ReviewWheel

RESEARCH · 2026 EDITION

The State of Home Service Reviews

Reviews decide who gets the call and who shows up first on Google.

97%
read your reviews before they call

68%
won't use a business under 4 stars

45%
now use AI to find a contractor

Every number sourced — BrightLocal, Whitespark, Birdeye, Gartner, ServiceTitan, Angi, LocaliQ, Womply & Harvard Business School. · reviewwheel.com

KEY FINDINGS

Six numbers that decide your next job

97%
read online reviews for local businesses
BRIGHTLOCAL 2026

54.6%
of review requests are now sent by text
BIRDEYE 2026

+24.5%
more home service reviews than the year before
BIRDEYE 2026

68%
only use a business rated 4 stars or higher
BRIGHTLOCAL 2026

74%
only read reviews from the last 90 days
BRIGHTLOCAL 2026

45%
use AI like ChatGPT to find local businesses
BRIGHTLOCAL 2026

01 · WHAT CUSTOMERS DO

Customers read your reviews before they call

Most people check your reviews before they pick up the phone. Good reviews get you the call. Too few, or bad ones, lose it.

97%
read online reviews

68%
only use a business rated 4 stars or higher

47%
want to see at least 20 reviews first

89%
expect you to reply to reviews

Source: BrightLocal, Local Consumer Review Survey 2026.

02 · RANKING ON GOOGLE

Reviews are the #2 thing Google ranks you on

Google decides who shows up on the map. Your Google listing counts the most. Reviews come second — and they are the one factor here that keeps growing.

Google listing **32%** · Reviews **20%** · Website **15%** · Everything else **33%**

> "Google listing" means your free Google Business Profile — how complete and active it is. Reviews are up from 16% in 2023, and fresh reviews beat old ones.

Source: Whitespark, Local Search Ranking Factors (2023 & 2026).

03 · HOW TO ASK

Texting wins

People open almost every text. They open very few emails. So when you ask for a review by text, far more customers see it — and far more leave one. That is why texting passed email in 2025 to become the #1 way to ask.

HOW OFTEN EACH ONE GETS OPENED

54.6% of review requests are now texts — the #1 way to ask, the first time ever (2025).

ReviewWheel takes it one step further. Every review request we send includes a personalized image, not just a link. In our own data, those land a **20–40%** response rate — 3 to 5 times what a standard text gets.

Sources: open rates — Gartner (SMS up to 98% vs email ~20%); channel mix — Birdeye 2026.

04 · YOUR TRADE

Reviews are growing fastest in home services

Reviews in home services grew 24.5% in a single year. Everyone is piling them up, so the bar keeps rising — you need more reviews than before just to keep up. Homeowners already struggle to find a good pro, and reviews are how they choose.

+24.5%
more home service reviews than last year
BIRDEYE 2026

80%
of homeowners start their search online
SERVICETITAN 2025

54%
have a hard time finding a good pro
ANGI 2024

$90–$228

One paid lead in home services costs $90–$228.
Reviews bring you the same customers — for the price of a text. Average cost per lead from paid search, by trade (LocaliQ, 2025).

05 · THE MONEY

Reviews make you money

~2×

More reviews, more money

Businesses with 200+ reviews earn about double the revenue of an average business.

+52%

New reviews beat old ones

Get 9 or more reviews in 90 days and you earn 52% more revenue.

+35%

Replies pay off

Reply to at least 1 in 4 reviews and you earn 35% more revenue.

5–9%

Every star counts

Each extra star in your rating raises revenue 5 to 9%.

Sources: Womply, 2019 (revenue, reply & recency); Luca, Harvard Business School, 2011 (per-star lift).

06 · AI SEARCH

People now ask AI to find a contractor

More people ask ChatGPT and Google's AI, "who's the best HVAC company near me?" The AI reads your reviews to answer. So your reviews now help you show up in AI, too — Google treats AI search and map search the same way.

45%

use AI like ChatGPT to find local businesses — the #3 way, up from 6% last year

BRIGHTLOCAL 2026

68%

of local searches now show an AI answer at the top

WHITESPARK 2025

WHAT TO DO

Four things that work

1. **Get more reviews**
   You need at least 20 to be trusted. At 200+, businesses earn about double.
2. **Keep them coming**
   New reviews count more than old ones — with customers, Google, and AI.
3. **Ask by text**
   It works better than email, so more people reply.
4. **Reply to reviews**
   89% of customers expect it, and it brings in more money.
5. **Or let ReviewWheel do all four**
   Personalized image texts, Google-safe pacing, and AI review replies — handled for you. **Start a 10-day free trial →**

SOURCES

Where these numbers come from

A roundup of the best public research on local reviews, focused on home services. Every number above is sourced, with the year.

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