

FREE GUIDE • SERVICE BUSINESS EDITION

# 100 Free Ways to Get More Customers Online

The simple, no-fluff playbook for service business owners who want more leads — without spending a dime on ads.

## BUILT FOR

- ✓ Plumbers, electricians, HVAC, roofers
- ✓ Landscapers, painters, cleaners, handymen
- ✓ Any local service business owner

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## PHIT·WEB

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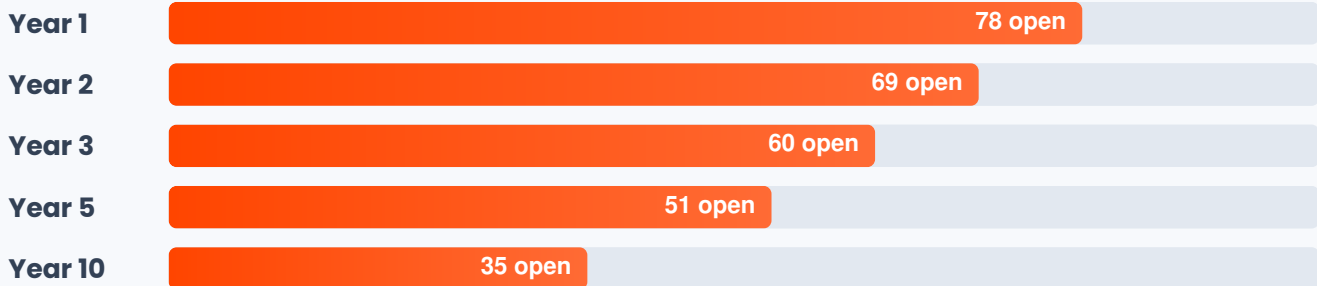
Website design, SEO, and content marketing that actually sells your services.

READ THIS FIRST

# The Hard Truth About Running a Business

If you own a service business, you already know it is hard. But you may not know **how** hard. The numbers are not pretty. We need to start here so you understand what you are up against — and why this guide matters.

## Out of every 100 new businesses in the U.S., how many are still open?



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Business Employment Dynamics*.

**Read that again.** Out of every 100 businesses that open, only **35 are still here after 10 years**. Two out of three are gone. That is not bad luck. That is the game.

And here is the worst part: the #1 reason most service businesses fail is not bad work, bad prices, or a bad economy. It is one simple thing — **not enough customers**. People don't know they exist. The pros who survive are not always the best at their trade. They are the best at being *found*.

That is what this guide is about. 100 free and low-cost ways to be found. Then at the end — the one move that ties them all together and makes every other tactic in this book work 10 times harder.

## What's in this guide

First, the 7 biggest problems killing service businesses (and which one is killing yours). Then 100 specific ways to bring in more customers — short, easy to read, organized by category so you can skim and pick the ones that fit. Then a clear plan for the one thing that brings customers in on autopilot for years: your own website. By the time you finish reading, you will have a real game plan you can start using this week.

## SOUND FAMILIAR?

# The 7 Problems Killing Service Businesses Right Now

If even three of these hit home, you are not alone. Almost every owner we talk to is dealing with most of them. Let's name them out loud.

### **Problem #1 — You are great at the work, but stuck on getting customers.**

You can fix the pipe, wire the panel, build the deck. But getting strangers to know you exist? That is a whole different job. And no one trained you for it.

### **Problem #2 — Lead sites like Angi and Thumbtack are eating your margins.**

\$40 a lead. \$80 a lead. And half the time the lead is fake or shared with five other pros. You are paying just to compete on price.

### **Problem #3 — Word of mouth is great — until it slows down.**

Referrals are gold. But they come in waves. When the wave stops, the phone stops. You need a steady source you control.

### **Problem #4 — When people search for your service, they don't find you.**

A homeowner Googles "plumber near me" at 9pm. The top 3 results get 75% of the calls. If you are on page 2, you might as well not exist.

### **Problem #5 — You have no website — or a website that doesn't sell.**

A page with your phone number is not a website. A real website builds trust, answers questions, and books jobs while you sleep.

### **Problem #6 — You compete on price because that is all customers can see.**

If buyers can't see what makes you different, they will pick the lowest bid every time. That is a race to the bottom.

### **Problem #7 — You are working 60 hours and bringing home 30 hours of pay.**

You went into business for freedom. But you are running yourself ragged because every month starts at zero. No pipeline means no freedom.

**The good news:** Every single one of those 7 problems gets fixed by the same thing — a steady flow of customers who already know who you are when they call. The rest of this book shows you how to build that. For free.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

# Don't Try to Do All 100. Pick 5.

This guide is a buffet, not a checklist. Read it once. Mark the 5 ideas that fit you best. Do those for 30 days. Then come back and pick 5 more.

## The rules of the game

- 1. Be helpful, not pushy.** Every tactic in this book works better when you help first and sell second. Online, helpful people get hired. Pushy people get blocked.
- 2. Show up every week.** One post, one review, one reply. Small steps add up fast. Most pros quit after two weeks. The ones who win do small things for six months.
- 3. Track what works.** When a customer calls, ask "Where did you find us?" Write it down. After 30 days, double down on what is working.
- 4. Don't pay for ads yet.** Most owners burn \$500 on Facebook ads before they have one good photo of their work or one Google review. Build the free stuff first. Then ads cost 10 times less.
- 5. The last one (#100) is the secret.** The first 99 ideas are great. But they only work at full power when you have the one thing that ties them all together. Don't skip the end.

## The 8 categories of tactics

### #1-15

#### Free Social Media

Where your customers already hang out.

### #16-30

#### Local Listings

Show up when people search.

### #31-45

#### Online Groups

Be helpful. Get hired.

### #46-60

#### Content & Blogging

Answer questions, win customers.

### #61-72

#### Reviews

The strongest free marketing.

### #73-83

#### Email & Direct Outreach

Reach people one-to-one.

### #84-93

#### More Free Places

Craigslist to HARO and beyond.

### #94-99

#### Smart Moves

Networking that compounds.

## THE FULL LIST

# 100 Free Ways to Get More Customers Online

Each idea is short on purpose. You don't need a 20-page essay to know how to post on Facebook. You need to know *that you should*, and the small trick that makes it work.

## Free Social Media — Where Your Customers Already Hang Out #1–#15

### #1 Make a Facebook Business Page

It's free. Add photos, your phone, and your hours. Post once a week.

### #2 Post Before-and-After Photos

People love seeing the change. A messy yard turned clean. A broken pipe fixed.

### #3 Go Live on Facebook

Show a job in progress. Talk for 5 minutes. People love watching real work.

### #4 Make an Instagram Page

Post a photo every other day. Use 10 hashtags like #PortlandPlumber.

### #5 Use Instagram Reels

Short videos get the most views. Show a quick tip or a job.

### #6 Start a TikTok Account

Post short videos. TikTok pushes new accounts in front of lots of people.

### #7 Make a YouTube Channel

Post how-to videos. Like 'How to unclog a sink.' These keep getting views for years.

### #8 Use YouTube Shorts

60-second videos. Easy to make. Big reach.

### #9 Post on LinkedIn

Great for B2B work or office jobs. Share what you did this week.

### #10 Pin Your Work on Pinterest

Home services do well here. Pin photos of finished jobs.

### #11 Use X (Twitter) Locally

Search for your town. Reply to people asking for help.

### #12 Make a Snapchat Story

Show your day. Younger customers see it.

### #13 Try Threads

Like Twitter but new. Less crowded. Easy to grow.

### #14 Share Customer Photos

Get the customer to send a pic. Post it (with permission). Free proof you do good work.

### #15 Use One Hashtag For You

Make up a tag like #JohnsHVACTips. Use it on every post.

## Local Listings — Show Up When People Search #16–#30

### #16 Claim Your Google Business Profile

This is the #1 free thing you can do. It's the map list on Google.

### #17 Add 10 Photos to Google

More photos = more clicks. Add a few each month.

### #18 Post Updates on Google

Like a mini Facebook post on your Google page. Do it weekly.

### #19 Get on Yelp

Free listing. Add hours, photos, your story.

### #20 List on Bing Places

Same idea as Google. Less traffic but free.

### #21 List on Apple Maps

iPhone users find you here. Free.

### #22 List on Yellow Pages Online

Old name, still works. Free basic listing.

### #23 List on Better Business Bureau

Trust badge. Helps with bigger jobs.

### #24 Join Angi (formerly Angie's List)

Free basic listing. Paid leads are pricey but the free spot helps.

### #25 List on Thumbtack

Customers come to you. Free to list, you pay per lead.

### #26 List on HomeAdvisor

Same model as Thumbtack.

### #27 Get on Houzz

Best for home pros. Designers and remodelers love it.

### #28 List on Nextdoor for Business

Your neighbors see you. Huge for local services.

### #29 List on Foursquare

Free. Helps with search.

### #30 Find Your Chamber of Commerce

Most have a free or cheap online directory. Local trust.

## Online Groups — Be Helpful, Get Hired

#31-#45

### #31 Join 5 Local Facebook Groups

Search your town name. Ask to join. Help people. Don't spam.

### #32 Join Your Town's Reddit

Like r/Portland. Help when people ask. Don't sell. Just answer.

### #33 Answer on r/HomelImprovement

If you do home work. Big group. People ask for help all day.

### #34 Use r/SmallBusiness

Talk to other small biz owners. Trade tips and leads.

### #35 Post on Nextdoor

Share a tip. Like 'How to keep your gutters clean.' Post your name at the bottom.

### #36 Answer Questions on Quora

Pick 3 topics you know. Answer well. Add your website at the bottom.

### #37 Use Reddit Search

Search 'need a plumber Portland' or your trade. Reply when you can help.

### #38 Try Discord Local Servers

Many cities have one. Younger folks live here.

### #39 Join Mom Groups Online

Moms hire local services more than any group. Be a regular helper.

### #40 Find Your HOA Group

Many neighborhoods have Facebook pages. Get in. Be the helper.

#### #41 Be Active in BiggerPockets

If you serve landlords. Real estate folks always need pros.

#### #42 Help on Houzz Discussions

Designers and homeowners ask questions. You answer.

#### #43 Use Facebook Marketplace

List your service like a product. People shop here all day.

#### #44 Comment on Local News Posts

Town newspaper Facebook page. Be the smart local voice.

#### #45 Join Industry Facebook Groups

Other pros share leads and tips. You will learn too.

## Content — Help People, They Hire You

#46–#60

#### #46 Write a Blog on Your Website

One post a month. Like '5 signs your roof needs help.' Google sends people.

#### #47 Make a Top-10 List Post

Lists get the most clicks. 'Top 10 plumbing fixes you can do.'

#### #48 Write a 'How To' Post

Help, don't sell. People who read it trust you.

#### #49 Make a FAQ Page

Answer the 10 questions you hear most. Google likes these.

#### #50 Make a YouTube Tutorial

Show how to do a small task. People will call when they want it done right.

#### #51 Start an Email Newsletter

Send one tip a month. Stay on people's minds.

#### #52 Make a Free Checklist

Like 'Spring home tune-up checklist.' People hand you their email for it.

#### #53 Write a Story Post

Tell a real job story. People remember stories more than ads.

#### #54 Make a Cost Guide

'How much does a new roof cost?' is searched 1,000 times a day.

#### #55 Show Your Process

A page that says how you do the job, step by step.

#### #56 Make a Local Resource Page

List free local stuff. Dump days, recycling. Your town will share it.

#### #57 Write About Local Problems

'Why Portland basements flood' if you do basements. Local + helpful.

#### #58 Make a Comparison Post

'DIY vs hiring a pro for X.' Honest. People share these.

#### #59 Add a Photo Gallery

Before and after. Each photo can show up in Google Image search.

#### #60 Make a Map of Jobs You've Done

Visual proof of your service area. Trust builder.

## Reviews — The Strongest Free Marketing

#61-#72

### #61 Ask Every Happy Customer

Most won't think to leave one. You have to ask. Right after the job.

### #62 Text a Google Review Link

Make it one click. The easier it is, the more you get.

### #63 Print Cards With a QR Code

Hand to customer. They scan, leave a review in 30 seconds.

### #64 Reply to Every Review

Even bad ones. Stay calm. Show you care. New customers read this.

### #65 Ask for Photos in Reviews

Photos in reviews get more eyes.

### #66 Get Reviews on 3 Sites

Google, Yelp, and Facebook. Don't put all in one basket.

### #67 Use Reviews on Your Site

Pull quotes onto your homepage.

### #68 Make a Referral Bonus

Pay \$50 or give credit when someone sends a friend who hires you.

### #69 Send a Thank You Card

Real mail. Surprises people. They tell friends about you.

### #70 Drop By After the Job

A week later. Quick check-in. Builds the bond. Drives referrals.

### #71 Ask 'Who Else Should I Help?'

After good work. Most folks know one or two.

### #72 Use a Review Widget

Show your star rating on every page of your site.

## Email & Direct — Reach People One-to-One

#73-#83

### #73 Collect Emails From Every Job

Just ask. Use them to send tips and stay close.

### #74 Send a Quarterly Tip Email

Once every 3 months. Helpful, not pushy.

### #75 Send a Seasonal Reminder

'Time to check your AC.' Easy win, brings repeat work.

### #76 Text Past Customers a Tip

Short. Useful. Reminds them you exist.

### #77 Email Local Businesses

Hand-written feel. 'Hi, I service the area, here's what I do, here's my card.'

### #78 Cold-Call Real Estate Agents

They send pro service work to vendors they know.

### #79 Cold-Call Property Managers

They have 50 doors and need pros.

### #80 Reach Out to Local Builders

They subcontract. Steady work.

### #81 Email an Old Customer List

Anyone you have not talked to in 6 months. 'Just checking in.'

### #82 Use Free CRM Like HubSpot

Track who is a hot lead. Free for small lists.

### #83 Build a Past-Customer Phone Tree

Pick up the phone. Old-school. Works.

## More Free Places to Get Found

#84-#93

### #84 List on Craigslist

Yes, still works in many towns. Post in the services section. Free.

### #85 List on Facebook Marketplace

Like a free ad. Renew it weekly.

### #86 List on OfferUp

Local. Free. Worth a shot.

### #87 List on TaskRabbit

If you do handyman work. Built-in customers.

### #88 List on Care.com

Cleaning, child care, pet care. Strong leads.

### #89 Use Alignable

LinkedIn for small business. Trade leads with other pros.

### #90 Submit to Local 'Best Of' Lists

Town newspapers run these. Free press.

### #91 Be a Source for Reporters

HARO (Help A Reporter Out). Reporters need quotes. You give one. Free press + link.

### #92 Get Listed on Niche Directories

Search 'best [your trade] directory.' Pick the top 5.

### #93 Use Local Business Schema

A code on your website that tells Google what you do. Free big boost.

## Smart Moves That Compound

#94-#99

### #94 Join BNI or a Lead Group

Weekly meeting. Members send each other leads. Some pay back fast.

### #95 Sponsor a Little League Team

Cheap. Your name on a banner. Whole town sees it.

### #96 Partner With a Non-Competing Pro

Plumber + electrician. Send each other work.

### #97 Hand Out 100 Business Cards a Month

Set the goal. Hit the goal. Volume wins.

### #98 Put Your Logo on Your Truck

A wrap pays for itself. People see you every day.

### #99 Wear a Branded Shirt Always

Even on errands. 100 people see it. Free ads.

# #100

## Have Your Own Website.

Your own digital real estate. Land that no one else owns. Where every other tactic in this book sends people — and where customers find you, day or night, on Google, Yahoo, Bing, ChatGPT, and every map app.

### Why this is the one that ties them all together

Here is what most owners miss. The first 99 ideas all do one job: they send people somewhere to learn more about you. So where do they go? If you don't have a website, they go to a Facebook page you don't fully control, a Yelp profile loaded with ads for your competitors, or just... away.

A real website is the only piece of marketing you actually own. Facebook can shut you down tomorrow. Angi can raise prices. Google can change the rules. Your website? It is yours. Forever. Every dollar you put into it works for you for 10, 20, 30 years.



#### Found on Google 24/7

A homeowner with a leak at 11pm doesn't call your friend. They Google. Be there or be invisible.



#### Trust before the call

Most buyers check your website before they call. No site means they call the next guy.



#### Sells while you sleep

A good website answers questions, shows your work, and books jobs at 2 in the morning.



#### Charge higher prices

A pro-looking site makes you the premium choice. You stop competing on price alone.



#### You own the leads

No more paying \$80 per shared lead from Thumbtack. The lead is yours and it is free.



#### Compounds for years

A good site keeps bringing customers in for 5, 10, 20 years. Compounded value beats any ad.



#### Works in every city you serve

Show up in every town nearby, not just your home base.



#### Builds your brand

Your name, your story, your photos. The kind of thing customers remember and refer.

**The hard math:** One job from your website pays for the whole site. After that, every job for the next 10 years is pure profit. That is the math no Facebook ad will ever beat. So why doesn't every business already have one? Two reasons. Either they think they can do it themselves with a drag-and-drop builder — or they think a real website costs \$10,000. Both are wrong. Let's clear that up.

**A WORD OF WARNING**

# The Trap of DIY Websites

"I'll just build it myself on Wix" sounds great. But here is what really happens — we see it every week.

What you need	DIY (Wix / Squarespace / GoDaddy)	A pro who builds for service businesses
Time to build it	40–120 hours of your time. That is 1–3 weeks of evenings and weekends.	10–14 days with almost none of your time after a 30-minute intake call.
Will it rank on Google?	Almost never. DIY templates are not built for local SEO.	Yes. Built city-by-city to be found in every town you serve.
Will it actually sell?	It will look pretty but read like a brochure. Pretty doesn't book jobs.	Yes. Every page is built to answer objections and drive the call.
Monthly fees	\$23–\$49/month forever. That is \$5,000+ over 10 years just in fees.	One-time price. No monthly fee for the build.
Looks like 1,000 other sites	Same templates everyone uses. You blend in.	Custom built. You stand out.
When something breaks	You fix it. Or you Google it. Or it stays broken.	We fix it.
Real cost over 3 years	~\$1,700 in fees + 100 hours of your time (worth \$5,000+).	One-time price + your time saved + jobs won.

**Here is the truth no one says:** Your time is worth more than \$25 an hour. If you spend 80 hours fighting with Wix, you just gave away \$2,000 in lost billable work. And you still don't have a site that sells.

This is exactly why PHIT Web exists.

NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT US

## PHIT **Web** builds websites that actually sell your service.

We are not a generic web designer. We only build for service businesses — plumbers, electricians, HVAC, roofers, landscapers, painters, cleaners, handymen. We know the calls you take. We know the customer in your area. And we know exactly what they need to see before they call.

### Why we are different



#### **We sell your service, not just show it**

Most websites read like a brochure. Ours read like a top salesperson. Every line is built to answer the doubt in a buyer's mind and drive them to call.



#### **Local SEO from day one**

Built city-by-city. We currently serve 12,000+ cities across all 49 states. Your site shows up where your customers actually search.



#### **10–14 days, not 3 months**

Most agencies take months. We deliver in two weeks. You start getting calls fast.



#### **One-time price. \$2,495 flat.**

No monthly fees for the build. No surprises. No hidden costs.



#### **Built for AI search too**

ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity — when people ask AI for a pro, our sites are ready to be the answer.



#### **Mobile-first design**

70% of your customers find you on their phone. Our sites are built for the phone first, desktop second.



#### **Spam-blocked contact forms**

6 layers of spam protection. Real leads only. No more inbox junk.



#### **No technical headaches**

You don't touch code. We handle everything. You focus on the work.

### What you get with a PHIT Web build

A custom-designed homepage that grabs attention in 5 seconds. Service pages that answer every question a buyer has. City pages that rank in every town you serve. A blog setup for content marketing. Photo gallery. Reviews module. Mobile menu. Contact form that emails you instantly. Google-ready schema. Site map for fast indexing. SEO built into every line of code. Fast hosting recommendations. And ongoing help if anything breaks.

READY WHEN YOU ARE

# Stop Losing Jobs to the Other Guy's Website

Every day you don't have a real website, you are sending customers to someone else. The good news: this is the easiest problem on the list to fix.

**\$2,495**

**One-time. Custom-built. Done in 10–14 days.**

Full custom site • Local SEO built in • Mobile-first • Contact forms • Photo gallery • Blog ready • AI-search ready  
• Spam protected

## How it works

- 1. You call or text us.** Tell us about your business. (503) 985-8854. Or email [info@phitweb.com](mailto:info@phitweb.com). Or fill out the form at [phitweb.com](http://phitweb.com).
- 2. We do a 30-minute intake.** We learn your service, your area, your customers, and what makes you different.
- 3. We build it.** You go back to running your business. We design, write, and code your site.
- 4. You review and approve.** We tweak anything you want. Then we go live.
- 5. You start getting found.** 10–14 days from start to live site. Then the calls start coming.

**One job pays for the site.** Most of our clients book a new job inside the first 30 days from being found on Google. That single job covers the entire build. Every job after that is profit. For years.

## Why we made this guide free

Because we want to be honest with you. Most service business owners don't need to spend a dollar to start getting more customers. The 99 ideas in this book are all free or nearly free. You can do them yourself, this week. We are giving you the playbook because we believe the right way to earn your trust is to help you first. But once you hit the ceiling that the free tactics always run into — that is when a real website that does the selling for you takes over. When you are ready for that — we are here.

— The PHIT Web team. Portland, OR. Building websites that sell since day one.

YOUR NEXT STEP

# Let's build the one thing that brings **customers in for years.**

You have 99 free ideas to start using today. When you are ready for the move that ties them all together — your own website that is built to sell — reach out. We will show you a few sites we have built for businesses like yours and answer any question you have. No pressure. No long contracts. Just a real conversation about your business.

[Visit phitweb.com](https://phitweb.com)

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**What we do:** Custom website design, local SEO, and content marketing for service businesses across all 50 states. Built to be found. Built to sell.

*Thank you for reading. Now go get those customers.*