What Customers Do Before They Call You

The sixty seconds that decide whether your phone rings or somebody else's does

The part nobody sees

A woman standing in her kitchen at 7:40 on a Tuesday evening notices water where water should not be.

She does not ask a friend. She does not open a phone book. She picks up her phone, types four words, and starts comparing.

What happens over the next sixty seconds decides who gets a job worth several hundred dollars, and none of it involves talking to anybody. She will look at three or four businesses, form an opinion about each, and call exactly one.

The other three never learn they were in the running.

This guide walks through those sixty seconds, one moment at a time, so you can see what she sees.

Second one: the list

She types, and gets a short list. Three businesses at the top with maps and stars, then everything else below.

Most people never scroll past those first few. Not out of laziness - they have four names, that is plenty, and the water is still spreading.

Being on that list is not about being the best plumber in town. It is about whether your listing tells the map what you do and where you do it. Businesses that are missing usually have a listing that is incomplete, categorized wrong, or has no service area set.

Worth knowing: you may appear when someone searches your name and still be invisible when they search what you do. Those are different searches, and only one of them brings new customers.

Second five: the glance

Now she compares. She is not reading. She is scanning four things:

The stars. Anything under four is out.

The number in brackets. This one decides more than the stars do. Two hundred reviews at 4.6 beats eleven reviews at 5.0, every time, because eleven could be anybody.

The photos. Real work, real trucks, real people. Stock photos read as fake even when nobody consciously notices.

Whether it looks current. A listing with 2019 hours and no recent reviews suggests a business that may not exist anymore.

She has now eliminated one or two names, in about five seconds, without knowing anything about the quality of anybody's work.

Second fifteen: the tap

She taps a business. Maybe the listing, maybe the website.

If it is the website, this is where most local businesses lose her.

She is on cell data, not wifi. Standing in a kitchen with water on the floor. If the page takes six seconds, she is already back on the list.

She is on a phone, so everything is small. If she has to pinch to read or scroll sideways to see the whole page, she leaves. Not out of impatience - it just feels like the wrong place.

She wants one thing: the phone number. If it is not near the top, and if tapping it does not dial, you have made her work for the right to give you money.

The most common expensive mistake in local business is a website built to look good on the owner's laptop, seen almost exclusively on customers' phones.

Second thirty: the check

If the site loaded and she is still there, she is now confirming she has the right kind of business.

She is looking for three things, and she will not hunt for them:

Do you do this specific thing? "Plumbing services" is vaguer than she needs. She has a burst pipe.

Do you come here? Not your address. Her neighborhood, named.

Are you real? A photo of an actual person, a truck with a name on it, a year you started. Something a fake business would not bother with.

Thirty seconds in, she has narrowed four names to one or two.

Second forty-five: the call

She calls.

And here is where the whole thing turns, because everything up to now has been about being chosen, and this is about being available.

If somebody answers, she stops looking. She has a person, a plan, and one less problem. She will probably not call anybody else even if she said she would compare prices.

If it rings out, she does not wait. She calls the next name. Right then, while the phone is still in her hand.

If it goes to voicemail, she almost certainly does not leave one. Leaving a voicemail means waiting, and she has water on the floor.

This is the moment most local businesses lose the most money, and the only moment they never find out about. A missed call leaves no trace. There is no notification saying somebody chose your competitor eleven seconds after your phone stopped ringing.

The one thing that changes this: an automatic text the moment a call is missed. *"Sorry we missed you - what do you need?"* It arrives while she is still deciding, and it puts you back in a race you had already lost.

The next morning

Say she reached somebody and got a quote. Now a different clock starts.

She has a number. She is thinking about it. Maybe she is waiting on a second quote, maybe her partner wants to look at it, maybe she just got busy.

Most businesses never follow up. They send the quote and wait, and they call the ones that go silent "not interested."

Most of them were interested. They got distracted, and the business that checked in a few days later got the work.

Every local business is sitting on a folder of quotes that went quiet. It is the cheapest source of new revenue any of them will ever have, and almost nobody touches it.

What the sixty seconds add up to

Five moments, five ways to lose:

She never sees you. Listing incomplete or categorized wrong.

She sees you and skips you. Thin reviews next to a competitor with hundreds.

She taps and leaves. Site slow, or awkward on a phone.

She calls and nobody answers. No system catching what the phone misses.

She goes quiet and stays quiet. No follow-up on the quote.

Not one of these has anything to do with how good you are at your work. That is the frustrating part, and also the useful part: every single one is fixable, and none of them require you to be better at your trade than you already are.

What to do about it

Today, free: search what you do plus your town on your phone. See where you land and who is next to you. Then open your own site on cell data and time how long it takes.

This week: fix your map listing. Correct hours, real photos of real work, right category, service area set. It is free, it takes an afternoon, and it is what most people see first.

This month: ask every satisfied customer for a review, the same way, every time. Consistency beats effort.

When you can: make sure a missed call gets a text back automatically. In most trades, one recovered job pays for it many times over.

Or let somebody else do it

Everything above is doable on your own. It is also five separate jobs, none of which are the job you actually trained for.

We will look at all of it and tell you exactly where you stand. Free, no obligation, and yours to keep whether you hire us or not.

What you will get: how you show up compared to the businesses next to you, how your site behaves on a real phone on a real connection, where your reviews put you in the comparison, and what happens to a call after hours.

If you are already in good shape, we will say so. Telling somebody they do not need us has never once cost us anything worth keeping.

Request your free audit at grandslamwinner.com

Grand Slam Winner - get found, get chosen, get paid.