



# **Contents**

#### HowtoDominateGoogle'sMost ProfitableRealEstate—atHalf the Cost of Google Ads

03



Strugglingwith SEO and expensive PPC? Discover why Google's Local Services Ads—sitting at the coveted "Spot Zero"—are beating traditional ads and

delivering leads for up to 50% less. Learn how local businesses are using LSAs to generate high-quality results fast—and how you can grab this prime real estate before your competitors catch on.

# The Follow-Up Fix: Stop Losing 50% of Your Leads After the First Call



Lead generation isn't your real problem—follow-up is. Learn why most local businesses lose hot leads right after that first contact, and what simple systems

you can install today to stop that silent sales killer. This article shows you how to turn second chances into consistent conversions without fancy tools— just smarter follow-through.

# Marketing Moves That Look Small — But Deliver Big (Examples You Can Copy)

15



Forget the fancy campaigns. This article reveals the tiny marketing tweaks local business owners overlook—yet they consistently drive massive results.

Based on real client wins, you'll get quick-hit strategies you can implement in one afternoon, even on a tight budget. No fluff. Just simple, powerful moves that work. Copy them and watch your business shift.

# Turning Haters Into Fans: Creative Ways to Flip Bad Reviews Into Killer Marketing

22



Negative reviews suck—but they don't have to. This article shows how to turn one-star rants into unexpected wins using creativity and empathy. Learn how top-performing local businesses

respond to criticism and transform angry customers into loyal fans—and why your next bad review might just be your most powerful marketing weapon.

## Welcome To LocalWerx Magazine

Thanks for checking out our online marketing resource guide for small business. Each month we cover topics that resonate with local businesses just like yours.

Our goal is simple. We want to enable you to do big things online, and it all starts by breaking down the complexities of marketing your business online.

It doesn't matter if you're just starting out, or an established business owner in your local community, you can always benefit from increasing your brand's visibility online.

To your success, Karen Estrin

#### **BROUGHT TO YOU BY**

LocalWerx is the leading small business marketing service in the Phoenix area. We help small businesses build "marketing machine" to connect with more customers online.

If you want to build your business, you need to market, it's that simple. But you can lose thousands of dollars if you don't know what you are doing. So we urge you to take action with some of the strategies we recommend.

For a more "hands off" approach, we offer affordable solutions that can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of LocalWerx Magazine and feel free to reach out to us anytime.



# How to Dominate Google's Most Profitable REALESTATE at Half the Cost of Google Ads

If you've been spending money on SEO or pay-per-click and still struggling to stay ahead of your competitors, this might explain why.

There's a new top dog in Google's search results—and it's not the organic listings.

It's not the local 3-pack either.

It's not even traditional Google Ads.

It's something above all of them—literally.

It's called Google Local Services Ads (LSAs), and it sits in what many are now calling

Spot Zero."

That coveted top slot that appears before anything else on a local search.

And the best part?

It often delivers leads for up to 50% less than traditional Google Ads—without sacrificing quality.

Let's unpack why LSAs are quickly becoming the most profitable ad real estate on Google—and how local businesses can start taking advantage of them right now.

What Are Google Local

Services Ads (LSAs)?

Google LSAs area specialized form of advertising for local service-based businesses, think roofers, electricians, pet groomers, accountants, HVAC pros, and dozens of other trades.

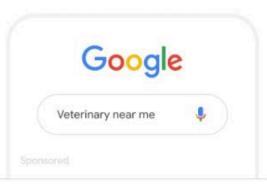
Unlike traditional PPC ads (where you pay per click), LSAs run on a pay-per-lead model.

That means you're only charged when someone actually contacts your business, not just clicks your ad.

#### Even better:

These ads come with built-in trust. Businesses that qualify for LSAs get a "Google Guaranteed" badge, which increases consumer confidence and conversion rates.

So you're showing up first and looking more credible. That's a win-win.



#### Happy Tails Veterinary







# Spot Zero: Why Visibility Has Changed

When a local customer searches for services—"plumber near me," "best dog groomer in Anoka," "emergency electrician"—Google now often shows LSAs first, sitting above:

The traditional Google Ads

The Google Maps 3-pack

🧭 All organic results

This is Spot Zero—the absolute highest point of visibility in a local search.

Being in this position means your business shows up before anything else, whether the search happens on desktop or mobile. It's like having your billboard placed at the busiest intersection in town... without paying for foot traffic that walks right past.

Most business owners don't even realize this placement exists—yet it's quietly stealing market share from those still stuck competing in the lower tiers.



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# Why LSAs Often Cost Less (But Convert More)

Here's whereitgetsreally interesting.

Many businesses assume that showing up higher on Google means spending more.

With LSAs, the opposite is often true.

Let's break it down:

AD TYPE	BILLING MODEL	AVG. LEAD COST	VISIBILITY
Traditional Google Ads	Pay-per-click	\$25-\$75 per click (or more)	Below LSAs
Google LSAs	Pay-per-lead	\$15-\$45 per lead (only if they contact you)	Spot Zero

That's up to 50% less per qualified lead—while appearing higher in the search results.

And because LSAs include your reviews, hours, service areas, and that green Google badge, they convert at a higher rate than most other ad formats.

No complex landing pages. No split-testing. No wasting money on tire-kickers who never call.

# The Trust Factor: Why LSAs Feel More "Local"

One overlooked advantage of LSAs is the trust psychology they create. Traditional ads often feel like... well, ads.

But LSAs show up looking like verified recommendations: a photo, a rating, and that big green Google Guarantee badge.

To the average consumer, it feels like Google is vouching for your business.

That's powerful. Especially when you're in a high-trust industry like home services, financial services, health and wellness, or legal.



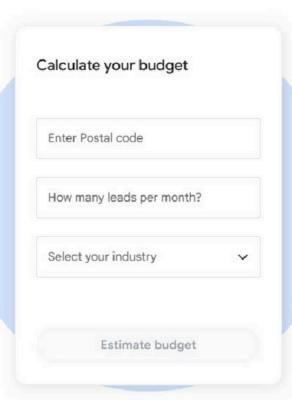
Gan Electric

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GOOGLE GUARANTEED

26 years in business Open - Closes 6





# Who Can Use Google LSAs?

LSAsaren'topen toeverybusiness—but Google supports a wide range of local services.

Some of the most eligible and profitable categories include:

- Plumbers, HVAC, electricians, and roofers
- Pet services like grooming and boarding
- Real estate agents and property managers
- Accountants and tax prep pros
- Lawyers (family, criminal, estate)
- Cleaning services, locksmiths, and more

If your business serves a local area and provides a service—there's a good chance you qualify.

## How to **Get Listed in Google LSAs**

To appearin LSAs, you'll need to go through a short approval process. This is n't atypical ad setup—you're applying for a verified listing.

Here's a quick breakdown of what's required:

- A verified Google Business Profile
- Valid business license and insurance
- Background checks (for owner or field workers, depending on industry)
- A clean record with Google (no spammy behavior or suspensions)

Once approved, you set your service areas, business hours, and job types—and Google starts showing your ad above all others.

From there, you only pay when a customer calls, messages, or books through the ad.









# What to Expect Once You're Live

LSAs aren't just about showing up—they're about stayingon top.

Here are a few pro tips to make sure you get the most from your listing:

- Respond quickly to leads (speed affects your ranking)
- Collect reviews consistently through your Google profile
- Keep business info updated (hours, service areas, etc.)
- **Dispute unqualified leads** Google often refunds for spam or unrelated contacts

Done right, this isn't just a better ad—it's a smarter system.

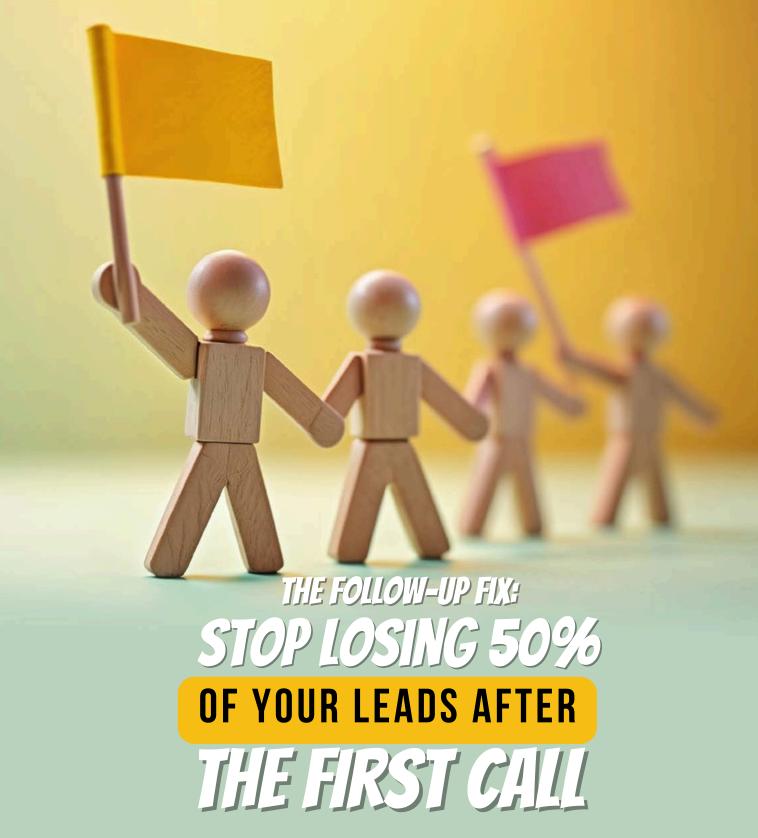
# **Final Thoughts**

Local businesses have spentyearsbattlingitoutinSEO,thelocal3-pack, and expensive pay- per-click ads.

But Google's algorithm—and its priorities—have shifted. LSAs now sit at the very top of local search results.

And they often deliver more calls, better leads, and lower costs than anything below them. If you're serious about showing up where it matters—and not burning through your budget doing it—Local Services Ads deserve your attention.

Because Spot Zero isn't just the best position on Google. It's where the most profitable leads live.



Most local businesses don't have a lead generation problem. They have a follow-up problem.

Whether you're getting inquiries from your website, Google Business Profile, Local Services Ads, Facebook, or even voicemail, what happens after that first contact request is where too many businesses quietly lose the sale.

The issue isn't always obvious. It's not about poor service or even bad marketing. It's the silent gap between interest and action. Someone reaches out, you respond (maybe), and then... nothing. The lead goes cold. You assume they weren't serious. But in reality?

They just heard back from your competitor first.



## WHY FOLLOW-UP GETS OVERLOOKED

Ask any local business owner how often they follow up with new leads, and you'll get some version of:

"Well, we call back if we miss them. But if they don't pick up, we move on."

That approach might have worked ten years ago, but today's customers expect fast responses, multiple contact points, and a sense that someone actually wants their business.

Here's what typically happens instead:

- A lead calls and leaves a message. No one responds for hours—or at all.
- 🕢 A prospect fills out a form, gets one email, and never hears back.
- A phone call goes unanswered. The person moves on.

This isn't just anecdotal. Studies show almost 50% of local business leads never receive a follow-up after the first attempt.

Not a second call. Not a text. Not even an email. And that lack of persistence isn't saving time—it's leaving money on the table.

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TUNING

Here's wherethings get interesting.

When someone reaches out for a service a plumber, accountant, pet groomer, they're in a decision-making moment. That moment might last 15 minutes. Maybe an hour. Maybe a day, at most. If they don't hear back quickly, they assume:

- You're too busy.
- You're not interested.
- Or you're not as professional as the next person who did reply.

Speed signals competence. And even if you're excellent at what you do, being slow to respond puts you at a disadvantage before the conversation even starts.

A few key timing benchmarks:

- Responding within **5 minutes** increases your odds of qualifying a lead by up to **10x**
- Waiting longer than **1 hour** drops your chances of conversion by over **80%**
- Calling back **once** isn't enough—most leads require 2–5 follow-ups

And no, it's not about being pushy. It's about staying present and helpful while your business is still on their radar



# FIXING THE FOLLOW-UP

### (WITHOUT CREATING MORE WORK)

This isn't about hiring more staff or working longer hours. The good news is that modern tools can handle most of the heavy lifting for you.

Here's what a simple, effective follow-up sys- tem can include:

#### 1. Missed-Call Text Back

When someone calls your business and you miss it, an automated text immediately re-plies:

"Hi, sorry we missed your call. This is Mike from All Seasons Plumbing. Can I help you with something today?"

That alone can recover a huge percentage of lost leads.

#### 2. Email or SMS Sequences

If someone fills out your website form or books a quote online, they should automatically receive:

- A confirmationor thank-you message
- ☐ A short follow-up within 1–2 hours ("Any questions I can answer?")
- ☐ Another message 24 hours later with a friendly reminder or helpful info

This kind of light, automated drip keeps your business top-of-mind without requiring daily effort.

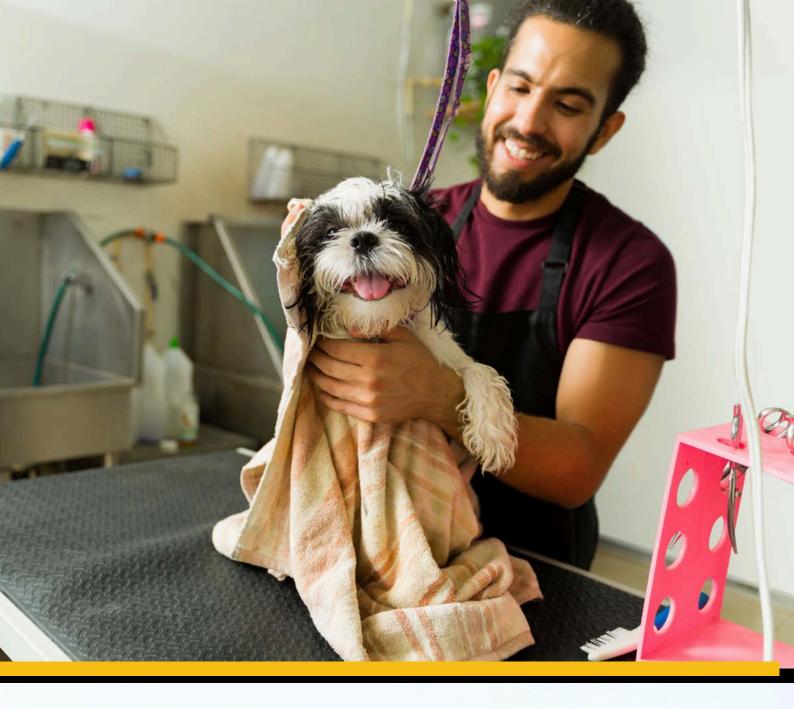
#### 3. CRMs and Lead Dashboards

A simple CRM (like Jobber, Housecall Pro, or even a Google Sheet + Gmail plugin) can track leads by status:

- New
- Attempted Contact
- Quote Sent
- No Response
- Closed / Booked

By logging each step, you're far less likely to forget about someone—and you can spot bottlenecks in your process.





# REAL-WORLD RESULTS FROM SMALL TWEAKS

Here are a few examples we've seen from businesses that implemented even basic follow-up improvements:

- An HVAC company started using missed-call text back and saw a 35% increase in booked appointments within 30 days.
- A dog grooming service added a 3-text follow-up flow and went from chasing leads to filling their schedule two weeks out.
  - An accounting firm started tracking response times and reduced average lead close
- time by 40%.

None of these businesses overhauled their operations. They just added systems that made sure leads weren't ignored—or forgotten.



# A SIMPLE FOLLOW-UP SEQUENCE YOU CAN STEAL

Want a plug-and-play template you can copy?Here's a basic example for service-based businesses:

#### Day 0 (Immediately After Inquiry)

**Text/Email:** "Hey [Name], thanks for reaching out to [Your Business Name]. We got your request and will be in touch shortly. In the meantime, here's a quick guide to [what you do/what to expect]."

#### Dayl

**Follow-Up Text/Call:** "Just checking in—do you still need help with [the service they asked about]? I'd be happy to answer any questions or get you booked."

#### Day3

**Reminder Message:** "We're holding your spot, but let us know soon if you'd like to move forward. Things are filling up fast!"

#### Day7

**Final Touch:** "Still happy to help with [service]. If now's not the right time, no worries—just reply 'not now' and we won't bug you."

Customize it for your industry. Adjust tone. The key is that it's systematic—not random or reactive.



# FINAL THOUGHTS

Every dollar you spend on marketing... every hour you invest into being more visible... it all leads to that single moment:

The lead reaches out.

What you do next matters more than most business owners realize. Because the sale doesn't happen when they see your ad. It doesn't happen when they Goo- gle your name. It happens when someone answers their question, earns their trust, and makes it easy to move forward.

In most cases, the only thing separating you from more revenue is a better follow-up system. And it doesn't take much.

Start by responding faster.

Follow up more than once. Use tools where it makes sense.

Track what's working. Because you don't need more leads. You just need to stop losing the ones you already have.



Let's be honest—most local business owners are drowning in marketing advice that sounds impressive but delivers jack squat in actual results.

You've probably sat through those coffee meetings where some "guru" talks about brand positioning, customer journey mapping, and omnichannel strategies until your eyes glaze over.

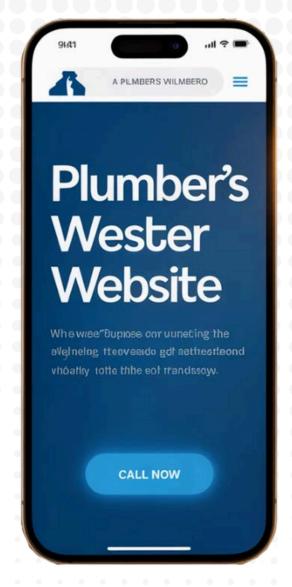
Then you go back to your business and wonder: "But what do I actually DO tomorrow?"

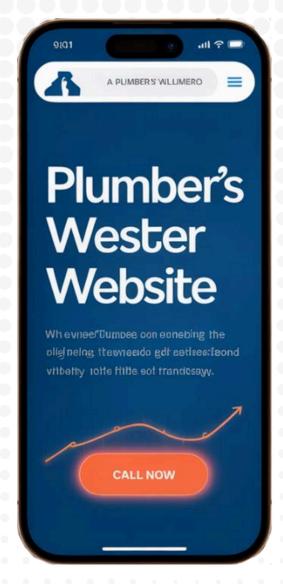
Here's the truth nobody wants to admit: The marketing moves that transform businesses

aren't the big, fancy campaigns. They're the small, unsexy tweaks that most people overlook.

I've spent years watching local businesses blow their budgets on complete marketing overhauls when tiny, strategic adjustments would have doubled their results at a fraction of the cost.

Today, I'm sharing the best micro-moves that deliver macro-results. These are the changes that my clients implement in a single afternoon but talk about for years afterward because of the revenue they generate.





# THE \$0 WEBSITE TWEAK THAT DOUBLED PHONE CALLS

Picture this: A local plumber's website was getting decent traffic but hardly any calls. The problem wasn't their service, their reputation, or even their website design. It was a single button.

Their "Call Now" button was the same blue color as their logo and website accents. It blended in perfectly with their branding. And that was exactly the problem.

The fix? We changed that button to a bright orange that deliberately clashed with everything else on the site.

Conversions jumped 87% in the first week.

Why it works: Your brain physically cannot ignore contrast. While design harmony might win awards, strategic discord wins customers.

What you can copy: Take your primary call-to-action on your website and make it visually "wrong." If your brand is blue, make the button orange. If your site is minimalist, make your contact form the one place where you go big and bold. The visual disruption forces attention.



A real estate agent I worked with had an email list of 2,300 past inquiries that hadn't converted. These were people who had expressed interest but never pulled the trigger. The list was essentially dead—the last campaign had an open rate under 10%.

Instead of writing some clever new campaign, we did something much simpler: We changed the sender name from "Riverside Realty" to "Emma Johnson" (the agent's actual name).

The subject line? "Quick question about [neighborhood name]" with the neighborhood personalized based on their original inquiry data.

The body of the email was three sentences long and looked like it was personally typed out on an iPhone.

Open rate? 72%. Response rate? 31%.

Why it works: People do business with people, not brands. The corporate facade actually harms trust, especially for local businesses where personality is your competitive advantage.

**What you can copy:** Stop hiding behind your company name in communications. Use your personal name as the sender, write subject lines that look like they came from a friend, and keep emails conversational. Bonus points: End at least one email with a genuine question requiring a response.



A local florist was struggling to stand out against bigger competitors with more Google reviews. Instead of begging every customer for reviews (the usual approach), they made one tiny change to their request process.

They identified their four most impressive arrangements—the ones that always got compliments—and placed a small card in only those deliveries that said: "If this arrangement made someone's day, we'd love to hear about it," with a QR code linked directly to their Google Business profile.

The result? Their review volume decreased slightly, but the quality and specificity of reviews skyrocketed. New reviews mentioned specific arrangements by name and included details about the recipient's reaction. Within three months, they ranked #1 for "best flower delivery" in their city.

**Why it works:** Review algorithms (and human readers) prioritize specificity and detail over quantity. By cherry-picking your review requests for your absolute best work, you create a feedback loop of your highest-value services.

**What you can copy:** Stop the review spray-and-pray approach. Identify the 20% of your products or services that genuinely impress customers, and focus your review requests exclusively on those experiences.



A small café spent thousands redesigning their website with professional food photography. The pictures were beautiful—perfectly lit croissants and artfully steamed lattes that belonged in magazines.

Yet, walk-in traffic barely improved.

On a whim, the owner replaced the homepage hero image with a smartphone photo of two regular customers laughing at a table, coffee mugs in hand. It wasn't perfectly lit. You could see some clutter in the background. It looked... real.

Walk-ins increased 63% in the following month.

**Why it works:** Customers aren't buying your product—they're buying the experience of having your product. Professional product photos showcase what you sell. Amateur experience photos showcase how your product makes people feel.

**What you can copy:** Replace at least one professional product photo on your website with a genuine customer experience shot. Don't stage it. Don't filter it. The authenticity is what sells.



A local tax preparer was posting the usual mix of tax tips and deadline reminders on social media. Engagement was predictably dismal. Who wants to think about taxes in their social feed?

She switched to a simple formula for one post a week: "The thing nobody tells you about [common financial situation]." Then she'd share a specific, slightly controversial insight that went against conventional wisdom.

Example: "The thing nobody tells you about home office deductions: For most people, they're not worth the audit risk. Here's what to do instead..."

These posts got 5x the engagement of her regular content. More importantly, clients started mentioning them during consultations, saying, "I screenshot that post you did about home offices."

Why it works: People are drowning in basic tips they could find anywhere. What they crave —and what they'll remember you for—are the insider insights that challenge what "everyone knows."

What you can copy: Once a week, share something that goes against the grain in your industry. Not to be contrarian, but to provide genuine insight that most people in your position aren't brave enough to say publicly.



Looking at these examples, a pattern emerges. The most effective small marketing moves target one of three psychological triggers:

- 1. Attention Creating visual or cognitive disruption that forces notice
- 2. Trust Stripping away corporate facades to reveal authentic humanity
- 3. Value perception Reframing how people view what they get versus what they pay

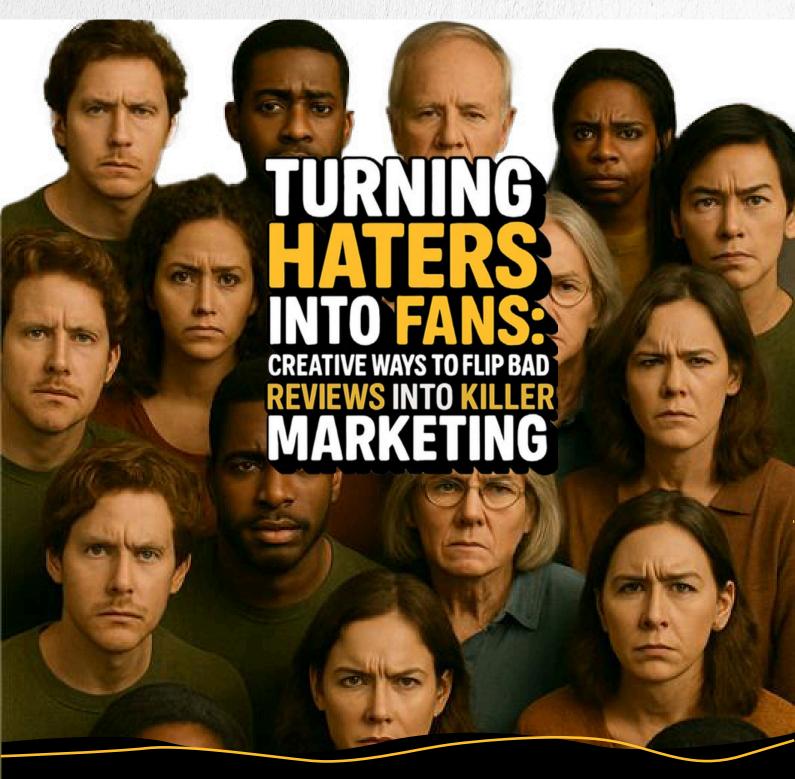
Most local businesses waste time on marketing that hits none of these triggers. They blend in visually, hide behind business names and jargon, and fail to clearly articulate their true value.

The beauty of these small moves is that they require almost no budget, minimal time, and zero special skills. You don't need a marketing degree to change a button color, sign your own name to an email, or take a candid photo of happy customers.

What you do need is the courage to be slightly uncomfortable—to make that button clash, to show your real workspace, to state the industry truth that others won't say.

In marketing, comfort equals invisibility. And for a local business, invisibility is death.

So start small. Pick one move from this list that resonates with you. Implement it this week. Then watch what happens when you stop marketing like everyone else and start making moves that actually matter.



Let's be honest: nothing makes your stomach drop quite like opening your notifications to find a one-star review ripping your business to shreds. For most businesses, negative reviews feel like a disaster—something to bury, deny, or pray disappears into the internet abyss.

But what if I told you those angry customers might be your most valuable marketing asset?

That's right. While your competitors are busy hiding from criticism, the smartest marketers are turning those furious rants into pure marketing gold. Here's how to transform your haters into unwitting brand ambassadors—and maybe even loyal fans in the process.



# THE COMPLAINT-TO-CONTENT PIPELINE

The first rule of marketing? Content is expensive to create. The second rule? Your angry customers are creating it for free.

That scathing review about your "impossible-to-navigate website" or "confusing pricing structure" isn't just feedback—it's market research you didn't have to pay for. These are pain points your entire audience likely shares but most never bothered to tell you about.

Action step: Create a "You Said, We Did" campaign. Collect similar complaints, implement changes, then showcase the before-and-after. This isn't just damage control—it's a content series that demonstrates you actually listen.

A coffee shop client of ours received multiple complaints about slow service during morning rush. Instead of getting defensive, they documented their process improvements in a mini-documentary for social media.

The campaign brought back three former complainers as loyal customers and attracted new business from people who appreciated their transpar- ency.



# THE PUBLIC RESPONSE STRATEGY

Most businesses get public responses dead wrong. They either:

- > Post generic corporate-speak ("We're sorry you had this experience.")
- > Get defensive and make things worse
- > Hide and hope nobody notices

Here's the strategy that actually works: Be human, be specific, and be entertaining.

Example that killed it: A restaurant received this review: "Waited 45 minutes for a table despite having a reservation. Food was cold when it arrived. Never coming back."

#### Their response:

"Mike—you're right. We completely dropped the ball Saturday night. Our reservation system crashed, our backup plan failed, and judging by the temperature of your food, so did our kitchen timing. This isn't who we are, but it's who we were that night, and that's on us. We've implemented [specific changes], and we'd love a chance to show you the experience you should have had. Your next meal is on me—Jason (the owner who's been losing sleep over this)."

That exchange got more positive attention than their five-star reviews because it showed competence under pressure.



# THE "HIGHLIGHT REEL" TECHNIQUE

This is where most marketers blow it. They hide negative reviews instead of strategically featuring them.

Create a "Highlight Reel" where you place a negative review next to your response and the eventual resolution. This does three things:

- > Shows potential customers you're confident enough to address problems
- > Demonstrates your problem-solving process
- > Creates social proof that you care about customer experience

A dentist we worked with added a section on their website called "We Heard You," where they showed how patient complaints (about wait times and unclear insurance billing) were handled. The result? A 19% increase in booked appointments, largely from visitors who praised their transparency.



# **TURN CRITICISM INTO YOUR FAQ SECTION**

Your FAQ page shouldn't just answer the questions customers ask before buying. It should address the complaints they might have after buying.

Study your negative reviews for patterns. Then, create pre-emptive content that addresses these issues before they become problems for new customers.

Example: If multiple reviews mention confusion about a chiropractor's new patient process, create a

"What to Expect on Your First Visit" page that outlines it in plain language. Include answers to real frustrations like parking, paperwork, and appointment flow.

This approach reduced front desk calls by 41% for one clinic while simultaneously increasing new patient conversions from their website.

Why? Because addressing objections head-on builds trust.

## THE REVIEW MINING PROCESS

Not all negative reviews are created equal. Some contain goldmines of product development insights.

- Set up a quarterly review mining process:
- Gather all reviews from the past 90 days
- Categorize complaints by theme (service, staff, pricing, scheduling, etc.)
- Identify actionable patterns

- Implement changes based on frequency and impact
- Create content showcasing the improvements

This isn't just about damage control—it's about letting your critics drive your innovation roadmap.

Some of your best improvements will come from your harshest critics.



# THE "CONVERT YOUR CRITICS" CAMPAIGN

Want to really flex your marketing muscles? Directly target your most vocal critics with personalized outreach.

One HVAC company identified their 10 most negative reviewers and sent each a personalized video from the owner addressing their specific concerns. They invited each critic to try their new scheduling system and upgraded service—for free.

The results?

Six accepted, five updated their reviews, and three became regular customers who now refer friends. That's the power of targeted reputation management.

# FINAL THOUGHTS: THE MINDSET SHIFT

The businesses that win aren't the ones with perfect reviews. They're the ones who handle imperfection perfectly.

Negative reviews aren't a PR crisis—they're a marketing opportunity wrapped in an angry email. They're also an inevitability.

No business bats 1000, and pretending otherwise makes you look less trustworthy, not more.

Remember: Customers don't expect perfection.

They expect attention. Show them you're paying attention to criticism, and you'll stand out in a world of businesses with their fingers in their ears.

Because in the end, your biggest critics aren't your enemies. They're just fans who haven't been converted yet.



THE #1 MISTAKE LOCAL BUSINESSES MAKE?

Winging their marketing — and hoping it works.

Running a business is hard enough. Trying to figure out what actually brings in leads shouldn't be a guessing game.

We help local businesses get seen, get chosen, and get results — without wasting money on tactics that don't work.

Our approach is simple:

#### MORE VISIBILITY. MORE PHONE CALLS. MORE GROWTH.

It's not about flashy trends. It's about smart strategy, proven to work in your industry, in your town.

Trusted by real local businesses

Focused on results, not vanity metrics

Built to scale with you

**CURIOUS WHAT WE'D DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS?**