The Yelp Playbook for Contractors

Build a Yelp business page that earns trust and brings in calls, without breaking Yelp's rules

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

smallbizmarketing.net

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Build a Yelp business page that earns trust and brings in calls, without breaking Yelp's rules.

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PART 1

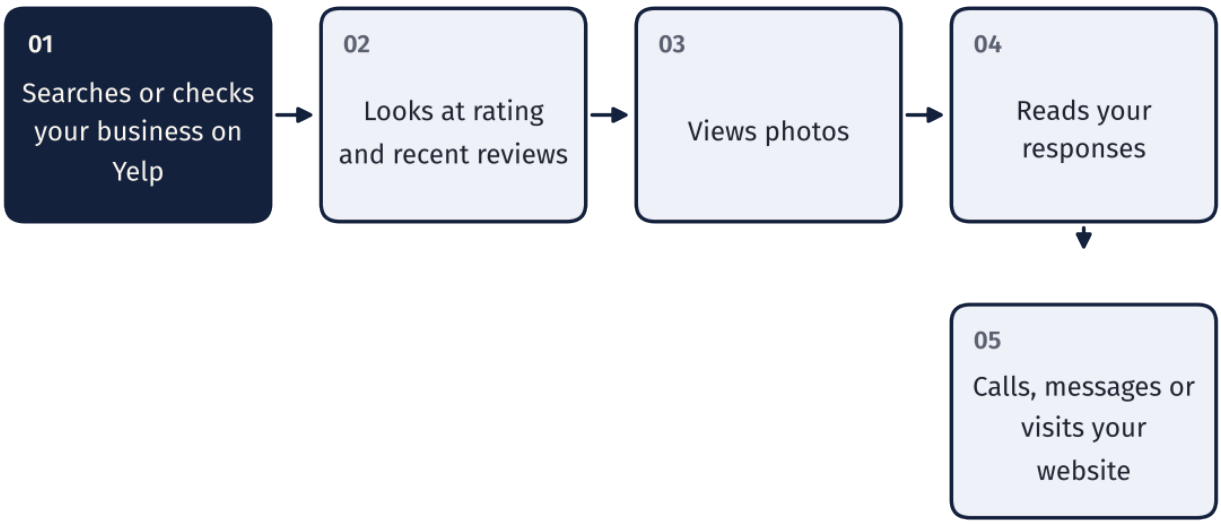
Why Yelp

How homeowners use Yelp to check out contractors.

SECTION 02

How homeowners use Yelp

Many homeowners check Yelp before calling a contractor, even if they found you somewhere else. A complete page with photos, accurate details and thoughtful responses to reviews makes you look established and trustworthy.



Your page is often a second check after Google. Make it match.

SECTION 03

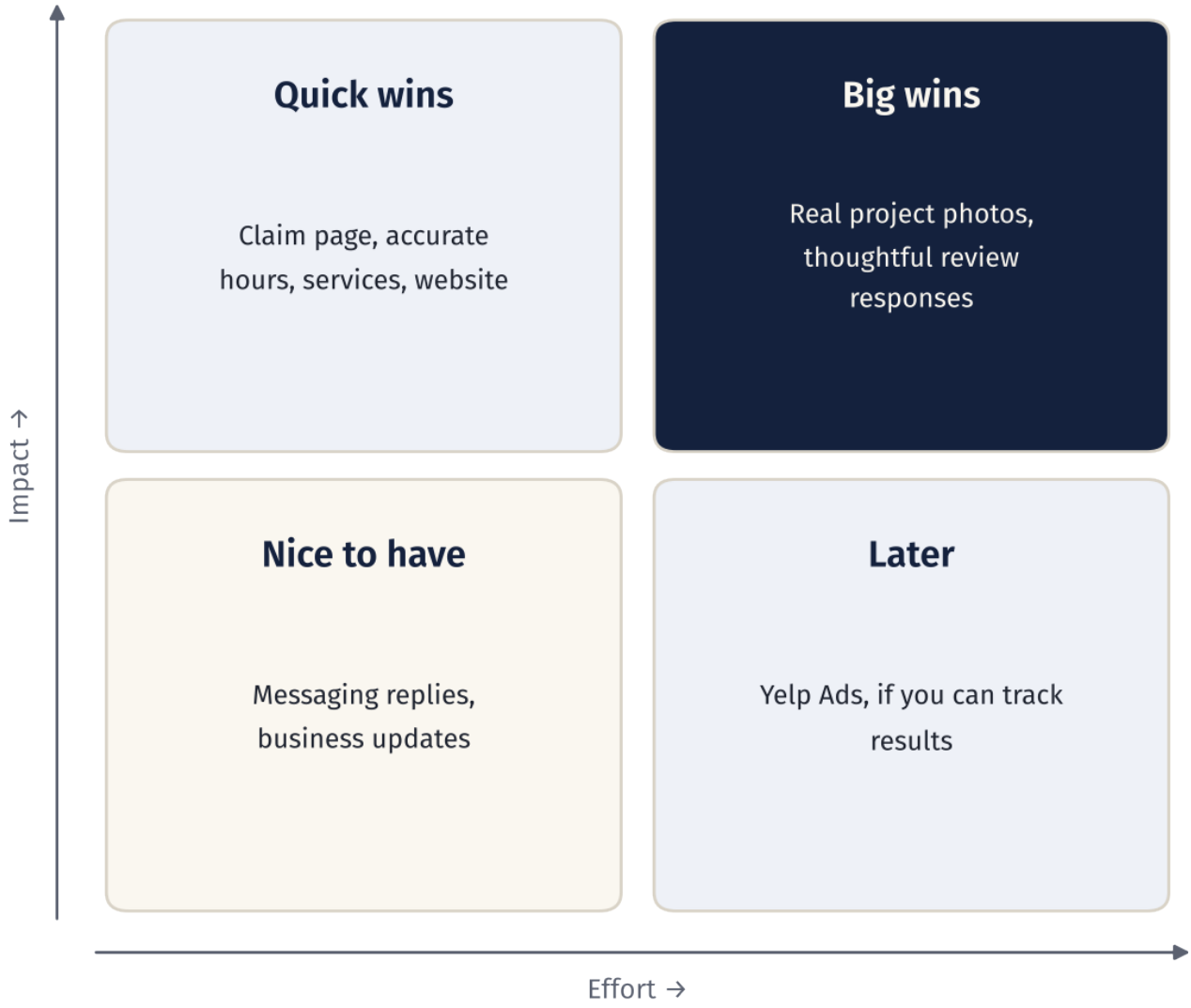
The most important rule: don't ask for Yelp reviews

Yelp's guidelines discourage businesses from asking customers for reviews, and Yelp may filter reviews it believes were solicited. That's different from Google. Focus on doing great work, having a complete page and responding well. Check Yelp's current guidelines for businesses directly.

- Don't send review links or ask for Yelp reviews
- Don't offer anything in exchange for reviews
- Do let customers know you're on Yelp, for example with a Yelp sticker or a link on your website
- Do respond professionally to reviews

SECTION 04

Where to focus first



Get the free basics right before considering ads.

PART 2

Set up your page

SECTION 06

Yelp business page checklist

- [ ] Claim your page through Yelp for Business
- [ ] Correct business name, phone and website
- [ ] Service area and hours
- [ ] Categories that match your work
- [ ] Specialties and history sections filled in
- [ ] At least 15 real project photos

SECTION 07

Specialties section template

TEMPLATE · COPY AND CUSTOMIZE

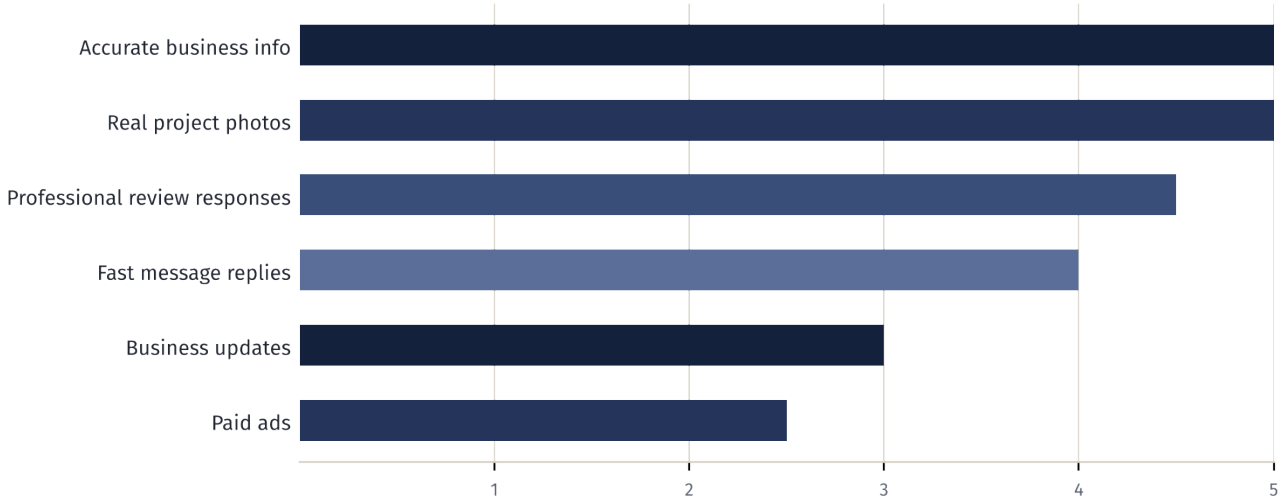
Yelp specialties

We specialize in [service 1], [service 2] and [service 3] for homeowners in [area]. Every project starts with an in-home consultation and a clear written quote. Licensed and insured, with [X] years of experience.

SECTION 08

Photos

Upload finished projects, before-and-afters and your team at work. Real photos make your page look active and trustworthy.



Our view of what matters most on Yelp, rated 1 to 5. Based on experience, not Yelp's rules.

PART 3

Reviews, messages and ads

SECTION 10

Responding to reviews

Responses are public and future customers read them. Thank happy customers specifically. For negative reviews, stay calm, acknowledge the concern and offer to resolve it offline.

TEMPLATE · COPY AND CUSTOMIZE

Response to a positive review

Thank you, [Name]! It was a pleasure working on your [project]. We're glad you love the result.

TEMPLATE · COPY AND CUSTOMIZE

Response to a negative review

Thank you for your feedback, [Name]. We're sorry [issue] didn't meet your expectations. We'd like to make it right. Please contact us at [phone] so we can talk.

SECTION 11

Messages and requests

Reply to Yelp messages quickly and professionally, ask a few questions about the project and invite them to schedule a consultation.

SECTION 12

Should you pay for Yelp Ads?

Yelp offers paid advertising. Start with a complete free page, track how many calls and messages come from Yelp, and only test ads with a clear budget and a way to measure results. Check Yelp's current offerings directly.

RECOMMENDED TOOL

Yelp for Business

Claim and manage your Yelp page.

Visit Yelp for Business at biz.yelp.com →

SECTION 13

Real-world scenario: cleaning up a Yelp page (illustrative)

This is an illustrative example. A remodeler's Yelp page has wrong hours, no photos and two unanswered negative reviews from years ago. They claim the page, fix the details, add twenty project photos and post calm, helpful responses to every review. Homeowners checking them out now see an active, professional business.

SECTION 14

Troubleshooting Yelp

Reviews seem hidden	Yelp may filter some reviews; never ask for reviews and keep your page active.
Negative review	Respond calmly and offer to resolve it offline.
Page shows wrong info	Claim the page and update it through Yelp for Business.

PART 4

Your toolkit

30-DAY ACTION CALENDAR

30 days to a strong Yelp page

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 Claim your page	**DAY 2** Verify ownership	**DAY 3** Fix name and phone	**DAY 4** Add website	**DAY 5** Set hours
DAY 6 Set service area	**DAY 7** Choose categories	**DAY 8** Write specialties	**DAY 9** Write history	**DAY 10** Upload 5 photos
DAY 11 Upload 5 more	**DAY 12** Upload 5 more	**DAY 13** Read all reviews	**DAY 14** Respond to positive reviews	**DAY 15** Respond to negative reviews
DAY 16 Add Yelp link to website	**DAY 17** Check messages	**DAY 18** Reply to messages	**DAY 19** Post an update	**DAY 20** Add new project photos
DAY 21 Review page views	**DAY 22** Respond to new reviews	**DAY 23** Check info is correct	**DAY 24** Add more photos	**DAY 25** Reply to messages
DAY 26 Review calls from Yelp	**DAY 27** Respond to reviews	**DAY 28** Post an update	**DAY 29** Review results	**DAY 30** Plan next month

TRACKER

Monthly Yelp results

Month	Page views	Calls	Messages	Jobs won
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 18

Glossary

Yelp for Business	Yelp's tools for owners to manage their page.
Filtered reviews	Reviews Yelp's software doesn't show in the main rating.

SECTION 19

Recommended tools

These are the tools mentioned in this playbook. Some links may be affiliate links; we only recommend tools we use or would set up for clients.

RECOMMENDED TOOL

Yelp for Business

Claim and manage your Yelp page.

Visit Yelp for Business at biz.yelp.com →

RECOMMENDED TOOL

Wix

Your own website, linked from Yelp.

Visit Wix at wix.com →

RECOMMENDED TOOL

Housecall Pro

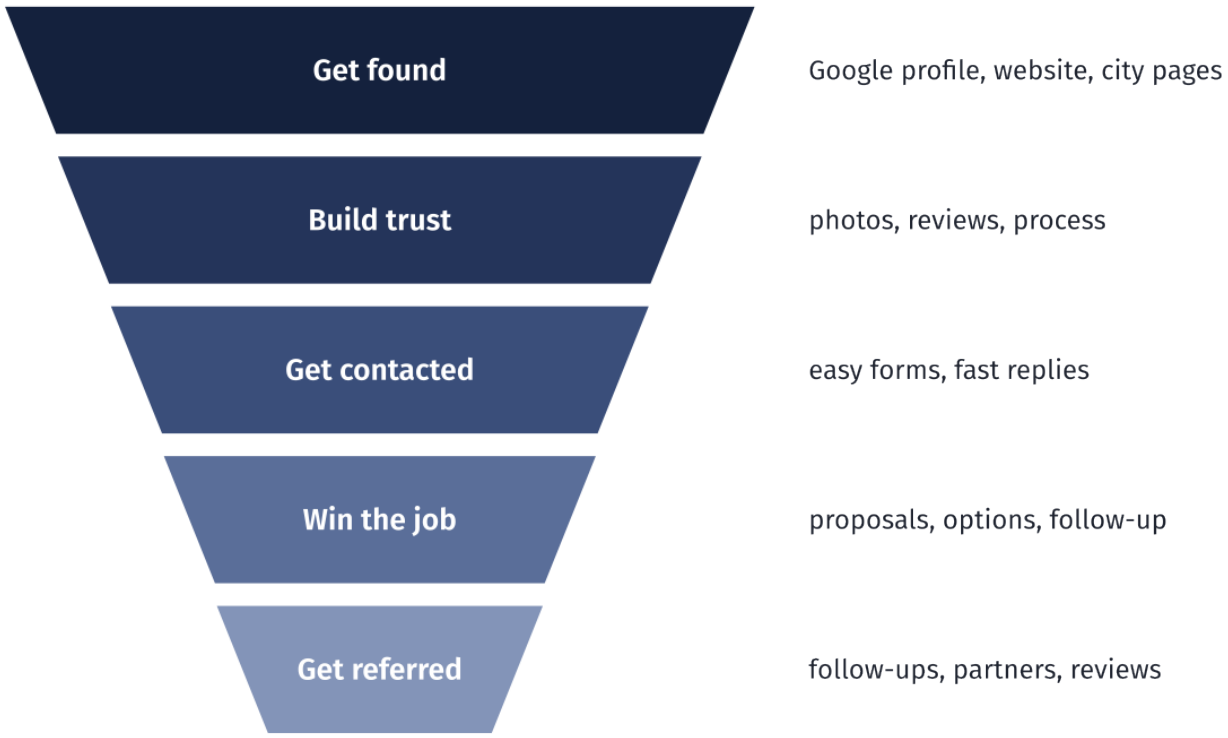
Manage the jobs Yelp brings in.

Visit Housecall Pro at housecallpro.com →

SECTION 20

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 21

Bonus: your weekly marketing hour

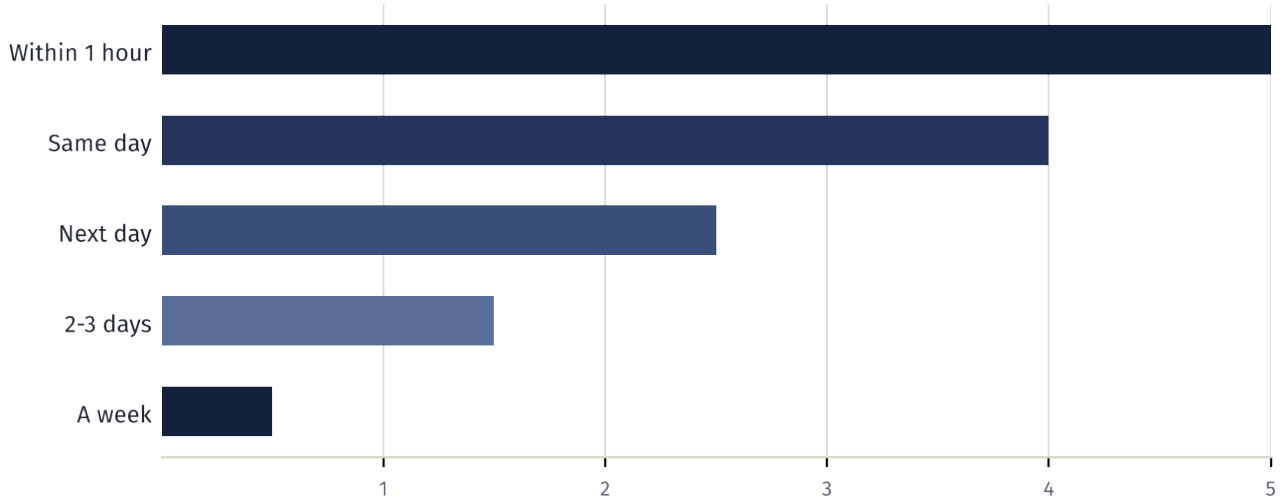
You don't need a marketing department. One focused hour a week, done consistently, beats occasional bursts of effort.

- 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 22

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 23

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 24

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.