# The Local SEO Playbook for Contractors

Show up when homeowners search for your services in every city you serve

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

smallbizmarketing.net

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*Show up when homeowners search for your services in every city you serve.*


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PART 1

# The essentials

The core steps, in order. Start here.

SECTION 02

## The three things that drive local rankings

- Relevance: your pages clearly match what people search for
- Distance: where you are compared to the searcher
- Prominence: reviews, links and how well-known your business is online

SECTION 03

## Your first 60 minutes

- Write your service list and city list side by side
- Google your top three service-plus-city searches and note who ranks
- Check that your name, phone and website match on Google and your site

SECTION 04

## Step 1: Pick your keywords

List each service and each city you want work in. Your keywords are combinations like bathroom remodel Sacramento or tile contractor Roseville.

RECOMMENDED TOOL

### Semrush

Find which searches bring homeowners to competitors and track your rankings by city.

Visit Semrush at semrush.com →

SECTION 05

## Step 2: Build one page per service

- Title: Service in City | Business Name
- Clear description of the service, your process and photos
- Common questions and answers

- Contact form

SECTION 06

## Step 3: Build city pages that are actually useful

- Projects completed in that city, with photos
- Neighborhoods you serve
- Anything local that matters, like permit experience
- Never copy the same page and swap the city name

SECTION 07

## Step 4: Strengthen your Google Business Profile

See The Google Business Profile Playbook. Make sure categories, services and photos match your website.

SECTION 08

## Step 5: Citations

- List your business on major directories with identical name, phone and website
- Fix old listings with outdated details

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## Step 6: Earn local links

- Suppliers and showrooms you work with
- Local associations and chambers of commerce
- Sponsorships and community projects

SECTION 10

## Step 7: Track progress

- Track 10 to 20 service-plus-city searches monthly
- Watch calls and form submissions, not only rankings

SECTION 11

## 60-day plan

- [ ] Days 1-10: keyword list and page plan
- [ ] Days 11-30: service pages live
- [ ] Days 31-45: top three city pages live
- [ ] Days 46-60: citations, links and first ranking report

PART 2

# Going deeper

The strategy behind each step, with frameworks and diagrams.

SECTION 13

## Deep dive: understanding search intent

Not every search is equal. Someone searching bathroom remodel ideas is dreaming; someone searching bathroom remodeler near me is ready to call. Focus your service and city pages on searches with hiring intent, and use blog articles for research-style searches later.

Hiring-intent searches usually include a service plus a location, or words like near me, cost, company or contractor. These are the searches where ranking actually brings calls.

- Hiring intent: service + city, near me, contractor, company, cost
- Research intent: ideas, how to, trends, DIY
- Build service and city pages first; blog later

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## Deep dive: on-page basics that matter

Each page should focus on one main topic. Put the service and city in the page title, the main heading and the first paragraph, written naturally. Add photos with descriptive file names and alt text, and link related pages to each other, such as your Roseville page linking to your walk-in shower page.

Make pages genuinely useful. Explain the process, show real projects, answer questions and make contact easy. Pages that help homeowners tend to hold rankings better over time than thin pages stuffed with keywords.

- One topic per page
- Service and city in title, heading and opening paragraph
- Internal links between related service and city pages
- Real photos, FAQs and a contact form on every page

SECTION 15

## Deep dive: measuring what matters

Rankings are a signal, not the goal. The goal is estimate requests and booked jobs. Track monthly: website form submissions, calls from your Google profile, and which pages and searches bring visitors. Google Search Console shows which searches you appear for for free.

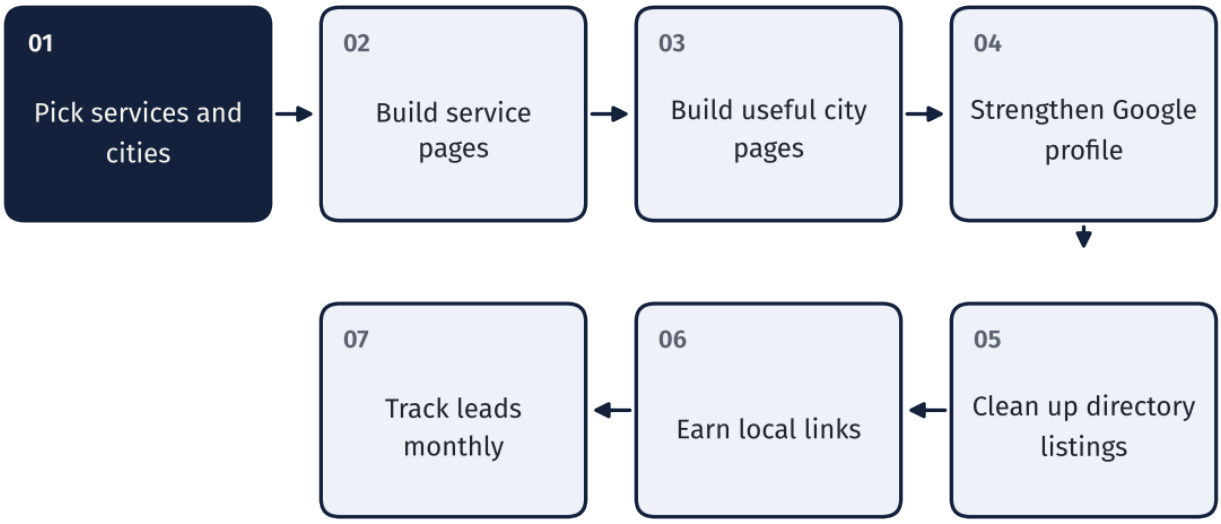
Review the numbers once a month. Improve the pages that get impressions but few clicks by rewriting the title to be clearer and more appealing. Improve pages that get clicks but no leads by adding photos, proof and a simpler form.

- Monthly: form submissions, profile calls, top pages, top searches
- Low clicks: improve the title and description
- Low leads: improve photos, proof and the form

SECTION 16

## The big picture: show up where you want to work

Local SEO means showing up on Google when homeowners in your area search for your service. You need the right pages, a strong Google profile, and signals that your business is real and trusted.




The order we recommend for contractor local SEO.

SECTION 17

# Hiring searches vs research searches




ideas, trends, how-to searches

cost, best materials, reviews

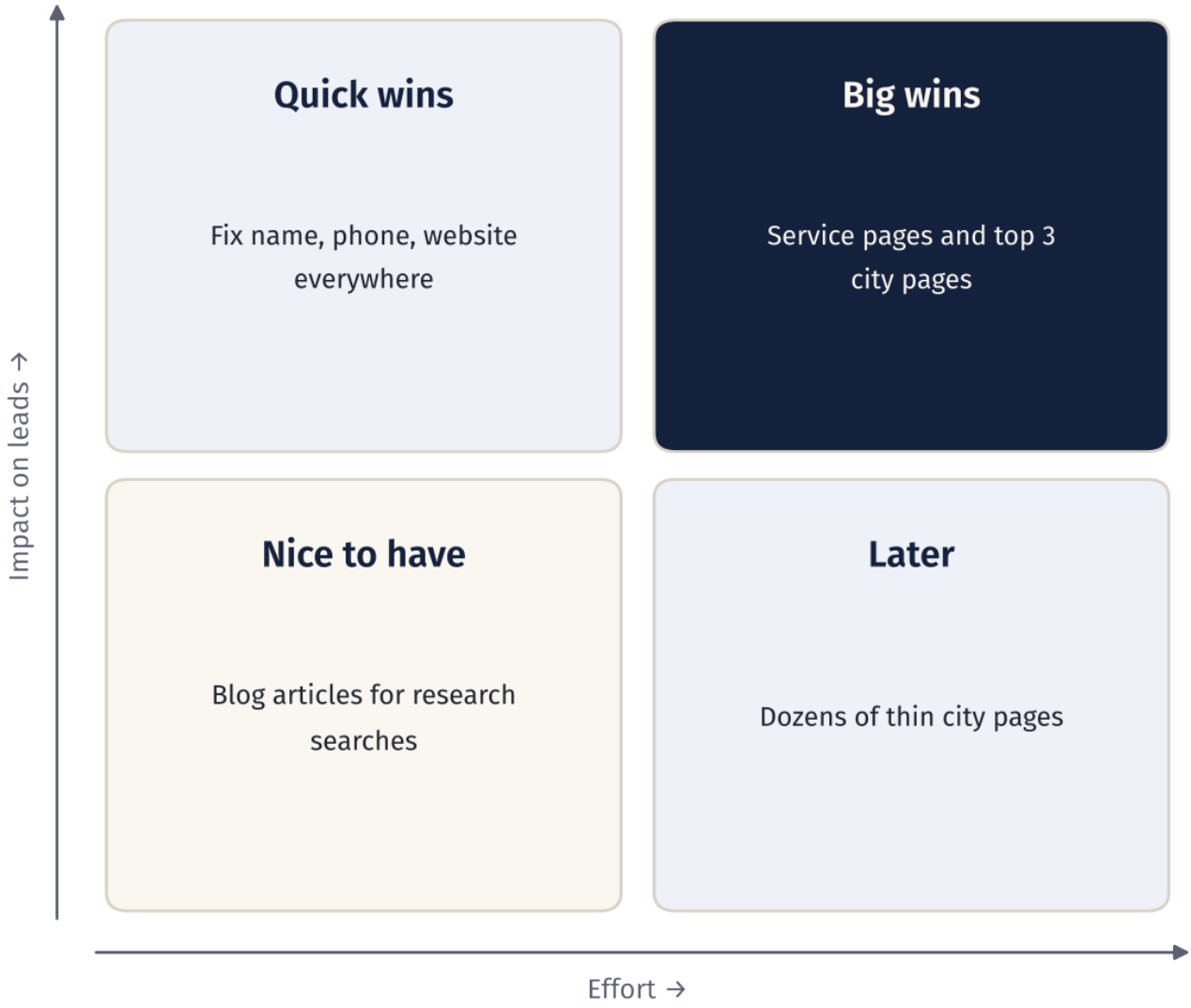
service + city, near me, contractor

homeowner calls or fills out your form

Focus your main pages on hiring searches. Use blog articles for research searches later.

SECTION 18

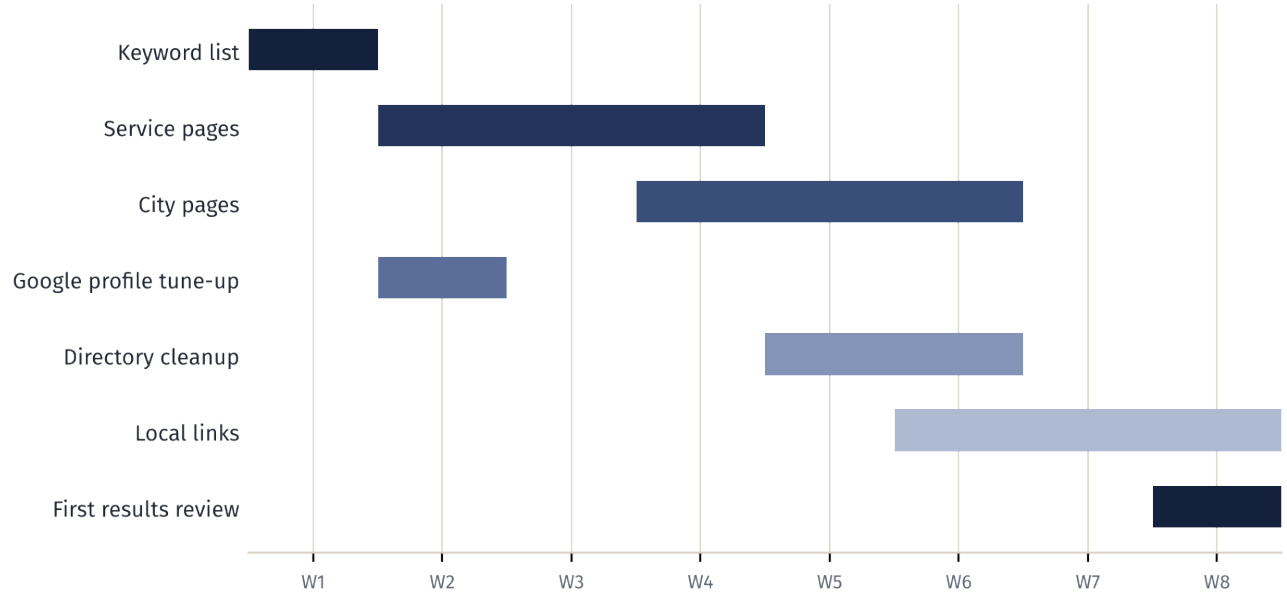
# Where to spend your time first




A few strong pages beat many thin ones.

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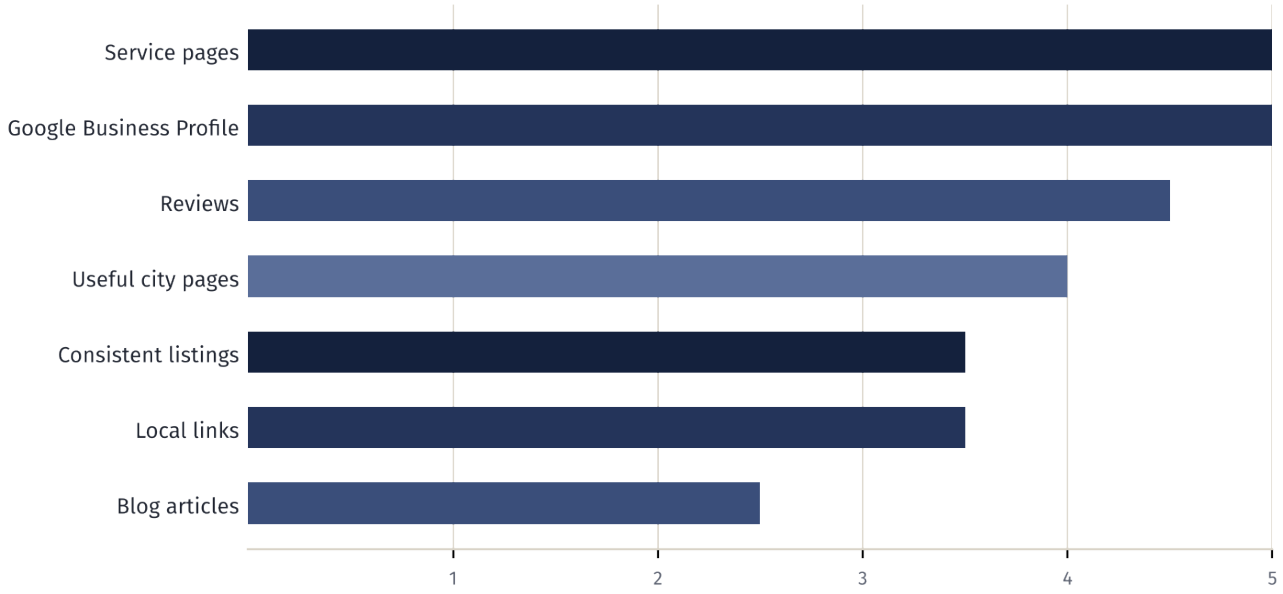
# Your 8-week local SEO timeline




Two months to a solid local SEO foundation. W = week.

SECTION 20

# What helps most




Our view of what moves local rankings for contractors, rated 1 to 5. Based on experience, not a ranking factor study.

SECTION 21

# Real-world scenario: expanding to new cities (illustrative)

This is an illustrative example. Lena's remodeling company gets most of its leads from one city, but she wants more work in two wealthier nearby towns.

Instead of copying her main city page, she builds a genuinely useful page for each new town: recent projects there, neighborhoods she serves, and notes about local permits. She links each city page to her service pages and asks two local suppliers to mention her on their sites.

Over the following months, she starts appearing for searches in those towns and receives her first estimate requests from them.

The lesson: one helpful page per city, linked to strong service pages, beats dozens of copied pages.

SECTION 22

# Troubleshooting: local SEO problems

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ranking in one city but not others** | Build a useful page for each target city and make sure your Google service area includes them. |
| **Pages get impressions but few clicks** | Rewrite the page title to be clearer and more appealing. |
| **Clicks but no leads** | Add photos, proof and a simpler contact form to the page. |
| **Rankings dropped suddenly** | Check for site changes, broken pages or a Google profile issue before assuming a penalty. |

PART 3

# Tools you can use today

Examples, templates, worksheets, calendars and trackers.

SECTION 24

# Worked example: keyword map

EXAMPLE

Bathroom remodeling Sacramento → service page: /bathroom-remodeling

Walk-in shower Roseville → section on the Roseville city page plus a project photo

Tile contractor Granite Bay → Granite Bay city page

Heated bathroom floors → service page: /heated-floors

SECTION 25

# Worked example: city page outline

EXAMPLE

Title: Bathroom Remodeling in Roseville, CA | Your Company

Intro: Local bathroom remodeling for Roseville homeowners, from tub-to-shower conversions to full primary suites.

Recent Roseville projects: three photos with one-line captions.

Neighborhoods served: list the areas you actually work in.

Local note: experience with local permits and HOA approvals, if true.

Call to action: Request a Roseville estimate.

SECTION 26

# Worksheet: your keyword map

**Service 1 + top 3 cities**

**Service 2 + top 3 cities**

**Service 3 + top 3 cities**

**Competitors ranking for your top search**

**Directories to update**

SECTION 27

# Common mistakes to avoid

- Copying one city page and only changing the city name

- Targeting cities where you don't actually want to work
- Ignoring your Google Business Profile while building pages
- Checking rankings daily instead of tracking leads monthly

SECTION 28

# FAQ

### How long does local SEO take?

Usually several weeks to a few months to see movement, depending on competition.

### Do I need backlinks?

A few relevant local links help, such as suppliers and associations. Avoid paying for low-quality links.

30-DAY ACTION CALENDAR

# 30 days of local SEO basics

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**<br>List services | **DAY 2**<br>List cities | **DAY 3**<br>Google top searches | **DAY 4**<br>Note competitors | **DAY 5**<br>Map keywords to pages |
| **DAY 6**<br>Draft service page 1 | **DAY 7**<br>Draft service page 2 | **DAY 8**<br>Draft service page 3 | **DAY 9**<br>Publish service pages | **DAY 10**<br>Add photos and alt text |
| **DAY 11**<br>Draft city page 1 | **DAY 12**<br>Draft city page 2 | **DAY 13**<br>Draft city page 3 | **DAY 14**<br>Publish city pages | **DAY 15**<br>Link pages together |
| **DAY 16**<br>Check Google profile | **DAY 17**<br>Match categories to pages | **DAY 18**<br>Search your business name | **DAY 19**<br>List directories | **DAY 20**<br>Fix listing 1-3 |
| **DAY 21**<br>Fix listing 4-6 | **DAY 22**<br>Ask a supplier for a link | **DAY 23**<br>Join local association | **DAY 24**<br>Ask for 5 reviews | **DAY 25**<br>Connect Search Console |
| **DAY 26**<br>Check search terms | **DAY 27**<br>Improve one title | **DAY 28**<br>Add one project | **DAY 29**<br>Review leads | **DAY 30**<br>Plan next month |

SECTION 30

# copy-ready templates

TEMPLATE · COPY AND CUSTOMIZE

## City page structure

Title: [Service] in [City], [State] | [Company]

Intro: Local [service] for [City] homeowners, from [small project] to [large project].

Recent [City] projects: [3 photos with one-line captions]

Areas we serve in [City]: [neighborhoods]

Local note: [permit or HOA experience, if true]

Call to action: Request your [City] estimate.

TEMPLATE · COPY AND CUSTOMIZE

## Keyword map

[Service] + [City] → [page URL]

TRACKER

# Keyword map

| Search phrase | Page it belongs to | Live? | Rank check |
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SECTION 32

# glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Keyword** | The words someone types into Google. |
| **Citation** | A listing of your business name, address or phone on another site. |
| **Backlink** | A link from another website to yours. |
| **Search intent** | What the person searching actually wants to do. |
| **Impressions** | How many times your page appeared in search results. |

SECTION 33

# 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

### Semrush

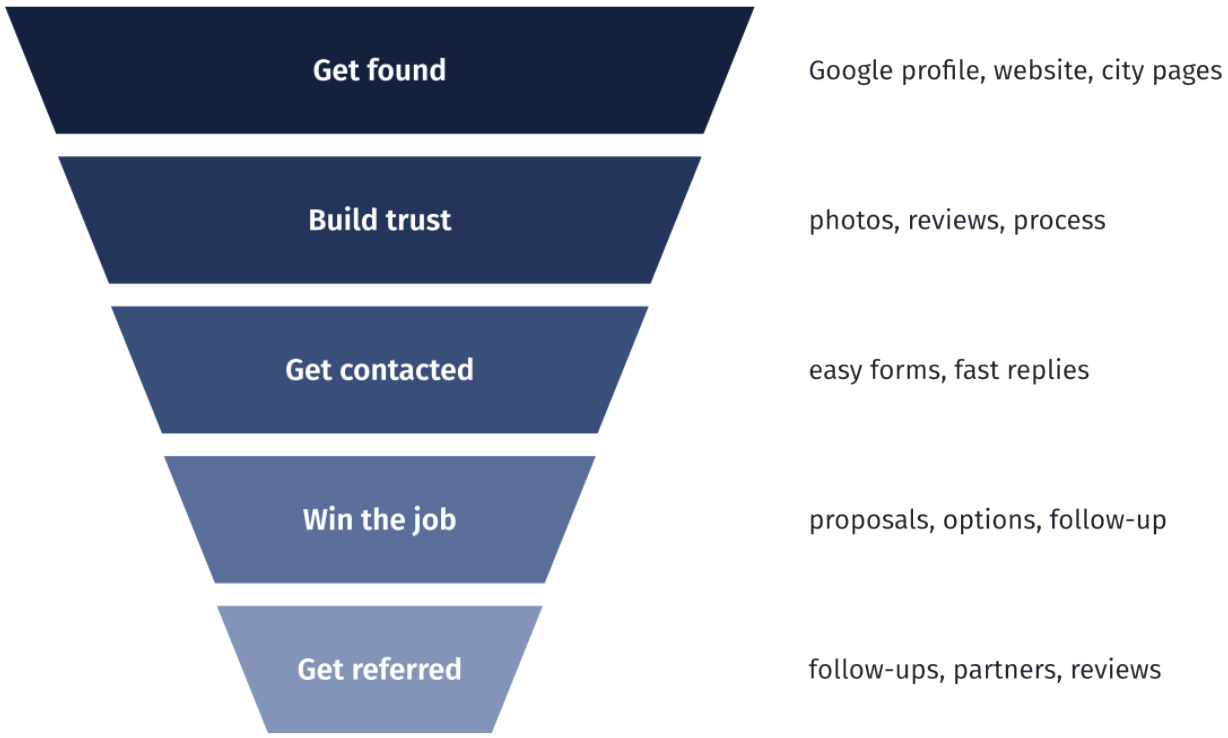
Find which searches bring homeowners to competitors and track your rankings by city.

**Visit Semrush at semrush.com →**

SECTION 34

# 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 35

## Bonus: your weekly marketing hour

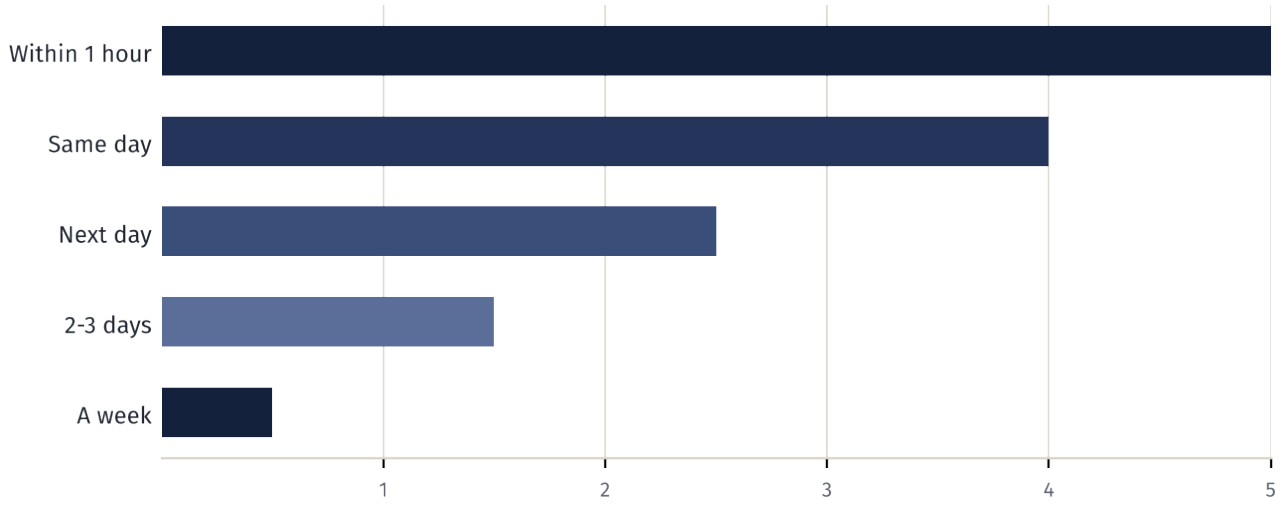
You don't need a marketing department. One focused hour a week, done consistently, beats occasional bursts of effort.

- 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 36

## 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 37

# 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 38

# 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.