Grow That Local

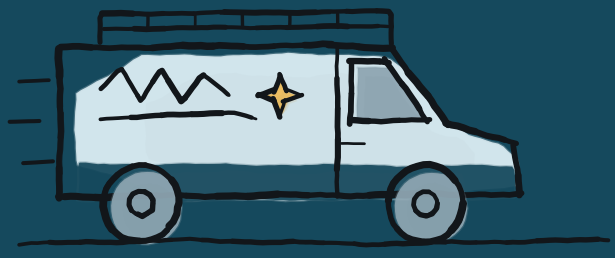
a free guide

How many reviews a painter needs to win

The review counts that put painters in the map's top 3 across 10 Southeast cities, the star bar, and a plan that works with fewer, bigger jobs.

For painting 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

Painters finish fewer jobs a month than plumbers or cleaners, so every review counts for more. We looked at 994 painting 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. The good news: the painting map is less crowded than most, and a steady painter can reach it.

How we did it, and its limits: we ran one Google Maps search for painters 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 painter 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

The idea. The painters in the map's top 3 had about twice the reviews of the next seven, and about 18 times the reviews of the painters further down. Here's the typical (median) count at each spot, across all 10 cities (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026):

Map spot	Typical review count
Top 3	146
Spots 4 to 10	69
Spots 11 to 20	38
Spots 21 to 100	8

Look at the bottom row. The typical painter past spot 20 had 8 reviews, and 10% of the painters we saw had none at all. A painter who asks every customer pulls away from most of the map within a season.

In a typical city, the painter with the fewest reviews in the top 3 had 75. That's the real door into the top 3, and section 4 shows you how to find it in your own town.

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
Painters	146	69
Flooring installers	150	61
Handyman	138	41
Pressure washing	137	68

Example. A made-up painter has 25 reviews. On the table, they're well above the painters past spot 20. They need about 13 more to look like a typical spot 11 to 20 painter, about 44 more for spots 4 to 10, and about 50 more to match the smallest top-3 painter 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 the next row up. That's your first target.

2 Your city will be different

The idea. Across the 10 cities, the typical top-3 painter had anywhere from 60 to 287 reviews. The smallest top-3 painter ranged from 11 reviews to 152 (GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026).

City	Fewest reviews in the top 3	Typical top-3 count
Jackson, MS	11	75
Birmingham	29	116
Montgomery (94 results)	43	60
Little Rock	61	173
Louisville	70	196
Tulsa	80	104
Memphis	87	120
Lexington	144	152
Nashville	148	287
Huntsville	152	239

In 7 of the 10 cities, a painter with under 90 reviews made the top 3. In Birmingham, one did it with 29. Distance and relevance put them there, and Part 3 explains how.

If your town isn't on the list, use the range. The only number that counts is the one you find in section 4.

Example. A made-up painter outside Nashville sees that the city's typical top-3 count is 287. Then they search from the neighborhoods they paint most. The top 3 there had 52, 130 and 300 reviews. Their first target is 52.

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. Painting and roofing share the highest star bar of the six trades we studied. None of the 30 top-3 painters (3 in each of 10 cities) had fewer than 4.5 stars, and their typical rating was 4.9. Websites matter too: 2 of the 30 had no website, while nearly a third of all the painters we saw had none, more than in any other trade in this series (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).

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 painter has 40 reviews at 4.7 stars, pulled down by one review about drips on a hardwood floor. The calculator says 20 more 5-star reviews gets them to 4.8. They also reply to the old review, saying they came back, cleaned the floor and repainted the wall corner to corner.

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. 28 of the 30 top-3 painters had one.

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 20 minutes

The idea. The map a homeowner sees depends on where they're standing, so your target depends on where your customers live. Search the way they do, from where they are, and write down what the top 3 has.

Search on your phone, in Google Maps, the way a homeowner would: "house painter," "interior painting," "exterior painting" and "cabinet painting." 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, for the job you want most, in the area you want it. GTL estimate: that number gets you into the conversation. Match it, keep your stars at 4.8 or higher, and the things in Part 3 decide the rest.

Example. A made-up painter wants more cabinet work. They search "cabinet painting" from three spots: near their shop, in the 1990s subdivision full of oak kitchens, and in the older neighborhood downtown. In the subdivision, the smallest top-3 count was 50. Their number is 50.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pick the job that pays you best per crew-day: interior, exterior or cabinets.
- [ ] Pick three spots: near your base, the neighborhood you most want, and the far edge of your service area.
- [ ] From each spot, search "house painter" and the search for your best job in Google Maps. Write down the review count, star rating and newest review date for each top-3 painter.
- [ ] Circle the smallest count in the area you want most. That's your target.

5 How many reviews a month a painter can really get

The idea. Painters have fewer jobs a month than most trades, so missing even one ask costs you. 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 some asks get missed at the end of a long job. 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 two-crew painter can plan on two to three new reviews a month, and a solo painter about one. Our reasoning: two crews finish around 12 jobs a month, counting single rooms and touch-up work, and one in five of 12 is between two and three. A solo painter finishes about half that.

The best moment to ask is the final walkthrough, when you hand over the touch-up kit: each can labeled with the room, the color name and the sheen. The homeowner is pleased, and you've just done something no other painter they called would have done. Small jobs count too. A single-room customer writes reviews just like an exterior customer does.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up two-crew painter counts last quarter: 9 exteriors, 14 interior jobs, 5 cabinet jobs and 8 small rooms and touch-ups, 36 in all, so 12 a month. At one in five, that's about two and a half reviews a month. They'd only been asking after exteriors, so they were getting one every two months.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Count every job you finished in the last 90 days, single rooms 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 save it in your phone.
- [ ] Buy blank labels. Hand over a labeled touch-up kit at every final walkthrough, then send the review link.

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.

The painters in your top 3 keep collecting reviews too. GTL estimate: a top-3 count can grow by a couple of dozen a year. Check your searches every three months and move your target if it moves.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up two-crew painter has 20 reviews. In the catch-up month, they ask the 36 customers from the last 90 days, and one in five says yes: 7 reviews, so 27. Then they add about two and a half a month. The targets come from section 1.

Target	Reviews	Reached in about
Typical spot 11 to 20	38	6 months
Typical spot 4 to 10	69	19 months
Smallest top-3, typical city	75	21 months

If their section 4 number is 50, they get there in about 11 months. One full exterior season and one winter of interiors.

Do it in 24 hours

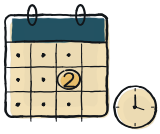
- [ ] Write the sum with your own numbers: your target, today's count, your catch-up, your pace.
- [ ] Pull every customer from the last 90 days and text them your review link, if they've agreed to texts.
- [ ] Put a reminder in your phone for 90 days from now to rerun your searches.

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 5 of the 10 cities, the typical painter in spots 4 to 10 had more reviews than the smallest painter 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).

Painting's trap is winter. Exterior jobs bunch up in the warm months, so reviews do too. In early spring, when exterior shoppers arrive, the last three months are winter. GTL estimate: get at least two new reviews every month, all year. You need several fresh reviews in every three-month window, including the one that ends in March.

Example. A made-up painter's newest review is from October. In December, they start asking after every interior room and cabinet job. By March, they have six winter reviews, and the newest is a week old when the first exterior shoppers look.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down the date of your newest review.
- [ ] Compare it with the newest review of each top-3 painter from section 4.
- [ ] Count your reviews from last December through February. If it's fewer than six, winter is your gap. Ask your last five interior 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).

Don't stuff replies with search words like "best house painter 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). Name the job and the color instead. It's specific, and the next homeowner can picture it.

GTL estimate: reply within two days, and the same day for a bad one. Painting complaints are usually small and visible: paint on a switch plate, a drip on the floor, a missed spot behind a door. A reply that says exactly what you'll fix, and when, turns the complaint into proof.

Example. A reply to a 5-star review after a front door and shutters job:

> **Thanks, Casey. That navy looks sharp against the white trim. The touch-up can is labeled in the garage if the door ever gets a scuff.**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Reply to every review you haven't answered, good or bad. Name the job and the color in each reply.
- [ ] Turn on review alerts in your Google profile so you see new ones the same day.
- [ ] For any bad review, thank them, say exactly what you'll fix and when, and call them.

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 (Google Maps user-contributed content policy, support.google.com). So never write "please mention our cabinet painting," and never offer a free touch-up visit for a review.

What you can do is ask right after a specific job. A homeowner asked the day the kitchen cabinets go back up tends to write about the cabinets. And list every service on your profile, so Google can connect what customers write to what you offer.

Example. A made-up painter's review text, sent from the driveway after the walkthrough:

> **Thanks for having us, Robin. Your touch-up kit is in the garage, one can per room, all labeled. If you have a minute, an honest Google review helps a small company like ours a lot: (your review link)**

The text names the job in the thank-you. It doesn't tell Robin what to write.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Read your review request text. Remove anything that asks for particular words, a rating or a painter's name, and anything offered in return.
- [ ] Check your profile's services. Add every job you do: interior, exterior, cabinets, trim, decks and fences, drywall repair, color consultations.
- [ ] Send the ask at every final walkthrough, the same day.

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 searches from three spots for your best-paying job, and circle your target (section 4).
- [ ] Count your jobs from the last 90 days 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, naming the job and the color (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 painters. Before you text anyone, read the texting rules.

If the painter 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 painters every month. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: Review requests. Free sample: your first 10 requests sent. Review requests is $100 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Win-back texts — **$100 a month · 7-day full refund**
Bring past customers back for their next job. Free sample: your first 25 customers texted.

Neighborhood postcard — **$400 a month · 7-day full refund**
Your ad in mailboxes across nice neighborhoods. Free sample: your ad, designed and shown on the card.

Monthly report card — **free**
See how you stack up against local competitors. Free sample: your first report card, this month.

Text us at (423) 924-2014, or start at growthatlocal.com/start.

Sources

Every statistic above, with where to check it:

1. GTL analysis of Google Maps results, 10 Southeast cities, November 2026: 994 painting 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, businesses with no reviews. 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 and requesting specific content or staff names): 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. A painter who asks every customer pulls away from most of the map within a season (section 1). Reasoning: the typical painter past spot 20 had 8 reviews, and two or three new reviews a month passes that in a few months.
2. Aim first for the smallest review count in your local top 3, for the job you want most (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 the end of a long job is when asks get missed.
4. A two-crew painter can plan on two to three new reviews a month, a solo painter about one (section 5). Reasoning: two crews finish around 12 jobs a month counting single rooms and touch-ups, and one in five of 12 is between two and three.
5. A top-3 count can grow by a couple of dozen a year (section 6). Reasoning: the painters already in the top 3 keep finishing jobs and asking too, so the target moves while you climb.
6. Get at least two new reviews every month, all year (section 7). Reasoning: shoppers look at the last three months, so you need several fresh reviews in every three-month window, including the one that ends in March.
7. 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