



THE PLAYBOOK • 2026 EDITION • UPDATED OCTOBER 2026

Get more Google reviews.

The honest way.

A practical guide for local businesses: when to ask, what to say, how to reply, and the rules every review site plays by.

READ TIME

10 minutes

INSIDE

6 chapters, 9 templates

FROM

TripleReviews

Reviews decide who gets the call.

Most good businesses don't have a review problem because of their work. They have one because nobody asks, and problems get lost on the way.

Google ranking

Google ranks local results on relevance, distance and prominence. It says review count and ratings are part of prominence.

Your replies

New customers read how you answer, especially the bad ones. A calm reply often does more than another five stars.

AI assistants

People now ask ChatGPT and others who to call. Their answers often draw on reviews: how many, how recent, how you reply.

THREE NUMBERS TO WATCH

Rating

Google rounds it to one decimal. 4.75 and up shows as 4.8.

Velocity

New reviews in the last 90 days. A steady pace beats a one-time push.

Reply rate

The share of reviews with an owner reply. Aim for every single one.

The rest of this playbook is about moving those three numbers without breaking a single rule.

Ask every customer, the same way.

- 01 **Ask everyone the same way.** Asking only customers you think are happy is review gating. Google and Trustpilot don't allow it.
- 02 **Time it right.** A couple of hours after the job, while it's fresh. Never between 8 PM and 8 AM.
- 03 **Put your name first.** Customers should know who's asking before they read anything else.
- 04 **Put the link in the first message.** One tap to the review page. Customers post from their own phone, never from a tablet at your counter.
- 05 **Remind once, then stop.** One reminder a day or two later if they don't respond, and no more than one request a year.
- 06 **Never pay for reviews.** No discounts, gifts or entries in exchange for a review. Google and Trustpilot ban any reward, and the FTC's rule bans rewards that depend on what a review says.

TEXT MESSAGE

Hi [First name], this is [Business]. Thanks for choosing us today! If you have a minute, a quick Google review helps a lot: [link]
Reply STOP to opt out.

EMAIL

Subject: How did we do?
Hi [First name], thanks for choosing us. If you have a minute, we'd be grateful for an honest Google review: [link]
Want to tell us something privately? Just reply to this email.

COUNTER SIGN OR CARD

How did we do?
Scan with your phone to leave us a Google review.
[QR code]
Thank you for choosing us!

Only text customers who agreed in writing to get texts from you, usually at booking or checkout, and keep a record of it. Ask only real customers about a recent job, never staff, family or friends.

When something goes wrong: same link, real follow-up.

An unhappy customer deserves a fast answer from a person. Their review link is the same as everyone else's: never hold it back, and never trade a fix for a review.

- 01 **Answer the same day.** A reply in hours tells the customer they were heard.
- 02 **Say who will call, and when.** Apologize for what went wrong, and leave reviews out of it.
- 03 **Call within a few hours.** A person, not a template. Listen first, then offer what you can.
- 04 **Close the loop.** Note what happened and fix the cause, not just the case.
- 05 **Leave the review to them.** Their link works like everyone else's. Never ask anyone to change or remove a review after you fix the problem.

FIRST REPLY BY TEXT

Thanks for telling us, [First name], and I'm sorry about [the issue]. [Name] will call you by [time] today to make it right.

CALL OPENER

Hi [First name], it's [Name] from [Business]. I read your message and I wanted to hear it from you. What happened?

Don't

Offer anything to remove or change a review.

Don't

Send the link only to happy customers.

Don't

Argue, in private or in public.

Reply to every review.

- 01 **Within a day or two.** Fast replies show you're paying attention.
- 02 **Be specific on the good ones.** Name the service or the tech. It reads as real, not canned.
- 03 **Never share private details.** No addresses, prices, invoice numbers or health information.
- 04 **Take problems offline.** Own what was on you, then give a direct way to reach you.

5 STARS

Thanks, [First name]! Glad [tech] got your [service] sorted so quickly. We'll pass your note on to [him/her/them].

3 STARS

Thanks for the honest feedback, [First name]. Glad the [service] went well, and you're right that [the issue] wasn't good enough. We're working on it. If you're open to it, I'd like to hear more: [phone].

1 STAR

[First name], I'm sorry. This isn't the experience we want anyone to have. I'd like to understand what happened and make it right. Please reach me directly at [phone]. – [Name], owner

Fake review? Reply briefly that you can't find a record of the job, then report it through your Business Profile.

Where you can ask, site by site.

SITE	CAN YOU ASK?	IN PLAIN WORDS
Google	YES	Ask everyone the same way. No rewards, no asking only happy customers.
Facebook	YES	Asking for recommendations is fine. No rewards.
Tripadvisor	YES	Ask all guests. No incentives of any kind.
Trustpilot	YES	Invite everyone the same way, once per recent experience. No rewards, no staff or family, never on your own devices.
Yelp	NO	Don't ask in any form. You can show that you're on Yelp.
Thumbtack	YES	Ask past customers to review your profile.
Angi	YES	Ask customers to review completed work.
Houzz	YES	Ask clients to review finished projects.
Nextdoor	YES	Ask neighbors you've worked with to recommend you.
Booking, Expedia	THEY INVITE	Only verified guests, invited by the site.
OpenTable	THEY INVITE	Only diners who booked through OpenTable.

TWO RULES THAT APPLY EVERYWHERE

No paying for reviews. Google, Trustpilot and most review sites ban any reward for a review. The FTC's rule bans fake reviews and rewards that depend on what a review says.

No hiding the bad ones. Asking only customers you expect to be happy is review gating, which Google and Trustpilot don't allow. Hiding negative reviews on your own site is review suppression under the FTC's rule.

Our plain-language reading of each site's published guidelines, checked in September and October 2026. Rules change. Not legal advice. Site names are trademarks of their owners; TripleReviews isn't affiliated with any of them.

Your first 30 days.

WEEK 1

- ☐ Get your Google review link and QR code
- ☐ Add the QR code to invoices, receipts and leave-behind cards
- ☐ Decide who owns follow-ups

WEEK 2

- ☐ Ask every customer after every finished job
- ☐ Set quiet hours and one reminder, then stop

WEEK 3

- ☐ Reply to every review from the last 90 days
- ☐ Call back anyone who told you something went wrong

WEEK 4

- ☐ Check rating, velocity and reply rate
- ☐ Pick the one complaint that came up most and fix its cause

THE MATH, FROM 4.3 WITH 212 REVIEWS

Shows as 4.5 **71 new reviews**

Shows as 4.6 **152 new reviews**

Shows as 4.7 **297 new reviews**

Shows as 4.8 **636 new reviews**

Assumes new reviews average 4.9. Every business is different.

DO IT AUTOMATICALLY

TripleReviews asks every customer the same way after every job, and gives every private note to a person.

See where you stand first. The free review check compares you with three nearby competitors in about a minute.

triplereviews.com/scan

Free tools: triplereviews.com/tools



INFO@TRIPLEREVIEWS.COM • MIAMI, FLORIDA

TripleReviews is review request and feedback software, built and operated by Resonate Agency LLC (doing business as Point Higher), a Florida company. Google, Trustpilot, Yelp and other names are trademarks of their owners.