

Get found on Google.

Before most people call a trade, they look on Google. Here's what decides who shows up, and why most of it is work you can do yourself, without an expensive SEO firm.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

11 of the top 20

things that decide who shows up on Google Maps are about your Google Business Profile and your reviews. Most of the rest is your website, plus where you're located, which you can't change.

Source: Whitespark 2026 Local Search Ranking Factors (expert survey)

WHAT THAT MEANS FOR YOU

You don't need an expensive SEO firm.

For a local trade, the work that gets you found and chosen is simple, and it works best when you keep at it:

- ✓ A steady stream of new Google reviews
- ✓ A complete, accurate Google profile
- ✓ Real photos from your jobs, and regular posts
- ✓ A website page for each service and city
- ✓ A job gallery with short captions, kept fresh
- ✓ Answers to the questions customers really ask

1 Your Google Business Profile The biggest share of the list.

1 Claim it and verify it

Go to business.google.com and search your business name. If it's there, claim it. Google will ask you to verify, often with a short video of your truck, tools or paperwork.

2 Pick the most specific main category

It's the #1 factor in the report. "Pool cleaning service" beats "Contractor." Add your other kinds of work as extra categories.

3 Set your service area, and hide your home address

List the cities you really drive to. If customers don't come to you, remove the street address. Google's rules ask for that.

4 List every service, in your customers' words

"Water heater replacement," "AC tune-up," "drain cleaning." Use the words people type, with a line about each one.

5 Keep your hours and phone number right

Being open when someone searches is #5 on the list. Set holiday hours, and use a number someone answers.

6 Add real job photos, then keep adding them

Clear, real photos rank #11 for turning a search into a customer. Before-and-afters, your truck, your crew. Skip stock photos.

2 Reviews Four of the top 20 factors.

Ask every customer, the same day

A text with your review link right after the job works best. People say yes when the job is fresh.

Free QR card and texts:

lonemountainworks.com/review-kit

Keep them coming

A few every week beats twenty in one month. How recent your reviews are, and a steady flow of them, both rank in the top 20.

Reply to every review

Good or bad, within a few days.

Short and calm. Owner replies rank #17 for turning a search into a customer.

3 Your website and other listings Where Google sends people to decide.

- ✓ **A page for each main service**
“AC repair” and “AC installation” each get a page that names the cities you serve. It’s also #2 for showing up in AI search answers.
- ✓ **Answers to real questions**
What it costs, how long it takes, whether you cover their street. Answer the questions you hear on every call.
- ✓ **The same name and phone everywhere**
Word for word on your site and your Google profile, and link the site from your profile.
- ✓ **A job gallery with short captions**
“New pool pump in Surprise.” Add a job or two every month, so the site stays fresh and keeps naming the places you work.
- ✓ **Tap-to-call, fast on a phone**
Most people will see your site on a phone, in a hurry. Put your number at the top of every page.
- ✓ **Your other free listings**
Apple Business Connect, Bing Places, Yelp, Facebook and Nextdoor. Claim them, and keep the details the same.

4 Mistakes that bury or suspend a profile

- ✗ **Extra keywords in your business name**
“Joe’s Plumbing | Best Plumber Peoria.” The name is a top factor, which is why Google suspends profiles that stuff it. Use your real name.
- ✗ **A virtual office or P.O. box as your address**
Google can suspend the listing. Use your real location, or hide it and set a service area.
- ✗ **Paying for reviews, or asking only happy customers**
Against Google’s rules, and so is writing your own. Google filters them, and a profile can lose all its reviews at once.
- ✗ **Two listings for the same business**
Duplicates split your reviews. Ask Google to merge or remove the extra one.

Your one-hour weekly checklist

- ☐ Text your review link to this week’s customers
- ☐ Reply to every new review
- ☐ Post one job photo to your Google profile
- ☐ Add a finished job to your website gallery, with a one-line caption
- ☐ Check your hours, especially around holidays

See where you stand

Open a private tab on your phone and search your main service and your city, like “pool service Surprise.” Do you show up on the map, and how high? Results change from one neighborhood to the next, so check from a few places.

Or get a free Google check-up that does it for you, compares you with the shops nearby, and lists what to fix first: lonemountainworks.com/scorecard



Rather hand this off?

This is what I do every week for West Valley trades: your website, your Google profile and posts, and the rest of the office too, from job reports and invoices to bookkeeping. It’s all done for you, so you can stay in the field. Text me with any question about this guide. I’m happy to help, even if you do it all yourself.

Jake Richardson • (623) 748-1006 • lonemountainworks.com