Grow That Local

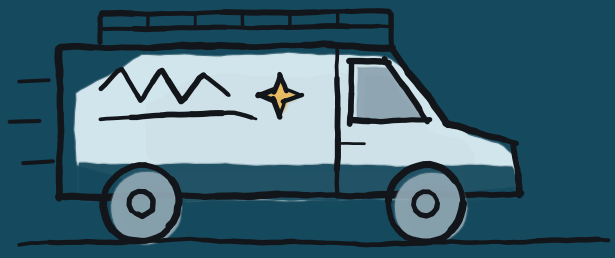
a free guide

Show up when customers ask ChatGPT

What chat assistants and Google's answer box read before they name a local business, and the four things to fix first.

For forward-looking owners.

- 7 short sections in 2 parts
- 27 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

More of your customers now skip the list of links. They ask ChatGPT, "Who's a good plumber near me?" or read the answer box at the top of Google, and call one of the two or three names it gives. In BrightLocal's 2026 survey, 45% of consumers said they'd used ChatGPT or similar chat tools for local recommendations, up from 6% the year before (BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026, brightlocal.com).

Nobody can buy a spot in those answers, and anyone who promises you one is guessing. The good news is that the answers are built from things you already control: your Google profile, your reviews, the facts on your website and your listings on other sites. Fix those and you're in the running in chat answers and on the Google map at the same time.

Part 1 explains where the answers come from and shows you how to check what they say about you today. Part 2 is the four fixes, in order.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every number and every platform rule 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 businesses or results.



Part 1

Where the answers come from

1 How ChatGPT finds a local business

The idea. When someone asks ChatGPT for a local business, it doesn't pull a name from memory. OpenAI says ChatGPT search uses third-party search providers and content from its partners, and that it can use the person's general location to find local results such as nearby business listings, sometimes with a map (OpenAI Help Center, help.openai.com).

So the answer is built from what it finds on the web at that moment: business listings, review sites, company websites and local articles. When it's done, it names a few businesses and usually shows the sites it read. The businesses it can describe clearly, from several places that agree with each other, are the ones it names.

One more thing OpenAI says: websites that block its search crawler, called OAI-SearchBot, won't be shown in ChatGPT search answers (OpenAI, Overview of OpenAI Crawlers, developers.openai.com). Section 7 shows you how to check yours.

Example. Someone asks ChatGPT, "Who's a good roofer in (your town) for hail damage?" The answer names three roofers. Under each name it lists where it found them: a Google profile, a review site and a page on the roofer's own website about storm damage. A made-up roofer with 80 reviews but no storm page and an old phone number on two listings isn't named.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Open ChatGPT and ask, "Who's a good (your trade) in (your town)?"
- [ ] Write down every business it names and every site it says it used.
- [ ] Note if you're named. If you are, check that what it says about you is right.

2 How Google's answer box picks a business

The idea. On many searches, Google now writes a short answer at the top of the page before the map and the links. Google's guide for site owners says you don't need any special files, code or markup to appear in it. The same basics that help in regular search apply, and Google says a Google Business Profile can help your services show in these answers and in other search results (Google Search Central, developers.google.com).

The same guide lists things to ignore: special text files for chat tools, cutting your pages into small chunks, rewriting pages just for these answers, and chasing fake mentions around the web. If someone tries to sell you any of those for Google, you can say no.

Example. A made-up house cleaner searches "move-out cleaning (your town)" on their phone. An answer box at the top names two companies and says one "offers move-out cleans with same-week booking." That line matches a sentence on that company's own website, word for word. The cleaner's site says only "Residential cleaning services."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Search your three best-paying jobs plus your town on Google, on your phone.
- [ ] For each search, note whether an answer box appears, and who it names.
- [ ] Copy any sentence the answer box says about a competitor. Find where it came from: their profile, their reviews or their site.

3 Run the ask test on yourself

The idea. Before you fix anything, see where you stand. Chat answers change from one ask to the next, so ask each question twice, in a fresh chat each time. Use the questions your customers ask, including the specific ones: "Which plumbers in (your town) do tankless water heaters?" or "Who paints older homes with lead paint safely near (your town)?"

We're building a free report that runs this test for you and shows who gets named. Until it's ready, this is the do-it-yourself version, and it takes about 20 minutes.

Example. A made-up HVAC company asks ChatGPT five questions, twice each, and runs the same five on Google. Out of ten chat answers, they're named twice. Google's answer box names them once. Both times they're named, the source shown is their Google profile. They're never named for "heat pump install," and their website has no heat pump page.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write five questions a customer would ask, two of them about a specific job you want more of.
- [ ] Ask each one twice in ChatGPT, starting a new chat each time.
- [ ] Run the same five on Google and look for the answer box.
- [ ] Make a tally: question, named or not, and the sources shown.



Part 2

What to fix

4 Your Google profile, complete and correct

The idea. Your Google profile is the listing chat tools and Google's answer box see most. Google says businesses with complete and accurate info are more likely to show up in local results (Google Business Profile Help, support.google.com). For chat answers, the details matter too. A question like "who does emergency drain cleaning?" can only be matched to a profile that lists emergency drain cleaning.

Fill in every field: name exactly as on your sign, primary category, every service with a line of text, service area, hours, phone, website and photos.

Example. A made-up landscaper's profile lists "Landscaping" and nothing else. They add 14 services, each with one plain sentence: weekly mowing, spring cleanup, mulch installation, paver patios, French drains and the rest. The paver patio line says "Paver patios and walkways, designed and built by our own crew, usually in one to two weeks."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Add every service you really do, each with one plain sentence that says what's included.
- [ ] Check that your name matches your sign and your paperwork exactly.
- [ ] Check your hours, phone number, website link and service area.
- [ ] Upload ten recent job photos.

5 Reviews that say what you did

The idea. Chat tools answer specific questions, so they look for specific words. A review that says "they replaced our water heater the same day and hauled the old tank away" helps you show up for water heater questions. A review that says "great service" helps much less.

You can't write reviews or pay for them. Google doesn't allow offering money, discounts or free work in exchange for a review, or asking only your happy customers (Google Maps content policy, support.google.com). What you can do is ask every customer, right after the job, for an honest review. Since April 2026, Google's rules also ban asking for reviews with specific content, so don't ask them to mention the work. Naming the job in your own text reminds them what you did, and many mention it on their own.

Example. A made-up painter's review text, sent the evening of the final walk-through:

> **After the job:**
> **"Thanks for having us, [first name]. Hope you love the new kitchen cabinets. If you have a minute, an honest Google review helps a lot: [review link]"**

Within two months, a third of their new reviews name the job on their own: "kitchen cabinets," "the whole exterior of our 1920s house," "deck stain."

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Save a review text like the one above in your phone, with your review link.
- [ ] Send it to every customer whose job you finished in the last 30 days.
- [ ] Reply to each new review and name the job in your reply ("Glad the cabinets turned out the way you wanted").
- [ ] Make sending the review text the last step of every job.

6 Plain facts on your website

The idea. Chat tools quote websites. They can only quote what's written there in plain text. A photo of a flyer with your prices, or a slideshow of logos, gives them nothing to read.

Add one short block of facts to your site, in plain sentences: what you do, which towns you serve, your hours, your license number, if you're insured, how pricing works, how soon you can come out, and what's included. Then answer the questions customers ask most, one short answer each. Google's guide says to write content yourself, from what you know (Google Search Central, developers.google.com). Nobody knows your jobs better than you do.

Example. A made-up house cleaner's facts block:

> **Facts block:**
> **"We clean homes in [town], [town 2] and [town 3]. Standard cleans every week, two weeks or month. Move-out and deep cleans by request. We bring our own supplies and vacuums. Same cleaner each visit when we can. Insured and background-checked. Text for a quote: [phone]."**

Now, when someone asks for "a house cleaner that brings their own supplies," there's a sentence on the site that answers it.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write your facts block in eight short sentences: services, towns, hours, license, insurance, pricing, how soon, what's included.
- [ ] Put it on your homepage or on an About page, as text, not as a picture.
- [ ] Write the five questions you hear most on calls, with two or three sentences each, and add them to your site.
- [ ] Give each of your three best-paying jobs its own page that says what it is, where you do it and what it includes.

7 The same facts everywhere, and a site the readers can open

The idea. When a chat tool finds your business in several places that agree, it can describe you with confidence. When your old phone number is on one site and a different name is on another, it may skip you or give the wrong number.

Check the listings customers use in your trade: Yelp, Facebook, Nextdoor, the Better Business Bureau, Bing Places, Apple Business Connect, Angi or Thumbtack if you use them, your supplier's find-a-pro page and your state license lookup. Same name, same phone, same website on all of them. Real local mentions help too: a news story, a sponsor page, an association member list. Google says to skip fake ones (section 2).

Then check that your website doesn't block OpenAI's search crawler. Open your web address with /robots.txt on the end. If you see "OAI-SearchBot" next to "Disallow," your site is blocked from ChatGPT search answers (OpenAI, Overview of OpenAI Crawlers, developers.openai.com). Ask whoever runs your site to remove that line.

Example. A made-up plumber finds their Yelp page shows a phone number they dropped three years ago, and their Facebook page has the old business name from before they formed an LLC. They fix both in one evening. Their robots.txt file is clean. They put the ask test from section 3 in their calendar for a month later, to see what changed.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Search your business name and write down every site that lists you.
- [ ] Fix any listing with a wrong name, phone number, website or hours.
- [ ] Claim Bing Places and Apple Business Connect if you haven't.
- [ ] Open yoursite.com/robots.txt and look for OAI-SearchBot. If it's blocked, get it removed.
- [ ] Put a reminder in your phone to run the ask test again in 30 days.

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

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

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.

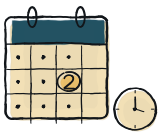
Websites: growthatlocal.com/services/websites

or we can do it for you

Free sample: A ranking check and 10 fixes

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

SEO: growthatlocal.com/services/seo



Your first 24 hours, in one list

If you only do four things this week, do these:

- [ ] Run the ask test: five questions, twice each in ChatGPT, and once each on Google (section 3).
- [ ] Fill in every field on your Google profile, with a line for every service (section 4).
- [ ] Text your review link to last month's customers and ask for an honest review (section 5).
- [ ] Put your facts block on your website, and fix any listing with the wrong phone number (sections 6 and 7).

The fixes here are the same ones that move you up the Google map. For the map side, read Why the Other Guy Shows Up First on Google.



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local does every fix in this guide for local businesses: the profile, the reviews, the site and the listings. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: SEO. Free sample: a ranking check and 10 fixes. SEO is $400 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

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.

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.

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. BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (1,002 US adults, published Feb 2026): 45% used ChatGPT or similar chat tools for local recommendations, up from 6% the year before. brightlocal.com (before you start)

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

- OpenAI Help Center, "Searching the web with ChatGPT" (third-party search providers, general location, nearby business listings, maps): help.openai.com (section 1)
- OpenAI, "Overview of OpenAI Crawlers" (sites that opt out of OAI-SearchBot aren't shown in ChatGPT search answers): developers.openai.com (sections 1, 7)
- Google Search Central, guide for site owners on Google's answer features (no special files or markup; Google Business Profiles help; things to ignore; write from what you know): developers.google.com (sections 2, 6)
- Google Business Profile Help, "Tips to improve your local ranking on Google" (complete and accurate info): support.google.com (section 4)
- Google Maps user-contributed content policy (bans incentives for reviews and asking only happy customers): support.google.com (section 5)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. Chat tools name the businesses they can describe clearly from several places that agree (sections 1 and 7). Reasoning: they build each answer from a live web search, so a business with matching facts in many places gives them more to work with than one with a single listing.
2. Specific words in reviews and on your site help you show up for specific questions (sections 5 and 6). Reasoning: chat tools answer the question asked, and they can only match a job to a business when that job is written down somewhere they read.
3. Ask each question twice (section 3). Reasoning: chat answers vary from one ask to the next, so one ask can make you look better or worse than you are.
4. Check again after 30 days (section 7). Reasoning: listings, reviews and site changes take days to weeks to be picked up, and a month gives enough time to see a change.

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