The Google Business Profile Playbook

Rank higher on Google Maps and get more calls from homeowners near you

By the SmallBiz Marketing team
Contractor marketing specialists · 20+ years of marketing experience

smallbizmarketing.net

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Rank higher on Google Maps and get more calls from homeowners near you.

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PART 1

The essentials

The core steps, in order. Start here.

SECTION 02

Why your profile matters

When homeowners search for a contractor near them, Google often shows a map with three businesses before any website. Your Google Business Profile decides whether you are one of them.

RECOMMENDED TOOL

Google Business Profile

Free. Claim or create your profile here.

Visit Google Business Profile at business.google.com →

SECTION 03

Your first 60 minutes

- Find your profile on Google Maps and claim it
- Choose your primary category
- Set your service area
- Upload your 10 best project photos

SECTION 04

Step 1: Claim and verify

- Search for your business on Google Maps
- Claim it if it exists, or create a new profile
- Use your exact real business name, nothing extra
- Complete verification as Google instructs

SECTION 05

Step 2: Pick the right categories

Your primary category should match your most profitable work, such as Tile Contractor or Bathroom Remodeler. Add secondary categories for other services you actually offer.

SECTION 06

Step 3: Service area, hours and contact

- Set a service area by city or region instead of showing a home address
- Add accurate hours, including when you answer estimate requests
- Link to your website's home or contact page

SECTION 07

Step 4: Description and services

- Description: what you do, who you serve, where, and what makes you different
- Add each service with a two-sentence description

SECTION 08

Step 5: Photos

- Upload 10 or more real finished-project photos to start
- Add before-and-afters and team photos
- Add new photos at least twice a month

SECTION 09

Step 6: Posts and Q&A

- Post a recent project every week or two with a short caption
- Add common questions and answer them yourself

SECTION 10

Step 7: Reviews

Ask every client for a review at the final walkthrough, send a direct link the same day, and reply to every review. See our 5-Star Reviews Playbook for scripts.

SECTION 11

30-day plan

- [ ] Week 1: claim, verify, categories, service area, description
- [ ] Week 2: services list and 10 photos
- [ ] Week 3: first two posts and three Q&As
- [ ] Week 4: request reviews from your last 10 clients

PART 2

Going deeper

The strategy behind each step, with frameworks and diagrams.

SECTION 13

Deep dive: what Google looks at in the map results

Google decides which businesses to show in the map results using three broad factors: how relevant your profile is to the search, how far you are from the searcher, and how prominent your business is. You can't move your location, but you can strongly influence relevance and prominence.

Relevance comes from your categories, services, description and the words customers use in reviews. Prominence comes from the number and quality of reviews, your website, and how often your business is mentioned and linked across the web.

That is why the most important habits are simple: choose precise categories, list every real service, keep adding photos, and earn steady reviews. Profiles that are complete and active tend to outperform neglected ones.

- Precise primary category beats a broad one
- Every real service listed with a short description
- Fresh photos and posts show the business is active
- Steady, recent reviews matter more than a burst of old ones

SECTION 14

Deep dive: handling problems and suspensions

Profiles occasionally get suspended or edited by Google or the public. Keep your information truthful and consistent and you avoid most issues. Never add keywords to your business name, never create duplicate profiles and never use a virtual office address.

If someone suggests an edit to your profile, Google may apply it. Log in at least weekly to review suggested changes and correct anything wrong. If your profile is suspended, fix the issue first, then follow Google's reinstatement process with clear evidence such as your business license and photos of your branded vehicle or signage.

- Log in weekly and review suggested edits
- Keep your business license and proof of address on file
- Never use keyword-stuffed names or fake locations

SECTION 15

Deep dive: turning profile views into calls

Many homeowners decide from your profile alone. Make it easy: an accurate phone number, a website link to your contact page, and photos that match the work they want. Add a cover photo of your best project and update it seasonally.

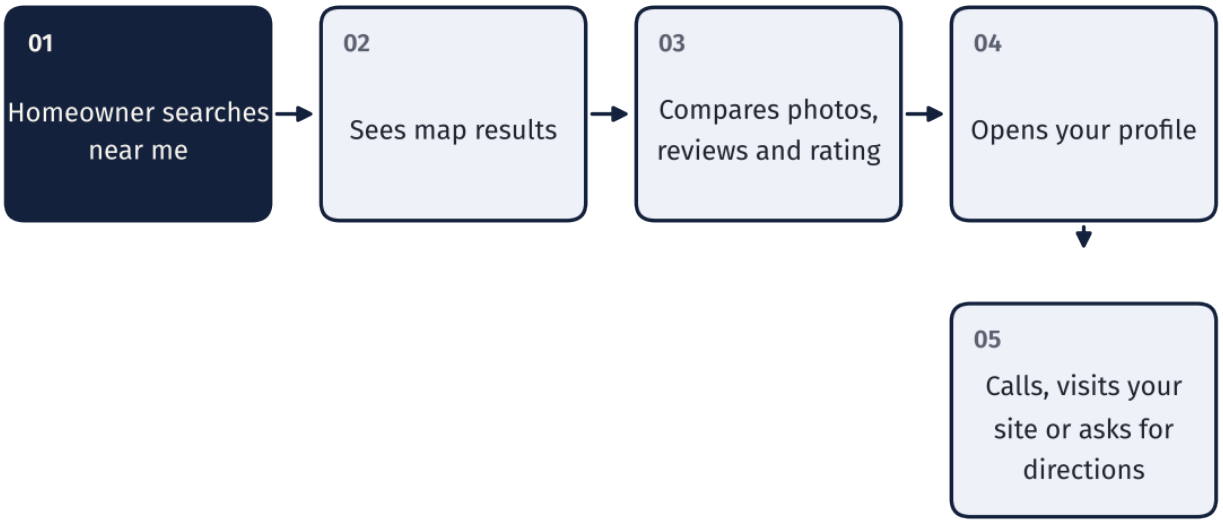
Use the Q&A section to answer the questions that stop people from calling: Do you offer free estimates? What areas do you serve? Do you handle permits? Short, honest answers remove friction.

- Cover photo: your single best project
- Website link: contact page or main service page
- Q&A: estimates, areas, permits, timelines

SECTION 16

The big picture: the map is where local jobs start

When a homeowner searches for a contractor near them, Google often shows a map with a few businesses before any regular results. Those spots get a lot of the calls. Your Google Business Profile is what puts you in that map.

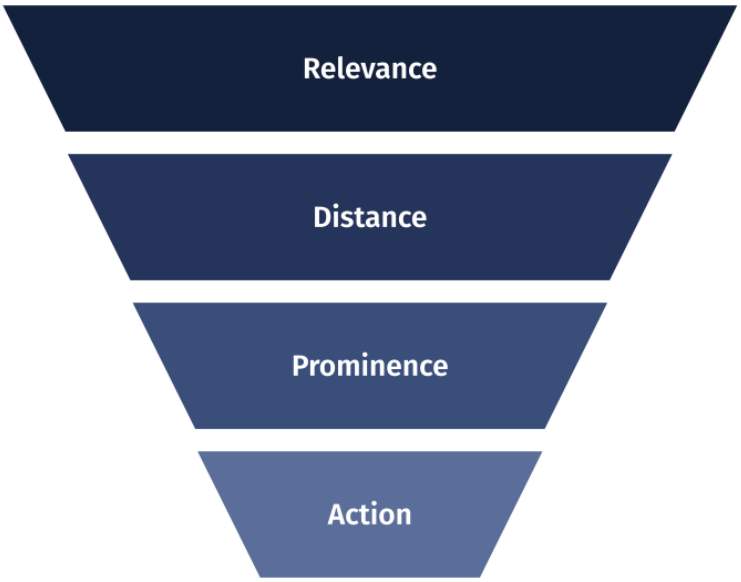


How homeowners use the map results to choose who to call.

SECTION 17

What Google looks at

Google uses three big ideas when deciding who shows up: how well your profile matches the search, how close you are, and how well-known and trusted you are. You control most of the first and third.



Categories, services and description match the search

How close your service area is to the searcher

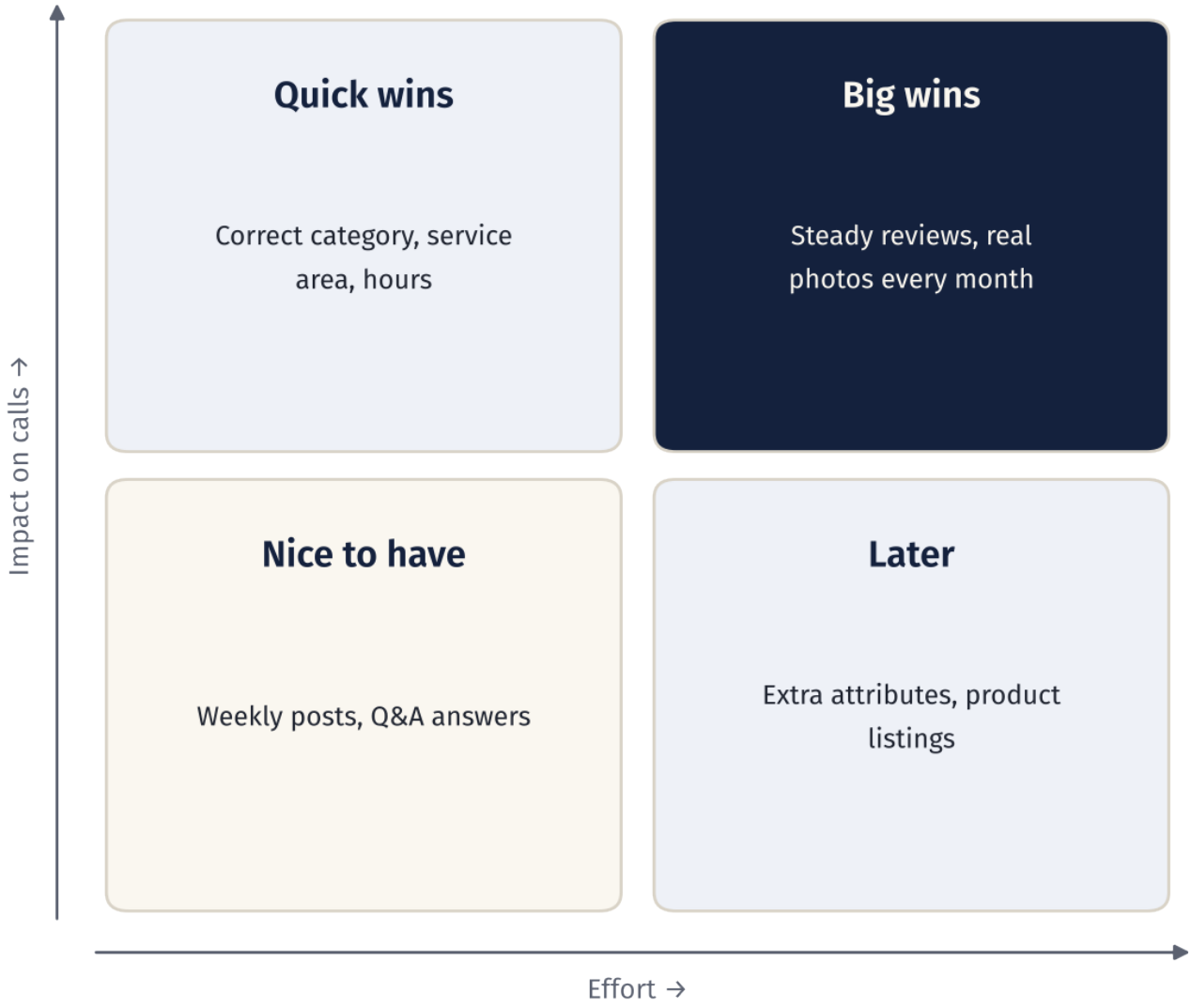
Reviews, photos, website and mentions across the web

Clear phone, website and photos turn views into calls

The factors that move you up the map, and what turns a view into a call.

SECTION 18

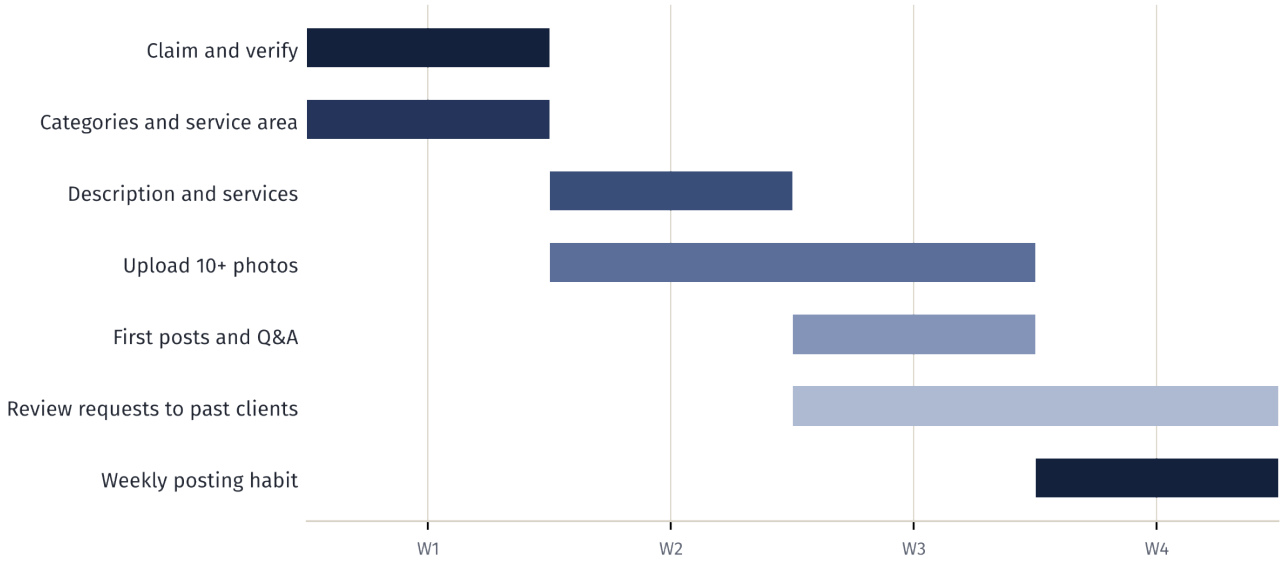
Where to spend your time first



Do the high-impact basics before the extras.

SECTION 19

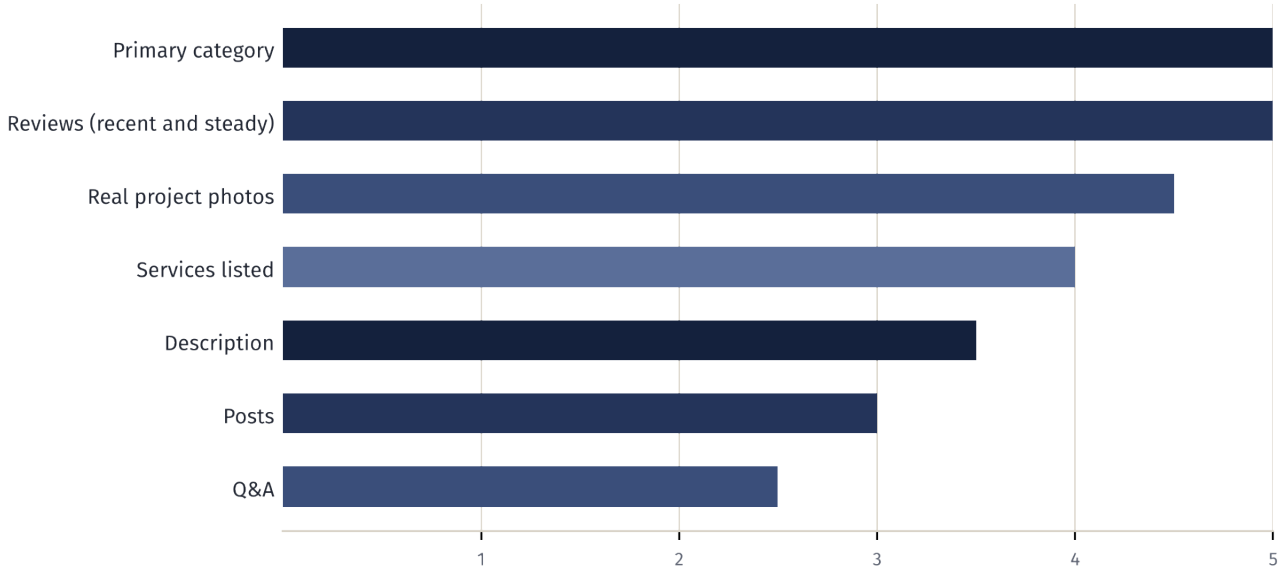
Your 4-week profile timeline



A month to a complete, active profile. W = week.

SECTION 20

What matters most on your profile



Our view of what matters most, rated 1 to 5. Based on our experience, not a Google ranking list.

SECTION 21

Real-world scenario: getting onto the map (illustrative)

This is an illustrative example. Picture Dana, a bathroom remodeler whose profile was created years ago and forgotten. It has the category General Contractor, two photos, an old phone number and four reviews from 2021.

Dana changes the primary category to Bathroom Remodeler, sets a service area of five cities, updates the phone number and writes a clear description. Over three weeks she uploads twenty project photos and asks every client from the past year for a review using a direct link.

She posts a finished project every week and answers the three questions homeowners ask most in the Q&A. After a month the profile looks active and trustworthy, with fresh reviews and real work.

The lesson: most profiles lose not because of competition, but because they look abandoned. A complete, active profile stands out.

SECTION 22

Troubleshooting: when the profile isn't working

Profile doesn't appear for searches	Check your primary category, add every service, and confirm your service area covers the searcher's city.
Lots of views but few calls	Add better photos, more recent reviews and clear answers in Q&A.
Information keeps changing	Log in weekly and reject incorrect suggested edits.
Profile suspended	Fix anything that breaks Google's guidelines, then request reinstatement with your business license and proof of operation.
Reviews stopped coming in	Restart asking at every walkthrough and send the link the same day.

PART 3

Tools you can use today

Examples, templates, worksheets, calendars and trackers.

SECTION 24

Worked example: a profile description

EXAMPLE

We are a licensed and insured tile and bathroom remodeling company serving Roseville, Rocklin, Granite Bay and Sacramento. We specialize in custom walk-in showers, heated floors and large-format tile for homeowners who want a high-end result. Every project starts with an in-home consultation and a clear written quote.

SECTION 25

Worked example: services list

EXAMPLE

Walk-in shower remodeling: Custom curbless and curbed showers with niches, benches and premium tile.

Heated bathroom floors: Electric radiant floor heating installed under tile for year-round comfort.

Kitchen backsplashes: Designer backsplashes in porcelain, natural stone and handmade tile.

SECTION 26

Worked example: a weekly post

EXAMPLE

Just finished: a full primary bathroom remodel in Granite Bay with a curbless shower, linear drain and heated floors. Planning a bathroom project? Request an estimate through our website.

SECTION 27

Worksheet: your profile

Primary category

Secondary categories

Cities in your service area

Your profile description (first draft)

Five services to list

SECTION 28

Common mistakes to avoid

- Adding city names or keywords to your business name

- Choosing a broad category like General Contractor when a specific one fits better
- Uploading only logos or graphics instead of real photos
- Leaving questions and reviews unanswered for weeks

SECTION 29

FAQ

Should I show my address?

If customers don't visit your location, set a service area and hide the address.

How often should I post?

Once every week or two is plenty. Consistency beats volume.

Can I have more than one profile?

Only for real separate locations with staff. Duplicate profiles can get suspended.

30-DAY ACTION CALENDAR

30 days to a strong Google Business Profile

Do one task a day. Tick the box in your head, or print this page and cross off each day as you go.

DAY 1 Search your business on Maps	**DAY 2** Claim your profile	**DAY 3** Start verification	**DAY 4** Pick primary category	**DAY 5** Add secondary categories
DAY 6 Set service area	**DAY 7** Set hours	**DAY 8** Add website link	**DAY 9** Write description	**DAY 10** Add service 1
DAY 11 Add service 2	**DAY 12** Add service 3	**DAY 13** Upload 5 project photos	**DAY 14** Upload 5 more photos	**DAY 15** Add a cover photo
DAY 16 Add team photo	**DAY 17** Write first post	**DAY 18** Add 3 Q&As	**DAY 19** Get your review link	**DAY 20** Ask 3 recent clients for reviews
DAY 21 Reply to all reviews	**DAY 22** Ask 3 more clients	**DAY 23** Post a recent project	**DAY 24** Add 3 more photos	**DAY 25** Check suggested edits
DAY 26 Ask 3 more clients	**DAY 27** Reply to new reviews	**DAY 28** Post again	**DAY 29** Review calls in Insights	**DAY 30** Plan next month

SECTION 31

copy-ready templates

TEMPLATE · COPY AND CUSTOMIZE

Profile description

[Company] is a licensed and insured [trade] company serving [City], [City] and [City]. We specialize in [service 1], [service 2] and [service 3] for homeowners who want [result]. Every project starts with an in-home consultation and a clear written quote.

TEMPLATE · COPY AND CUSTOMIZE

Service description

[Service name]: [What it is] with [key features], installed by our experienced team. Ideal for [type of homeowner or home].

TEMPLATE · COPY AND CUSTOMIZE

Weekly post

Just finished: [project] in [City] with [2 standout details]. Planning a [project type]? Request an estimate through our website.

TEMPLATE · COPY AND CUSTOMIZE

Q&A answers

Do you offer free estimates? Yes, every project starts with a free in-home consultation in our service area.

What areas do you serve? We work in [list cities].

TRACKER

Monthly Google profile results

Month	New reviews	Total reviews	Photos added	Posts	Calls
Month 1					
Month 2					
Month 3					
Month 4					
Month 5					
Month 6					
Month 7					
Month 8					
Month 9					
Month 10					
Month 11					
Month 12					

SECTION 33

glossary

Google Business Profile	Your free listing that appears on Google Maps and local results.
Primary category	The single category that best describes your main business.
Service area	The cities or regions you travel to for work.
Map results	The group of local businesses Google shows with a map.
Suggested edit	A change to your profile proposed by Google or the public.

SECTION 34

Recommended tools

Every tool recommended in this playbook, in one place. Some links may be affiliate links; we only recommend tools we use or would set up for clients.

RECOMMENDED TOOL

Google Business Profile

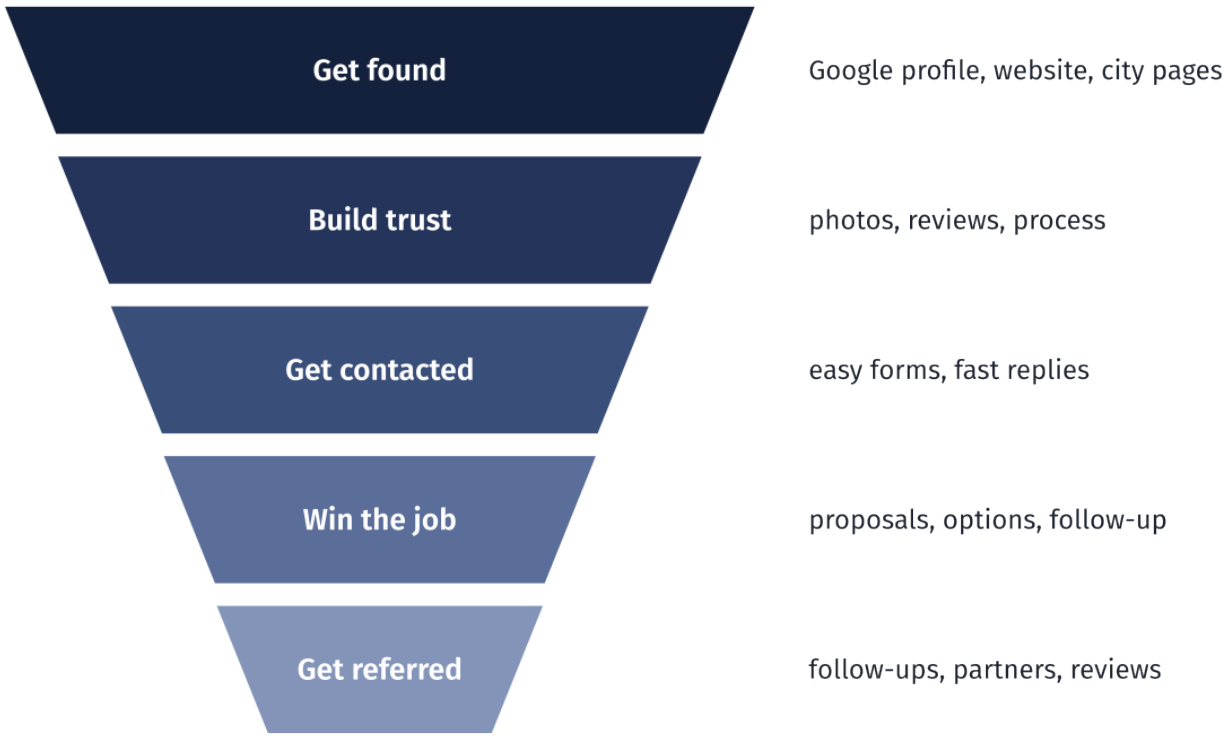
Free. Claim or create your profile here.

Visit Google Business Profile at business.google.com →

SECTION 35

Bonus: the contractor marketing system on one page

Every playbook in this series fits into one simple system. Homeowners find you, trust you, contact you and refer others. Each part supports the next.



The five stages of contractor marketing and the tools for each.

SECTION 36

Bonus: your weekly marketing hour

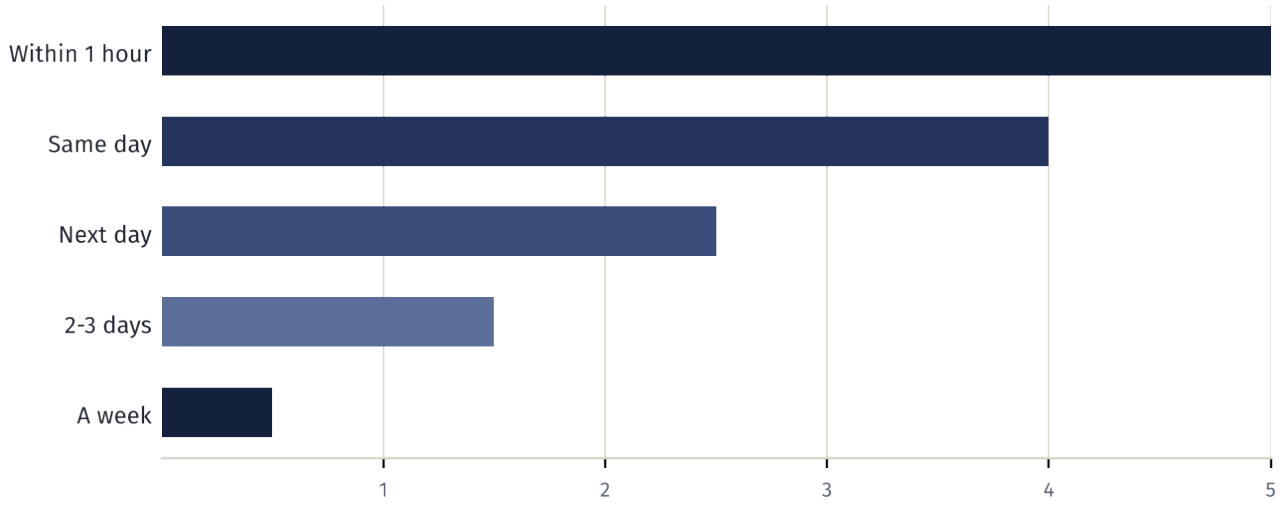
You don't need a marketing department. One focused hour a week, done consistently, beats occasional bursts of effort.

- First 15 minutes: answer every new lead and message
- Next 15 minutes: send review requests for finished jobs
- Next 15 minutes: upload new project photos to your website and Google
- Last 15 minutes: work on one improvement from your current playbook

SECTION 37

Bonus: how fast to reply to a lead

Homeowners often contact several contractors at once. The first professional reply makes a strong impression.



Our view of how reply speed affects your chances of winning the job, rated 1 to 5. Based on experience, not a study.

SECTION 38

Bonus: master checklist

- [ ] Website with a page for each main service
- [ ] Contact form on every page
- [ ] Google Business Profile complete and active
- [ ] Review request after every job
- [ ] Real project photos added monthly
- [ ] Pages for your top cities
- [ ] Job management software for quotes and payments
- [ ] Follow-up with past clients and partners
- [ ] One marketing hour every week

SECTION 39

Bonus: when to get help

Doing it yourself works if you have the time. If your calendar is full of jobs, it's often worth having a professional set up the foundation so you can focus on the work you do best. SmallBiz Marketing builds premium contractor websites and Google setups and can run your monthly marketing for you.

ABOUT SMALLBIZ MARKETING

SmallBiz Marketing builds premium websites and Google visibility for home-improvement contractors. Our team brings 20+ years of marketing experience, and every playbook is built from the same systems we use for client websites.

Rather have it done for you?

We build premium websites and Google setups for contractors, live in 5 days. Tell us about your business through the contact form at smallbizmarketing.net/contact.

Contact us →

Contractor website	$2,495
Website + Google setup	$3,495
Monthly growth plan	$995/mo

Some links in this playbook may be affiliate links. We only recommend tools we use or would set up for clients. Tool features and pricing change; check each company's site for current details.