Grow That Local

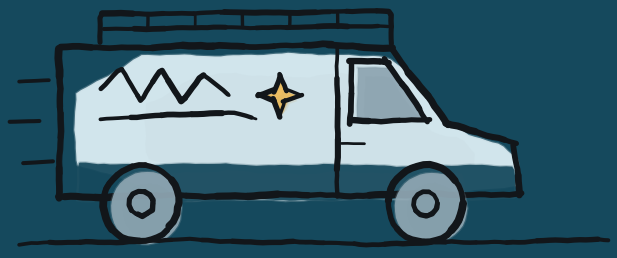
a free guide

Yard signs, truck wraps and door hangers that get calls

What to put on each, what to leave off, and the five-second test every sign has to pass.

For owners with trucks and job sites.

- 11 short sections in 5 parts
- 33 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

Your truck, your yard signs and your door hangers are ads you've already paid for. Most of them are hard to read. This guide shows what to put on each one, what to cut, the rules to check before a sign goes in the ground, and how to make all three work on the same street in the same week.

Every section has the idea, a made-up example and a short checklist. Each one takes a day or less.

Two rules we kept while writing it:

- Every law or rule we quote has a public source you can check, listed at the end. When we give our own judgment, we say "GTL estimate" and tell you why we think it. Sign rules differ by town and HOA, so we tell you what to check, not what your town says.
- Every example is made up to show the idea. None of the names, numbers or designs are real businesses.



Part 1

The five-second rule

1 Five seconds, three things

The idea. Nobody stops to read your truck or your yard sign. They glance at it from a moving car or a sidewalk. GTL estimate: you get about five seconds, often less. In that time a stranger can take in three things, and only three:

1. **Who you are.** Your business name.
2. **What you do.** One or two words: "Roofing," "Lawn care," "Plumbing."
3. **How to reach you.** One phone number, big.

Everything else competes with those three and makes them harder to read.

Example. A made-up plumber's old van side had a logo, a slogan, nine services, an email, a website, three social icons and the phone number at the bottom in small type. The new side has the name, "Plumbing and Drains," and the phone number as tall as the name. Neighbors started quoting the number back to the owner.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Park your truck on the street and stand across from it.
- [ ] Count to five, then look away and say what you remember.
- [ ] If you can't say the phone number, the number is too small or too crowded.

2 What to leave off

The idea. Most signs fail by saying too much. Cutting is free and works right away.

Leave off:

- **A list of services.** Pick the one word that covers most of your work.
- **Slogans.** "Quality you can count on" could be on any truck in town.
- **Email addresses and social icons.** Nobody types an email from a moving car.
- **Long web addresses.** Use a short one or none.
- **More than one phone number.** One number, the one that gets answered.
- **Script fonts and thin letters.** They blur at a distance.

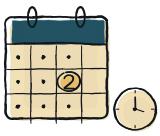
Keep, if it applies:

- **A license number, where your state requires it.** See section 6.
- **A short web address or QR code on yard signs and door hangers.** Those get read up close, by someone standing still.

Example. A made-up painter's yard sign said "Interior, Exterior, Cabinets, Decks, Drywall, Power Washing." The new sign says "PAINTED BY [business]" and the phone number. Same sign size, half the words.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write down every word on your truck and your yard sign.
- [ ] Cross out everything that isn't name, trade or phone.
- [ ] Ask your sign shop for a quote to redo the worst one.



Part 2

Yard signs

3 What goes on a yard sign

The idea. A yard sign on a finished job is a neighbor's proof that you do good work on their street. The words that work best say it was you, on this house. GTL estimate: "Done by" or "New roof by" beats a plain logo, because it tells a passerby the work they're looking at is yours.

Use big letters, two colors with strong contrast, and the phone number as big as the name. Dark on white or white on dark both work. Two-sided signs set across the yard, not facing the house, get read from both directions.

Example (made-up yard signs, one per trade).

Roofers:
"NEW ROOF BY [business]" and "[phone]"

Landscapers:
"ANOTHER YARD BY [business]" and "[phone]"

Plumbers:
"PLUMBING BY [business]" and "[phone]" (best on remodels, where the work runs for days)

HVAC:
"NEW SYSTEM BY [business]" and "[phone]"

House cleaners:
"CLEANED BY [business]. ASK ABOUT EVERY OTHER WEEK." and "[phone]" (only with the client's OK, see section 4)

Painters:
"PAINTED BY [business]" and "[phone]"

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write your sign in the "Done by" style for your trade.
- [ ] Check it from across the street at full size, or print it at full size on paper.
- [ ] Order a small batch so every current job can have one.

4 Ask first, check the rules, come back for it

The idea. A sign on a customer's lawn needs their yes, and sometimes the town's or the HOA's too. A sign that gets pulled or fined helps nobody.

What to check, in general terms:

- **The customer.** Ask at the quote, not on the last day. Say how long it stays and when you'll collect it. Some customers, often house-cleaning clients, would rather neighbors didn't know they hire help. Respect it.
- **The HOA.** Many homeowner associations limit yard signs: size, number, how long, or not at all. The homeowner can tell you, or ask for the rules in writing.
- **The town.** Many towns have a sign ordinance. It may limit size and how long a contractor sign can stay, ban signs in the public strip between sidewalk and street, or require a permit. Search your town's name plus "sign ordinance," or call the planning or zoning office.
- **The right of way.** Never put signs on utility poles, medians or street corners. Many towns remove them and some fine the business named on them.

Example. A made-up roofer's contract has one line: "We may place a small yard sign during the job and for up to 14 days after. Tick here if you'd rather we didn't." The crew lead writes the pickup date on a calendar the day the sign goes in.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Add one yard-sign line to your quote or contract.
- [ ] Look up your town's sign ordinance and write down any time or size limit.
- [ ] Put pickup dates in your calendar for every sign that's out now.



Part 3

Truck wraps and magnets

5 What goes on a truck

The idea. Your truck is the most-seen ad you own. It sits on job streets for hours and drives through town every day. Each side of it has a job.

- **Driver and passenger sides.** Name, trade, phone. Seen by people walking past and by cars beside you.
- **Back doors or tailgate.** The phone number, big, plus the trade word. GTL estimate: the back gets the longest look of any side, because the driver behind you at a light has nothing else to look at.
- **Hood and roof.** Skip them. Nobody reads a hood.

Keep the phone number at least as tall as the business name. Pick one color for the background and one for the words, with strong contrast.

Example (made-up truck sides, one per trade).

Roofers:
"[business] ROOFING" with "Repairs and replacements" and "[phone]"

Landscapers:
"[business]" with "Lawn care and landscaping" and "[phone]". The trailer gets the phone number too, because the trailer is what's parked at the curb.

Plumbers:
"[business] PLUMBING" with "Drains, leaks, water heaters" and "[phone]"

HVAC:
"[business]" with "Heating and cooling" and "[phone]"

House cleaners:
"[business]" with "House cleaning" and "[phone]" on a door magnet, since most cleaners drive their own car

Painters:
"[business] PAINTING" with "Interior and exterior" and "[phone]"

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Take a photo of each side of your truck and the back.
- [ ] Mark the phone number on each photo. Is it the biggest thing on the back?
- [ ] Send the photos to a sign shop and ask for a quote on the back doors first.

6 Rules that may apply to your truck

The idea. Some states and the federal government have rules about what has to be on a work vehicle. Check before you print, so the wrap doesn't need redoing.

- **Your contractor license number.** Some states require it on your trucks and ads. California, for one, requires licensed contractors to show their business name and license number on commercially registered vehicles, and plumbing contractors there must also show their address on both sides (CSLB advertising guidelines, cslb.ca.gov). Ask your state's licensing board what applies to you.
- **A USDOT number for heavy rigs.** The federal motor carrier agency requires a USDOT number for vehicles of 10,001 pounds or more used in interstate commerce, and some states require one for in-state work too (FMCSA, fmcsa.dot.gov). A pickup alone is usually under that. A truck towing a loaded trailer, like many landscaping rigs, or a box truck may be over it. Check your combined weight rating.
- **Your town.** A few towns or HOAs limit parking marked commercial vehicles on residential streets overnight. If you take the truck home, check yours.

Example. A made-up California plumber orders a new van wrap. Before it prints, they ask the shop to add the business address and license number to both sides in the size the state requires, instead of finding out from a fine later.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Look up your state licensing board's rules on license numbers in ads and on vehicles.
- [ ] Find the combined weight rating on the door sticker of your heaviest truck and trailer.
- [ ] If you're over 10,001 pounds and cross state lines, check the FMCSA page in the sources.

7 Wrap, decals or magnets

The idea. You don't need a full wrap to get calls. The words matter more than the coverage. GTL estimate: here's how the three usually compare.

Option	Good for	Watch out for
Door magnets	One car, a personal vehicle, a cleaner's car	Can blow off on the highway, can mark paint if left on for months
Cut vinyl decals	Name, trade and phone on a plain truck	Fewer design choices
Partial wrap	Back doors and sides, with a color block behind the words	Costs more than decals
Full wrap	A fleet that wants to look the same	Costs the most; a busy design defeats the five-second rule

Example. A made-up landscaper with two trucks and two trailers puts cut vinyl on all four, with the phone number on the trailer tailgates in the biggest letters. They spend the rest of the budget on yard signs.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Decide which option fits how many vehicles you run.
- [ ] Get two quotes for the same design, words first.
- [ ] Ask each shop how long the vinyl is expected to last in your climate.



Part 4

Door hangers

8 What a door hanger says

The idea. A door hanger is read by someone standing still, holding it. So it can say a little more than a sign, but it still needs one idea. The one that works best for trades: "We just did a job on your street." GTL estimate: neighbors of a job you just finished are the warmest strangers you'll ever reach, because they watched you work.

A good hanger has:

- One line saying you just worked nearby.
- One photo of the finished job, with the house unrecognizable.
- One reason to call now: a free check, a booking window or a route day.
- The phone number, big, and a short web address or QR code.

Example (made-up door hanger lines, one per trade).

Roofers:
"We just put a new roof on a home on your street. Want a free look at yours while we're here this week? [phone]"

Landscapers:
"We mow on your street every Thursday. Adding a yard on the same day is easy. [phone]"

Plumbers:
"We just replaced a water heater on your street. If yours is over ten years old, ask us to check it. [phone]"

HVAC:
"We just tuned up a system on your street. Booking spring tune-ups this month. [phone]"

House cleaners:
"We clean a home on your street every other Tuesday. One more on the same day is easy for us. [phone]"

Painters:
"We just painted a home on your street. Free color samples on your wall if you're thinking about it. [phone]"

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Write your trade's line in your own words.
- [ ] Pick one finished-job photo for the front.
- [ ] Order a small batch, enough for the homes on each side of your next five jobs.

9 Where door hangers are allowed

The idea. A door hanger is welcome on most doors and a problem on a few. One rule is federal and firm: never put a flyer or hanger in or on a mailbox. Federal law bars putting mail matter without postage in a mailbox, and it carries a fine (18 U.S.C. 1725, govinfo.gov).

What to check, in general terms:

- **"No Soliciting" signs.** Skip those homes, every time.
- **Your town.** Some towns require a permit or registration for door-to-door handouts, or limit the hours. Search your town's name plus "solicitation ordinance."
- **HOAs and gated communities.** Some ban handouts. Ask your customer in that neighborhood.
- **Where it goes.** On the door handle, never on the storm door glass or stuck in the frame where it falls.

Example. A made-up house cleaner asks every regular client: "Mind if we leave a hanger on the two doors either side of you?" Most say yes. One says no because of the HOA, and the cleaner notes it in the client file.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Look up your town's rules on door-to-door handouts.
- [ ] Tell everyone who hangs them: handle only, never the mailbox, skip "No Soliciting."
- [ ] Ask your current customers if they mind hangers on their neighbors' doors.



Part 5

Make them work together

10 Same street, same week

The idea. One sign is easy to miss. A sign, a truck, a hanger and a post on the same street in the same week look like a busy local company. GTL estimate: a neighbor who sees your name two or three times in a week is far more likely to call than one who sees it once, because by the third time it feels familiar.

Example. A made-up painter's job week on one street:

> **Monday:**
> **The truck is parked out front. The yard sign goes in.**
>
> **Wednesday:**
> **Door hangers on the five homes either side.**
>
> **Friday:**
> **A before-and-after post naming the neighborhood, with the owner's OK.**
>
> **Two weeks later:**
> **The crew collects the sign and leaves one more hanger on the corner homes.**

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Pick your next job and plan its week: sign, hangers, post.
- [ ] Line up your postcard, if you send one, to the same streets that month.
- [ ] Tell the crew lead which day the hangers go out.

11 Know which one brought the call

The idea. If you can't tell which piece brought a call, you can't tell what to buy more of. Two cheap ways to tell:

- **Ask every new caller.** "How did you hear about us?" Write the answer down, every time.
- **Give each piece its own web address or QR code.** A sign can point to one page and the hanger to another, so visits tell you which one worked.

GTL estimate: after three months of asking, most owners can see which piece pulls its weight in their town.

Example (sample numbers). A made-up roofer writes down the answer for every new call for 90 days: 14 from Google, 6 from yard signs, 4 from door hangers, 3 from the truck, 5 from referrals. They order twice as many yard signs and keep the hangers.

Do it in 24 hours

- [ ] Add "How did you hear about us?" to whatever you write calls down in.
- [ ] Ask your sign shop to add a short web address or QR code to the next batch of yard signs.
- [ ] Set a reminder for 90 days from today to count the answers.

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

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



Your first 24 hours, in one list

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

- [ ] Stand across the street from your truck and run the five-second test (section 1).
- [ ] Cross out everything on your sign that isn't name, trade or phone (section 2).
- [ ] Add a yard-sign line to your quote or contract (section 4).
- [ ] Check your state's rule on license numbers on trucks (section 6).
- [ ] Start asking every new caller how they heard about you (section 11).



Where to go next

Signs, trucks and hangers reach the street you're on. A postcard reaches the streets around it. Our free postcard return calculator shows how many jobs a mailing would need to bring in to pay for itself.

And a sign only works if the work behind it looks good in photos: our free Job-Site Photo Shot List gives you the 13 shots to take on every job.



If you'd rather hand it off

Grow That Local designs ads for local businesses and puts them in mailboxes on the streets you want. Each service starts with a free sample, so you see the work before you pay.

Best fit for this guide: Neighborhood postcard. Free sample: your ad, designed and shown on the card. Neighborhood postcard is $400 a month, with a 7-day full refund.

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.

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.

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

This guide quotes laws and rules, not statistics. Each was checked on 2026-11-12:

- California Contractors State License Board, "Fast Facts: Advertising Guidelines for Contractors": business name and license number on commercially registered vehicles; plumbing (C-36), sign (C-45) and well-drilling (C-57) contractors also show their address on each side. cslb.ca.gov (section 6)
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, "Do I Need a USDOT Number?": required for vehicles with a weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more used in interstate commerce; some states require one for in-state work. fmcsa.dot.gov (section 6)
- 18 U.S.C. 1725, mail matter without postage placed in a mailbox: govinfo.gov (section 9)

GTL estimates

These are our own judgment, not measured facts:

1. About five seconds to read a sign or a truck, and three things fit in it (section 1). Reasoning: a car at town speeds passes a parked truck or a yard sign in a few seconds, and a glance holds a name, a word and a number at most.
2. "Done by" signs beat a plain logo (section 3). Reasoning: the sign then points at work the passerby can see. A plain logo is only a name.
3. The back of a truck gets the longest look (section 5). Reasoning: at lights and in slow traffic, the driver behind you faces your back doors for the whole wait.
4. How door magnets, decals and wraps compare (section 7). Reasoning: from common sign-shop options; prices and lifespans vary by shop and climate, so get quotes.
5. Neighbors of a finished job are the warmest strangers (section 8). Reasoning: they've seen the crew, the truck and the result, so a hanger reminds them of something they already noticed.
6. Seeing your name two or three times in a week makes a call more likely (section 10). Reasoning: a name seen several times feels familiar, and familiar names get the call when the need comes up.
7. Three months of asking callers shows which piece works (section 11). Reasoning: most small trades get enough new calls in 90 days for a pattern to show.

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