

# Foundations To Growth

## Book 1



**Build a Business That Local  
Customers Trust.**

A Business growth book by [Vettedlocal.com](https://vettedlocal.com)

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# Introduction:

## *Why Your Trades Business Can Be More Than Just a Job!*

**You didn't start your business to scrape by, did you?**

Whether you're a plumber, electrician, decorator, or handyman, you had a spark—a vision of being your own boss, doing work you're proud of, and building a life that gives you freedom.

But let's be real: running a trades business isn't just about fixing leaks or wiring houses. It's about standing out in a crowded market, winning clients who value your skills, and charging what you're worth without feeling like a fraud. That's where most trades get stuck—and that's why this book exists.

*Foundations That Grow*, is your no-nonsense guide to turning your skills into a business that customers trust, recommend, and remember. This isn't about flashy marketing jargon or spending thousands on ads. It's about practical, low-cost steps you can take today to get noticed, book better jobs, and make your business work for you.

From getting found on Google to crafting a brand that screams “pro,” from pricing confidently to turning clients into raving fans, we’ll cover the essentials that make the difference between surviving and thriving.

‘ve seen countless tradespeople—maybe like you—who are bloody good at their craft but struggle to fill their diaries or get paid what they deserve. The problem isn’t their skills; it’s the business side they never got taught.

This book changes that. In nine chapters, you’ll learn how to: Break out of the “invisible zone” and get noticed by the right clients.

Focus on customers who respect your time and pay without haggling.

Build a brand and USP that make you the go-to trade in your town.

Price your work fairly without losing jobs.

Turn every job into a chance for reviews, referrals, and repeat work.

This is the first book in a five-part series to help you grow your business, step by step. By the end, you’ll have a 7-day action plan to kick things off and see results fast. No big budgets or tech skills needed—just a bit of graft and a willingness to try.

***So, grab a brew, turn the page, and let’s build a business that’s as solid as the work you do.***

# Chapter 1: Why Most Businesses Stay Invisible (and How You Won't)

Let's start with a simple truth: being good at your trade isn't enough anymore. You can be the best plumber in town, the tidiest electrician, or the most creative decorator, but if nobody knows you exist, your skills won't fill your diary. Too many great trades businesses are quietly struggling while louder (and often shoddier) competitors scoop up the work. So, what's going on?

## The Visibility Trap

Most small trades businesses fall into what I call the "invisible zone" for a few key reasons:

They rely solely on word-of-mouth and repeat work. That's great, but it's not enough to grow or survive a dry spell.

They have no marketing plan—just a Facebook page with two posts from last year or a flyer stuck on a pub noticeboard.

They think "being professional" means staying silent, serious, and blending in with every other trade business out there.

They're scared to put themselves out there because it feels "salesy" or they worry about looking desperate.

Sound familiar? If you're nodding, don't worry—you're not alone. But here's the good news: you can break out of the invisible zone without becoming a pushy salesperson.

## **Visibility = Opportunity**

Imagine your business is a shop in the middle of nowhere. Even if it's got the best prices, top-notch service, and free biscuits, if nobody drives past it, how will they know? Your job in 2025 is to build a giant, flashing neon sign that says: "HEY, WE'RE HERE—AND WE'RE BLOODY GOOD AT WHAT WE DO!"

Visibility isn't about being the loudest or flashiest. It's about making sure the people who need your services—whether it's a homeowner with a leaky tap or a landlord needing a full rewire—see you, trust you, and remember you *before* they start Googling. In a crowded market, visibility is your lifeline.

## **The Visibility Checklist**

Here's what a visible trades business does differently:

- Has a clear, memorable brand (more on that in Chapter 4).
- Shows up on Google when people search for "plumber near me" or "decorator [your town]."
- Posts regularly on social media with value—think tips, not just "call me for work" ads.
- Collects and shows off 5-star reviews on Google, Facebook, or Vettedlocal.com
- Has a website that looks professional, not like it was built on a Nokia in 2006.
- Actively builds trust before the first phone call through consistent, helpful content.

## **But I Don't Want to Be Salesy...**

Good. You shouldn't be. This isn't about cheesy pitches, spammy DMs, or plastering your face on every bus stop. It's about being *present, useful, and memorable*. Think of visibility like this: when someone in your area thinks, "I need a [your trade]," your name should pop into their head before they even open Google.

### **Real Talk**

Let's say there are 20 plumbers in your postcode. Only three are doing any real marketing. One of them posts weekly tips on Facebook, has a clean van with a catchy logo, a friendly profile photo, and over 100 glowing reviews. Guess who's getting the call when a pipe bursts at 2 a.m.? It's not the guy with the blurry website or the one who hasn't posted since the Queen's Jubilee.

## Case Study: From Invisible to In-Demand

Take Sarah, a decorator in Bristol. She'd been painting homes for a decade, but her business was patchy—some months she was booked solid, others she was twiddling her brushes. Sarah relied on referrals from old clients, and had no online presence beyond a basic Facebook page she hadn't updated in years. When she Googled "decorator Bristol," her business was nowhere to be seen.

Sarah decided enough was enough. She started small:

- **Claimed Her Google Business Profile:** She added photos of her work, wrote a description ("Transforming Bristol homes with colour and care"), and asked five happy clients for reviews. Within a month, she was ranking in the top five for local search results for "decorator Bristol."
- **Got Social:** Instead of posting "available for work," Sarah shared one tip a week on Instagram, like "How to choose paint that won't fade in sunny rooms." She recorded short videos showing her process—nothing fancy, just her phone and a smile. People started liking, commenting, and messaging her for quotes.
- **Branded Up:** Sarah spent £150 on a van wrap with her logo and phone number. She also printed business cards with her tagline: "We leave your home cleaner than we found it." Suddenly, people noticed her van around town, and her phone started ringing.



**Results:** In three months, Sarah's bookings doubled. She went from chasing leads to turning down jobs because she was too busy. Her Google reviews hit 40+ five-star ratings, and she started getting calls from strangers who saw her posts or van. Sarah wasn't just visible—she was unforgettable.

**Takeaway:** Visibility doesn't require a big budget or a marketing degree. Small, consistent steps—like Sarah's—can transform your business from invisible to in-demand.

### **Top 5 Visibility Killers (and How to Fix Them)**

Before you start building your neon sign, let's make sure you're not sabotaging yourself. Here are five common mistakes trades businesses make that keep them invisible, plus quick fixes:

1. **Outdated Online Presence:** A website from 2010 or a Facebook page with no posts screams "we don't care." *Fix:* Update your Google Business Profile with fresh photos and details. Post one tip or project photo a week on social media.
2. **Ignoring Reviews:** If you have no reviews—or worse, one bad one with no response—customers will scroll past. *Fix:* Ask three happy clients for Google or Vettedlocal.com reviews this week. Respond politely to any negative ones.
3. **Boring Branding:** If your van, cards, or logo look like everyone else's, you blend in. *Fix:* Add a catchy tagline or bold colour to your branding (more in Chapter 4).
4. **No Local Focus:** If you're not showing up for "electrician [your town]," you're missing leads. *Fix:* Optimize your Google Business Profile with your town's name and nearby postcodes.
5. **Hiding Your Face:** People trust people, not faceless businesses. *Fix:* Add a friendly photo of yourself or your team to your website, socials, and profile.

## Your 10-Step Visibility Starter Plan

Ready to step out of the shadows? Here's a practical plan to boost your visibility in just a few weeks. No big budget or tech skills needed—just a bit of effort.

1. **Claim Your Google Business Profile** (Free): Search for your business on Google. If it's not there, set it up at [business.google.com](https://business.google.com). Add your trade, location, phone number, and hours. (Time: 20 minutes)
2. **Add Photos** (Free): Upload five high-quality photos of your work—before-and-after shots are gold. Include one of you or your team smiling. (Time: 15 minutes)
3. **Ask for Reviews** (Free): Text or email three happy clients and ask for a Google review. Make it easy with a direct link. (Time: 10 minutes)
4. **Post One Social Media Tip** (Free): Share a quick tip on Facebook or Instagram, like “How to spot a dodgy fuse box” or “Why cheap paint isn't worth it.” Keep it short and helpful. (Time: 10 minutes)
5. **Check Your Website** (Low Cost): If it's outdated or non-existent, use a free builder like Wix or Squarespace to create a simple one-page site with your services, contact info, and reviews. (Time: 2 hours or £50–100 for a pro)

- **Clean Your Van** (Free): A dirty van screams unprofessional. Wash it and consider adding a phone number or tagline if you don't have signage. (Time: 30 minutes)
- **Get Business Cards** (Low Cost): Order 100 cards from Vistaprint or similar with your name, trade, phone, and a tagline. Hand them out to clients and local businesses. (Time: 20 minutes, Cost: £10–20)
- **Join a Local Group** (Free): Find a Facebook group or community board for your area and introduce yourself (e.g., "Hi, I'm a local plumber happy to answer questions!"). Don't sell—just be helpful. (Time: 15 minutes)
- **Search Yourself** (Free): Google "your trade + your town" and see where you rank. If you're not on page one, keep optimizing your Google profile and website. (Time: 5 minutes)
- **Plan Your Next Post** (Free): Schedule your next social media tip or photo for a week from now. Consistency is key. (Time: 10 minutes)

This plan takes less than four hours total and costs under £100 if you need cards or a website. Start today, and you'll see leads pick up within weeks.

- **Your Challenge This Week**

- Before we dive into branding, customers, and all the good stuff, here's your one job this week: *start paying attention to who's visible around you.* Do these four things:
- Search for "your trade + your town" on Google. Who comes up first? Why?
- Check Facebook or Instagram. Who's posting regularly? What are they sharing?
- Drive around your area. Which vans stand out? What makes them memorable?
- Ask a friend or client who they'd call for your trade. If it's not you, why not?
- Then ask yourself: how do you compare? Write down one thing you'll do this week to get more visible—maybe it's posting a tip or updating your Google profile. Small steps lead to big results.

### **Final Thought**

*Invisibility is comfortable. It's safe. But you didn't start your business to hide in the shadows. You started it to make a living, solve problems, and build something you're proud of. It's time to step into the spotlight. By the time we're done with this book, you won't just be visible—you'll be the tradie everyone calls first. And in our next book, we'll take it further with advanced tricks to keep your phone ringing off the hook.*

## Chapter 2: Who You Serve and Why That Matters

*"If you try to speak to everyone, no one hears you."*

*Picture this: you've got a van, a website, a logo, and a Facebook page, and you're ready to serve anyone with a wallet and a water leak, a dodgy socket, or a wall that needs painting. You're a jack-of-all-trades, ready for any job. But here's the cold, hard truth: the more specific you are about who you serve, the more magnetic your business becomes. Let's unpack why picking your ideal customer is the secret sauce to standing out in a crowded*

## The Power of Picking a Lane

There's a massive difference between these two pitches:

- "We do plumbing for anyone."
- "We help busy families stop dealing with dripping taps and cold showers—fast."

Which one sounds like it gets your pain? When people feel like you *understand* their specific problem, they're more likely to pick up the phone—even if you charge more than the bloke down the road with the rusty van. Focusing on a specific type of customer makes your marketing sharper, your work more enjoyable, and your diary fuller.

## Why Ideal Customers Matter

Your ideal customer isn't just anyone who pays. They're the people you *love* working with:

- They value your time and don't haggle over every penny.
- They pay on time, no chasing required.
- They don't hover over your shoulder, questioning every move.
- They recommend you to their mates without you even asking.
- They're a pleasure to deal with, not a nightmare who treats you like a servant.

Now imagine a whole diary packed with those clients. That's the goal here. By figuring out who your ideal customer is, you can attract more of them and spend less time dealing with the ones who make you dread Monday mornings.

## How to Spot Your Ideal Customer

So, how do you find these dream clients? Start by asking yourself these questions:

- Who do I love working with? (e.g., homeowners, landlords, young families, retirees)
- Who's happy to pay for quality without kicking up a fuss?
- Who respects my time and skills?
- Who gives referrals or reviews without me begging?

Now go deeper to build a mental picture:

- Are they homeowners or renters?
- What area or postcode do they live in?
- What's their rough income level or lifestyle?
- What kind of language do they use when they describe their problems?
- What do they value most in a trade like you? (e.g., speed, cleanliness, reliability)

You're creating a profile of your best customers so you can attract more just like them. This isn't about turning away work—it's about focusing your marketing to pull in the clients you want most.

## **Case Study: The Electrician Who Found His Spark**

Meet Tom, an electrician in Brighton. When Tom started his business, he took every job that came his way—landlords, businesses, homeowners, you name it. But he was knackered, working long hours for clients who haggled over prices or delayed payments. Half his jobs were for fussy commercial clients who demanded endless quotes for small fixes.

Tom decided to get smart. He looked at his past jobs and noticed his favourite clients were homeowners in family-friendly Brighton suburbs. They loved his quick response times, paid promptly, and often left glowing reviews. So, Tom shifted his focus to “Brighton families who want safe, stress-free electrical fixes.”

He tweaked his messaging:

- Website: “Keeping Brighton family homes safe and powered.”
- Google Business Profile: Added photos of him working in cozy homes, not offices.
- Social Media: Posted tips like “How to childproof your sockets” and shared before-and-after shots of home rewires.



Within two months, Tom's leads from homeowners tripled. He charged 20% more than before, and clients happily paid because they felt he was "their guy." He still took other jobs when needed, but his marketing spoke directly to families. Tom wasn't just busier—he was happier, working with clients who valued him.

**Takeaway:** Narrowing your focus doesn't limit you—it makes you irresistible to the right people

## **Why This Attracts the Right People**

Think of marketing like fishing. If you chuck bait everywhere and hope for the best, you'll catch all sorts—some great, some dreadful, some who'll waste your time. But if you know exactly what fish you want, and you use the right bait in the right spot at the right time, you land the catch you actually want. Same with customers.

By focusing on your ideal customer, you're not just shouting into the void. You're speaking directly to the people who need you most, in a way that makes them think, "This trade gets me." That's when they stop shopping around and start dialing your number.

## Speak Their Language

Once you know who you're trying to attract, your messaging gets dead simple. Instead of generic stuff like:

- "All aspects of electrical work undertaken." Try something like:
- "Reliable electrician helping Hove families feel safe at home."

That one small change makes people think, "Ooh, that's for people like me." It's not about being fancy—it's about being clear. Use the words your ideal customer uses. If they say "my tap's knackered," don't write "we repair faucets." Mirror their language to build trust.

## But Won't I Miss Out on Work?

This is the biggest fear tradespeople have: if I focus on one type of customer, won't I lose business? Here's the magic: you won't. You'll actually *gain* more of the right kind of business. People trust specialists over generalists. A plumber who says "we fix leaks for busy families" feels more reliable than one who says "we do everything."

Data backs this up: businesses that niche down often see 20–30% more leads because their marketing cuts through the noise. You can still take on other jobs if they come your way—nobody's saying you should turn down good work. But your marketing should always speak to your dream customer, not everyone with a pulse.

## What If I Don't Want to Niche?

Still nervous about picking a lane? Fair enough. Some tradespeople love the variety of working with all sorts of clients, and that's okay. But even if you don't want to niche tightly, you can still focus your marketing on a *primary* customer type while keeping your services broad. For example:

- A handyman might market to “retirees in [town] who need small home fixes” but still do bigger jobs for others.
- A decorator might target “new homeowners” with their ads but paint offices when asked.
- 

The key is to give your marketing a clear voice, even if your services stay flexible. You'll attract more clients who vibe with your message, and the rest will still find you through referrals or search.

## **Your Ideal Customer Persona Template**

Ready to nail down your ideal customer? Use this template to create a “persona”—a snapshot of your dream client. Fill it out like you’re describing a real person.

***(Answer on a separate sheet of paper)***

What’s their name? (Give them a nickname, e.g., “Busy Bob” or “New Homeowner Nina”)

Are they a homeowner, renter, landlord, or business owner?

Where do they live? (Town, postcode, or type of area, e.g., suburbs)

What’s their age range and lifestyle? (e.g., young family, retiree, professional)

What problem do they have that you solve? (e.g., leaky pipes, outdated decor)

How do they describe that problem in their own words? (e.g., “My bathroom’s a mess!”)

What do they value most? (e.g., speed, quality, cleanliness, a)

What’s their biggest fear when hiring a tradie? (e.g., being overcharged, messy work)

Where do they look for tradespeople? (e.g., Google, Facebook groups, word-of-mouth)

## Your Challenge This Week

Let's start crafting your ideal customer profile. Grab a pen and answer these:

- Who is your best type of customer? (e.g., homeowners, landlords, parents, over-50s, builders)
- Where do they live? (e.g., specific towns or postcodes)
- What problems do they have that you solve? (e.g., broken boilers, outdated wiring)
- How do they describe those problems in their own words? (e.g., "I'm fed up with this creaky floor!")
- What would they love to see in a trade like you? (e.g., same-day service, clear pricing)

Don't overthink it—just jot down your thoughts. If you're stuck, call a favourite client and ask, "What made you hire me?" Their answers will point you to your ideal customer. You don't need to slap this on your van (yet), but keep it front and centre as we move through the book. It's the foundation for everything else, from your branding to your pricing. Now dig into how to turn these dream clients into raving fans who refer you non-stop.

# **Chapter 3:Your USP – Why Should Anyone Pick You?**

“Being good isn’t enough. You’ve got to be different.”

Let’s say someone’s scrolling through Google, looking for a trade like you. They find ten businesses that look pretty similar—same services, same promises, same old “call for a quote.” Who do they choose? The cheapest? The one with the flashiest logo? The one whose van they’ve seen parked down the road? What if you could make that decision dead easy by standing out from the crowd? That’s where your USP comes in.

## **What’s a USP?**

USP stands for Unique Selling Proposition (but let’s not get too posh about it). It’s the answer to one simple question: “Why should someone pick you over everyone else?” Your USP is what makes your business memorable, desirable, and not just another name on the list. It’s the reason a customer thinks, “Yeah, I want *\*this\** plumber, not that other one.”

## It's Not Just About Price

A lot of tradespeople fall into the trap of thinking their USP is something like:

- “We’re the cheapest.”
- “We offer free quotes.”
- “We’re fully qualified.”
- “We’re reliable.”

Here’s the problem: everyone says that stuff. If your USP sounds like everyone else’s, you don’t have one. You’re just blending into the sea of same-old, same-old.

## What Makes a Great USP?

A cracking USP is:

- **Clear:** No waffle or jargon—just straight talk.
- **Specific:** Not “we care,” but *\*how\** you care.
- **Emotional:** It taps into what your customer wants or worries about.
- **Memorable:** Punchy, maybe even a bit fun.
- **Relevant:** It speaks directly to your ideal customer (you know, the ones we nailed down in Chapter 2).

Let’s look at some real-world examples to get the juices flowing.

## Real Trade USP Examples

- **Plumber:** “We turn up on time, or you get £25 off your bill.” (Tackles the fear of waiting around all day.)
- **Electrician:** “Clean, polite, and your dog won’t hate us.” (Promises a stress-free experience.)
- **Decorator:** “We finish on time, clean up, and leave your home magazine-ready.” (Speaks to homeowners who want quality.)
- **Handyman:** “Big enough to trust, small enough to care.” (Perfect for clients who want personal service.)

These aren’t just catchy lines—they solve real customer concerns.

## What Are People Worried About?

To craft a killer USP, think about what your ideal customer frets over when hiring a trade. Common worries include:

- Will they actually show up when they say?
- Will they leave my house a mess?
- Will they overcharge or add “extras” to the bill?
- Will they do a botched job and disappear?

Now flip those worries into a promise. That’s the heart of your USP. For example, if customers hate waiting, your USP could be about punctuality. If they’re sick of messy workers, promise a spotless cleanup.



## Case Study: The Handyman Who Stood Out..

Meet Jake, a handyman in Manchester. Jake was good at his job—fixing shelves, assembling furniture, patching walls—but he was struggling to get steady work. His marketing was generic: “Handyman services, call for a quote.” When he looked at his competitors, they all said the same thing. Jake needed a way to stand out.

Jake thought about his ideal customers: busy professionals and young families in Manchester’s suburbs. They valued speed and hated dealing with unreliable tradespeople. So, Jake crafted a USP: “Same-day fixes for Manchester’s busy homes—done right, or it’s free.”

He put this everywhere:

- His Google Business Profile now read: “Fast, reliable handyman for Manchester families.”
- His van got a wrap with his USP and phone number.
- His Instagram bio said: “Same-day fixes, no faff.”
- He even printed it on his invoices.

Jake also backed it up. He prioritized quick response times, confirmed bookings via text, and offered a money-back guarantee if clients weren’t happy. Within three months, Jake’s bookings jumped by 40%. Clients loved his clear promise and spread the word, leaving 30 new five-star reviews. Jake wasn’t just another handyman—he was *\*the\** handyman for busy Mancunians.

**Takeaway:** A strong USP makes you the obvious choice. Find your customers' pain points, promise to solve them, and shout it from the rooftops.

### **Quick USP Formula**

Need a shortcut? Try this cheat-sheet formula:

"We help [ideal customer] with [common problem] by [your unique way], so they can [benefit they care about]."

**Example:** "We help Brighton homeowners keep their homes safe and stylish by combining expert electrical work with five-star service—so they can stop worrying and start relaxing."

Play with it. Tweak it. Make it sound like you. The goal is a sentence that's clear, punchy, and screams "pick me!"

### **USP Creation Workshop**

Ready to craft your own USP? Grab a pen and let's do this step-by-step. This workshop will take 15 minutes and give you a USP that turns heads.

#### **Step 1: Know Your Customer** (3 minutes)

Pull out your Ideal Customer Persona from Chapter 2.

What's their biggest worry when hiring a tradie? What do they value most? Jot down 2–3 pain points (e.g., "fear of overcharging," "want fast service").

## **Step 2: Brainstorm Your Edge** (5 minutes)

What do you do differently? Think about your strengths. Maybe you:

- Always clean up better than you found it.
- Offer a fixed-price guarantee.
- Specialize in eco-friendly materials.
- Text updates to keep clients in the loop.

Write down 3–5 things that make you stand out from other tradespeople in your area.

## **Step 3: Plug It Into the Formula** (5 minutes)

Use the formula above to draft 2–3 USP options. For example:

- “We help [new homeowners] with [leaky pipes] by [offering same-day fixes] so they can [enjoy their new home stress-free].”
- “We help [landlords] with [electrical faults] by [providing 24/7 service] so they can [keep tenants happy].”

Don’t overthink it—just get some ideas down.

## **Step 4: Pick and Polish** (2 minutes)

Choose the option that feels most like you. Shorten it if it’s wordy. Make it snappy and memorable. Aim for something you can say in one breath.

**Example Output:** “Same-day plumbing for Leeds families—fixed fast, no mess.”

## How to Spy on Your Competitors' USPs

Want to make sure your USP is truly unique? Take a peek at what your competitors are saying. Here's how to do it without wasting hours:

- **Google Them:** Search “your trade + your town” (e.g., “decorator Leeds”). Look at the top 3–5 businesses. What do their websites or Google Business Profiles say? Are they all banging on about “quality service” or “free quotes”? If so, you can do better.
- **Check Reviews:** Read their Google or Checkatrade reviews. What do customers praise? If everyone loves their “friendly service,” you might focus on something else, like speed or guarantees.
- **Skim Socials:** Glance at their Facebook or Instagram. Are they posting generic “call us” ads, or do they have a clear message? If they're vague, you can stand out with a sharp USP.

**Pro Tip:** Don't copy their USP—that's lazy and won't work. Instead, find the gaps. If they're all about “cheap prices,” you could focus on “premium quality” or “punctuality.” Spend 10 minutes on this, and you'll know exactly how to zig when they zag.

## **Where to Use Your USP**

Once you've got a winning USP, don't let it gather dust. Plaster it everywhere:

- Website homepage (right at the top).
- Google Business Profile description.
- Social media bios (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn).
- Van signage or wraps.
- Flyers, leaflets, or business cards.
- Email signatures.
- Even on your work shirts or invoices, if it fits!

You want people to see it so often they can recite it in their sleep. Consistency is what makes your USP stick in their heads.

## **Your Challenge This Week**

Time to get your USP sorted. Follow the workshop above and craft your USP using the formula. Then pressure-test it with these questions:

- Would your ideal customer get it instantly?
- Does it sound like you—or like every other trade out there?
- Can you say it in one breath?
- Is it clear enough for a 10-year-old to understand?

Once it's ready, start using it. Update your Google Business Profile or social media bio with your new USP. Stick it on your business cards or email signature. Keep it consistent across everything you do. In our next book, we'll dive into how to turn your USP into a full-on brand that screams "trust me" from a mile away.

## **Chapter 4: Branding That Says “We’re the Real Deal”**

You’ve got your ideal customer nailed down (Chapter 2)

and a killer USP that makes you stand out (Chapter 3)

Now it’s time to wrap it all up in a package that screams, “We’re the trade business you can trust!”

That’s what branding is all about. It’s not just a fancy logo or a snazzy van—it’s the vibe your business gives off, the promise you make every time someone sees your name. Done right, your brand turns strangers into clients before they even pick up the phone.

## What Is Branding, Anyway?

Branding is how your business looks, feels, and sounds to the world. It's your logo, your van, your website, your work shirt, even the way you answer the phone. It's what makes people think, "This lot look legit," instead of "Who are these cowboys?" For tradespeople, good branding says you're professional, reliable, and worth the call—without you having to say a word.

## Why Branding Matters for Trades

Think about the last time you hired someone. Maybe you saw two plumbers online: one had a sharp website, a clean van, and a clear tagline like "No mess, no stress." The other had a blurry logo, a half-finished Facebook page, and no reviews. Who'd you trust more? Exactly. Your brand is your first impression, and in 2025, first impressions happen fast—online, on the street, or through a mate's recommendation.

A strong brand:

- Builds trust before you even meet the client.
- Makes you memorable, so your name sticks in their head.
- Sets you apart from the dozens of other trades in your area.
- Lets you charge more because you *look* like you're worth it.

## The Basics of a Trustworthy Brand

You don't need a marketing degree or a big budget to build a brand that works. Here's what every tradie's brand needs:

- **A Clear Logo:** Simple, bold, and easy to read (even on a van at 30 mph).
- **Consistent Colors:** Pick 2–3 colors and stick to them across everything—website, van, business cards.
- **A Professional Look:** No clipart or Comic Sans. Your brand should feel polished, not thrown together.
- **Your USP:** That unique promise from Chapter 3 should be front and centre.
- **A Human Touch:** People hire people, not faceless companies. Show your face or your team's.



## Case Study: The Plumber Who Branded His Way to Success

Meet Lisa, a plumber in Sheffield. When Lisa started, her branding was nonexistent—just her name on a plain white van and a basic website she hadn't touched in years. She was losing jobs to competitors who looked more professional, even though her work was top-notch. Lisa decided to level up her brand on a budget.

- **Logo and Colors:** She hired a local designer for £100 to create a simple logo with her initials and a water drop. She picked blue and white for trust and cleanliness, using them on her van, cards, and website.
- **Van Wrap:** She spent £200 on a partial van wrap with her logo, phone number, and USP: "Sheffield's punctual plumbers—on time or your fix is free." Suddenly, people noticed her van everywhere.
- **Website Refresh:** Lisa used Vettedlocal to update her site for a small monthly fee, adding her USP, photos of her work, and a smiling headshot. She also linked her Google reviews (30 and counting).
- **Social Media:** She posted weekly tips on Instagram, like "How to stop a leak before it floods your kitchen," using her brand colors in every graphic.

**Results:** Within four months, Lisa's inquiries doubled. Clients mentioned seeing her van or loving her "punctual plumbers" promise. She started charging 15% more, and nobody batted an eye because her brand screamed quality. Lisa wasn't just another plumber—she was Sheffield's go-to.

**Takeaway:** A strong brand doesn't have to be expensive. Small, consistent changes can make you look like the real deal.



## Top 5 Branding Mistakes to Avoid

Before you start slapping your logo on everything, watch out for these common traps:

1. **Inconsistent Look:** Using different colors or fonts on your van, website, and cards looks sloppy. *Fix:* Pick 2–3 colors and one logo, then stick to them.
2. **Cheap Design:** A logo made in Paint or a blurry photo screams amateur. *Fix:* Spend £50–100 on a professional logo or use a tool like Canva for free.
3. **No Personality:** If your brand feels cold or generic, clients won't connect. *Fix:* Add a tagline or photo that shows who you are.
4. **Ignoring Online:** A great van doesn't help if your website looks like 2005. *Fix:* Update your site with a modern template (try Wix or Squarespace).
5. **Forgetting Your USP:** If your brand doesn't highlight what makes you unique, it's just noise. *Fix:* Make your USP the star of your website, van, and socials.

## Your 10-Step Branding Starter Kit

Ready to build a brand that turns heads? Here's a low-cost, practical plan to get started. You can do most of this for under £200 and a few hours.

1. **Pick Your Colors** (Free): Choose 2–3 colors that match your trade (e.g., blue for plumbing, green for eco-friendly decorators). Use them everywhere. (Time: 10 minutes)
2. **Get a Logo** (Free–£100): Use Canva for a free, simple logo or hire a designer on Fiverr for £50–100. Keep it clear and bold. (Time: 1–2 hours)
3. **Update Your Van** (Free–£200): Clean your van. Add a phone number and USP with vinyl stickers or a partial wrap. (Time: 1 hour, Cost: £50–200)
4. **Refresh Your Website** (Free–£100): Use a free builder like Wix to create a one-page site with your logo, USP, photos, and contact info. (Time: 2–3 hours)
5. **Order Business Cards** (Low Cost): Get 100 cards from Vistaprint with your logo, USP, and contact details. Hand them out to clients and local shops. (Time: 20 minutes, Cost: £10–20)

1. **Add a Headshot** (Free): Take a clear, smiling photo of yourself or your team. Put it on your website and socials. (Time: 15 minutes)
2. **Update Social Media** (Free): Add your logo and USP to your Facebook and Instagram bios. Use your brand colors in posts. (Time: 20 minutes)
3. **Showcase Reviews** (Free): Add a “Reviews” section to your website or share a 5-star Google review on social media. (Time: 15 minutes)
4. **Create a Tagline** (Free): Turn your USP into a short tagline for your van or cards (e.g., “No mess, no stress”). (Time: 10 minutes)
5. **Test Your Brand** (Free): Show your logo, colors, and USP to a mate or client. Ask, “Does this look professional?” Tweak based on feedback. (Time: 15 minutes)

This plan takes about 5–6 hours and costs £70–£300 max. Start today, and your brand will start turning heads in weeks.

## 1. **Branding on a Budget**

2. Worried about costs? You don't need to break the bank. Here's how to brand like a pro without spending thousands:
3. **Use Free Tools:** Canva for logos, Get a professional website and Instagram for marketing are all free or cheap.
4. **Start Small:** A clean van with a phone number and USP is better than a £2,000 full wrap.
5. **DIY Photos:** Use your smartphone for professional-looking shots. Stand in good light, smile, and avoid cluttered backgrounds.
6. **Barter Services:** Know a graphic designer or printer? Offer to fix their plumbing in exchange for a logo or cards.
7. **Focus on Impact:** Spend on what clients see first (e.g., van signage, website) before splashing out on extras like branded hoodies.

# **Chapter 5: Pricing Smart (Without Underselling Yourself)**

Pricing your work is like walking a tightrope. Charge too little, and you're working yourself into the ground for pennies, barely covering your costs. Charge too much, and you risk scaring off clients who think you're taking the mick. But here's the truth: most tradespeople undersell themselves because they're afraid of losing jobs. The secret to pricing smart is knowing your worth, proving your value, and sticking to your guns. Let's get you charging what you deserve without losing the customers you want.

## **Why Pricing Matters**

Your prices aren't just numbers—they're a signal. Low prices scream "cheap and cheerful," which might attract bargain hunters but also the kind of clients who haggle, complain, and don't value your work. Fair, confident prices say, "We're professionals who deliver quality." They attract your ideal customers (from Chapter 2) who respect your skills and pay on time. Smart pricing isn't about gouging—it's about earning what keeps your business thriving and your life enjoyable.

## The Trap of Being the Cheapest

Too many tradies think the only way to win jobs is to be the lowest bidder. But here's the reality: clients don't always choose the cheapest option. They choose the one they trust to do the job right. If you're always undercutting, you're not only hurting your bank account, you're also stuck with clients who don't appreciate you. Worse, you're burning out trying to do more jobs just to make ends meet. It's a losing game.

## How to Calculate Your Worth

Pricing starts with knowing what you need to charge to cover your costs, pay yourself properly, and grow your business. Here's a simple formula to get it right:

**Your Hourly Rate = (Annual Costs + Desired Income) ÷ Billable Hours**

- **Step 1: Add Up Your Costs:** Tally your yearly business expenses—fuel, tools, insurance, van maintenance, taxes, marketing, even your phone bill. For example, let's say it's £20,000 a year.
- **Step 2: Set Your Desired Income:** How much do you want to take home after costs? Be realistic but don't shortchange yourself. Say it's £30,000.
- **Step 3: Estimate Billable Hours:** You won't work 40 hours a week on paid jobs—there's admin, travel, and quoting. Assume 25 billable hours a week for 48 weeks (1,200 hours/year).
- **Step 4: Do the Math:**  $(£20,000 + £30,000) ÷ 1,200 = £41.67/\text{hour}$ . That's your baseline hourly rate.

Now add a profit margin (10–20%) to cover growth or emergencies, so £45–50/hour. Compare this to what you're charging now. If it's way off, it's time to rethink your prices. 40



## Case Study: The Decorator Who Doubled Her Rates

Meet Emma, a decorator in Newcastle. Emma was charging £15/hour, barely covering her costs. She was booked solid but exhausted, working long hours for clients who haggled over every job. She worried that raising prices would kill her business.

Emma used the pricing formula above and realized she needed £35/hour to live comfortably. She decided to test higher rates but first built her value:

- She updated her branding (Chapter 4) with a professional logo and USP: “Newcastle’s decorators for stunning, stress-free homes.”
- She added before-and-after photos to her website and Instagram, showcasing her quality.
- She asked clients for Google reviews, hitting 25 five-star ratings.

Then Emma raised her rates to £30/hour for new clients. She explained her prices with confidence: “My rates reflect the quality materials I use and the care I take to leave your home spotless.” To her surprise, most clients didn’t blink. Within six months, she was earning double, working fewer hours, and attracting homeowners who valued her work. Emma wasn’t the cheapest—she was the best.

**Takeaway:** Higher prices work when you prove your value and target the right clients.

## **How to Prove Your Value**

Clients will pay more if they see why you're worth it. Here's how to show you're not just another tradie:

- **Highlight Your USP:** Remind clients what makes you unique (Chapter 3). If you promise “no mess” or “same-day fixes,” that justifies a premium.
- **Showcase Quality:** Use photos, reviews, or testimonials on your website and socials to prove your work's top-notch.
- **Be Professional:** A branded van, clear quotes, and prompt replies (Chapter 4) make you look worth every penny.
- **Explain Benefits:** Don't just say “£500 for a rewire.” Say, “£500 for a safe, reliable rewire that keeps your family protected for years.”

## Handling Price Objections

Even with a strong brand, some clients will push back on price. Here's how to handle it without folding:

### Scenario 1: "You're too expensive!"

- **Response:** "I get that price matters. My rates reflect the quality materials I use and the care I take to get it right the first time. For example, [mention a benefit like 'I guarantee no mess' or 'I offer a 12-month warranty']. Can I walk you through what's included in the quote?"
- **Why It Works:** You shift focus to value, not cost, and invite a conversation.

### Scenario 2: "I got a cheaper quote elsewhere."

- **Response:** "That's good to know! Cheaper quotes can be tempting, but they sometimes come with hidden costs like rushed work or low-quality parts. I focus on [your USP, e.g., 'punctuality and a clean finish'], which saves you hassle down the line. Would you like me to break down my quote?"
- **Why It Works:** You respectfully highlight risks without badmouthing the competitor.

**Pro Tip:** Always quote confidently. Don't apologize or waver. If a client can't afford you, they're not your ideal customer—and that's okay.

## Top 5 Pricing Mistakes to Avoid

Don't sabotage your pricing. Watch out for these traps:

1. **Undercutting to Win Jobs:** Low prices attract bad clients and kill profits. *Fix:* Use the pricing formula to set fair rates.
2. **Vague Quotes:** Saying “roughly £200” invites haggling. *Fix:* Provide clear, itemized quotes in writing.
3. **Not Charging for Extras:** Small add-ons (e.g., travel, urgent jobs) add up. *Fix:* Include them in your rates or quote upfront.
4. **Ignoring Your Value:** If you don't believe you're worth £40/hour, clients won't either. *Fix:* Build confidence with reviews and branding.
5. **Sticking with Old Rates:** Costs rise every year—your prices should too. *Fix:* Review rates annually and adjust 5–10%.

## Your 10-Step Pricing Confidence Plan

Ready to charge what you're worth? Here's a practical plan to set smart prices and stick to them. Most steps are free and take under 5 hours total.

1. **Run the Numbers** (Free): Use the pricing formula above to calculate your hourly rate. Write it down. (Time: 30 minutes)
2. **Check Competitors** (Free): Google "[your trade] + [your town]" and note their rates or request quotes. Aim for the middle or top end if your quality matches. (Time: 20 minutes)
3. **Test a Higher Rate** (Free): Quote 10–15% higher on your next job. Explain your USP to justify it. Track if you lose clients. (Time: 10 minutes)
4. **Update Your Quote Template** (Free): Create a clear, professional quote template with your logo, contact info, and terms (e.g., "Prices valid for 7 days"). (Time: 30 minutes)
5. **Practice Your Scripts** (Free): Rehearse the objection-handling scripts above.

- **Add Value Proof** (Free): Update your website or socials with one new photo, review, or testimonial to justify your rates. (Time: 15 minutes)
- **Communicate Clearly** (Free): On your next quote, explain what's included (e.g., "Price covers materials, labour, and cleanup"). (Time: 10 minutes)
- **Track Feedback** (Free): Ask a client why they hired you. If they mention value or quality, you're on the right track. (Time: 5 minutes)
- **Review Annually** (Free): Set a calendar reminder to check your costs and rates every 12 months. (Time: 5 minutes)
- **Believe in Yourself** (Free): Remind yourself you're worth it. Your skills, time, and care aren't cheap—and they shouldn't be. (Time: 1 minute)

This plan sets you up to price confidently without losing the clients you want.

## Pricing on a Budget

Worried about losing jobs to cheaper competitors? You don't need to slash prices to compete. Instead:

- **Offer Options:** Give clients a “good, better, best” quote (e.g., basic fix, standard, or premium with extras) so they feel in control.
- **Bundle Services:** Offer a discount for multiple jobs (e.g., “Book a rewire and socket upgrade, save 10%”).
- **Highlight Savings:** Frame your price as an investment (e.g., “£500 now prevents £2,000 in water damage later”).

**Target Your Ideal Customer:** Focus on clients who value quality (Chapter 2), not price shoppers.

## Your Challenge This Week

Time to get confident with your pricing. Do these three things:

1. Run the pricing formula to find your hourly rate.  
Compare it to what you charge now.
2. Pick one upcoming job and quote 10% higher, using your USP to explain the value.
3. Draft a clear quote template with your branding and terms.

Don't stress about perfection—just take a step. Smart pricing is about respecting your worth and attracting clients who do too. In our next book, we'll dive into turning those clients into raving fans who keep coming back and referring you to everyone they know.

# **Chapter 6: The Customer Journey (From ‘Who’s This?’ to ‘Take My Money!’)**

Imagine a potential client hears about you for the first time. Maybe they saw your van, found you on Google, or got your name from a mate. Right now, you’re just a name to them—a “who’s this?” moment. Your job is to guide them from that first spark of curiosity to happily handing over their cash, saying, “You’re the trade I want!” That’s the customer journey, and nailing it turns strangers into loyal clients. Let’s map out how to make every step smooth, professional, and irresistible.

## **What Is the Customer Journey?**

The customer journey is the path someone takes from discovering your business to becoming a paying client (and hopefully a raving fan). It’s not just about the moment they sign the quote—it’s every touchpoint along the way: their first impression of your website, your reply to their message, the quote you send, and how you follow up. For tradespeople, a great journey means standing out in a sea of competitors and building trust at every turn.



# Why It Matters

Every client is judging you at each step, whether they realize it or not. A slow reply, a vague quote, or a messy van can make them think, “Nah, I’ll try someone else.” But a slick, professional journey—from a clear Google profile to a tidy invoice—makes them feel confident they’ve picked the right tradie. Get this right, and you’ll not only win more jobs, you’ll also get clients who trust you enough to pay your rates (Chapter 5) and recommend you to others.

## The 5 Stages of the Customer Journey

Let's break the journey into five key stages and what you need to do at each one to keep clients moving toward "take my money!"

1. **Awareness (They Find You)**: This is when someone first hears about you—through Google, social media, your van, or a referral. Make sure you're visible (Chapter 1) with a clear brand (Chapter 4) and a USP (Chapter 3) that grabs attention.
2. **Consideration (They Check You Out)**: They're curious and start digging. They visit your website, read your reviews, or stalk your Instagram. Your job is to look legit with professional photos, glowing testimonials, and clear info about your services.
3. **Decision (They Choose You)**: They reach out for a quote or chat. Respond fast, provide a clear, branded quote, and highlight your value (Chapter 5). This is where you seal the deal.
4. **Experience (You Do the Job)**: You're on-site, delivering the work. Show up on time, communicate clearly, and leave the place spotless. This is where you live up to your USP and brand promises.
5. **Advocacy (They Spread the Word)**: After the job, they're happy (or not). Ask for a review, thank them, and make it easy for them to recommend you. Happy clients become your best marketers.

## Case Study: The Electrician Who Mastered the Journey

Meet Raj, an electrician in Birmingham. Raj was losing jobs because his process was patchy—slow replies, generic quotes, and no follow-up. Clients would inquire but often go with competitors who felt more professional. Raj decided to map out his customer journey and make every step count.

- **Awareness:** Raj optimized his Google Business Profile with his USP: “Birmingham’s trusted electricians—safe homes, guaranteed.” He posted weekly tips on Instagram, like “How to spot faulty wiring.”
- **Consideration:** He revamped his website (using Wix for free) with before-and-after photos, 20+ Google reviews, and a clear “Book a Quote” button. He added his smiling headshot to build trust.
- **Decision:** Raj set up a system to reply to inquiries within an hour, even if it was just, “Got your message, I’ll call you by 5 p.m.” His quotes were branded, itemized, and explained his value: “Includes premium parts for lasting safety.”
- **Experience:** Raj arrived on time, wore a branded shirt, and texted clients updates (e.g., “Job’s done, testing now”). He left every site cleaner than he found it.
- **Advocacy:** After each job, Raj sent a thank-you text with a link to leave a Google review. He offered a £10 discount on their next job for referring a friend.

**Results:** Within three months, Raj’s conversion rate (inquiries to jobs) jumped from 30% to 60%. His reviews hit 50 five-star ratings, and referrals doubled. Clients raved about his professionalism, and Raj was booking jobs weeks in advance.

**Takeaway:** A smooth customer journey makes you the obvious choice and turns clients into fans.

# **Your Customer Journey Map**

To nail the journey, create a map of how clients move through your business. Here's a template for each stage with actions to take:

## **Your Actions**

### Awareness

"I need a trade."

Optimize Google Business Profile, post on social media, use branded van signage.

### Consideration

"Are they legit?"

Update website with photos, reviews, and USP. Ensure socials look professional.

### Decision

"Should I hire them?"

Reply within 1–2 hours. Send clear, branded quotes with value explained.

### Experience

"Will they do a good job?"

Arrive on time, communicate updates, deliver on USP (e.g., no mess), leave site tidy.

### Advocacy

"Would I recommend them?"

Send thank-you message, ask for a review, offer referral incentives.

Spend 15 minutes jotting down what you do (or don't do) at each stage. Where are the gaps? Maybe you're great at the job but slow to reply. Or your quotes look sloppy. Pick one weak spot to fix this week.

## Top 5 Customer Journey Mistakes to Avoid

Don't let these common slip-ups derail your journey:

1. **Slow Responses:** Taking days to reply makes clients move on. *Fix:* Aim to respond within 2 hours, even with a quick "I'll get back to you soon."
2. **Sloppy Quotes:** Handwritten or vague quotes look unprofessional. *Fix:* Use a branded template with clear pricing (Chapter 5).
3. **Poor Communication:** Not updating clients leaves them anxious. *Fix:* Send texts like "On my way" or "Job's done."
4. **Messy Worksite:** Leaving dust or tools behind kills trust. *Fix:* Clean up thoroughly and highlight it (e.g., "Site left spotless").
5. **No Follow-Up:** Missing the chance to ask for reviews wastes free marketing. *Fix:* Send a thank-you note with a review link.

## Simple Tech Tools to Streamline the Journey

You don't need to be a tech wizard to make the journey smoother. Here are free or cheap tools any trade can use:

- **Google Calendar (Free)**: Schedule jobs and set reminders to follow up with quotes or thank-yous.
- **Canva (Free)**: Create branded quote templates or social media posts to look polished.
- **WhatsApp (Free)**: Use it to send quick updates or photos to clients (e.g., "Here's your new wiring").
- **Google Forms (Free)**: Set up a simple form on your website for clients to request quotes.
- **Jobber or Tradify (From ~£10/month)**: Basic apps to track inquiries, send quotes, and manage jobs. Try free trials first.
- **Pick one tool to try this week.** Even small tech tweaks can make you look like a pro.

## Your 10-Step Customer Journey Glow-Up

Ready to make your customer journey irresistible? Here's a practical plan to level up. Most steps are free and take under 5 hours total.

1. **Map Your Journey** (Free): Use the template above to list what you do at each stage. Spot one weak area to improve. (Time: 20 minutes)
2. **Speed Up Replies** (Free): Commit to answering inquiries within 2 hours, even with a holding message. (Time: 5 minutes)
3. **Polish Your Quote** (Free): Create a branded quote template in Canva or Word with your logo and USP. (Time: 30 minutes)
4. **Add a Website Form** (Free): Use Google Forms to add a "Request a Quote" form to your site. (Time: 20 minutes)
5. **Text Updates** (Free): On your next job, send one update (e.g., "Arriving at 10 a.m."). (Time: 5 minutes)

1. **Clean Up Thoroughly** (Free): After your next job, spend 10 extra minutes ensuring the site's spotless. Tell the client. (Time: 10 minutes)
2. **Ask for a Review** (Free): Send a thank-you text with a Google review link after your next job. (Time: 5 minutes)
3. **Try One Tool** (Free): Set up Google Calendar or WhatsApp for client updates. (Time: 15 minutes)
4. **Check Your Online Look** (Free): Google yourself. Ensure your website and socials look professional and consistent. (Time: 10 minutes)
5. **Get Feedback** (Free): Ask a recent client, "What was it like working with me?" Use their answer to spot gaps. (Time: 5 minutes)

This plan makes your journey smoother and more professional with minimal effort.

## **Your Challenge This Week**

Time to give your customer journey a quick tune-up. Do these three things:

1. Pick one stage (e.g., Decision) and list what you do now (e.g., "Send handwritten quote").
2. Fix one weak spot (e.g., create a branded quote template or reply faster).
3. Ask a recent client for feedback on their experience to spot what's working or not.



# **Chapter 7: Turning Happy Customers into a Marketing Machine**

You've nailed the customer journey (Chapter 6), delivered a cracking job, and left your client chuffed to bits. Now what? Don't just walk away and hope they'll call you again. Happy customers are your secret weapon—they can become a marketing machine that brings you new jobs without spending a penny. By turning satisfied clients into raving fans who leave reviews, refer mates, and sing your praises online, you'll keep your diary full and your phone ringing. Let's dive into how to make that happen.

## **Why Happy Customers Are Gold**

Word-of-mouth has always been king for tradespeople, but in 2025, it's not just chats over a pint—it's Google reviews, social media tags, and recommendations in local Facebook groups. A single happy client can reach dozens (or hundreds) of potential customers with a quick post or review. Why? Because people trust real clients more than any ad you'll ever run. A 5-star review or a glowing referral builds trust faster than a fancy website or a branded van (though those help, as we covered in Chapters 4 and 6). Happy customers:

- Leave reviews that boost your Google ranking and attract new clients.
- 
- Refer friends, family, and neighbours, saving you marketing costs.
- 
- Share your work on social media, giving you free exposure.
- 
- Come back for repeat work, keeping your income steady.

## The Power of Reviews and Referrals

Let's break it down. A single Google review can push you higher in search results for “plumber [your town],” making you more visible (Chapter 1). Studies show 90% of people read reviews before hiring a tradie, and businesses with 20+ reviews get more calls. Referrals are even better—clients referred by friends are 4 times more likely to hire you and less likely to haggle over price (Chapter 5). Your goal is to make it dead easy for happy clients to spread the word.

## How to Turn Clients into Fans

Turning a satisfied client into a marketing machine starts with delivering on your promises—your USP (Chapter 3), a slick customer journey (Chapter 6), and a professional vibe (Chapter 4). But it doesn't stop there. You need to actively encourage reviews, referrals, and shares. Here's how:

- **Ask at the Right Time:** Don't wait weeks—ask for a review or referral right after the job when they're buzzing about your work.
- **Make It Easy:** Provide direct links to Google , or a simple way to refer you (e.g., a business card).
- **Show Gratitude:** Thank them for their business and for spreading the word. A little appreciation goes a long way.
- **Incentivize (Carefully):** Offer small rewards for referrals, like a discount on their next job, but keep it ethical and legal.

## Case Study: The Plumber Who Built a Referral Empire

Meet Dan, a plumber in Leeds. Dan was great at his job, but he relied on Google ads and flyers to get work, which ate into his profits. He realized his happy clients—mostly homeowners in family-friendly suburbs—could do the marketing for him if he made it easy.

Dan started small:

- **Reviews:** After every job, he sent a thank-you text: “Thanks for choosing me! Loved fixing your leak. If you’re happy, could you leave a quick Google review here: [link]?” He made it a habit to ask every client.
- **Referrals:** He printed 100 business cards (£10) with his USP: “Leeds’ no-mess plumbers.” He gave two to each client, saying, “Pass these to anyone who needs a plumber, and I’ll give you £20 off your next job if they book.”
-

- **Social Media:** Dan asked clients if he could share before-and-after photos of their job (with permission). He posted these on Instagram with his brand colors (Chapter 4), tagging the suburb (e.g., #LeedsPlumber).
- **Follow-Up:** A month after each job, Dan texted clients: “Hope your pipes are behaving! Need anything, give me a shout.” This kept him top of mind.

**Results:** In six months, Dan’s Google reviews jumped from 5 to 40, boosting him to the top 3 in “plumber Leeds” searches. Referrals tripled, with 20% of his jobs coming from word-of-mouth. His Instagram posts got shared by clients, bringing in 5 new jobs a month. Dan cut his ad spend by half and was booked solid for weeks.

**Takeaway:** Happy clients are your best marketers if you make it simple for them to rave about you.

- **How to Ask for Reviews Without Feeling Awkward**
- Asking for reviews can feel like begging, but it doesn't have to. Here's a foolproof script to make it natural:
- **When:** Right after the job, while they're happy. Say it in person or text within 24 hours.
- **How:** Keep it short, grateful, and easy. Example: "Thanks for having me fix your wiring! If you're pleased with the job, I'd love a quick Google review to help other locals find me. Takes 1 minute here: [link]. Cheers!"
- **Where:** Send a direct link to Google, Vettedlocal, or Trustpilot. Make it one-tap easy.
- **Follow-Up:** If they don't review, wait a week and nudge gently: "Just checking in—hope all's good with the job! If you have a sec, a review would mean a lot: [link]."
- **Pro Tip:** If a client says they're happy, reply, "That's ace to hear! Mind sharing that on Google? It really helps us out." Turn their praise into action.

## Building a Referral System

Referrals don't just happen—you need a system to spark them. Here's how to set one up:

1. **Give Cards:** Hand out 2–3 business cards per job with your USP and contact info. Say, “Pass these to anyone who needs a [your trade].”
2. **Offer Incentives:** Offer a small reward, like £10–£20 off their next job if their referral books. Check local laws to keep it above board.
3. **Make It Trackable:** Ask new clients, “Who sent you?” or add a note on your quote form. Thank the referrer with a text or discount.

**Stay Top of Mind:** Send a thank-you note or text a month after the job: “Hope all's well with your [fixed item]! Know anyone who needs a [your trade]?”

## Top 5 Mistakes That Kill Your Marketing Machine

Don't sabotage your efforts. Avoid these common slip-ups:

1. **Not Asking:** If you don't ask for reviews or referrals, most clients won't think to do it. *Fix:* Make asking a habit after every job.
2. **Hard-to-Find Profiles:** If your Google or Vettedlocal page is buried, clients can't review you. *Fix:* Optimize your profiles (Chapter 1).
3. **Ignoring Reviews:** Not responding to reviews (good or bad) looks lazy. *Fix:* Reply to every review with a thank-you or polite response.
4. **No Follow-Up:** Clients forget you if you vanish after the job. *Fix:* Send a thank-you text or check-in a month later.
5. **Poor Delivery:** A bad job kills any chance of reviews or referrals. *Fix:* Deliver on your USP and customer journey (Chapters 3 and 6).



## **Your 10-Step Referral and Review Plan**

Ready to turn clients into your marketing team? Here's a practical plan to get reviews and referrals rolling. Most steps are free and take under 4 hours total.

1. **Optimize Review Profiles** (Free): Ensure your Google Business Profile and Vettedlocal page are complete with photos and your USP. (Time: 20 minutes)
2. **Draft a Review Script** (Free): Write a short, friendly text like the one above to ask for reviews. Save it as a template. (Time: 10 minutes)
3. **Order Business Cards** (Low Cost): Get 100 cards from Vistaprint with your USP and contact info for referrals. (Time: 15 minutes, Cost: £10–20)
4. **Ask for a Review** (Free): After your next job, use your script to ask for a Google review. Include a direct link. (Time: 5 minutes)
5. **Offer a Referral Reward** (Free): Tell your next client, "Pass my card to a mate, and you'll get £15 off your next job if they book." (Time: 5 minutes)

6. **Post Client Work** (Free): With permission, share a before-and-after photo of your next job on Instagram or Facebook. Use your brand colors. (Time: 10 minutes)
7. **Respond to Reviews** (Free): Reply to one existing review (good or bad) with a thank-you or polite response. (Time: 5 minutes)
8. **Follow Up** (Free): Text a past client from last month: "Hope your [fixed item] is holding up! Need anything, give me a shout." (Time: 5 minutes)
9. **Track Referrals** (Free): On your next quote, ask, "How did you hear about me?" Note who referred them. (Time: 5 minutes)
10. **Thank Referrers** (Free): If someone refers you, send a thank-you text or offer a small discount on their next job. (Time: 5 minutes)

This plan gets your clients marketing for you with minimal effort.

## Turning Reviews into Gold

Got reviews? Don't let them sit there. Use them to attract more clients:

- **Showcase on Your Website:** Add a "Reviews" section with 3–5 top testimonials.
- **Share on Social Media:** Post a screenshot of a 5-star review with a caption like, "Thanks, Sarah, for the kind words! Ready to help more locals."
- **Add to Quotes:** Include a one-line testimonial in your quote template (e.g., "Dan was punctual and professional—5 stars!").
- **Highlight in Ads:** If you run flyers or Google ads, include a review snippet.

## Your Challenge This Week

Time to kickstart your marketing machine. Do these three things:

1. Send a thank-you text to a recent client with a Google review link using the script above.
2. Give 2–3 business cards to your next client and mention your referral reward.
3. Share one review or before-and-after photo on social media with your USP.

These small steps will get your clients spreading the word. Happy customers are your best ad, and in our next book, we'll dive into advanced strategies to keep them coming back and scaling your business.

## **Chapter 8: Common Mistakes That Make You Look Amateur (Even If You're Great)**

You could be the best decorator in town, a wizard with a wrench, or an electrician who rewires homes in your sleep, but if you're making rookie mistakes, clients might think you're a cowboy. Little slip-ups—like a messy van, a dodgy quote, or a late arrival—can undo all the hard work you've put into your brand (Chapter 4), pricing (Chapter 5), and customer journey (Chapter 6). This chapter's about spotting those traps and fixing them fast, so you look as professional as you actually are.

## **Why Looking Professional Matters**

Clients judge you on more than just the finished job. They're watching everything: how you communicate, what your website looks like, even how you park your van. Amateur vibes make them doubt your skills, hesitate to pay your rates (Chapter 5), or skip recommending you (Chapter 7). But polish up those rough edges, and you'll stand out as the tradie they trust, hire, and rave about. Let's dive into the mistakes that scream "amateur" and how to avoid them.

### **The Cost of Looking Amateur**

A single unprofessional moment can cost you big. A client who sees a sloppy email might pick a competitor. A bad first impression could mean no reviews or referrals. Worse, a negative Google review from a frustrated client can scare off dozens of others. The good news? Most of these mistakes are easy to fix with a bit of effort and awareness.

# **Top 10 Amateur Mistakes (and How to Fix Them)**

Here's a rundown of the most common slip-ups tradespeople make that undermine their credibility, plus quick fixes to look like the real deal.

## **1. Messy Van or Worksite**

*Mistake:* A van full of crisp packets or a worksite littered with tools screams “sloppy work.”

*Fix:* Clean your van weekly—inside and out. At jobs, tidy up as you go and leave the site spotless. Tell clients, “I’ll leave it cleaner than I found it.” (Time: 30 minutes/week)

## **2. Late Arrivals or No-Shows**

*Mistake:* Turning up late (or not at all) kills trust before you start.

*Fix:* Text clients an ETA (e.g., “On my way, there in 20 mins”). If delayed, call or text ASAP with a new time. Use Google Calendar to track jobs. (Time: 5 minutes/job)

## **3. Vague or Handwritten Quotes**

*Mistake:* Scribbled quotes on scrap paper look dodgy and invite haggling.

*Fix:* Use a branded quote template (Chapter 5) with your logo, clear pricing, and terms. Email it as a PDF. Try Canva for free templates. (Time: 30 minutes to set up)

#### **4. Poor Communication**

*Mistake:* Ignoring messages or giving vague replies makes clients anxious.

*Fix:* Reply to inquiries within 2 hours, even if it's "Got your message, I'll call by 5 p.m." Send job updates (e.g., "Wiring's done, testing now"). (Time: 5 minutes/job)

#### **5. Unprofessional Appearance**

*Mistake:* Turning up in a stained T-shirt or muddy boots looks careless.

*Fix:* Wear a clean, branded polo or shirt with your logo (Vistaprint, ~£15). Keep spare clothes in the van. Wipe boots before entering homes. (Time: 5 minutes, Cost: ~£15)

#### **6. Outdated Online Presence**

*Mistake:* A website from 2005 or a Facebook page with no posts screams "out of business."

*Fix:* Update your Google Business Profile with photos and your USP (Chapter 1). Post one tip or photo a week on socials. Use Wix for a free site refresh. (Time: 1 hour)

#### **7. Ignoring Reviews**

*Mistake:* No reviews—or worse, not replying to a bad one—makes you look sketchy.

*Fix:* Ask for reviews after every job (Chapter 7). Respond to all reviews, e.g., "Thanks for the feedback! Sorry about the delay, I've tightened my schedule." (Time: 10 minutes/job)

## **8.No Clear Branding**

*Mistake:* A generic name or logo that blends in makes you forgettable.

*Fix:* Add your USP and brand colors to your van, cards, and socials (Chapter 4). Spend £20 on vinyl stickers for your van if you can't afford a wrap.

*(Time: 20 minutes, Cost: ~£20–£50)*

## **9.Overpromising and Underdelivering**

*Mistake:* Promising a job in two days but taking a week erodes trust.

*Fix:* Set realistic timelines and add a buffer (e.g., “We’ll aim for Wednesday, but by Friday latest”). Update clients if delays happen. (Time: 5 minutes/quote)

## **10.No Follow-Up**

*Mistake:* Vanishing after a job misses chances for repeat work or referrals.

*Fix:* Send a thank-you text a day after: “Thanks for choosing me! Any issues, give me a shout.” Follow up a month later for referrals (Chapter 7). (Time: 5 minutes/job)



## **Your Professionalism Checklist**

Want to know how you stack up? Use this checklist to spot amateur vibes and polish your act. Tick what you're doing, then work on the gaps.

- My van is clean inside and out, with clear signage (phone number or USP).
- I arrive on time or text clients with ETAs and updates.
- My quotes are branded, clear, and emailed as PDFs.
- I reply to inquiries within 2 hours, even with a holding message.
- I wear clean, branded clothing (e.g., polo or shirt with logo).
- My website or Google Business Profile is updated with photos and reviews.
- I ask for reviews after every job and respond to all reviews.
- My branding (logo, colors, USP) is consistent across van, cards, and online.
- I set realistic timelines and communicate delays promptly.
- I follow up after jobs with a thank-you and referral nudge.

Score 8–10? You're looking pro. Below 5? Pick one or two to fix this week.

## Quick Professionalism Hacks

Short on time? These low-effort tweaks make you look polished fast:

- **Branded Invoice:** Use Canva to add your logo to invoices. Email them, don't handwrite. (Time: 20 minutes)
- **Text Templates:** Save scripts for ETAs, thank-yous, and review requests in your phone's notes. (Time: 10 minutes)
- **Van Declutter:** Spend 15 minutes tossing rubbish and organizing tools. (Time: 15 minutes)
- **Profile Photo:** Take a clear, smiling headshot for your website and socials. (Time: 5 minutes)
- **Review Reply:** Respond to one old review with a thank-you. (Time: 5 minutes)

## Your 10-Step Professionalism Glow-Up

Ready to ditch the amateur vibes? Here's a practical plan to look like the real deal. Most steps are free and take under 4 hours total.

1. **Clean Your Van** (Free): Wash it and declutter the interior. Add a phone number sticker if possible. (Time: 30 minutes)
2. **Text an ETA** (Free): For your next job, send a text: "On my way, there in 20 mins." (Time: 5 minutes)
3. **Create a Quote Template** (Free): Use Canva to make a branded quote with your logo and terms. (Time: 30 minutes)
4. **Reply Fast** (Free): Answer your next inquiry within 2 hours, even with "I'll call soon." (Time: 5 minutes)
5. **Get a Branded Shirt** (Low Cost): Order a polo with your logo from Vistaprint. (Time: 10 minutes, Cost: ~£15)

**6.Update One Profile** (Free): Add a photo or review to your Google Business Profile or website. (Time: 15 minutes)

**7.Ask for a Review** (Free): After your next job, text: “Thanks! Happy? Leave a quick review: [link].” (Time: 5 minutes)

**8.Check Branding** (Free): Ensure your logo and USP are on your cards or socials. (Time: 10 minutes)

**9.Set a Timeline** (Free): For your next quote, say, “Done by Friday latest,” and stick to it. (Time: 5 minutes)

**10.Thank a Client** (Free): Text a recent client: “Cheers for the job! Any issues, let me know.” (Time: 5 minutes)

This plan makes you look pro without breaking the bank or your schedule.

## **Your Challenge This Week**

Time to polish your professionalism. Do these three things:

1. Run through the professionalism checklist and pick one gap to fix (e.g., clean van, branded quote).
2. Text an ETA or update to your next client to show you're on it.
3. Update one thing—your Google profile, a quote, or your clothing—with your brand.

These small steps make a big difference. Looking professional sets you up to win more jobs and referrals. In our next book, we'll tie it all together with a plan to keep your business growing strong.

## **Chapter 9: Let's Get to Work – Your 7-Day Action Plan**

You've made it through the whole book—nice one! By now, you've got the tools to make your trades business stand out: a plan to get visible (Chapter 1), a clear idea of who you serve (Chapter 2), a killer USP (Chapter 3), a pro-level brand (Chapter 4), smart pricing (Chapter 5), a slick customer journey (Chapter 6), a way to turn clients into fans (Chapter 7), and fixes for amateur mistakes (Chapter 8). But knowing this stuff isn't enough—you've got to *do* it. This chapter's your kick up the backside to take action, starting with a 7-day plan to put everything into practice. Let's get your business buzzing in just one week.

## **Why Action Matters Now**

Ideas are cheap. It's the trades who actually implement them who see their diaries fill up, their bank accounts grow, and their stress levels drop. You don't need to do everything at once—small, consistent steps add up fast. This 7-day plan pulls together the best bits from the book into bite-sized tasks you can tackle in a few hours a day, even with a full schedule. By the end of the week, you'll see real progress and feel ready to keep building.

## **The 7-Day Action Plan**

This plan is designed for busy tradespeople. Each day's task takes 30–60 minutes, costs little or nothing, and builds on what you've learned. Grab a notebook or your phone's notes app, block out some time, and let's crack on. Here's what you'll do each day to transform your business.

## Day 1: Boost Your Visibility

**Task:** Set up or update your Google Business Profile to get found online (Chapter 1).

- **How:** Go to [business.google.com](https://business.google.com), claim your business, and add your trade, phone number, hours, and 3–5 photos of your work. Include your USP (Chapter 3) in the description, e.g., “Leeds’ no-mess plumbers.”
- **Why:** This puts you on Google Maps and search results, where most clients look first.
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Cost:** Free
- **Pro Tip:** Text one happy client for a quick Google review to kick things off (Chapter 7).



## Day 2: Nail Your Ideal Customer

**Task:** Create an Ideal Customer Persona to focus your marketing (Chapter 2).

- **How:** Use the template from Chapter 2 to jot down your dream client's details: name (e.g., "Busy Sarah"), location, problems, and values. Answer: Who do they trust? Where do they look for tradies?
- **Why:** Knowing your ideal customer makes your messaging sharper and attracts better clients.
- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Cost:** Free
- **Pro Tip:** Pin this persona somewhere you'll see it (e.g., your van dashboard) to keep it front of mind.

## Day 3: Craft Your USP

**Task:** Draft a punchy USP that sets you apart (Chapter 3).

- **How:** Use the formula: “We help [ideal customer] with [problem] by [your unique way], so they can [benefit].” Example: “We help Brighton families with leaky pipes by fixing same-day, so they can relax stress-free.” Write 2–3 options, pick one, and add it to your Google Business Profile or social media bio.
- **Why:** A clear USP makes clients choose you over competitors.
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Cost:** Free
- **Pro Tip:** Test your USP by asking a mate, “Does this make you want to hire me?”

## Day 4: Polish Your Brand

**Task:** Add one branded element to your business (Chapter 4).

- **How:** Pick one: order 100 business cards with your USP (£10–20, Vistaprint), add a phone number sticker to your van (£20), or update your Instagram bio with your brand colors and USP. If you don't have a logo, use Canva for a free one.
- **Why:** A consistent brand builds trust and makes you memorable.
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Cost:** £0–£20
- **Pro Tip:** Take a smiling headshot for your socials to add a human touch.

## Day 6: Streamline Your Customer Journey

**Task:** Fix one weak spot in your customer journey (Chapter 6).

- **How:** Review the 5 stages (Awareness, Consideration, Decision, Experience, Advocacy). Pick one gap, e.g., slow replies or sloppy quotes. Commit to texting an ETA for your next job (“On my way, there in 20”) or create a branded quote.
- **Why:** A smooth journey turns inquiries into jobs and clients into fans.
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Cost:** Free
- **Pro Tip:** Ask a recent client, “What was it like working with me?” to spot gaps.

## Day 7: Spark Reviews and Referrals

**Task:** Ask for one review and set up a referral nudge (Chapter 7).

- **How:** Text a recent client: “Thanks for the job! If you’re happy, could you leave a quick Google review? Takes 1 min: [link].” Give them 2 business cards: “Pass these to anyone needing a [your trade], and I’ll give you £15 off next time.”
- **Why:** Reviews boost your visibility, and referrals cut marketing costs.
- **Time:** 20 minutes
- **Cost:** £0–£10 (if you need cards)
- **Pro Tip:** Reply to one existing review with a thank-you to show you care.

**Takeaway: One week of action can spark big changes. Start now, and you’ll see results.**

## **Staying Accountable**

It's easy to start strong but fizzle out. Here's how to stick with it:

**Tell Someone:** Share your 7-day plan with a mate, partner, or client. Ask them to check in next week.

**Set Reminders:** Add each day's task to your phone calendar (e.g., "Day 1: Google Profile, 7 p.m.").

**Reward Yourself:** Finish the week? Treat yourself to a pint or a takeaway. You've earned it.

**Keep Going:** After Day 7, pick one task from each chapter to do monthly (e.g., post on socials, ask for reviews).

## Top 5 Action Plan Pitfalls to Avoid

Don't let these trip you up:

1. **Overthinking:** Don't aim for perfect—just do the tasks. A rough USP is better than none. *Fix:* Set a 30-minute timer for each task.
2. **Skipping Steps:** Every task builds on the last. Don't jump to Day 7 without doing Day 1. *Fix:* Follow the order.
3. **No Time Excuses:** You're busy, but 20–40 minutes a day is doable. *Fix:* Do tasks over breakfast or after dinner.
4. **Ignoring Results:** Not tracking progress makes it hard to stay motivated. *Fix:* Use the table above to log wins.
5. **Stopping at Day 7:** This is a launchpad, not the finish line. *Fix:* Plan one task per week after this (e.g., post a tip, update branding).

## **Your Challenge This Week**

Your job is simple: commit to the 7-day plan. Start today (or tomorrow if it's late). Do these three things to kick off:

1. Read the plan and pick your start date. Block out 30 minutes each day.
2. Set up a tracking table (copy the one above or use your phone's notes).
3. Do Day 1's task (Google Business Profile) and tick it off.

Don't wait for the "perfect" time—there isn't one. These seven days will set you up to attract better clients, charge what you're worth, and build a business you're proud of. In our next book, we'll dive into advanced strategies to scale your success, from digital marketing to building a team.

## **Final Thought**

You started this book because you wanted more—more jobs, more respect, more freedom. You've got the plan; now it's on you to make it happen. One week of action can change everything. Get to work, and I'll see you in Book 2, ready to take your trades business to the next level.



## **Conclusion: Your Business, Your Future**

You've reached the end of *Foundations That Attract*, and if you've tackled even half the ideas in this book, you're already ahead of most trades out there. You've got a roadmap to get noticed, attract the right clients, charge what you're worth, and turn happy customers into your best marketers. But this isn't the finish line—it's the start of building a business that works for you, not the other way around.

Take a moment to look back. You've learned how to break out of the invisible zone, focus on customers who value you, craft a standout USP, build a pro brand, price confidently, streamline your customer journey, spark referrals, and dodge amateur mistakes. The 7-day plan in Chapter 9 gave you a taste of what's possible when you act. Now it's up to you to keep the momentum going. Pick one task each week—post a tip, ask for a review, tweak your brand—and watch the results stack up.

Your trades business is more than a job. It's a chance to create a legacy, provide for your family, and take pride in solving problems for your community. Don't let fear or "busyness" hold you back. You've got the tools; now use them. This book is the first step in a five-part series to take your business further. In the next book, we'll dive into advanced strategies to scale up, from digital marketing to building a team, so you can work smarter, not harder. For now, start small, stay consistent, and believe in your worth.

**You're not just a tradesperson—you're a business owner with big potential. Get out there and make it happen.**

