

Guerrilla tactics

The things that move the needle that nobody tells you. All legal, all free or near free, all things I do for clients.

Every tactic here works on its own. Do them yourself and they'll pay for the time. They're organised by the six stages a stranger goes through on the way to being a repeat customer, the same six the No Luck system runs automatically.

Stage 1: Visibility

1. Set your primary Google category to your exact trade.

Not "builder", not "contractor". "Roofing Contractor", "Plumber", "Electrician". It's the single biggest local ranking factor there is (Whitespark 2026), and one wrong category change has taken a business from 1st to 31st on the map (Sterling Sky). Five minutes, free.

2. Tick every predefined service Google suggests that you actually do.

In your Google Business Profile dashboard, under services. Google treats the ticked list as proof of what you cover. Thirty minutes, free.

3. Make your hours honest and wide, including bank holidays.

"Open at time of search" is now the 5th biggest ranking factor. If your profile says closed, Google hides you from the map at that moment. If you genuinely answer the phone at 7am and 8pm, say so.

4. Three real photos of recent jobs, the 1st of every month.

A profile with no new photos reads to Google as a business that's stopped trading. Set a calendar reminder. Phone photos of real work, never stock, never AI.

5. The page-one land grab for your own name.

When someone's given your number, they type your business name into Google before they ring. Make page one all you: a LinkedIn company page (set it up once, never touch it again, it ranks because Google trusts LinkedIn), a free Trustpilot profile, a Facebook page, a free Yell listing, and your Companies House record if you're limited. None of these are for leads. They're so the person checking you out finds you everywhere, and doesn't find a directory page selling your competitors next to your name. About two hours, once, free.

6. Get on Bing and Apple Maps in half an hour.

Bing Places has a one-click import from your Google profile. ChatGPT's local recommendations are pulled largely from Bing, so if you're not there, you don't exist to it. Apple Business Connect covers the maps on every iPhone. Both free.

7. Spell your name, address and phone identically everywhere.

"St" versus "Street" counts. 74% of businesses with mismatched details get left out of Google's AI answers (Semrush). One evening with a checklist.

8. Ask and answer your own questions on your Google profile.

From a personal account, ask the three things customers always ask (do you charge call-out, are you insured, how far do you travel). Answer as the owner. It doesn't move rankings; it converts the person deciding whether to ring.

9. Reply to every review, especially the bad one.

Covered in full in Google Maps, on the same page you got this from.

10. For whoever runs your website: structured data.

Ask them for LocalBusiness schema with your exact type (Plumber, Electrician, RoofingContractor), areaServed listing every town you cover, and hasCredential with your Gas Safe, NICEIC or FMB numbers. It's how the AI tools read facts about you instead of guessing.

Stage 2: Response

11. Missed call, text back within a minute.

"Hi, sorry I missed your call, I'm on site. What's the job? A quick description or a photo helps." 85% of people who hit voicemail hang up and ring the next name on the list. This one text is the difference.

12. Answer web enquiries inside five minutes.

An enquiry answered in five minutes is 21 times more likely to become a job than one answered at thirty. They're still on their phone, still on the problem, and haven't rung anyone else yet.

13. Rewrite your voicemail greeting.

"Text me the job and a photo and I'll come back to you within the hour." It turns the dead end into a message you can act on from site.

Stage 3: Quote

14. Itemised scope, one total.

List every task you'll do. Give one price. Line-by-line prices invite them to price-check your materials at Screwfix and treat your labour as a commodity.

15. Say what's excluded.

"Excludes plastering, waste removal, decoration." One line under the scope. It kills the end-of-job argument before it exists.

16. Never send a quote as a bare text.

"£2,500 for the bathroom" in a text reads as risk, and risk gets haggled. PDF or a quote link, with your insurance certificate, three photos of similar jobs, and three lines about you inside it. The £400-dearer quote with proof in it beats the cheap text more often than not.

17. Quote small jobs from the van.

Before you drive off, while their interest is at its peak. Speed reads as competence.

18. Never give a day rate.

"I price the finished job, so you know exactly what you'll pay." A day rate gets compared to their salary; a job price gets compared to the job.

19. Kill the ballpark, keep the filter.

Any rough number you say becomes THE price in their head. Instead: "I can't quote without seeing it, but jobs like this usually land between £X and £Y. Is that about what you expected?" Filters the dreamers without anchoring you.

20. Supply the materials, say the markup out loud.

"I add 15% on materials. That covers sourcing the right parts, and I guarantee everything I supply for a year." Customer-supplied cheap parts fail, and their failure becomes your reputation.

Stage 4: Follow-up

21. The four-touch chase, ending with the break-up.

Most quotes don't die on price. They die because the customer got busy and you didn't want to look desperate. Day 2: "Just checking the quote for the [job] came through, and whether you had any questions on what's included." Day 5: send the trust piece (insurance, two photos of similar jobs). Day 9: "Diary's filling for the month, wanted to check where you'd got to." Day 14, the break-up: "I haven't heard back on the [job], so I'll assume you've gone another way or paused it and I'll close it my end. If it comes back round, just shout." The break-up reopens dead quotes because nobody likes losing an option, and the ones who were never buying finally tell you, which cleans your list.

Stage 5: Reviews

22. Ask within the hour, personally, one tap.

Text, not email (texts get read in minutes, emails don't). Their name, the job, the person who did it, and a link that opens the review box directly: "Thanks for having me in for the [job], [Name]. If you've got 30 seconds, a Google review honestly makes a difference to a local business: [link]." Generic asks convert 5 to 10%. Personal ones convert 25 to 40%.

23. One nudge three days later, then stop.

More than one chase for a review costs goodwill that's worth more than the review.

24. Drip your backlog, never dump it.

Got years of happy customers and hardly any reviews? Don't message a hundred people in one afternoon. Ten reviews in two days followed by silence looks fake to Google and gets discounted. Ask five to eight past customers a week, every week, until the backlog's done. A steady trickle reads as a live, busy business, and going three weeks with nothing new measurably slips your ranking (Sterling Sky). This is the single most valuable thing on this list for an established trade with a thin profile.

25. Never filter, never pay.

Asking only the happy ones (checking "how did we do?" first and routing the happy ones to Google) is illegal in the UK since April 2025, as is offering anything in exchange for a review. Fines run to 10% of turnover. Ask everyone, plainly, or don't ask.

Stage 6: Referrals and repeat

26. Give referrals a reward and an annual reminder.

"Know anyone who needs [trade]? If they book through your link, there's a £50 M&S voucher in it for you." The reward makes recommending you feel like doing their mate two favours. The part everyone skips is the reminder: one message a year to past customers that the link still works. Referral rewards are fine; keep them completely separate from review requests, which can never carry a reward.

27. Cards through the ten nearest doors on every big job.

"I'm working at number 12 this week. If you want a look at the job or a price on anything similar, knock on or text me." The neighbour has already seen your van for a week; the card lands on warm ground. £50 of printing covers a year.

28. Seasonal reminders on a 90-day runway.

For anything annual (boiler service, gutter clears, decking treatment): a helpful email at 90 days out, a booking text at 30, a last-call at 14. The single most valuable one is the text 11 months after any install. Businesses running this keep up to 90% of customers coming back yearly, at zero acquisition cost.

The things that get profiles suspended or businesses fined

Don't stuff keywords into your business name on Google (competitors report it, Google suspends the profile, your lead flow dies overnight). Don't ask customers to put keywords in reviews (tested: does nothing anyway). Don't filter who gets asked for a review, don't pay for reviews, don't buy reviews (all illegal under the DMCC Act 2024, enforced since April 2025). Don't use stock or AI photos as "your work". Don't blast a hundred review requests in an afternoon. Don't pay agencies to submit you to hundreds of directories (the core handful above is all that counts). And don't let voicemail be your front desk.

Everything in this guide is part of what runs automatically inside the No Luck system, £386 a month, all done for you. falcon-systems.com/no-luck