Grow That Local

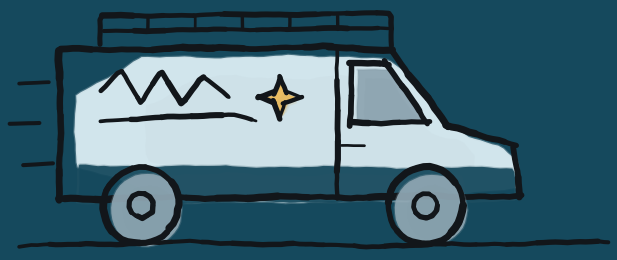
a free guide

Which marketing to buy first

Find your stage, then buy the one thing that pays first.

For owners under a million dollars a year in sales.

- 6 short sections in 3 parts
- 24 things you can do in the next 24 hours
- An example in every section
- Sources for every figure



growthatlocal.com · Text us at (423) 924-2014

Contents

Before you start: how this guide works 3

Part 1 **Start here** 3

1 Find your stage in two minutes 3

Part 2 **The road map** 5

2 Stage 1: no website yet 5

3 Stage 2: a site, but few reviews 5

4 Stage 3: steady, but seasonal 6

5 Stage 4: growing, with crews 6

Part 3 **Before you buy anything** 9

6 Ask one question before every purchase 9

Your first 24 hours, in one list 10

If you'd rather hand it off 11

Sources 12

GTL estimates 12

Before you start

Most owners buy marketing in the wrong order. They pay for search ads before anyone can find them on a map, or mail postcards to a website that doesn't load. This road map puts the nine kinds of local marketing in order for where your business is right now.

Start with section 1. Answer four questions and it tells you your stage. Then read only your stage's section. Each one says what to buy first, what comes next, and what to skip for now, with a checklist for the next 24 hours.

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 or results.



Part 1

Start here

1 Find your stage in two minutes

The idea. Answer these four questions in order. Stop at the first "yes." That's your stage.

1. **Do you have no website, or one you wouldn't send a customer to?** You're at stage 1 (section 2).
2. **Do you have fewer than 20 Google reviews, or none from the last three months?** You're at stage 2 (section 3).
3. **Do your calls drop by half or more in your slow months?** You're at stage 3 (section 4).
4. **Do you run more than one crew, or plan to hire for one this year?** You're at stage 4 (section 5).

If you answered "no" to all four, you're in good shape. Read section 6 before you buy anything else.

The order matters. Each stage makes the next one pay. Reviews bring more calls when people can find your site. Postcards bring more calls when people who look you up find good reviews.

> **Example.** A made-up painter answers: "I have a site, it's fine. I have 11 reviews, the newest from June." The first yes is question 2, so they're at stage 2. They skip straight to section 3.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Answer the four questions honestly.
- [ ] Write down your stage.
- [ ] Read your stage's section and do its checklist.
- [ ] Put a reminder in your phone for three months from now to answer the questions again.



Part 2

The road map

2 Stage 1: no website yet

If this is you. People hear your name from a neighbor, search for you, and find nothing, or a site from years ago. They call whoever they find instead. Our free missed calls calculator estimates how many calls a month a business like yours misses without a site.

Buy first: a Google Business Profile that's set up right, and a simple website. The profile puts you in the map. The site is where people go to check you're real and find your number. A one-page site is enough to start, as long as it loads fast on a phone and has a big call button.

Then: review requests. Once people can find you, reviews help them pick you.

Not yet: SEO, postcards and social posts. They all send people to look you up. Until there's something good to find, they're money spent on the wrong end.

Example. A made-up house cleaner with no site and no profile sets up the Google profile first, then a one-page site with prices "from" and a "Text us for a quote" button. A month later they start asking every new client for a review.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Search your business name and town on your phone. Write down what a stranger would find.
- [ ] Claim or create your Google Business Profile, with your real business name and service area.
- [ ] Upload ten photos of your work to it.
- [ ] Write the five lines your site's first screen needs: what you do, where, one proof, your number, and one button.

3 Stage 2: a site, but few reviews

If this is you. People find you, then pick the company with more and newer reviews. 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). Our free reviews calculator works out how many 5-star reviews you need to reach a 4.8.

Buy first: review requests. A steady flow of new reviews, asked for right after every job.

Then: Google Business Profile care. Fresh photos and updates every week, and a reply to every review. Also turn on missed-call text-back on your phone line. It's a free setting on most phone systems and it saves calls you'd lose.

Not yet: SEO. It works better once your profile has the reviews to hold a top spot.

Example. A made-up plumber with 9 reviews starts texting the review link after every job. Two months later they have 31, and the newest is from this week. Now they look at SEO.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Count your Google reviews and write down the date of the newest one.
- [ ] Get your review link from your profile and text it to every customer from the last 30 days.
- [ ] Reply to every review you haven't answered.
- [ ] Turn on missed-call text-back on your business line.

4 Stage 3: steady, but seasonal

If this is you. Busy months are packed, slow months are thin, and you spend the slow months worrying. Our free slow season planner shows your slow months and how many jobs would fill the gap.

Buy first: win-back texts and an email newsletter to past customers. The cheapest jobs in your slow months come from people who already know you. A text when their next job is due, and one useful email a month, fill gaps without new ads. Our free old customer list calculator shows how much work may be sitting there.

Then: a neighborhood postcard, timed before your busy season. Mailboxes on the streets you already work, a few weeks before people start looking.

Not yet: a bigger website. If calls are steady in season, the site is doing its job. Fill the calendar first.

Example. A made-up landscaper sees calls fall by more than half from December to February. In October, they text last year's cleanup customers about winter pruning and send a monthly email with one seasonal tip. In February, a postcard goes to the streets around their mowing routes.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down your three slowest months from last year's invoices.
- [ ] Pull 25 past customers whose next job could happen in those months.
- [ ] Check which of them have agreed to texts, and text those customers today.
- [ ] Put a postcard reminder in your calendar six weeks before your busy season.

5 Stage 4: growing, with crews

If this is you. You run more than one crew, or you're about to. You need enough of the right jobs to keep every truck busy, in every town you serve. Our free next hire calculator shows how many jobs a new crew member has to bring in to pay for themselves. That number is what your marketing has to deliver.

Buy first: SEO and a bigger website. A page for every service and every town, so each one can show up in its own searches. Our "Up to 25 pages" website plan is made for this.

Then: neighborhood postcards around your jobs, and a monthly report card. Postcards fill the streets near where crews already work. The report card tells you each month if it's paying, compared with the top three in your trade and town.

Not yet: anything you can't measure. At this size, a few hundred dollars a month on the wrong thing adds up. If a service can't show you its result in a plain monthly report, wait.

Example. A made-up HVAC company adds a second install crew. They add a page for each of the six towns they serve and one for each of their five main jobs. They mail the streets around each install. Every month they check the report card: rank, reviews and calls, against the top three.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] List every service you sell and every town you serve.
- [ ] Check which ones have their own page on your site. Write down the missing ones.
- [ ] Search your main service in your second-biggest town. Write down where you show up.
- [ ] Run the next hire calculator and write down how many jobs a month a new crew needs. Hold every marketing company to that number.

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: 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: 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

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



Part 3

Before you buy anything

6 Ask one question before every purchase

The idea. Every marketing choice gets one question: "Will this bring one more job a month, and how will I know?" If the answer is vague, wait. If it's clear, try it for a few months and check.

Two free tools help with the "how will I know" part. Our fix-first quiz asks a few quick questions and tells you what to fix first. Our marketing budget calculator suggests what a business your size might spend.

Example. A made-up roofer is offered a social media package. They ask, "Will this bring one more roof a month, and how will I know?" The answer is about "engagement." They pass, and put the money into review requests instead, which they can count.

Do it in 24 hours

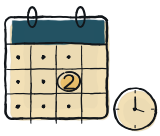
- [ ] Write the question on a sticky note or in your phone.
- [ ] List everything you pay for in marketing right now.
- [ ] Next to each, write how you know it brings jobs. Leave it blank if you don't know.
- [ ] For every blank, ask the company to show you, or put it on your list to cancel.

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



Your first 24 hours, in one list

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

- [ ] Answer the four questions and write down your stage (section 1).
- [ ] Do the checklist for your stage (sections 2 to 5).
- [ ] List what you pay for now and how you know it works (section 6).
- [ ] Set a reminder to answer the four questions again in three months (section 1).



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local does every step on this road map for local businesses. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

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.

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): 97% read reviews for local businesses. brightlocal.com (section 3)
2. Same survey: 74% look for reviews from the last three months. (section 3) (brightlocal.com)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. Fewer than 20 Google reviews marks stage 2 (section 1). Reasoning: below about 20, one bad review moves your rating a lot, and a shopper comparing three profiles tends to pick the one with more.
2. Calls dropping by half or more in slow months marks stage 3 (section 1). Reasoning: a smaller dip is normal for most trades, but a drop of half usually means crews sit idle and cash gets tight.
3. Buy in the order of the stages (section 1). Reasoning: each later step sends people to look you up, so it pays better once the earlier steps give them something good to find.
4. A one-page site is enough to start (section 2). Reasoning: people mostly check that you're real, local and reachable, and one fast page with a call button does that.

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