the ask. Right after a repair, the house is still hot. About an hour later, it's cool and the homeowner is relieved. That's when the text should go, with a line asking if everything's working, so problems come to you in private first.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up three-truck shop counts last quarter: 180 repair calls, 90 tune-ups and 30 system installs, 300 in all, so 100 a month. At one in five, that's 20 reviews a month. They'd only been asking after installs, so they were getting three.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Count every job you finished in the last 90 days, tune-ups included.
- [ ] Divide by three for your jobs a month. Divide that by five for your realistic reviews a month.
- [ ] Get your review link from your profile (look for "Ask for reviews") and load it into your scheduling software.
- [ ] Make the review text go out automatically about an hour after every job closes, tune-ups included.

6 Your timeline, month by month

The idea. Put sections 4 and 5 together and you get a date. Start with a catch-up month: ask every customer from the last 90 days, newest first. After that, your monthly pace does the work.

Here's the sum: months to target = (target minus today's count minus catch-up reviews) divided by reviews a month, plus one for the catch-up month.

Be honest about the big shops. The companies in a city's top 3 run many trucks and big maintenance plans, and they keep collecting reviews every week. GTL estimate: a top-3 count in a big city can grow by a few hundred a year. So climb in order: the top 20 first, then the top 3 near your base, where distance works for you. Check your searches every three months.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up three-truck shop has 100 reviews. In the catch-up month, they ask the 300 customers from the last 90 days, and one in five says yes: 60 reviews, so 160. Then they add 20 a month. The targets come from section 1.

Target	Reviews	Reached in about
Typical spot 11 to 20	225	5 months
Smallest top-3, typical city	687	28 months
Typical spot 4 to 10	768	32 months

If their section 4 number is 450, they get there in about 16 months. Two summers and a winter of asking at every tune-up.

Do it in 24 hours

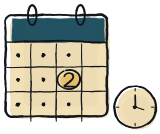
- [ ] Write the sum with your own numbers: your target, today's count, your catch-up, your pace.
- [ ] Pull every customer from the last 90 days and text them your review link, if they've agreed to texts.
- [ ] Put a reminder in your phone for 90 days from now to rerun your searches, in whichever season it is.

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

Why the count alone doesn't win

7 Fresh reviews beat a big old pile

The idea. In 6 of the 10 cities, the typical company in spots 4 to 10 had more reviews than the smallest company in the top 3 (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026). Count matters, but it isn't the whole story.

Freshness is part of the rest. BrightLocal's guide to Google's local ranking lists recency of reviews and steady review growth among the factors that move the map (BrightLocal, Google's Local Algorithm and Local Ranking Factors, brightlocal.com). Homeowners notice too: in BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 74% look for reviews from the last three months, and 32% look at the last two weeks (BrightLocal 2026, brightlocal.com).

HVAC's gap is the shoulder season. Repair calls slow in spring and fall, and so do reviews, right before the first heat wave or cold snap sends shoppers looking. GTL estimate: get at least two new reviews every month, and more in tune-up months. Most shoppers look at the last three months, so you want fresh ones in every three-month window.

Example. A made-up HVAC company sees its newest review is five weeks old in late April. They add the review text to every spring tune-up. By the first 90-degree week, they have 14 new reviews from April and May.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down the date of your newest review.
- [ ] Compare it with the newest review of each top-3 company from section 4.
- [ ] If yours is older than two weeks, text the link to your last ten tune-up customers today.

8 Reply to every review, in your own words

The idea. Google says replies to reviews show you value feedback, and that "positive reviews and helpful replies can help your business stand out" (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). Homeowners read them. In BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 89% of consumers expect owners to respond to reviews, 50% are put off by generic or templated replies, and 19% expect a reply the same day (BrightLocal 2026, brightlocal.com).

That 50% matters most in HVAC. A shop getting 20 reviews a month is tempted to paste the same "Thanks for choosing us" under every one. Don't. And don't stuff replies with search words like "best AC repair in town": BrightLocal lists keywords in owner replies among the things with little effect on the map (BrightLocal, Google's Local Algorithm and Local Ranking Factors, brightlocal.com). Two sentences about the actual job beat a paragraph of filler.

GTL estimate: reply within two days, and the same day for a bad one. The bad review this trade gets most is about upselling. A calm reply that shows you give options, not pressure, answers it for every future reader.

Example. A reply to a 5-star review after a summer repair:

> **Thanks, Taylor. A failed capacitor on the hottest day of the year is no fun. Glad the house was cool again by dinner. We'll see you for the fall tune-up.**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Reply to every review you haven't answered, good or bad. Name the job in each reply.
- [ ] Delete any copy-and-paste reply template you use. Write two real sentences each time.
- [ ] Turn on review alerts in your Google profile so you see new ones the same day.

9 The words in your reviews, and the rule about asking

The idea. What customers write matters as well as how many write. Google builds "Place Topics" from the themes in your reviews and shows the words customers mention most in bold (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). BrightLocal says the language in reviews can affect relevance, because when customers mention your services and your area, search engines understand you better (BrightLocal, Google's Local Algorithm and Local Ranking Factors, brightlocal.com).

You can't ask for those words, though. Google's rules say businesses must not ask for specific content in a review, must not offer anything in exchange, and must not ask only happy customers. They also ban asking customers to name a staff member and giving staff review targets (Google Maps user-contributed content policy, support.google.com). So never write "please mention our heat pump install," never offer a discount on the next tune-up for a review, and never run a contest for the tech with the most reviews.

What you can do is ask right after a specific job. A customer asked the evening the new heat pump goes in tends to write about the heat pump. And list every service on your profile, so Google can connect what customers write to what you offer.

Example. A made-up HVAC company's review text, sent about an hour after the tech leaves:

> **Hi, it's (Your Name) Heating & Air. Is the house cooling down OK? If anything's off, reply here and we'll sort it. If it's all good, an honest Google review helps a small company like ours a lot: (your review link)**

The text asks about the job first. It doesn't tell the customer what to write.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Read your review request text. Remove anything that asks for particular words, a rating or a tech's name, and anything offered in return.
- [ ] End any review contest or target for your techs.
- [ ] Check your profile's services. Add every job you do: AC repair, furnace repair, heat pumps, installs, tune-ups, ductwork, indoor air.

or we can do it for you

Free sample: Your first 10 requests sent

Review requests is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

Review requests: growthatlocal.com/services/reviews



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you only do five things today, do these:

- [ ] Write down your review count, star rating and newest review date (sections 1 and 3).
- [ ] Run your four searches from three spots, and circle your target (section 4).
- [ ] Count your jobs from the last 90 days, tune-ups included, and work out your monthly pace (section 5).
- [ ] Text your review link to every customer from the last 90 days who agreed to texts (section 6).
- [ ] Reply to every unanswered review, in your own words (section 8).

Tomorrow, count your new reviews. That's your first data point. Rerun your searches in 90 days.



Where to go next

Ready to ask? How to Get Your First 50 Google Reviews is a 30-day plan for who to ask first and when. 50 Review Request Texts That Get Replies gives you the exact words, with lines written for HVAC. Before you text anyone, read the texting rules.

If the company above you still wins with fewer reviews, Why the Other Guy Shows Up First on Google walks you through the other six things to check.



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local does this work 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: 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 Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026: 999 heating and air businesses from one Google Maps search per city (Nashville, Tulsa, Louisville, Huntsville, Lexington, Birmingham, Memphis, Little Rock, Montgomery, Jackson MS), up to 100 results each. Review counts by map spot, fewest reviews in the top 3, star ratings, websites. Totals only; no business named. A snapshot from one spot in each city: map order changes with the searcher's location, the words searched and the profile itself. (sections 1, 2, 3, 6, 7)
2. BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (1,002 US adults, published Feb 11, 2026): 31% only use a business with 4.5 stars or more. brightlocal.com (section 3)
3. Same survey: 68% only use a business with four stars or more. (section 3) (brightlocal.com)
4. Same survey: 28% always write a review when asked. (section 5) (brightlocal.com)
5. Same survey: 74% look for reviews from the last three months. (section 7) (brightlocal.com)
6. Same survey: 32% look for reviews from the last two weeks. (section 7) (brightlocal.com)
7. Same survey: 89% expect owners to respond to reviews. (section 8) (brightlocal.com)
8. Same survey: 50% are put off by generic or templated replies. (section 8) (brightlocal.com)
9. Same survey: 19% expect a reply the same day. (section 8) (brightlocal.com)

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

- Google Business Profile Help, "Tips to improve your local ranking on Google" (relevance, distance and prominence; more reviews and positive ratings can help; helpful replies help you stand out; no paid ranking): support.google.com (before you start, sections 4, 8)
- Google Business Profile Help, "Understand business summaries on Google Maps" (Place Topics built from reviews; most-mentioned words in bold): support.google.com (section 9)
- Google Maps user-contributed content policy (bans incentives, asking only happy customers, requesting specific content or staff names and staff review quotas): support.google.com (section 9)
- BrightLocal, "Google's Local Algorithm and Local Ranking Factors" (review recency and steady growth among ranking factors; review language can affect relevance; keywords in owner replies have little effect): brightlocal.com (sections 7, 8, 9)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. Getting into the top 20 is the first big win (section 1). Reasoning: the typical company in spots 11 to 20 had about ten times the reviews of the ones below, so that's the steepest step, and it's within reach in months, not years.
2. Aim next for the smallest review count in your local top 3 (section 4). Reasoning: it's the lowest count that's already winning where your customers search, so it's the nearest target that's proven to work.
3. Expect one review for every three to five customers asked, and plan on one in five (section 5). Reasoning: 28% say they'll always review when asked, a reminder brings in some of the rest, and heat waves mean some asks get missed.

4. A three-truck shop can plan on about 20 new reviews a month, a one-tech shop about 10 (section 5). Reasoning: three trucks finish around 100 calls and tune-ups a month and one tech around 50, and one in five of those is 20 and 10.
5. Send the review text about an hour after the job (section 5). Reasoning: by then the house has cooled or warmed and the homeowner feels the fix, and a problem still comes to you in private first.
6. A top-3 count in a big city can grow by a few hundred a year (section 6). Reasoning: the shops at the top run many trucks and maintenance plans, so dozens of new reviews a month is normal for them.
7. Get at least two new reviews every month, and more in tune-up months (section 7). Reasoning: most shoppers look at the last three months, so you want fresh ones in every window, including the shoulder seasons before a heat wave or cold snap.
8. Reply within two days, and the same day for a bad review (section 8). Reasoning: a fifth of shoppers expect a same-day reply, and a quick, calm reply stops a bad review from setting the tone for the next homeowner.

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