OPUS GROUP

PHONE CALLS FROM GOOGLE FOR LOCAL SERVICE BUSINESSES

FREE GUIDE

How a local service business can spend $1,000 and make $60,000 in a month

How to set up Google Local Services Ads yourself, get into the box at the top of Google, and turn the calls into paid jobs.

INSIDE

01 The math

02 The box at the top of Google

03 Set it up, step by step

04 How Google picks who shows first

05 Stop paying for bad leads

06 Turn calls into jobs

07 What changed in 2025 and 2026

08 Your numbers and weekly routine

BY THEO PRADA, OPUS GROUP

OPUSGROUPUSA.COM

01 · THE MATH

Here is how **$1,000** turns into **$60,000**

There is no trick to it. It is three numbers multiplied together: what a call costs you, how many of those calls become jobs, and what a job is worth to you.

$1,000 spent on Local Services Ads in a month → **33** calls, at $30 a call → **20** jobs, when three in five calls book → **$60,000** at $3,000 a job

YOUR AVERAGE JOB	CALLS	JOBS	MONEY IN
$800 a repair or a service call	33	20	$16,000
$1,500	33	20	$30,000
$2,000	33	20	$40,000
$3,000 a bigger job, like a water heater install or a large tree removal	**33**	**20**	**$60,000**

Same spend, same calls, same jobs. The only thing that changes is the size of the job. That is why picking your job types (section 03, step 4) matters as much as getting the calls.

1

Pay less per call

Set up properly, rank higher and dispute the bad calls. Sections 03 to 05.

2

Book more calls

Reply within 60 seconds, give a time and a price, follow up. Section 06.

3

Win bigger jobs

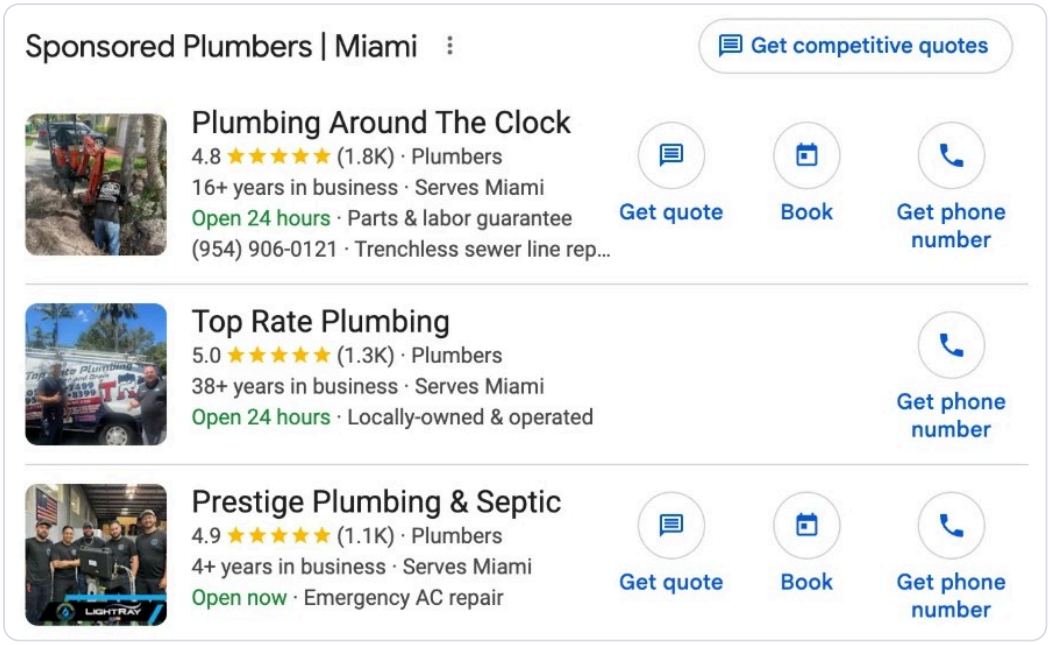
Ask Google for the jobs that pay and switch off the ones that don't. Section 03, step 4.

This is the math, not a promise. Calls and messages from Google have cost our clients between $27 and $90 each in their best months, depending on the trade and the town, and calls for bigger jobs can cost more. Page 10 has a worksheet for your own numbers.

02 · THE BOX AT THE TOP OF GOOGLE

The box at the top of Google

Search "plumber near me" on your phone. Before the normal ads, before the map and before any website, you get a short list of local companies with a star rating, a call button and a Google Verified badge. That list is Local Services Ads.



A real search for plumbers in Miami, September 2026. These are paid listings: each company pays when a customer contacts them through the ad.

You pay for leads, not clicks

You pay when someone calls, messages or books through the ad. People who only look cost you nothing, and Google filters out some of the junk.

The lead is yours

When a customer picks your name and calls you, that call is yours. It is not a lead resold to four other companies.

It sits at the very top

For most home service searches it is the first thing a customer sees, above the other ads, the map and the websites.

Google has checked you

The Google Verified badge shows the customer that Google has run checks on your business, like your license, your insurance and background checks on your team.

IS IT FOR YOU?

It works best if you do work at people's homes, you are licensed and insured for your trade, and someone answers the phone. If most of your work is commercial, the box will send you mostly homeowners.

03 · SET IT UP, STEP BY STEP

Set it up, step by step

Most of the work is paperwork. Google says verification takes three to four weeks on average, and one wrong name can add weeks on top. Get the papers right before you start.

1 Get your papers together first

- ◯ A verified Google Business Profile, with your name, address and phone exactly as you want them on the ad. The person signing up must be an owner or manager on it.
- ◯ Proof the business is registered: a D-U-N-S number (free, but it can take up to 30 business days), or your Secretary of State registration or IRS EIN letter.
- ◯ Your trade license, if your state requires one. Google checks state licenses against state records.
- ◯ A certificate of insurance in the business name, as a PDF, valid for at least 14 more days.
- ◯ A photo ID for the owner and for anyone who works in customers' homes, for background checks. Google pays for the checks.
- ◯ Google reviews. Some trades need at least five before the ad will show at all, so start asking every customer now.

> THE EASIEST HOLD-UP TO AVOID
> The name on your license, your insurance and your Google Business Profile must match exactly. "Smith Plumbing LLC" on one and "Smith's Plumbing" on another is enough to hold you up. Fix that before you apply.

2 Sign up

Go to **g.co/localservices**, or open your Google Business Profile and tap Advertise. Pick your trade, enter your details and add a card. New accounts still start here, even though Google is moving these ads into Google Ads (section 07).

3 Build your profile

- ◯ **Service area.** Only the towns and zip codes you will actually drive to. Google does not credit calls from outside the area you set.
- ◯ **Business hours and ad schedule.** Only the hours when someone will pick up, and set the ad schedule to match, because it starts on all day. Missed calls count against you, and from October 1, 2026, some are charged as leads.
- ◯ **Photos.** Show your real team, trucks and work, and keep adding new ones from recent jobs. Keep phone numbers out of the shot, even on a van or a shirt, or Google rejects the photo.
- ◯ **Highlights.** Pick up to six, like "24/7 emergency service" or "locally owned".
- ◯ **Link your Business Profile,** so your Google reviews show on the ad.

03 · SET IT UP, CONTINUED

4

Pick your job types. This is the money step.

Google lets you choose which jobs you want calls for. Many owners leave every box checked and fill the week with small, cheap jobs. Keep the jobs you want most, and uncheck the ones you don't do or don't want. Google does not credit calls for jobs you left checked but don't do. You still show up for searches like "plumber near me" either way.

Plumber: jobs worth keeping on

- ◯ Water heater installs
- ◯ Sewer and water line work
- ◯ Repipes
- ◯ Leak repairs

Tree service: jobs worth keeping on

- ◯ Tree removal
- ◯ Emergency and storm work
- ◯ Stump grinding with a removal
- ◯ Large trimming jobs

5

Get verified

Google checks whatever your trade and state require: business registration, insurance, state licenses and background checks. For plumbing, HVAC and electrical, everyone who works in customers' homes needs a check too. Google says it takes **three to four weeks** on average, so start the day you sign up and reply fast to every email from Google and the background check company. Some businesses can now get leads before the badge comes through. Their listings show below fully verified companies.

6

Set your budget and your bid

Start on **Maximize leads** and leave it alone for two weeks while Google learns. $1,000 a month is about $230 a week. Google suggests a budget big enough for around ten leads a week. If $1,000 a month is your limit, start there anyway and add more once the jobs come in. You only pay for leads, so a quiet week costs less.

7

Go live and check it

Search your trade and your town on your phone and make sure you show up. **Don't call your own listing to test it.** Make sure the number rings someone who answers. Then look at your message and booking settings: if your scheduling software has a Google booking link, bookings can switch on by themselves, and each booking is charged as a lead.

KEEP IT SWITCHED ON

Google re-checks businesses over time. Until your account moves into Google Ads, that includes a new insurance certificate or license when yours expires. Miss a request and your ads can pause. Answer every email from Google, and put your renewal dates on your calendar.

04 · HOW GOOGLE PICKS WHO SHOWS FIRST

How Google picks who shows first

Only a few companies fit in the box. The companies at the top are usually the ones who reply fast, have the reviews and cover the area the customer is in.

Your bid what you pay per lead	It counts, but it is only one of the things Google looks at. A company that answers and has the reviews can sit above one that bids more.
How responsive you are calls and messages	**Reply within 60 seconds, every time.** Answer calls live, get back to any you miss within a minute and answer messages just as fast. Google tracks your response time, and missed calls count against you.
How well you match the search	The job types you picked, your highlights, and where and when the customer is searching. It matters that the customer is inside your service area.
Messages and bookings switched on or off	Having them on can help. Google says only switch them on if you can reply within 24 hours, but aim for 60 seconds, the same as your calls.
Your reviews rating and number	Keep your rating above four stars and keep new reviews coming in every week.
Your profile photos and checks	Real photos, with new ones going up all the time, a fast average reply time and every verification check passed.
Your hours when you show	Your ad runs all day unless you set its ad schedule to your business hours. Set hours you will actually answer, not 24/7 if nobody picks up at 2am.

> THE CHEAPEST WAY TO THE TOP
>
> Reply to every call and message within 60 seconds, keep new photos going up and ask every customer for a review. None of it costs a dollar more, and the higher you sit, the more calls the same budget buys.

05 · STOP PAYING FOR BAD LEADS

Stop paying for bad leads

Some calls will be junk: a sales call, a wrong number, a job you don't do. Google credits some of it by itself. You dispute the rest, and the right settings stop most of it from coming in at all. Plenty of owners do neither.

HOW DISPUTES WORK NOW

There is no separate dispute button anymore. You dispute a bad call through **Rate this lead**, and Google may credit it, though a credit is never guaranteed. Google also skips charging for a lot of junk and credits more by itself. Those credits usually reach your account balance within 30 days, and the original charge still shows on your invoice.

DISPUTE A BAD CALL IN UNDER A MINUTE

1 **Open the lead**

In your Local Services Ads account, go to your leads and open the call. Once your account has moved into Google Ads, go to Goals, then Conversions, then Leads, and open the call there.

2 **Tap Rate this lead**

Give it a low rating and pick the reason that fits best.

3 **Write the reason in plain key words**

Say exactly what was wrong, in the same words as Google's reasons. Short and specific beats a long story:

- *"Spam. Robocall, no customer on the line."*
- *"Solicitation. Selling to us, not a customer."*
- *"Other. Wrong number, caller wanted a different business."*
- *"Duplicate lead. Same customer as the lead on September 12."*

Rate the good ones too

Give every good lead a high rating. Google uses your ratings to send you more of the leads you want.

Leave a note on every lead

What the job was, how the call went and how you spoke to them, whether it booked and what it was worth. Mark booked jobs as booked.

WHAT GOOGLE WON'T CREDIT

Calls for jobs you left checked but don't do, calls from towns outside your service area, calls outside your business hours and people who only want a price. Tighten your job types and service area and set your ad schedule to your business hours, and most of the first three stop.

06 · TURN CALLS INTO JOBS

Turn calls into jobs

Google gets the phone to ring. What happens next is up to you, and it is the cheapest place in the whole business to make more money.

52%
of calls to home service businesses reached a person

69%
of missed calls to small businesses got no callback within two days

7×
more likely to reach a decision maker when you reply within the hour instead of an hour later

Sources: Invoca home services call report, July 2026. Quo small business callback data, August 2026. Harvard Business Review, "The Short Life of Online Sales Leads," 2011.

1

Answer live, every time

Put the ad's number on a phone someone carries all day. If you are on a job, make sure someone else can pick up. A missed call can lose you the job and push you down the box, and from October 1, some missed calls are charged as leads.

2

Reply within 60 seconds

Missed a call or got a message? Get back to them within a minute. Google tracks how fast you respond, and fast replies help you rank. Many people don't answer unknown numbers, so text first: *"Hi, it's Mike from Smith Plumbing, sorry I missed you. Calling you back right now."* Then call.

3

Sound like the company they want, then book it

Answer with your company name and your first name, and stay calm and friendly. Ask three questions: What's going on? Where are you? When do you need us? Then offer two times: *"I can have someone there at 2 this afternoon or 9 tomorrow morning. Which works better?"*

4

Be straight about price

Give a price range, or your service call fee, on the phone. Google's rules ban bait pricing and any trip or diagnostic fee you didn't mention up front. Surprise fees also turn into bad reviews.

5

Follow up every quote

A text the next day and a call three days later. Plenty of jobs are not lost to a competitor, they are just forgotten.

6

Ask every customer for a review

Send your Google review link the day the job is done. You find it in your Business Profile under Read reviews, then Get more reviews. Ask everyone, not only the happy ones. Never offer a discount or gift for a review, and never write your own. Google bans both, and the FTC can fine for fake reviews.

07 · WHAT CHANGED IN 2025 AND 2026

What changed in 2025 and 2026

If you last looked at Local Services Ads a couple of years ago, some of what you know is out of date.

1

"Google Guaranteed" is now "Google Verified"

On October 20, 2025, a single Google Verified badge replaced the Google Guaranteed and Google Screened badges. The money-back guarantee for customers ended too. It only covered jobs booked before December 7, 2025. If your website, van or quotes still say Google Guaranteed, take it off.

2

Local Services Ads are moving into Google Ads

Google is moving accounts over in waves: some started in August 2026, and many businesses with no storefront follow later in 2026. You can't choose when. Google emails you 14 days before yours moves. Here is what changes:

- Your weekly budget becomes a daily one (weekly divided by seven).
- You can't set a maximum price per lead by hand anymore. Most accounts start on Maximize conversions.
- Old reports don't carry over, so screenshot or save them before the move. Your leads, badge, service areas and photos do carry over.
- A Leads page replaces the lead inbox. That is where you mark leads as booked and completed.

3

Missed calls can cost you

From October 1, 2026, a missed call during your business hours is charged as a lead if the caller stays on the line for more than 20 seconds, with a few exceptions. If your phone menu asks callers to press a key, the 20 seconds start after they press it. Answering the phone always helped you rank. Now it saves you money too.

4

Ads before the badge

Since August 2026 some businesses can get leads once the first checks pass, while the rest of verification finishes. Those listings show below fully verified companies.

5

Disputes and bookings

The dispute button went in 2024, so you now dispute bad calls through **Rate this lead** (section 05). In August 2026 Google also opened bookings to far more scheduling apps, so check whether yours has switched them on.

08 · YOUR NUMBERS AND WEEKLY ROUTINE

Work out your own numbers

Fill in the blanks with your numbers. If you don't know one yet, use the example and fix it after your first month.

	LINE	YOURS	EXAMPLE
A	What you spend on the ads in a month		$1,000
B	What one call costs you		$30
C	Calls in a month A ÷ B		33
D	How many out of every ten calls become jobs		6
E	Jobs in a month C × D ÷ 10, rounded		20
F	What your average job is worth		$3,000
G	**Money in** E × F		**$60,000**

If G is low, find the line furthest from the example. A low D points to how the phone gets answered. A low F points to your job types. A high B points to your profile, your reviews, your service area or junk getting through.

FIFTEEN MINUTES, EVERY MONDAY

- ◯ Go through every lead from last week. Dispute the junk through **Rate this lead**, rate the good ones highly and leave a note on each one.
- ◯ Check your reply times. Was every call and message answered within 60 seconds?
- ◯ Upload a few new photos from last week's jobs. Google holds up to 100, so remove old ones as you get close.
- ◯ Call back anyone you missed who never booked a job.
- ◯ Listen to three recorded calls. Did you give a time and a price? Did the job get booked?
- ◯ Ask last week's customers for a Google review.
- ◯ Check that your hours, holiday hours and service area are still right.
- ◯ Check your insurance and license dates, and any emails from Google.
- ◯ Write down last week's spend, calls, jobs and money in. At the end of the month, add up the weeks for A to G.

WANT IT DONE FOR YOU?

Or let us set it up and run it for you

Opus Group runs Local Services Ads and Google Ads for local service businesses. We handle the verification paperwork, pick the job types that pay, keep the photos fresh, dispute the bad calls and show you your calls and jobs every week. A few of our clients' best months:

R & J Plumbing & Backflow South Florida · September 2024	117 calls at $90 each
Feikema Plumbing & Sanitation Munster, Indiana · September 2025	52 calls at $61 each
1776 Tree Service Buffalo, New York · June 2026	117 calls at $44 each

- One company per trade per town. If we already work with someone in your trade and town, we will tell you right away.
- Month to month, with 30 days' notice. No long-term contract.
- You own the accounts, the pages and the numbers. Your ad spend goes straight to Google.

Book a free call with our team

Call (256) 516-9910 Email info@opusgroupusa.com opusgroupusa.com