



The Complete Guide to *Local Service Ads* for Pest Control

How pest control companies are taking the top spot on Google, paying per lead instead of per click, and booking 85% of the calls they pay for.

Knockout Pest Control Marketing

Braden Ormrod, Owner



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A Letter From Braden



Hi, I'm Braden Ormrod. I own Knockout Pest Control Marketing, and Local Service Ads are something I work in every day.

I've spent six years running marketing for local service businesses, and I kept getting stuck on the same question: it's great that we got you clicks, but did you get any work out of it? Clicks and impressions are easy to report, and easy to hide behind. What matters is how many turned into a booked job.

That's why Local Service Ads got my attention. It's the only channel I've worked in where you don't pay unless somebody actually contacts you. No clicks to explain away. Either the phone rang or it didn't.

I built Knockout to work with pest control companies and nobody else, across North America and the UK. Everything in this guide is what we actually do. You can take all of it and run it yourself, and I hope you do. If you'd rather have someone who does this daily handle it with you, that's what we're here for.

Let's get into it.

Who You're Learning From



OWNER

Braden Ormrod

Six years running marketing for local service businesses. Works in Local Service Ads daily.
Measures booked jobs, not clicks.

6

years in local
service
marketing

55+

local service
businesses
managed

1

industry we work
in: pest control

Why only pest control

Because the details are what make this work, and the details are different in every trade. Which job types are worth buying leads for. What a homeowner is actually worried about when they call. What seasonality does to your cost per lead. An agency serving twelve industries learns none of that properly.

Exclusive, high-intent leads for pest control businesses.
That's the whole business.

Why We Recommend This to Every Client

We don't say that about many things. In pest control this is the one channel we put in front of every company we work with.

PAY PER CLICK

100 people click your ad
3 of them call you

You pay for all 100.

PAY PER LEAD

100 people see your listing
3 of them call you

You pay for 3.

The position. If ten companies in your market run Local Service Ads, only two or three show before the "Show more" button. Almost nobody presses it.

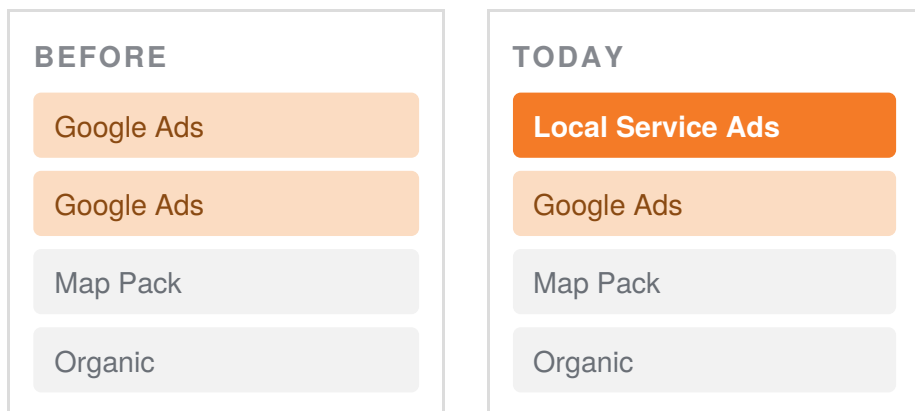
The pricing. You're charged per lead, not per click.

One thing to be honest about up front

This channel rewards well-run companies. If your phone doesn't get answered, Local Service Ads won't fix that. It'll make it more expensive.

You Don't Have a Lead Problem. You Have a Placement Problem.

Almost every pest control company tells us the same thing. "We do good work. We just aren't getting enough calls." That usually isn't a quality problem. Somebody in your town searched for an exterminator this morning, and three other companies came up first.



Local Service Ads sit above paid search, the map listings and organic. The campaign you've been running for years got pushed down.

They also don't look like ads. The format reads more like a map listing: name, star rating, review count, years in business, and a green Google Guaranteed check mark. People trained to scroll past ads don't scroll past these.

What Local Service Ads Actually Are

1

You pay per lead, not per click.

Everywhere else you're charged the moment someone clicks. Here you're charged when someone calls or messages you. Every dollar is attached to a human being who chose to contact you.

2

You carry the Google Guaranteed badge.

Approval means licence and insurance verification plus a background check. Clear it and your listing shows a green check mark. For a homeowner deciding who to let spray around their kids and pets, that badge does real work.

3

You're catching demand, not creating it.

Somebody scrolling Facebook sees your ad between vacation photos and a recipe video. They weren't thinking about pest control. Somebody who types "same day exterminator" absolutely was.

There is no higher intent prospect than someone proactively looking for your service in that exact moment.

What You'll Actually Pay

Some people search for information rather than a provider. But a homeowner who just heard something moving in the wall at 2am is not researching so they can handle it themselves. They want somebody to come out.

Cost per lead, in our clients' accounts

LSA – message		\$20–30
LSA – phone call		\$30–45
LSA – blended		\$30–35
Google Ads typical		\$45
Google Ads worst		\$60–70

A Google Ads campaign that's been running for years, with mature negative keyword lists and tuned bids, gets to around \$30–35 on its very best days. That's where Local Service Ads *start*, with almost no creative work at all.

On a \$2,000 monthly budget, the gap between a \$35 blended cost per lead and a \$45 one is about thirteen extra leads a month. Over a season that's a route's worth of recurring accounts.

The Local Service Ads Playbook

Here's the whole thing boiled down.



Every job booked earns a review, and every review makes step 2 easier.

That's it. Three steps.

Most pest control companies struggling with this platform are doing one of the three, or doing all three weakly. A lot never get past step one, because the application is tedious and easy to abandon halfway through.

Step one is a few weeks of paperwork. Steps two and three are where the money actually is, and they're where almost nobody puts in the work.

Step 1: Get Approved Without Giving Up

The application is a bit of a pain. Not difficult, just tedious. Here's the whole thing in order.

- 1 Google Business Profile.** Your LSA account is tied to it and its address sets your ranking radius. Creating and verifying one takes a week or two on its own.
- 2 Check eligibility.** Search "Google Local Service Ads". Enter your category and area to confirm the program is live for pest control in your market.
- 3 Build your profile.** Service areas, job types, hours, bio. Separate from your Business Profile. Step 2 covers how to configure it.
- 4 Upload documents.** Business licence, pesticide applicator licence and proof of insurance. Have digital copies ready. Chasing paperwork halfway through is where people give up.
- 5 Background check.** Google uses a third party, Pinkerton Consulting. For owner-operated companies it's usually just you.

How long it takes

Depending on how quickly you gather documents, anywhere from one to four weeks. Typically around two to three.



Don't start this in April

Pest season doesn't wait for your paperwork. If you want to be live before ants, termite swarmers and wasps start the phones ringing, apply in December or January. Approval timing is the one part of this you can't fix afterwards.

Once you're approved you're active in the service areas you set, and you start paying per lead. Somebody calls or texts, that's when you're charged.



Setting Your Budget

Three settings control your spend. Get these right and the platform mostly runs itself.

BID STRATEGY

Let Google set bids automatically. It has more auction data than you do, and it beats manual management in our accounts.

MAXIMUM BID

Set a ceiling between \$30 and \$50. Not to squeeze the auction, but so you never wake up to a \$100 lead.

WEEKLY BUDGET

Caps how many leads you get. Spent, and your ad goes offline until it resets. You'll never be charged more.

For a launch we typically recommend the equivalent of \$800 to \$2,000 a month, depending on your route capacity and your market.

What \$2,000 a month looks like

57

leads per month

14

leads per week

2

leads per day

At a \$35 blended cost per lead, on roughly a \$500 weekly budget. Flow won't be even. Some days four, some days none. What's guaranteed is the ceiling.

Treat the budget like a dial

Routes full through August? Turn it down. Coming out of a slow winter? Open it up. No creative rebuild, no campaign restructure.



When Google tells you there's room to grow

Once you're consistently spending your full budget, the dashboard will tell you there's more demand available. It'll say something like "you're hitting your \$2,000, there's room to grow here."

That's a real signal, not a sales pitch. If you have the route capacity and the appetite, that's the moment to open it up. You're leaving booked jobs sitting in the auction.

We have yet to find a lower cost-per-lead channel available to pest control companies. If you have capacity, this is where the next dollar goes.

How Google Paces Your Leads

This one confuses people, so it gets its own page.

Google deliberately spreads your leads over the budget period instead of burning your weekly budget in two days. To do that, it temporarily throttles how often your ad shows.



Leads by day across one week. The grey days aren't a broken campaign. That's pacing.

So you'll log in, see visibility drop, and assume something broke. Usually nothing broke. It's Google making sure your ad isn't generating leads faster than your budget can accommodate.

The thing worth watching is the difference between a pacing throttle and a real ranking problem. A pacing throttle corrects itself. A ranking problem doesn't, and it traces back to one of the five things in the next section.

Step 2: Rank in the Top Three

If ten companies in your market run Local Service Ads and you're not consistently in the visible two or three, you're paying for a platform you're not really on.

WHAT A HOMEOWNER SEES

- Guardian Pest Solutions** ★★★★★
- Citywide Pest Control** ★★★★★
- Shield Exterminating** ★★★★★

▼ Show more

4–12 Everybody else

People don't scroll. They don't hit "Show more." They find something at the top and book it.

There are five things Google is watching. We put them into a framework, partly because it's easier to remember and partly because the name was sitting right there.

The RINGS Framework

Reviews, consistently

ImmEDIATE answers, every call

Never advertise hours you can't cover

Ground you actually cover

Show yourself in your profile

Get all five right and you'll hold the top three in your market. Get four right and one badly wrong, and you'll wonder why the platform "stopped working."

The one that sinks most companies is the second one.



Reviews, consistently

Reviews are a major driver of your Local Service Ads ranking. They also drive your map ranking and affect your SEO. One activity, three returns.

Volume matters. Consistency matters more. Google looks at your recent velocity, roughly a rolling ninety days.

This works – one a week, every week



This doesn't – a burst, then silence



Start with one a week

Just one. That's fifty-two a year, it's achievable for a one-truck operation, and it compounds. Once the habit sticks, raise the target.

Use the dashboard

You can send a verified review request from any lead in your dashboard, which is why you capture the customer's email when you book the job. And the foundation is obvious: do great work.

Immediate answers, every call

This is the one that costs companies the most, and most owners don't realise it's being measured.

Responsiveness is a ranking factor. We've worked with clients getting plenty of leads who weren't picking up the phone. Their ranking slid, their lead flow shrank, and they concluded the platform didn't work.

What one missed call costs

Wasted lead fee		\$35
Lost customer		\$600
Review not earned		-1
Ranking signal		↓

Using a \$600 first-year value for a recurring account. Run it with your own numbers and the case only gets stronger.

If a homeowner calls three companies and you're the one who doesn't answer, you lost the account and damaged your ranking in the same thirty seconds.

The phone call isn't an interruption to the work. It is the work.

Never advertise hours you can't cover

The hours you set determine when your ad is eligible to show. Set 9 to 5 and you're invisible outside 9 to 5.

9–5 only – you miss the evening searchers



24/7 with nobody answering – worse than not advertising



7am–8pm with real coverage – this is the target

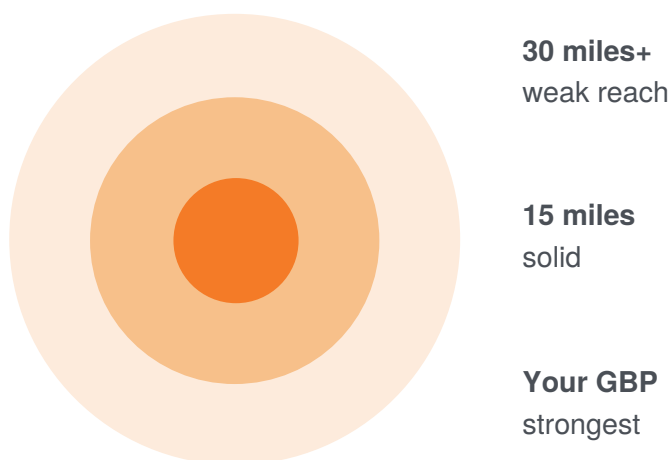


People read that hours drive visibility and jump straight to 24/7. Then the phone rings at 8:40 at night and nobody answers. That unanswered call is worse than never getting it, because it feeds a negative signal into the system that decides whether you show up tomorrow.

There is real money after hours. Nobody notices a roach on the kitchen floor at 11am. They notice it at 9pm, and they want somebody out tomorrow. So extend the hours. Just name the person who'll answer first.

Ground you actually cover

Your ranking is anchored to your Google Business Profile address, and your strongest performance sits within about 15 miles (25 km) of it.



You can add areas well beyond that and you should. But be realistic. A service area forty miles out won't perform like your home city.

Cities first, ZIP or postal codes for gaps

Set areas by city. Some places won't come up in Google's city search though. Add those by code.

Covering several metros? One profile won't do it. You need a separate Google Business Profile per location and a separate LSA account tied to each. Plan that before you build.

Show yourself

On Google Ads you write headlines and descriptions. Here there's no ad copy, so the few levers you have carry a lot of weight.



Your Pest Control Co.

★★★★★ 4.9 (127)

✓ Google Guaranteed

18 years in business · Family owned · Licensed

Bio attributes

Twelve to sixteen selectable attributes: years in business, veteran owned, family owned, locally owned. Select everything that applies.

Photos

Your primary image should be a real photo of you. Homeowners are deciding whether to let a person into their home.

✓ DO THIS



✗ NOT THIS



Then add job photos: techs at work, treatment equipment, your truck. Photos are a ranking factor.

Pick job types by margin, not by capability

There are eight to twelve services you can select, and most owners tick every box they're capable of doing. The right question is **which of these is worth \$30 to \$45 just to be introduced to.**

Lead cost as a share of the job



Illustrative, at a \$40 lead cost against a \$1,800 termite job, a \$600 first-year recurring plan, a \$250 one-time and a \$180 wasp call. Run it with your own tickets.

A recurring account is the one to weight for, because you're buying a customer, not a job. A one-off wasp nest at \$180 is a different calculation entirely.

Revisit this seasonally

This setting is a throttle on your job mix, and almost nobody uses it that way. Mosquito season starting? Turn it on. Termite crew booked six weeks out? Turn it off for a stretch.

Step 3: Book the Job



85%

BOOKING RATE

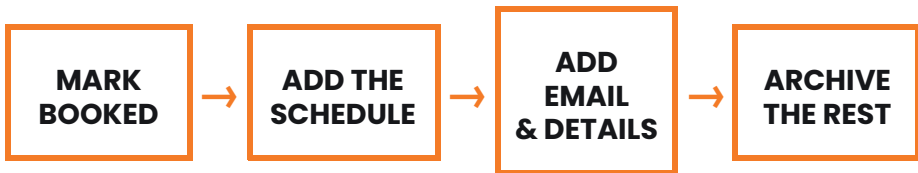
These leads are different. Somebody searched for an exterminator, saw your Google Guaranteed badge, and called you. They're not browsing. They have a pest problem in their house right now.

Your job is mostly to not lose them.

- 1 Answer the phone.** Not "return the call promptly." Answer it, during every hour you told Google you're open.
- 2 Make one person accountable.** "Whoever's free" isn't a system. Name who owns these calls in each block of hours.
- 3 Book the inspection on the first call.** Every callback and "let me get back to you" leaks conversion.
- 4 Follow up on the rest.** You already paid for that lead. A message sitting unanswered for an hour is money thrown away.

Mark Your Jobs as Booked

Google grades how you handle the leads it sends you. Most owners never touch the dashboard after the phone call, and it quietly costs them ranking.



Mark it booked as soon as it converts. This is the main input into how Google reads your responsiveness.

Add the schedule. Closing the loop between booked and when strengthens the signal.

Add the customer's email. It lets you send a verified review request straight from the dashboard, and it builds a list you own.

Archive the ones that didn't convert. Don't leave dead leads sitting open. Your dashboard should reflect reality.

A few minutes a day. Done consistently it improves your ranking and gives you honest numbers. Skipped, it degrades both.

Stop Paying for Bad Leads

You're not required to pay for disqualified leads. Google screens a lot of this itself, so you won't have many to file. But not many isn't none, and the ones that slip through are your money.

What you can dispute

- ❌ Someone calling to apply for a tech job. By far the most common one we see.
- ❌ Someone trying to sell you something, where your service never came up.
- ❌ Spam, robocalls, anything pre-recorded that wasn't a live human.
- ❌ A caller from a location you don't serve.
- ❌ Someone calling for a service you don't offer. Wildlife trapping, say.

The dashboard is fairly intuitive for this. Open the lead, pick the dispute option, choose the reason, submit. Approved disputes get credited back.

Five minutes a week. At \$35 a lead, catching two bad ones a month is \$840 a year. Make it a habit, not a project.

Then It Compounds

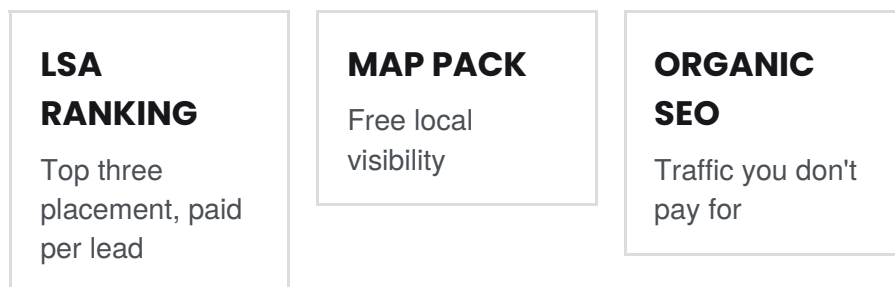
This is the part we like most about this channel, and the reason the weekly habits matter more than they look like they should.



and it starts again, a little cheaper each month

Every job you book is a chance to ask for a review. Every review improves your LSA ranking, which puts you in front of more people, which produces more jobs.

But those same reviews are also lifting your map pack ranking and feeding your organic SEO. The work you're doing to win one channel is quietly winning you two more.



Six months in, a company doing this properly isn't just paying for top placement. They're ranking in the map pack and pulling organic traffic, on the back of reviews collected from paid leads.

Your First 30 Days

- ☐ Google Business Profile created and verified
- ☐ Licence, applicator certification and insurance gathered digitally
- ☐ Application submitted, background check underway
- ☐ Service areas set by city, gaps filled by code
- ☐ Job types selected by margin, not by capability
- ☐ Hours set to hours you can genuinely cover
- ☐ Bio attributes filled in completely
- ☐ A real photo of you as your primary image, plus job photos
- ☐ Bidding on automatic with a \$30 to \$50 maximum bid
- ☐ Budget set between \$800 and \$2,000 a month
- ☐ One named person accountable for answering calls
- ☐ Every lead marked booked or archived within 24 hours
- ☐ Customer email captured on every booked job
- ☐ A review request sent on every completed job
- ☐ One new review a week, minimum
- ☐ Five minutes a week reviewing disputes

Implementation

You could take everything in this guide and run it yourself. If that's your only option, it's worth doing.

But instead of piecing this together between jobs and guessing whether a ranking dip is pacing or a real problem, you could have a team that does this every day doing it with you.

- ✓ We handle the application, documents and background check
- ✓ We build and configure your profile, service areas and job types
- ✓ We manage your budget and bidding week to week
- ✓ We watch your ranking, cost per lead and pacing
- ✓ We file your disputes so you're not paying for job applicants
- ✓ We help you build the review habit that makes it all compound



Braden Ormrod · Owner
Knockout Pest Control Marketing

Book a call and we'll look at your market and your current cost per lead.



FAQ

Answers from Braden Ormrod, Owner

How long until I'm actually getting leads?

Two to three weeks for approval in most cases, one to four at the extremes, depending on how fast you get your documents together. Apply in the off-season.

What if I'm already running Google Ads?

Most of our clients run both for a while and compare cost per lead. In our experience LSAs come in lower, and your Google Ads visibility has already been squeezed by the placement change anyway.

Do I need to background check my whole crew?

The program describes checks on the business and its employees. For owner-operated companies it's usually just you.

What if I don't have enough reviews yet?

Start collecting now, before you're approved. One a week from today puts you in a much better spot by the time you go live, and it helps your map and organic rankings in the meantime regardless.

My ranking dropped. What happened?

Check pacing first. If it isn't pacing, work down the RINGS list. It's usually responsiveness or a review drought.



Let's take a look at your market.

If you want help getting set up, or you're already running Local Service Ads and want to know why you're not in the top three, book a call with us.

pestcontrol-marketing.com

Exclusive, high-intent leads for pest control businesses.

Figures in this guide reflect campaigns we manage and will vary by market, season and competition. Google controls the Local Services Ads program and its features are subject to change.