



● A FREE GUIDE FOR LOCAL CONTRACTORS

# The Contractor's Lead Machine

Own your pipeline. Own your business.

How local customers really find, vet, and hire a contractor — and how to make sure that's you. From someone who spent 12 years on the inside of the lead business.

READ THIS FIRST

# The platforms aren't on your side.

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I spent 12 years on the other side of the contractor lead business — at HomeAdvisor and Angi. I saw exactly how those platforms make their money, and it isn't by getting you hired. It's by selling the same lead to four of your competitors and letting you fight over it.

This guide is the stuff I wish every contractor knew. No fluff, no 400-page theory — five short chapters on how local customers actually find, vet, and hire a contractor in 2026, and how to make sure that's you.

You don't need to be technical or have a marketing degree. You need to understand a few things the platforms would rather you didn't — then decide whether you want to build the system yourself or have someone build it for you. Both are fine. I'll show you both at the end.

Let's get into it.

# 01

CHAPTER 01

## The lead platforms are rigged against you.

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Here's how a shared-lead platform actually works. You pay for a lead. So do three to five of your competitors — the platform sells that **same** homeowner to all of you. Now you're in a footrace and a price war before you've even said hello, and whoever loses still paid for the privilege.

It gets worse. You never own the customer or the relationship — the platform does. You don't own the rankings, the reviews, or the traffic. You're renting access to people who were taught to comparison-shop you to the bottom. The minute you stop paying, you disappear.

That's the whole model: keep you dependent, keep you bidding, keep you renting. It's a tax on not having your own presence — and most contractors pay it for years without realizing there's another way.

### THE TAKEAWAY

**Every dollar you spend on shared-lead platforms rents you one customer for one job. Every dollar you put into your own search presence buys you customers for years.**

# 02

CHAPTER 02

## Your website is a salesperson — or a saboteur.

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When someone gets your name — a referral, a yard sign, a Google search — the first thing they do is look you up. Your website is the handshake. And a customer decides whether to trust you in about five seconds, mostly before they've read a word.

Most contractor websites quietly lose the job: slow to load, hard to read on a phone, no clear way to call, stock photos instead of real work, no reviews, no license or service area in sight. Every one of those is a reason to hit the back button and call the next guy.

A site that wins does a few simple things well: loads fast, puts a tappable phone number right up top, shows real photos of real jobs, displays reviews and your license, and makes the service area obvious. That's it. Your website has one job — turn a stranger into a phone call.

### THE TAKEAWAY

**Your site has about five seconds to make someone trust you enough to call. Fast load, real photos, and a phone number they can tap — that's 80% of the job.**

# 03

## CHAPTER 03

# Speed wins. The five-minute rule.

Most contractors think they lose jobs on price. They don't. They lose them on **response time**. A homeowner with a problem rarely calls one contractor — they call three. And the one who answers first usually wins, before price ever comes up.

The drop-off is brutal. Reach out within five minutes and you're light-years ahead of the contractor who calls back tomorrow afternoon. By then the homeowner has already booked someone else and forgotten you existed.

You can't always answer — you're under a sink or on a roof. So you need a system that answers for you: an instant text back the second a call is missed or a form comes in. Something as simple as **“Got your message — this is Franky, I'll call you in 10.”** keeps you in the race while your competitor's voicemail loses it. Then a couple of polite follow-ups over the next few days catch the ones who got busy.

This is exactly the kind of thing the right software handles automatically — missed-call text-back and follow-up sequences that run without you lifting a finger. More on that at the end.

### THE TAKEAWAY

**The contractor who responds first usually wins the job — not the cheapest, the fastest. Even an automatic “got your message, calling you shortly” text beats silence every time.**

# 04

CHAPTER 04

## Google is your best salesperson (even on \$5 a day).

If I could only fix one thing for a contractor, it would be Google — and not the expensive part. Your **Google Business Profile** is free, you already own it, and a fully dialed-in one will out-earn almost any paid lead platform you're on right now.

It's the little map of three businesses that shows up when someone searches “plumber near me.” Landing in that Map Pack is the highest-intent, lowest-cost visibility a local contractor can get — these are people ready to hire, right now, in your town.

Getting there isn't magic, it's maintenance: the right business categories, real photos added regularly, accurate service areas, and — above all — a steady stream of reviews. Reviews are the currency of local search. Ask every happy customer, every time.

From there, \$5–10 a day in Google Local Services Ads (the ones with the green “Google Guaranteed” badge) can put you at the very top, pay-per-lead, on a profile you actually own. Done right, that beats a thousand dollars a month on shared leads. This is the core of what I do for the contractors I work with.

### THE TAKEAWAY

**A fully optimized Google Business Profile with steady reviews will out-earn almost any paid platform — and you already own it for free. Start there.**

# 05

CHAPTER 05

## Your old leads are a goldmine (even the no's).

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Every contractor I've ever met chases shiny new leads while sitting on a pile of money they already earned. Every quote you sent that went quiet. Every "we'll think about it." Every customer from two years ago. That's not a dead end — that's the cheapest pipeline you'll ever have.

A quote that went cold isn't a no, it's a not-yet. A short, human follow-up a week later — "Hey, still happy to get you on the schedule if you're ready" — closes a shocking number of jobs that everyone else gave up on.

And your past customers are gold: a seasonal check-in, a maintenance reminder, a simple ask for a review or a referral. The job you already did is the easiest next job you'll get. You just need a list and a reason to reach out — both of which a basic CRM handles for you.

### THE TAKEAWAY

**The cheapest lead you'll ever get is the customer you already served. A two-line follow-up to old quotes and past customers will out-earn most ad spend.**

# Two honest ways forward.

So now you know how it works — own your site, answer fast, win Google, work your list. The only real question left is who builds it. You've got two good options, and I mean it when I say both are legit.

## OPTION 1 — DO IT YOURSELF

### Build it on one platform.

Everything in this guide — the website, the missed-call text-back, the follow-up sequences, the customer database, the review requests — can run on a single tool. The one I use to run all of it is GoHighLevel. If you're hands-on and want to own your system, start a free trial and have a look. (That's my referral link — if you sign up I earn a small commission at no cost to you. I only recommend it because it's genuinely what I use.)

[Start a free GoHighLevel trial »](#)

## OPTION 2 — HAVE ME DO IT FOR YOU

### Let me handle the whole thing.

If you'd rather run your business and let someone handle all of this for you, that's what my agency, LeadWise Connect, does — the website, the Google presence, the follow-up systems, built and managed so you never think about it. Book a free 15-minute call. No pressure, no hard pitch.

[Book a free 15-minute call »](#)

Either way — stop renting customers from platforms that are betting against you. Own your pipeline. Own your business.

— Franky

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# Who's behind this.

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I'm Franky Colon. I spent 12 years inside the contractor lead business — HomeAdvisor and Angi — before I started LeadWise Connect, where I design websites and run the marketing for local contractors out of Tampa, FL.

I started this because I watched too many good contractors lose work to worse ones who simply showed up better online. That's a fixable problem, and it's the one I work on every day. This guide is me handing you the playbook I use.

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