THE ULTIMATE

LOCAL SERVICE ADS PLAYBOOK

TRADEOPS CONSULTING

GETTING CUSTOMERS HAS NEVER BEEN THIS EASY

TradeOps
CONSULTING

● CO-FOUNDER · TRADEOPS CONSULTING

Bengt Jobe.

I started in the trades. I built a home-service business, then sold it. Now I help other owners do the same, only faster.

50+
BUSINESSES SERVED

$20M+
TRACKED REVENUE ADDED

US + CA
CLIENTS ACROSS BOTH



BENGT JOBE, CO-FOUNDER

THE JOURNEY

EARLY DAYS
In the trades
I worked in the trades. Boots, trucks, dirt under the nails.

BUILT IT
My own shop
I started, scaled, and sold a home-service business of my own.

2021
Helping other owners
I took everything I learned getting customers for myself and started offering marketing to other home-service businesses.

2025
Co-founded TradeOps
I co-founded TradeOps to bring industry experience together with world-class service delivery.

2026 →
Now
Top of class marketing and growth consulting for 50+ trades businesses across the US and Canada.

01

A Quick *Introduction*

Homeowners search "AC repair near me" or "emergency plumber" every minute of every day. The very first thing they see is not your website. Not your Google Business Profile. Not even your Google Search Ad. It is a Local Service Ad.

If you are not there, the call goes to a competitor. Every time. This guide shows you exactly how to win that spot.

Why Local Service Ads matter in 2026

- **You pay for leads, not clicks.** Only real phone calls and messages from homeowners get charged.
- **Top of the page.** Above search ads. Above the map pack. Above organic.
- **Highest intent traffic on the internet.** Homeowners who click an LSA are ready to book today.
- **Lower cost per lead than Google Search Ads.** Service leads run $40 to $70. Same lead on PPC runs $80 to $120.
- **Invalid leads get refunded automatically.** Google's AI listens to every call and credits your account for spam, job seekers, and calls under 30 seconds.
- **Most leads are still exclusive.** Even after the 2025 shared-quote rollout, your call is your call.

A Quick *Introduction*

What you will get from this guide

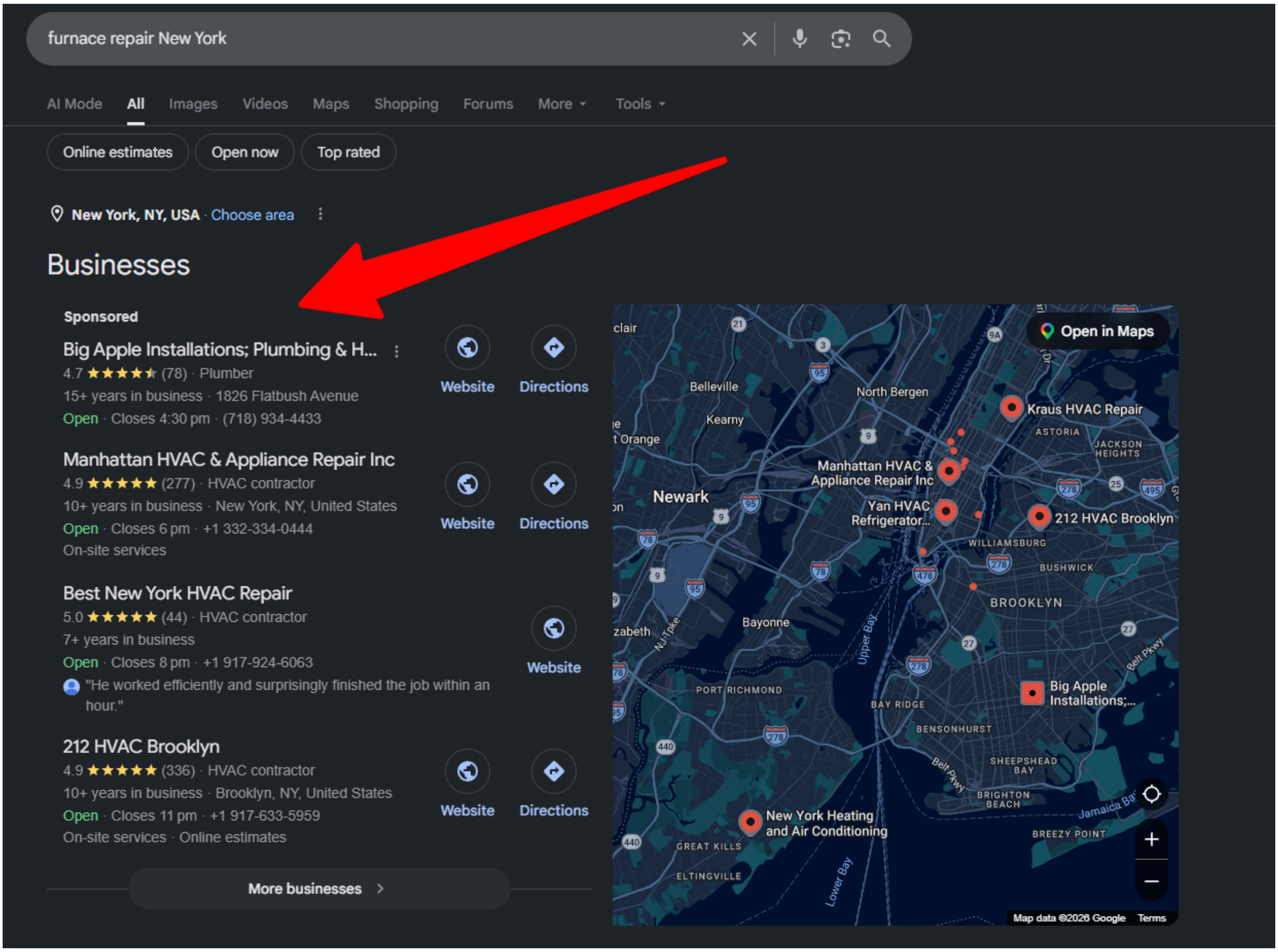
The full setup process. The ranking factors that actually move the needle. The lead management routine the top accounts run every day. The mistakes that kill accounts overnight. And what to do when your account slows down.

Want us to run your LSA personally? Book a call and we will tell you exactly what is holding your rankings back.
https://calendly.com/yashsinghblogger

Where Local Service Ads *Show Up*

Local Service Ads sit at the very top of the Google search results page. Above everything paid. Above everything organic. They are the first thing a homeowner sees the moment they hit search.

The SERP stack from top to bottom

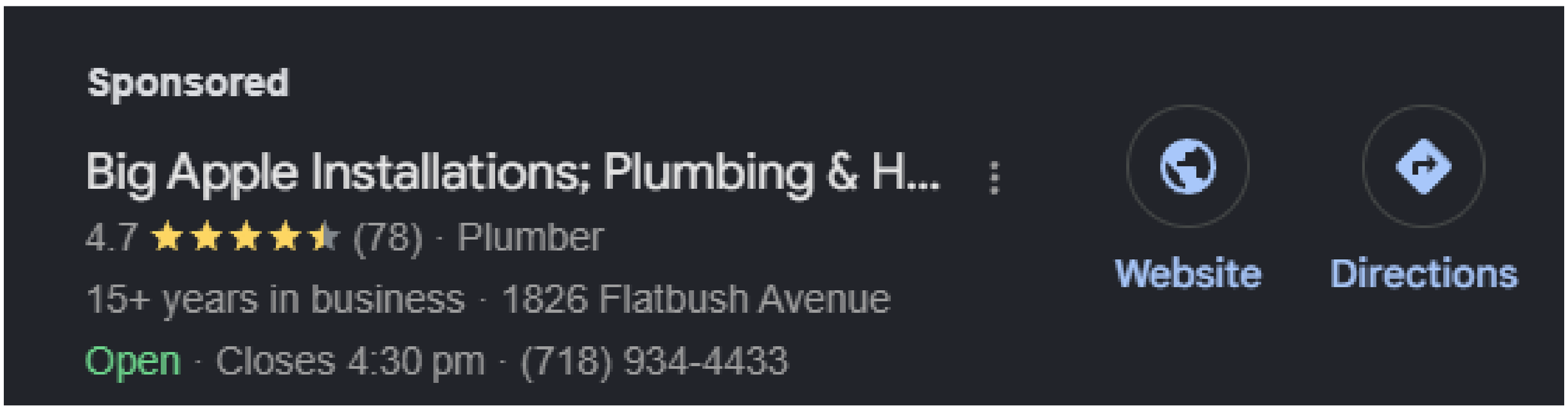


Where Local Service Ads *Show Up*

What an LSA actually shows

Every Local Service Ad displays the same elements:

- Business name and rating
- Number of reviews
- Years in business
- Service area
- A phone number, a message button, and sometimes a "Book" button



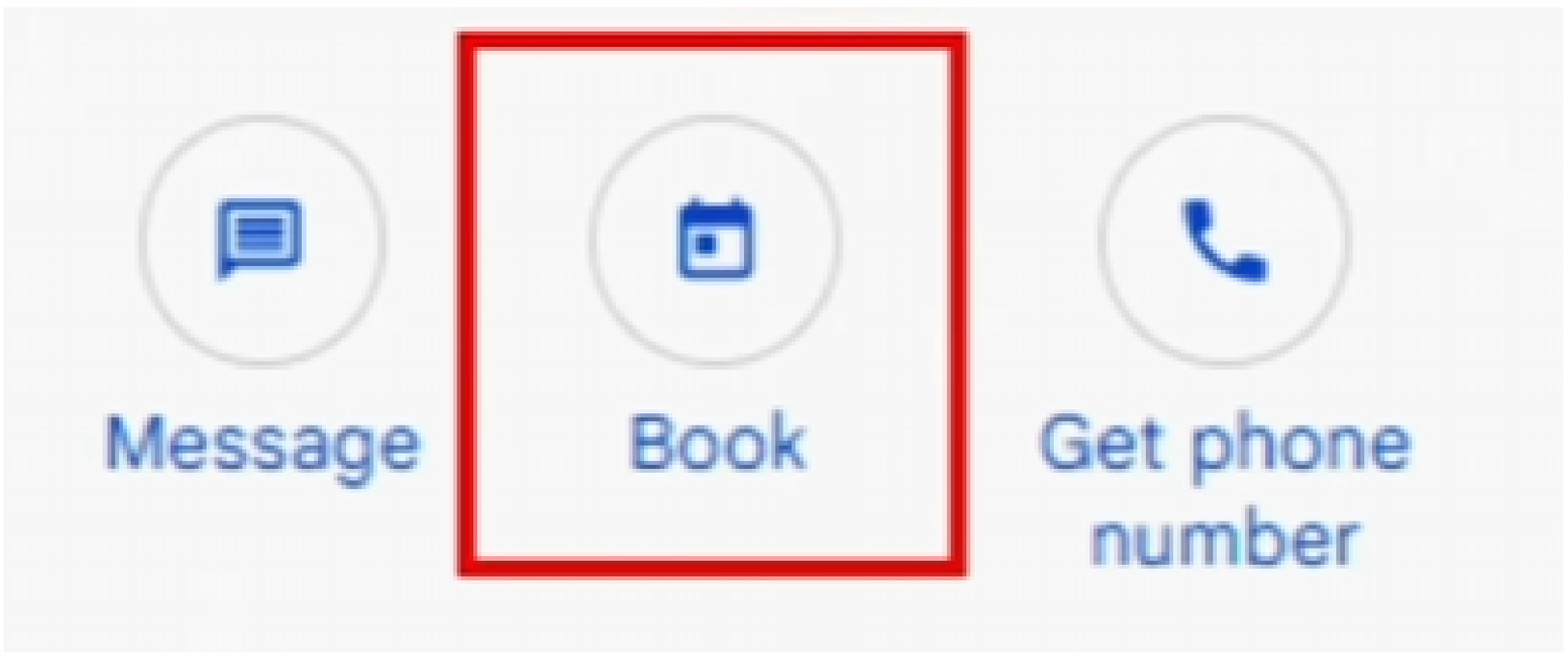
There is no ad copy you write. No headlines. No descriptions. Google pulls everything from your profile and your selected attributes. Your job is to make sure those inputs are dialed in. The rest of this guide is how to do that.

How Leads Come In +

The Google Screened Badge

Three ways a homeowner can contact you

- Call - the homeowner taps and rings your phone directly
- Message - the homeowner sends a text or email through the LSA platform
- Book - the homeowner schedules an appointment that drops straight into your CRM



The "Book" button only appears if you have connected a supported booking partner (Housecall Pro, ServiceTitan, Workiz, GoHighLevel, Square). Profiles with the booking option enabled rank higher than profiles without it.

How Leads Come In +

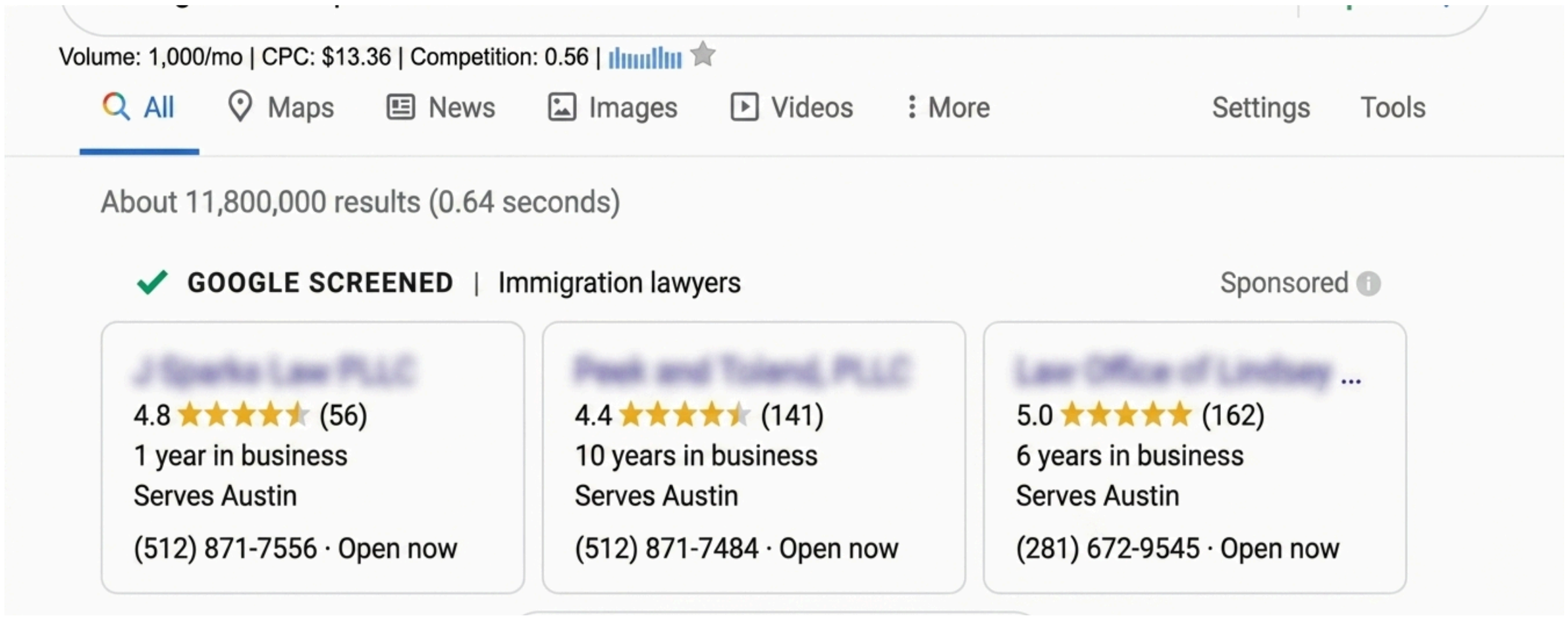
The Google Screened Badge

What changed with the badge

Until October 2025, every approved profile showed a Google Guaranteed badge - a green checkmark promising Google would back up the work up to a certain dollar amount.

Google retired the "Guaranteed" badge for home services and replaced it with Google Screened for most categories.

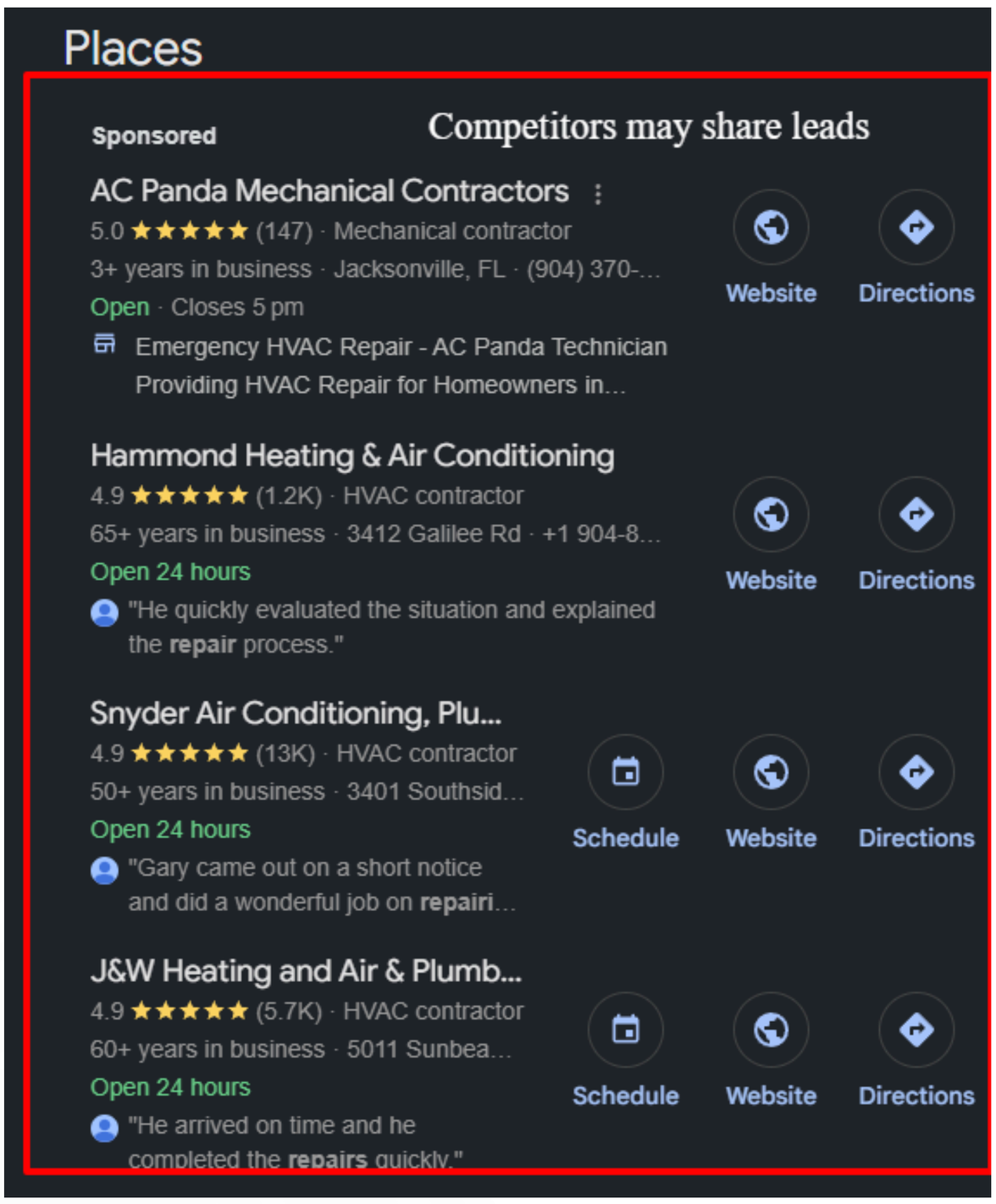
The verification process is the same (license, insurance, background check) but the customer-facing promise is now framed as "screened by Google" rather than a money-back guarantee.



Exclusive leads *vs* Shared leads

Until 2024, every LSA lead was exclusive. Your phone rings, the homeowner is yours.

In late 2024, Google rolled out a "Get competitive quotes" feature. Homeowners can now tap that button and request quotes from multiple companies at once. When that happens, you receive a shared lead, the same homeowner request goes to 2 or 3 competing businesses in the same area.



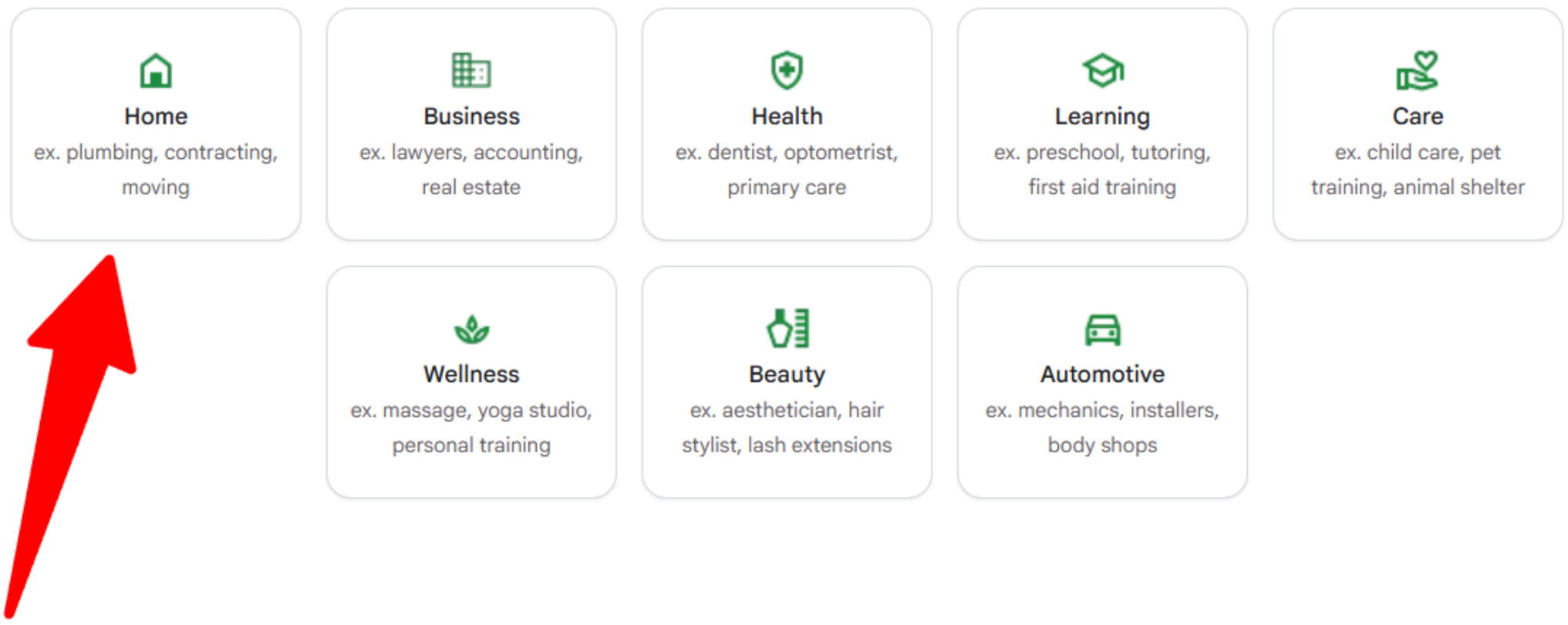
Here is the reality: most leads are still exclusive. In our client accounts across HVAC and plumbing, shared leads make up roughly 10-20% of total volume. The speed-to-lead game matters even more on shared leads, whoever calls back first usually wins the job.

Eligibility + Prerequisites

Before You Start

Is your business eligible for LSA

Local Service Ads cover specific industries. HVAC and plumbing are both fully supported, along with roofing, electrical, garage door, pest control, landscaping, locksmith, and most other home service trades.



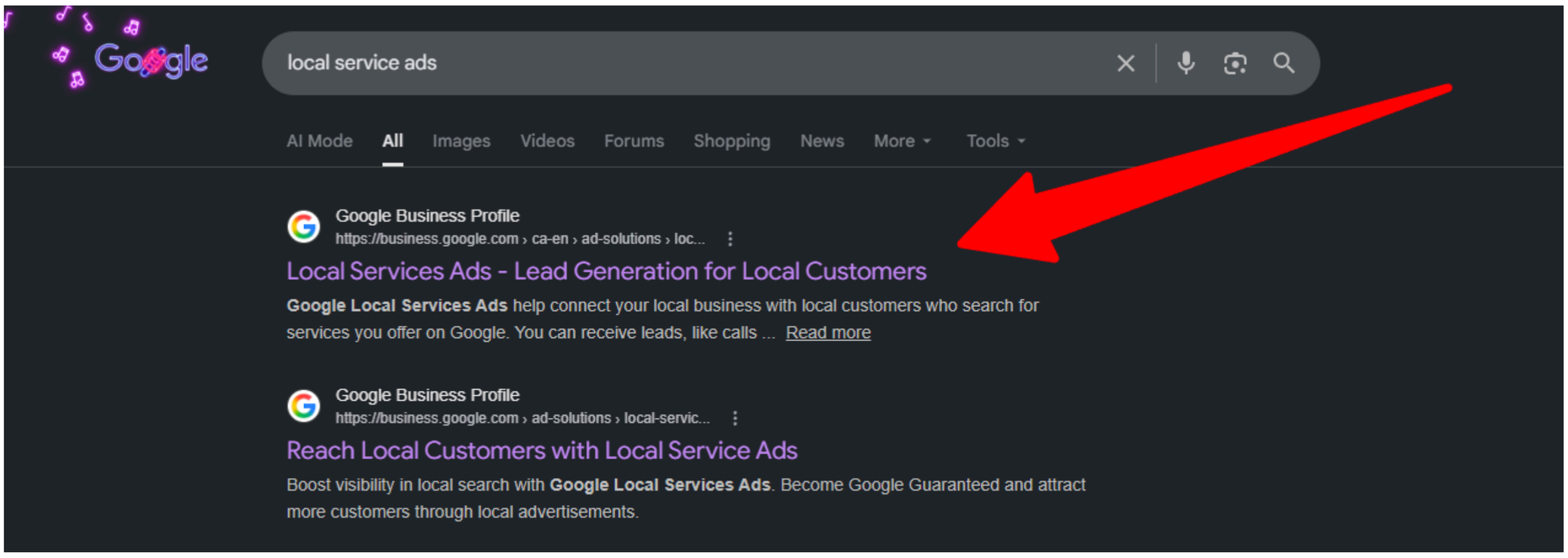
If your business shows up in the list, you can run LSA.

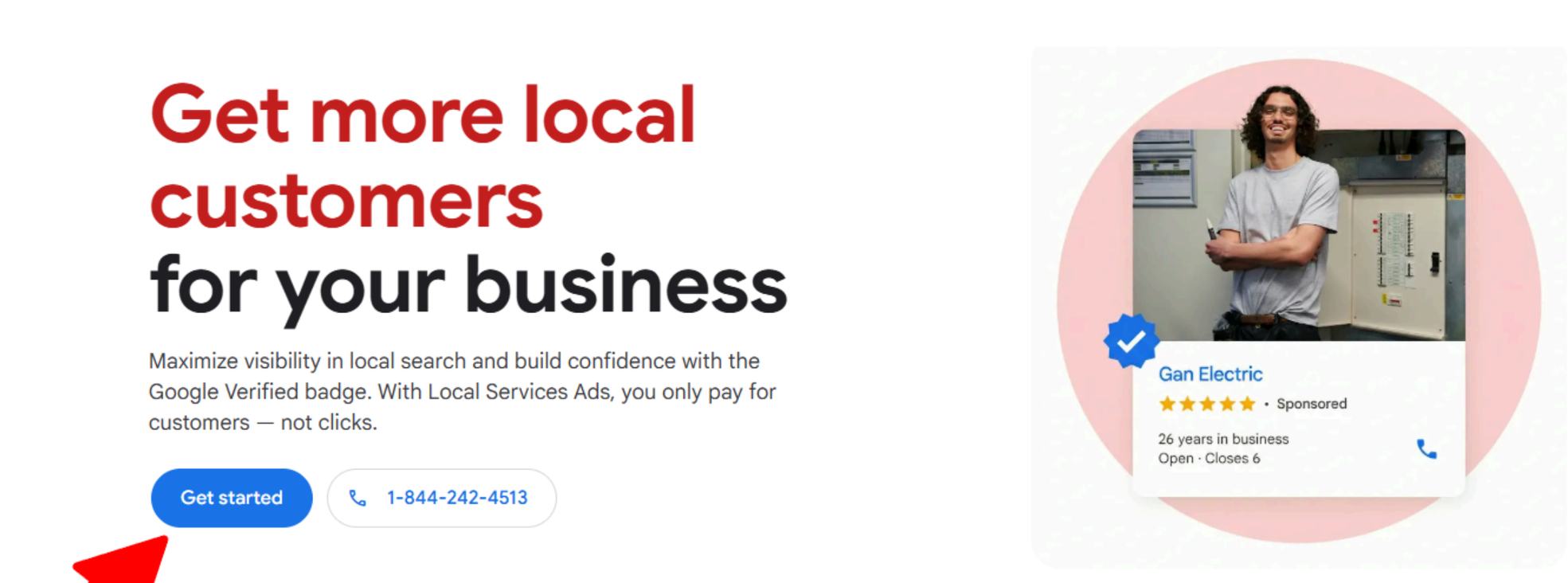
What you need before signup

- Verified Google Business Profile with name, address, phone, hours, and at least 5 customer reviews
- Current business license for your trade and state
- General liability insurance (certificate showing coverage)
- Owner and employee names for Evident background checks
- Credit card or bank account for billing
- High-quality photos of team, trucks, owner, and jobsites

Starting the *Signup*

Type "local service ads" into Google. Click the official Google Local Services page. Click Get Started and follow the prompts.

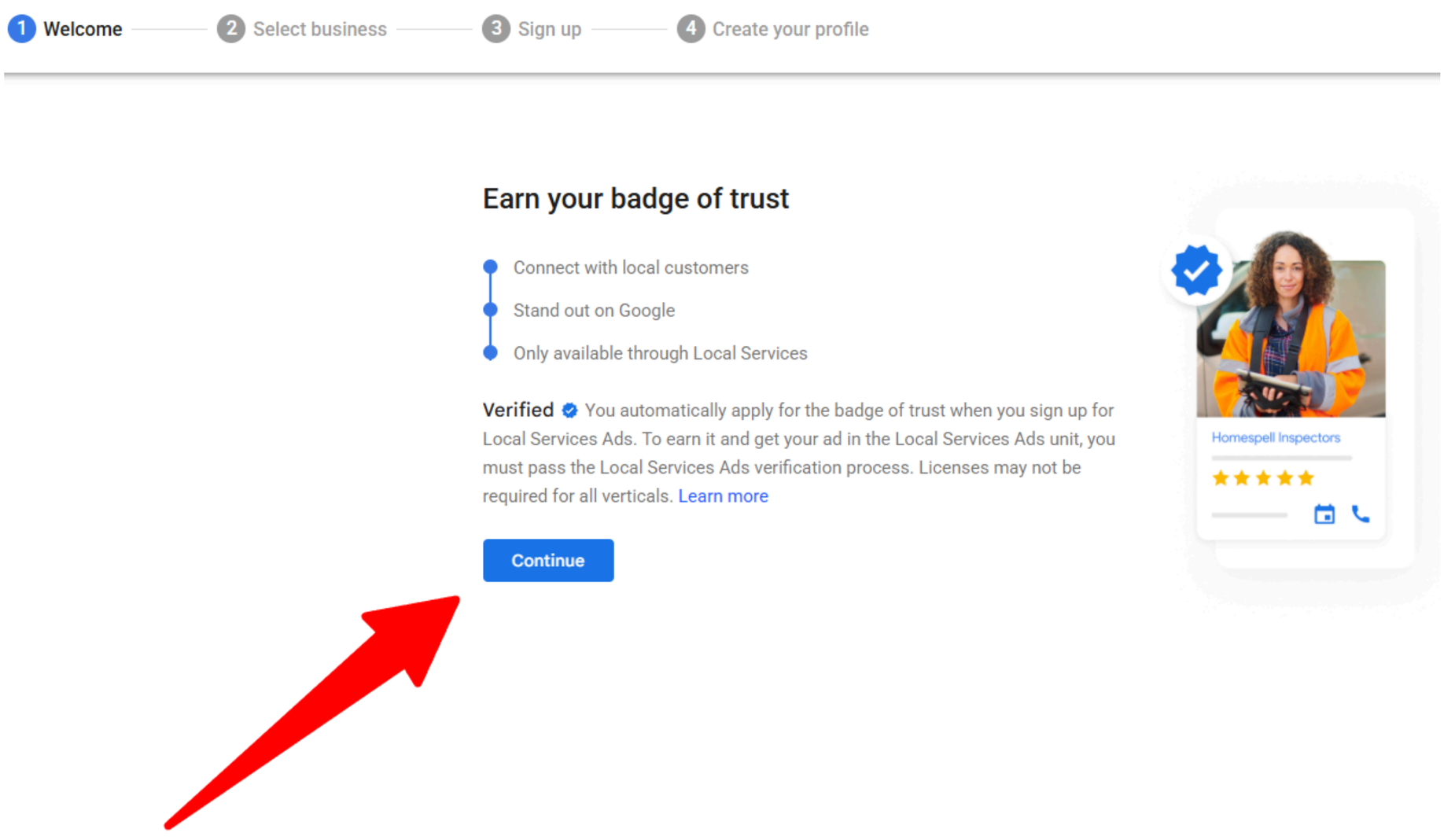




Google will ask if you are a new advertiser or an existing one. If you already run Google Search Ads, link the existing account. If not, create a new one. Either path leads to the same setup checklist.

Starting the *Signup*

After clicking Get Started on the Local Services Ads page, the first screen you land on is the welcome screen. Google introduces you to the badge of trust and the four-step setup process at the top: Welcome → Select business → Sign up → Create your profile.



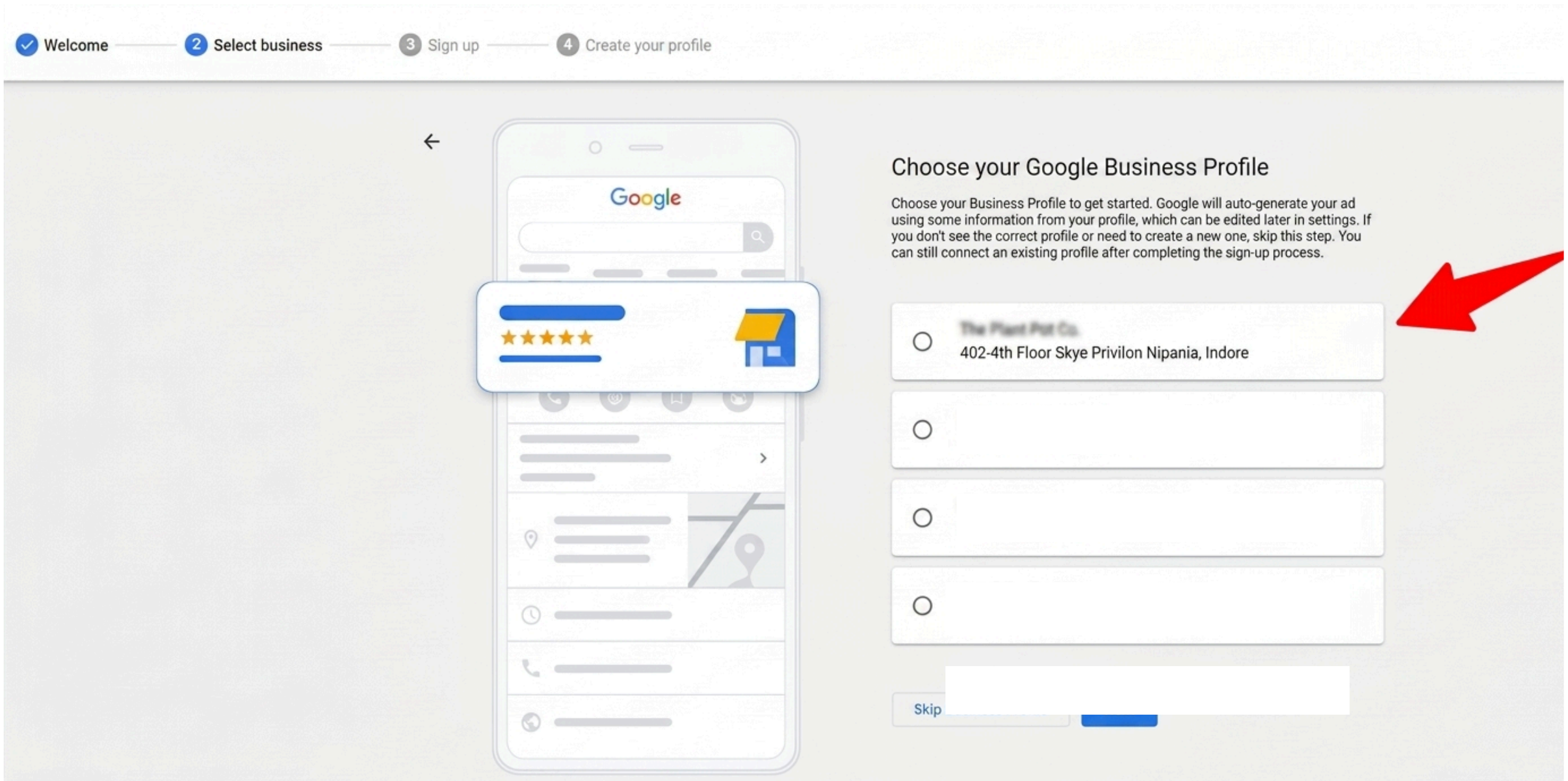
What "Verified" actually means

You automatically apply for the badge the moment you sign up. To actually earn it and start running ads, you must pass Google's verification process, license check, insurance check, and background check via Evident.

Starting the *Signup*

Select Your Google Business Profile

Google asks you to connect your existing Google Business Profile (GBP) to your LSA account. Every profile attached to your Google login shows up as a selectable option.



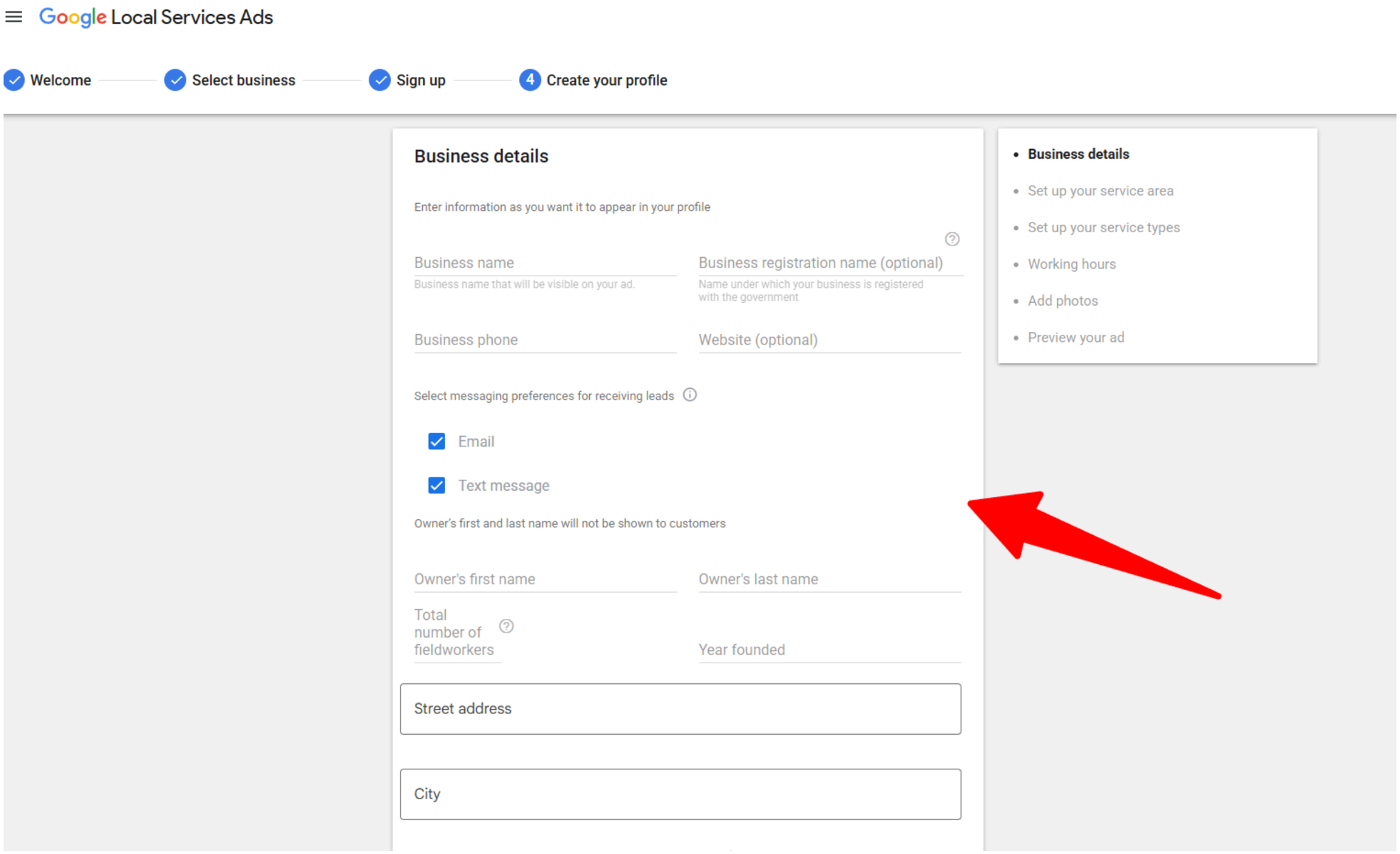
Why this step matters

Your LSA listing pulls business details, reviews, photos, hours, and address directly from your GBP. Picking the right one saves you from re-entering everything later, and connects your GBP reviews to your LSA listing.

Reviews on your GBP are one of the strongest ranking factors in LSA. Picking the right profile links that review history to your ad from day one.

Business *Details*

If you don’t select the Google business Profile you will have to fill this form.



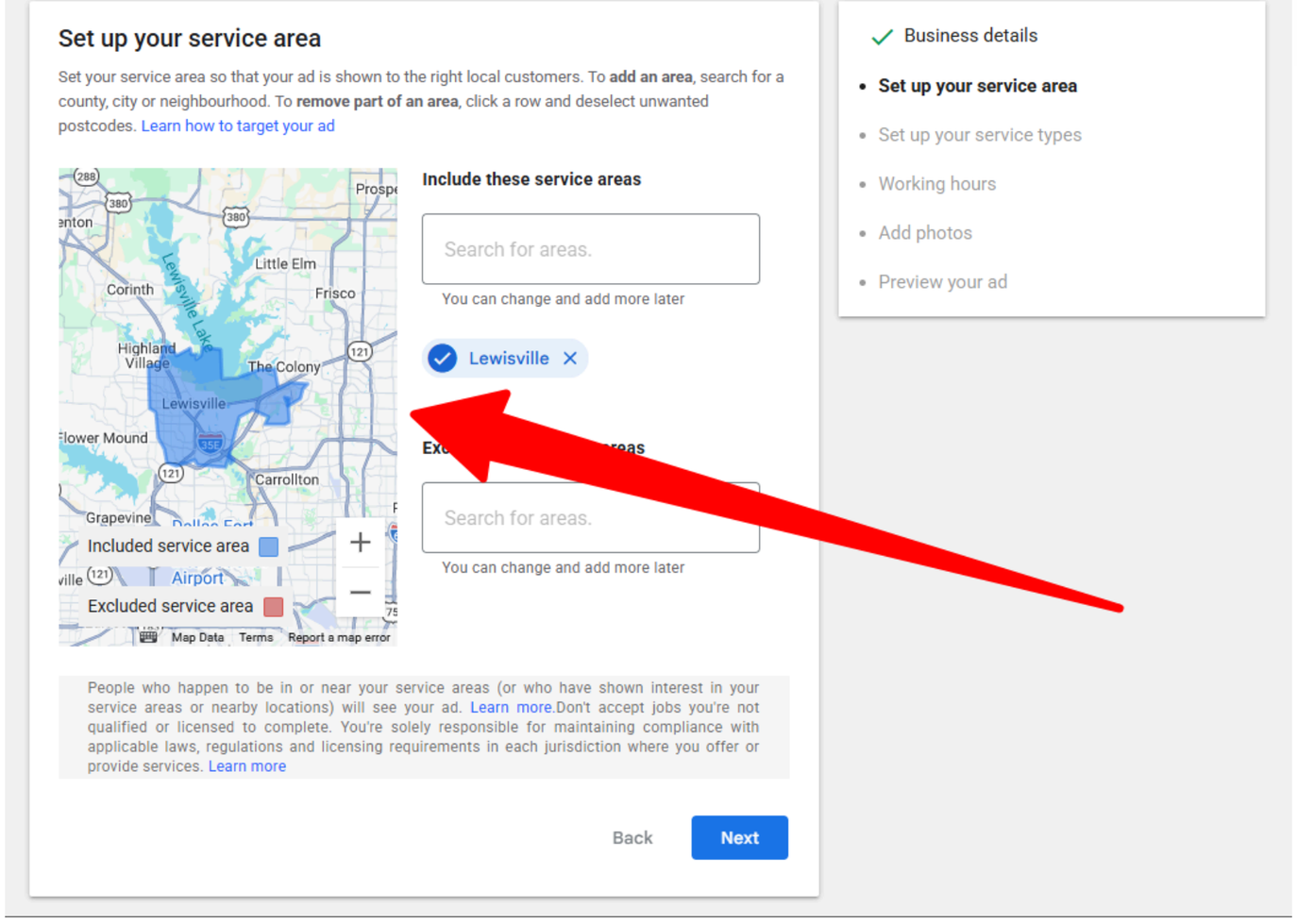
Enter every field exactly as you want it to appear in your live ad. This information feeds your public profile.

If your team cannot respond to text or email within 30 minutes during business hours, turn it off. Slow response time on messages hurts your account ranking the same way missed calls do.

Service Area *Setup*

Select Your Business area

Draw the line on the map. Homeowners inside your area see your ad. Homeowners outside do not.



How service areas work in LSA

Google asks you to define two zones:

- Include: cities, counties, neighborhoods, or zip codes you actively serve
- Exclude: specific zones inside your included area you do not want leads from

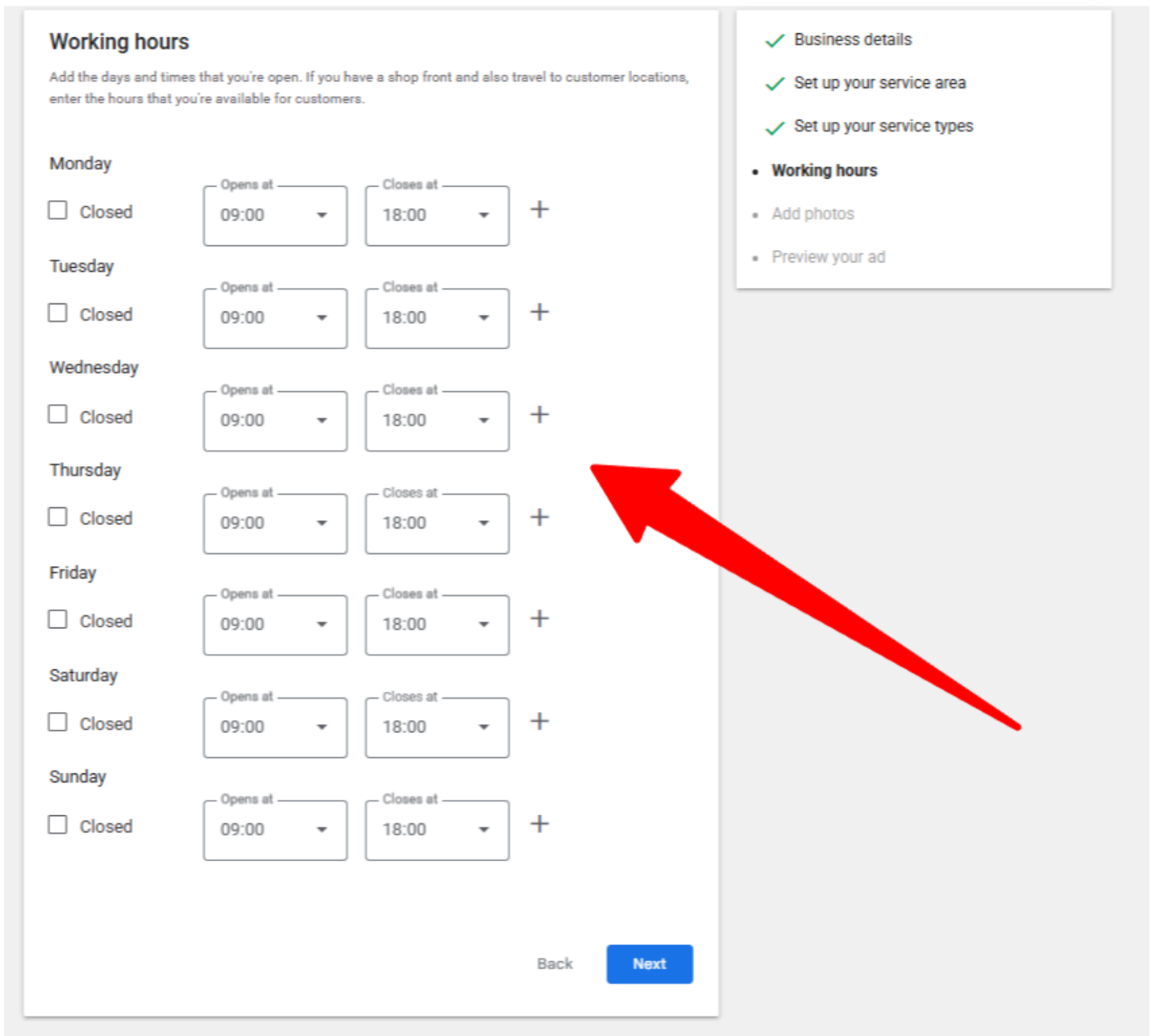
What to do

- Add every city and county you serve to the Include box
- Drop in any zip codes or neighborhoods you want to skip to the Exclude box
- Confirm the blue shaded area matches where your team actually drives
- Click Next

Working *Hours*

Set Your Working Hours

Working hours control when your LSA listing is eligible to show. Outside these hours, your ad is invisible. Inside them, Google expects you to pick up the phone.



How working hours actually work in LSA

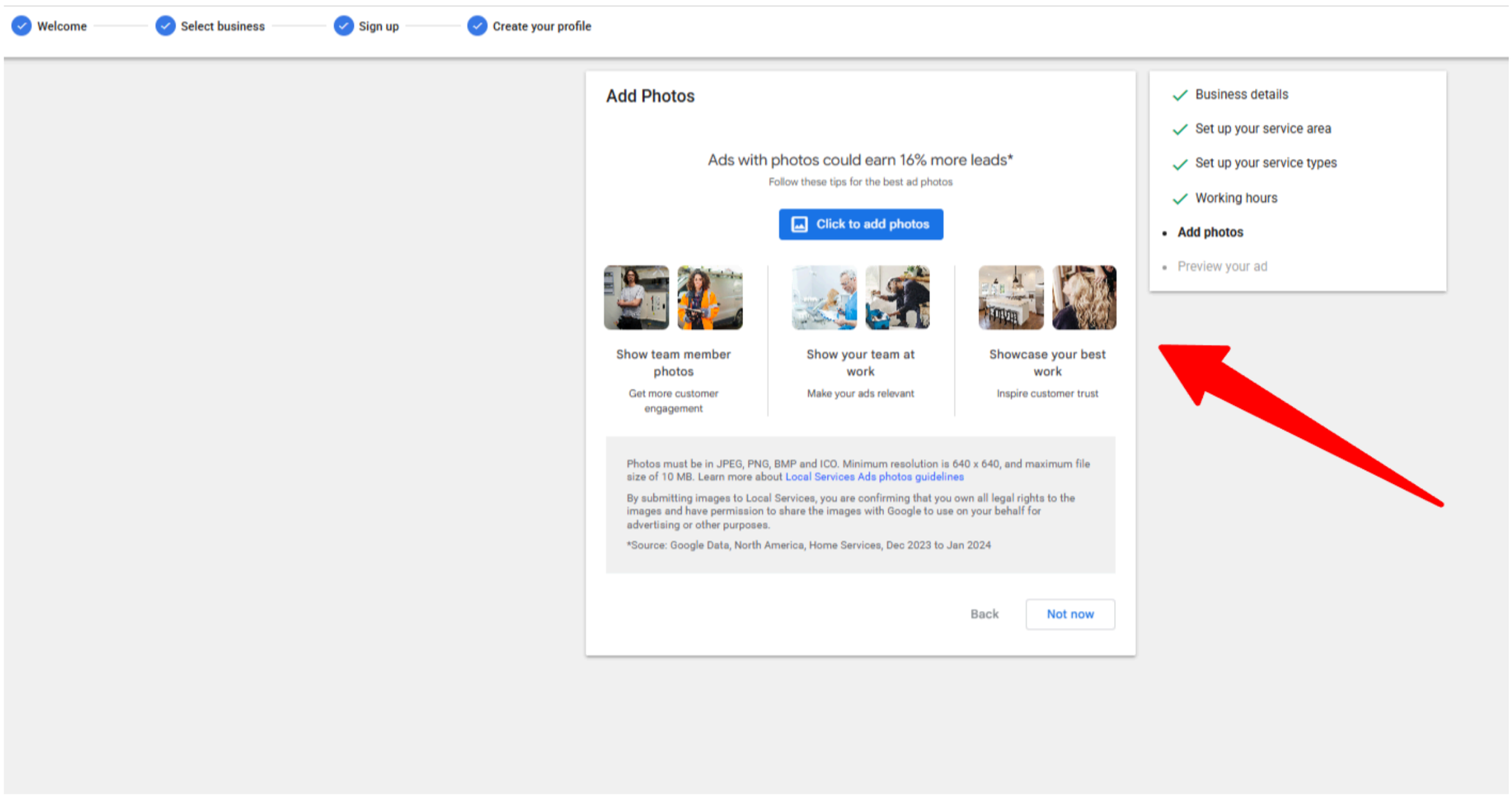
Your listing only appears in search results during the hours you set here. A homeowner searching at 2 AM will not see your ad if you are closed.

But here is the catch - working hours are also your single biggest responsiveness commitment to Google. Every hour you say you are open, Google expects you to answer the phone. Miss too many calls during your set hours, and your account ranking drops fast within weeks.

Photos

Add Photos

Google's own data on this screen says it plainly: ads with photos earn 16% more leads. Photos are not optional. They are one of the strongest competitive levers in your entire LSA profile.



The three photo categories Google wants:

The screen shows you three example types, and they are listed in order of impact:

1. Show team member photos
2. Show your team at work
3. Showcase your best work

Why "faces" is the rule

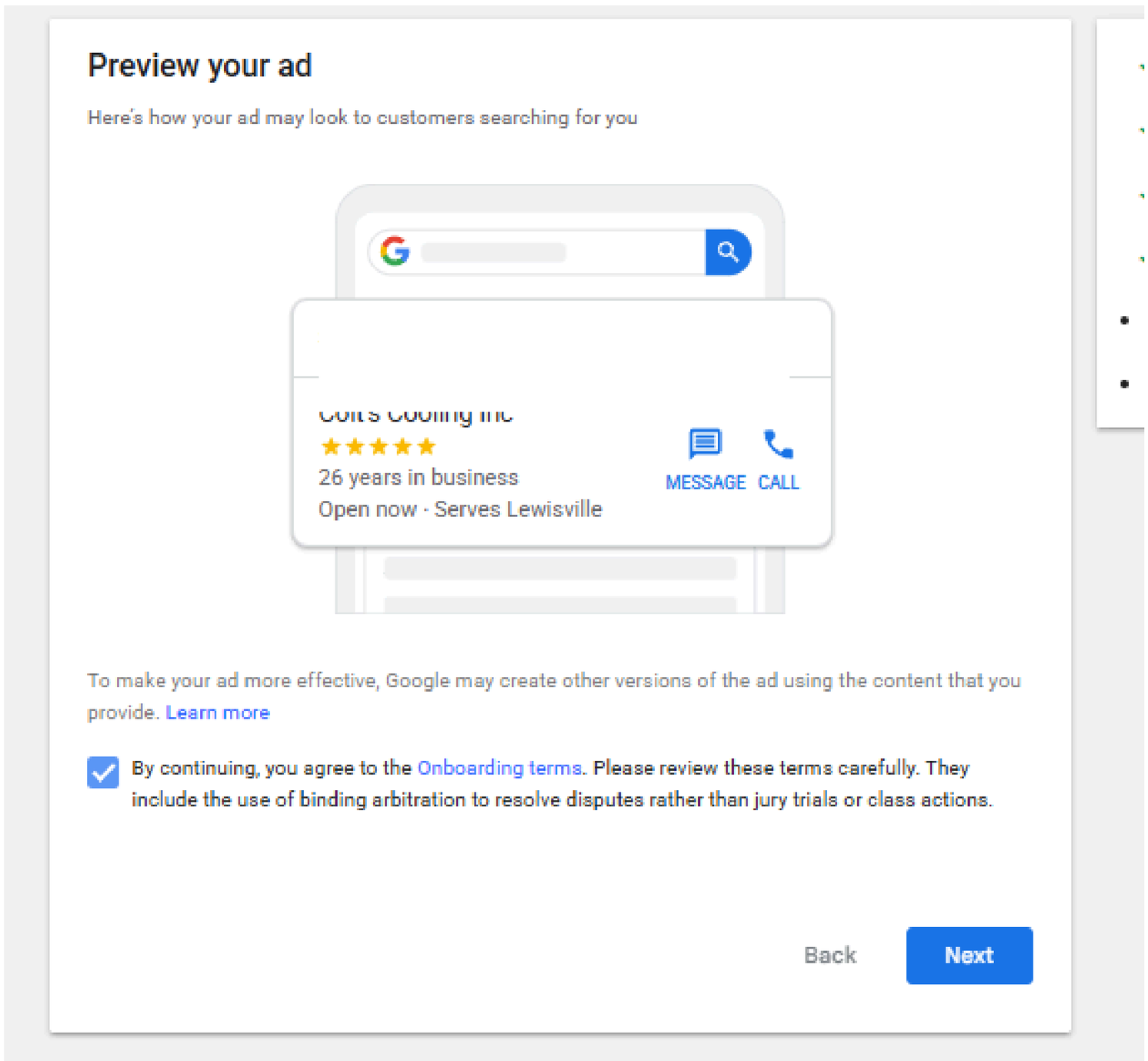
Two things happen when a homeowner sees a photo of your actual team:

- They trust you faster (it is a real business, not a faceless ad)
- They click and call more often

Ad *Preview*

Preview your ad

This is what homeowners will see when your ad goes live. The preview shows the exact card format Google uses on mobile and desktop search results.



What customers see on your live ad

The preview card displays five elements, in this exact order:

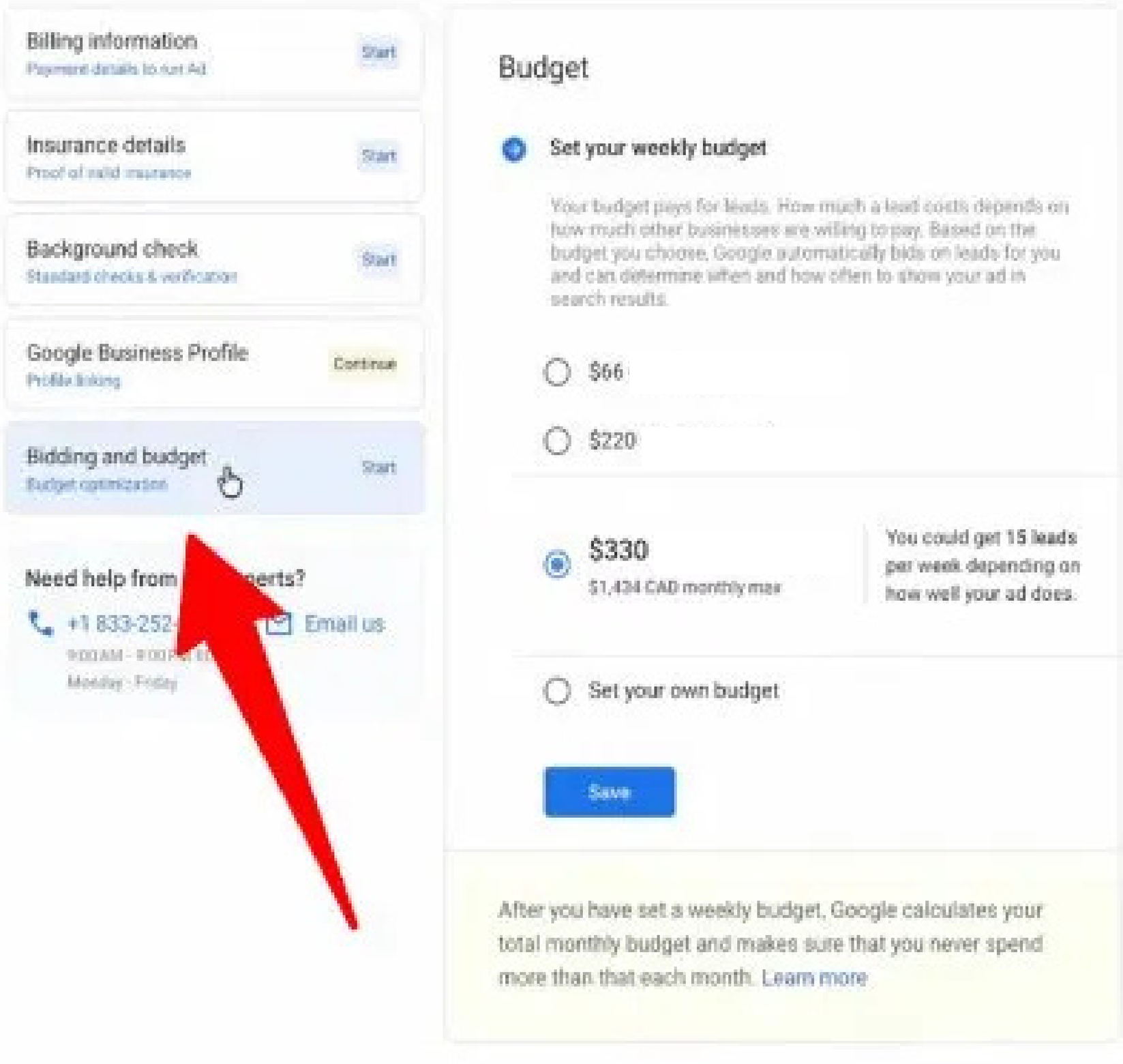
1. Sponsored label
2. Business name
3. Star rating
4. Years in business

Open now · Serves [city]

Bidding & Budget

Bidding and Budget

This is where you tell Google how much you are willing to spend per week. Get this right and Google sends you a steady flow of leads. Get it wrong and your account either burns through money or never spends anything at all.



LSA *Budgeting*

How LSA budgeting works

LSA budgets are set weekly, not daily. You tell Google a weekly spend and it distributes leads across the week.

The detail most operators miss: the weekly budget is not a hard cap. Some weeks you spend more, some less. The actual ceiling is your monthly budget, calculated as your weekly budget × roughly 4.35.

What Google recommends vs what we recommend

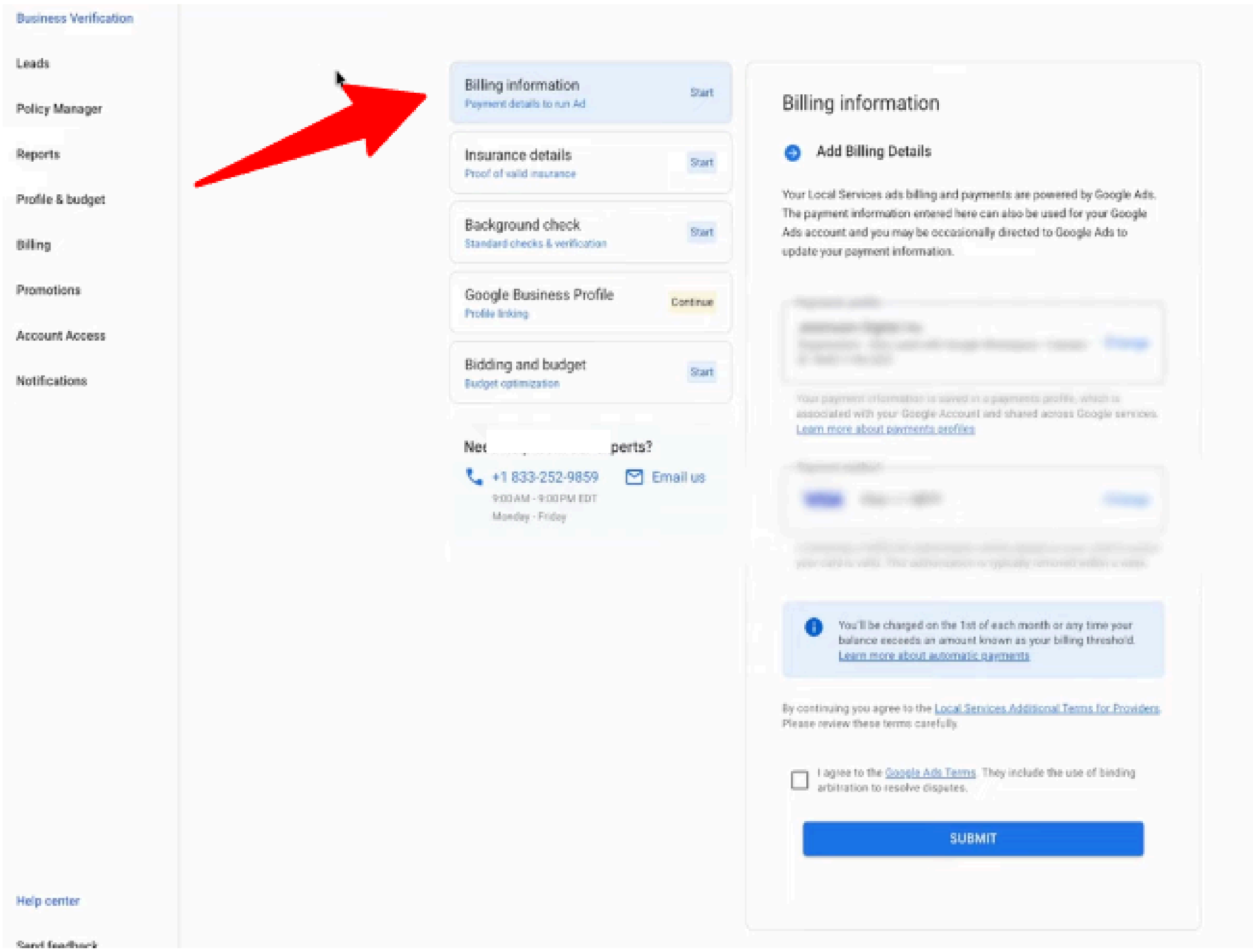
Google's signup flow gives three preset budget options based on what other home service businesses in your area pay. The recommended one is usually undersized, calibrated to get new accounts started, not to compete.

Accounts that start at Google's recommended weekly budget often stall out at 3 to 5 leads per week because the signal is too small for the algorithm to take the account seriously.

Billing *Information*

Billing Information

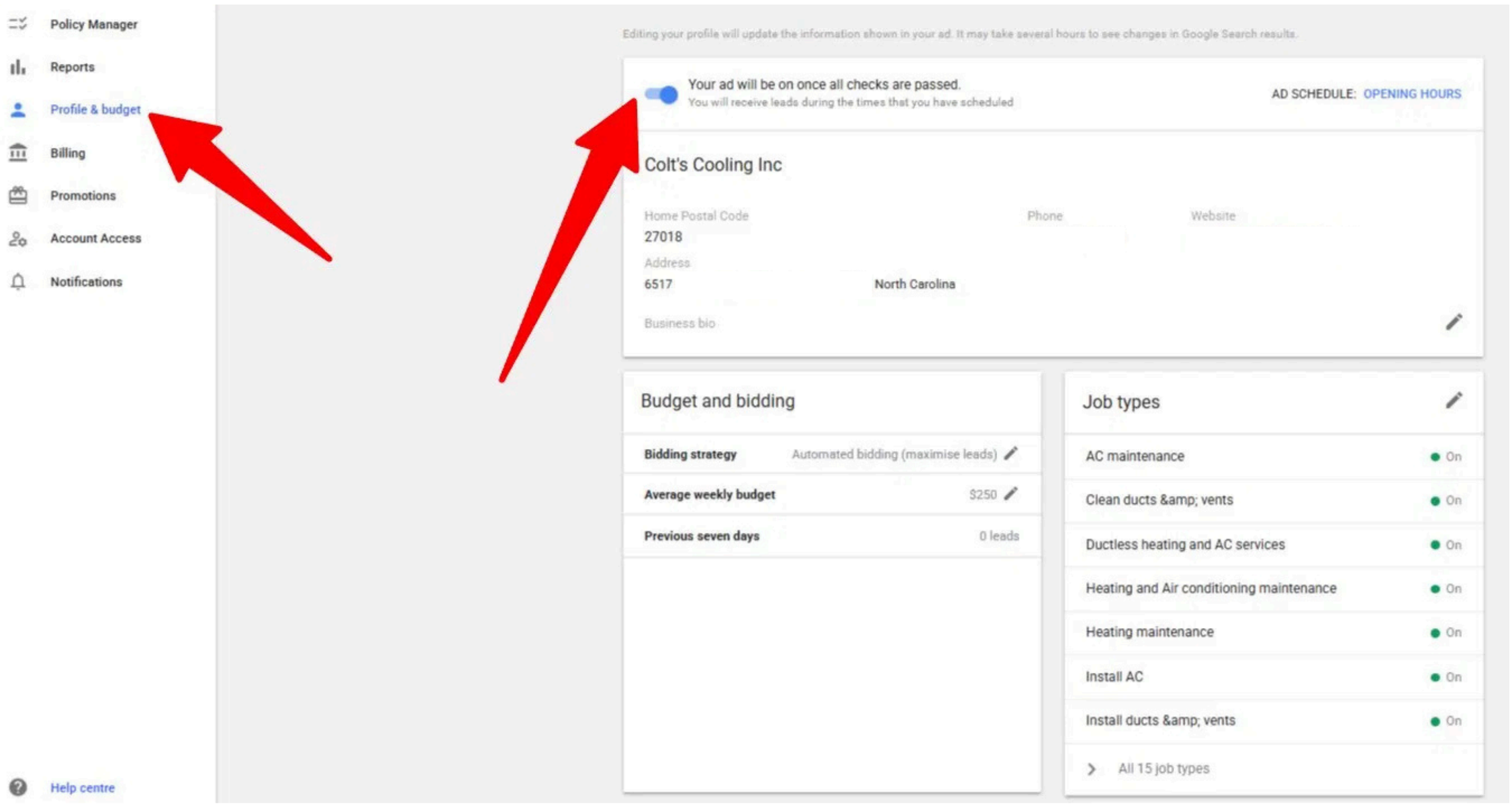
This is where you connect your payment method so Google can charge you for the leads you receive. No payment method on file means no leads delivered. Period.



Profile & Budget

The Profile & Budget Dashboard

This is your account home base. Once verification clears, every adjustment you make to your live ad services, photos, bidding, budget, hours, happens from this screen.



The ad on/off toggle

In the top section, you will see a blue toggle and the text "Your ad will be on once all checks are passed."
This is the master switch for your account. Three states:

- Toggle ON, checks pending - ad will auto-activate the moment Google approves verification
- Toggle ON, checks passed - ad is live and serving leads
- Toggle OFF - ad is paused, no leads come in regardless of verification status

The Ranking Factors

That Actually Move the Needle

Your ad is live. Now Google decides how often to show it and to which homeowners. The decision is not random. Eight factors control your ranking in LSA, and most operators only optimize two of them.



The Ranking Factors

That Actually Move the Needle

Another important factor we've observed is budget strength, setting your weekly budget as high as reasonably possible (for example, $5,000/week or higher) can signal to Google that your business is capable of handling more volume and willing to spend aggressively.

Even if you do not actually receive that many leads, higher budgets may positively influence visibility and competitiveness within the ad auction.

However, it's important to note that all of these insights are based on our personal observations, campaign data, and industry experience, these ranking factors are not officially confirmed or stated by Google.

Rating Leads &
The Cleanup Rule

We mentioned lead rating on page 21 as the most underused ranking lever in LSA. This page is how to actually use it.

Why rating every lead matters

Google's algorithm watches what you do with the leads it sends you. Every rated lead is a training signal:

- 5 stars: Google learns to send more leads like this one
- 1 star: Google learns to filter leads like this one out
- Never rated: Google assumes you do not care and the algorithm goes flat

Profiles that rate 90%+ of their leads consistently outrank profiles that rate 10%. We have seen this pattern in account after account.

Marking jobs as booked.

When you set an appointment from a lead, click Mark as booked in the lead detail view. This signals to Google that the lead converted to a real job, and the algorithm rewards your account with more high-intent leads.

Speed-to-Lead +

What Leads Don't Count

The cleanup rule - never let leads pile up

The single fastest way to slow your account: leave 50+ leads sitting unrated and untagged for months. Google reads it as "this business does not work their leads." Lead flow drops within 2–4 weeks.

Why speed-to-lead decides who wins

The single biggest predictor of whether an LSA lead converts to a booked job: how fast you call back.

- Under 5 minutes → 50%+ conversion rate
- 5–30 minutes → 25–35% conversion
- 30 minutes–2 hours → 10–20% conversion
- 2+ hours → under 10%

Homeowners who fill out an LSA request are calling 2–3 other companies in the same 10-minute window. Whoever picks up first usually wins the job - especially on emergency calls.

Speed-to-Lead +

What Leads Don't Count

What leads do NOT count

You do not pay for every lead that comes through. Google's AI listens to every call and automatically filters out:

- Calls under 30 seconds - too short to be a real inquiry
- Job seekers - anyone asking about employment
- Spam and robocalls - telemarketers, scam attempts
- Out-of-service-area - homeowners outside the zones you set
- Advertisers and vendors - sales calls from suppliers or marketing agencies
- Wrong industry - homeowner clearly looking for a different trade

The 10 Mistakes That Kill

LSA Accounts

These are the 10 patterns that show up in every slowed-down account we audit. Fix any one of them and your lead flow recovers. Fix all 10 and you dominate.

10 MISTAKES THAT KILL LSA ACCOUNTS

Subhead: In order of impact

1 — MISSING CALLS DURING WORKING HOURS
The #1 LSA killer. Answer rate < 80% drops ranking fast.
*The #1 account killer in LSA • **Action:** Fix dispatch coverage first



2 — USING AI RECEPTIONISTS OR LONG IVRs
Multi-step menus flagged as slow response.
Action: Use a real human



3 — NEVER RATING LEADS
Unrated leads pile up and signal inactivity.
Action: Rate every lead within 48 hours



4 — RATING TOO MANY LEADS AS POOR
Gaming refunds gets accounts flagged.
Action: Rate honestly based on quality



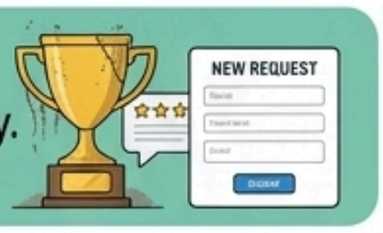
5 — SLOW RESPONSE TIME
Speed-to-lead < 5 minutes is the standard.
• **Action:** Set 60-second answer target



6 — EXPIRED LICENSE OR INSURANCE
Monthly expiration checks. Ads paused < 24 hours.
Action: Set reminder 30 days before



7 — IGNORING REVIEWS
No new reviews in 60+ days signals inactivity.
• **Action:** Build a review request system



8 — SETTING THE WEEKLY BUDGET TOO LOW
Budgets < $250/week starve the algorithm.
Action: Start at $300/week minimum



9 — POOR OR OUTDATED PHOTOS
Stock images, visible phone numbers drag rankings.
Action: Refresh 2–3 photos every 60–90 days



10 — RELYING ONLY ON LSA
LSA slowdown can lead to bankruptcy.
Action: Add Google Search Ads, SEO, and more

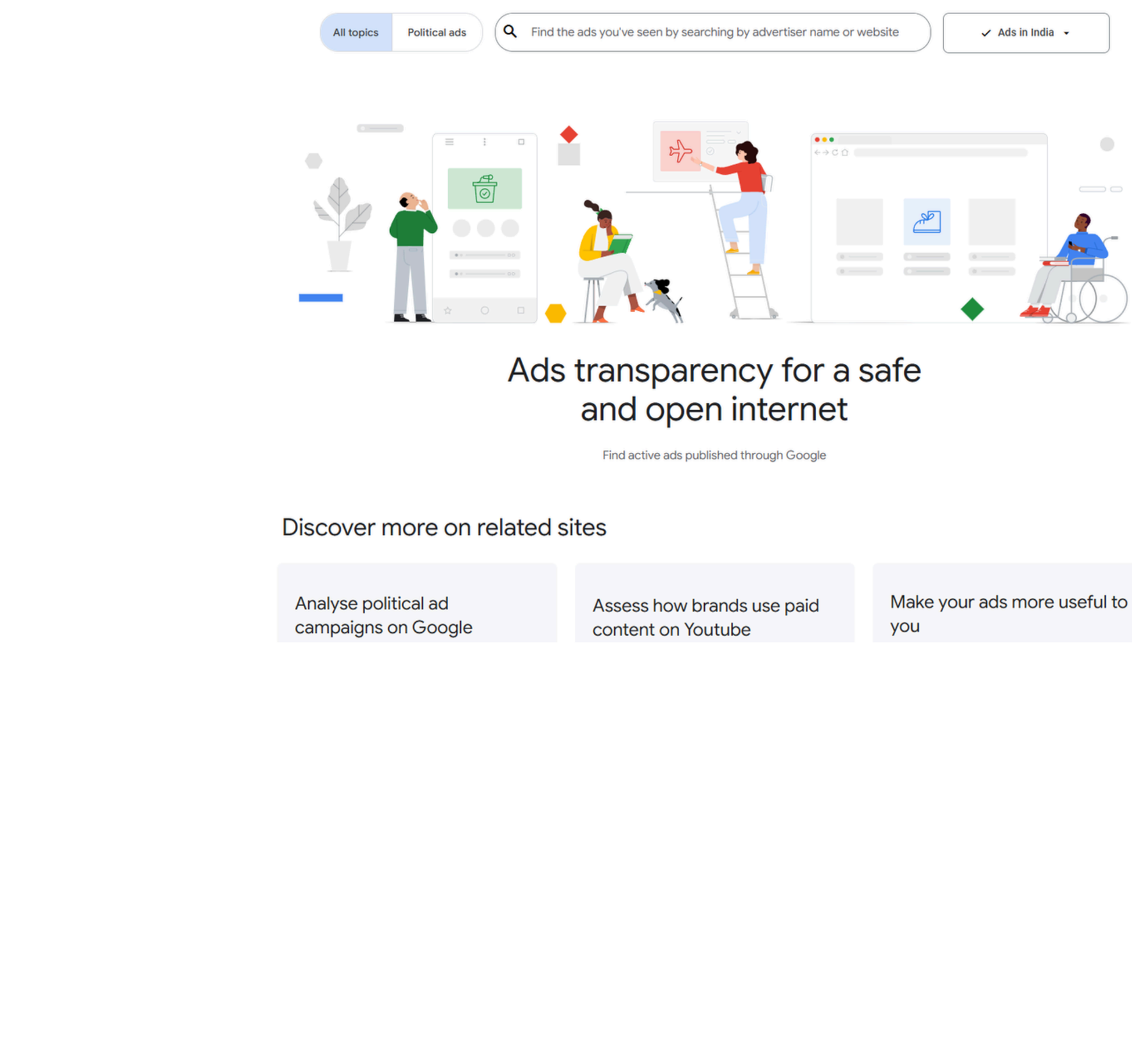


Spying on Your *Competitors*

You do not have to guess what the top-ranked LSA accounts in your city are doing. Google publishes most of it publicly, and three free tools let you reverse-engineer any competitor's profile in 10 minutes.

Tool 1: Google Local Ads Catalog
The official Google Local Services directory. Search any city + service combination and see every active LSA listing in that market.

Tool 2: Google Ads Transparency Center
The Transparency Center shows every active Google Search Ad any advertiser is running, including LSA-eligible businesses also running PPC.



The Bottom *Line*

Local Service Ads are not a hack. They are not a growth shortcut. They are not a magic button that solves a broken business.

What they are is the single highest-leverage paid channel available to home service businesses in 2026, if you treat them as an operating system rather than a marketing channel.

The businesses dominating LSA in every city share the same pattern. They answer the phone within 60 seconds. They rate every lead within 48 hours. They refresh their photos every quarter. They show up in the dashboard every single day. None of this is complicated. All of it is consistent.

The businesses that fail at LSA share a different pattern. They set the account up once, hand it off, and expect Google to do the rest. Six months later they wonder why the phone stopped ringing.

You now know which side of that line you want to be on.

What we hope you take from this guide

The right photos beat the most expensive bid. A 95% answer rate beats a 24/7 schedule with voicemail.

Rating every lead beats every clever bidding strategy. Honest hours beat aggressive hours. Faces beat equipment. Speed beats budget.

The Bottom *Line*

LSA rewards the operators who show up. Not the ones with the biggest spend, not the ones with the slickest agency, not the ones who have been around the longest. The ones who show up every day, do the small things right, and treat their lead flow like the lifeline it is.

If you are running a home service business in 2026 and you are not in the top three of your local LSA results, that is a fixable problem. Most of the time, the fix is not money. The fix is attention.

One last thing

If you read this guide and do nothing, your account will not improve. If you read this guide and implement three things this week, you will see changes within 30 days. If you implement everything, you will be in the top three of your local results within 90 days.

Want us to handle the daily operational heavy lifting for you? If you don't have the time to audit leads, update photos, and manage the LSA dashboard every single day, let’s talk. Book a call today, and we'll show you exactly how to optimize your setup for maximum call volume.
https://calendly.com/yashsinghblogger