FREE COMPANION GUIDE · PAY-PER-LEAD + SEO STACK

The Angi + SEO Companion Guide

Keep the phones ringing now. Build the free traffic underneath. The honest stack for owners running Angi, Thumbtack, or Networx — and paying **$500–$3,000/mo** to an agency that hasn't delivered call volume yet.

LocalServiceBusinessSEO
The 23-chapter V5.1 Playbook

Free Audit
localservicebusinessseo.com

THE THESIS

Leads next week vs. leads in 90 days. Run both.

If you're already paying Angi, Thumbtack, Networx, or Service Direct, you're solving the right problem: pay-per-lead is the only local marketing channel that delivers a call *this week*. Don't apologize for it. The problem is that pay-per-lead is a decaying channel — your CPL goes up every quarter as more contractors join the platform, and you don't own the lead funnel. Pause the spend and the calls stop the same day.

SEO is the opposite shape: zero calls month one, a handful month two, and then it compounds. Google Maps + organic traffic costs you the same in month 36 as it does in month 3, and you keep every booking. The canonical name for this is *compounding vs. decaying channels*: paid is decaying (each dollar buys less over time), SEO is compounding (each dollar's work keeps paying forever).

The honest play is to **stack them** — not pick one. Keep Angi running. Start the SEO cadence on day one. Watch the two pipelines side-by-side. Pause Angi when your map-pack-driven calls cross the line. This guide is the playbook for that stack, end to end — the cost math, the 90-day timeline, and the decision criteria for when to pause paid.

Note on the agency layer: many owners we hear from are also paying $500–$3,000/mo for SEO that hasn't delivered call volume yet. That's a separate decision from the Angi question. This guide focuses on the paid-leads vs. organic stack; if you want the audit on whether your current agency is actually running the cadence, run the free audit at localservicebusinessseo.com first.

THE HONEST COST MATH

Three line items. No agency math.

Pay-per-lead (Angi, Thumbtack, Networx, Service Direct)

CPL range (2026): $35–$120 per shared lead for residential trades. Higher for HVAC and roofing in saturated metros, lower for handyman and cleaning. Shared leads typically convert at 10–18 percent because they go to 3–5 contractors simultaneously.

Effective cost per booked job: $200–$800 once you account for the shared-lead conversion rate. Some Angi categories are now structurally unprofitable for solo operators after the 2025 platform fee bumps.

Strengths: Calls inside 7 days. No SEO learning curve. Phones ringing while you focus on the actual work. **Weaknesses:** Decaying channel. You don't own the lead. CPLs rise every year. Pause the spend = calls stop.

Agency local SEO (the $500–$3,000/mo bucket)

Cost: $500–$3,000/mo, opaque deliverables, no skill transfer back to the owner.

What you typically get: A monthly report (rankings + impressions, rarely calls). Some Posts. Some directory work. The cadence items that actually move the 2026 algorithm — weekly Posts, services & attributes upkeep, owner-led review replies, geo-tagged photos, monthly service-area edits — get reported on but rarely *run*.

Strengths: Hands-off. No time investment from the owner. **Weaknesses:** Pay forever. No skill transfer. Most owners can't tell if the agency is actually working. The agency owns the dashboards, not the trigger.

LSB SEO (the owner-run alternative)

Cost: One-time $197 V5.1 Playbook (the 23-chapter system), plus your time (about 4–6 hours a week for the first 90 days, then 2 hours/week steady-state). Or $99/mo AI Workforce module to operate the cadence for you.

What you get: The exact weekly cadence Google rewards (V5.1 Ch 22). Owner-attributable ranking signals. Skill transfer that means by month six, you understand your own GBP better than any agency would.

Strengths: Compounding. You own it. By month 6 you've replaced a $500–$3,000/mo agency engagement with a $99/mo (or self-run) cadence. **Weaknesses:** Month 1 is invisible. Compound takes 90 days minimum to start showing. Requires owner attention — not "set and forget."

The mental model: *Pay-per-lead is rent. Agency SEO is also rent — with a worse landlord. Owner-run SEO is the only one of the three you actually own.*

WEEKS 1–4

Angi carries the load. SEO planted.

ANGI / THUMBTACK / NETWORX	LSB SEO CADENCE
• Continue your existing Angi/Thumbtack/Networx spend. Do not cut anything yet — you need the call volume. • Note your starting CPL. You will compare it against weeks 9–13.	• GBP claim + verification check. Update categories, services, hours, and service area. • Start the weekly Posts cadence — 1 Update Post, 1 Offer Post per week. • Owner-led review-request automation goes live. Trigger fires on every completed job. • Site: confirm top 3 services have dedicated pages with city name + service name in the H1.

Expected SEO calls this window: 0–2 per month. Compound does not show in week 4 — this is normal, not a failure.

WEEKS 5–8

First map-pack movement.

ANGI / THUMBTACK / NETWORX	LSB SEO CADENCE
• Still carrying most calls. Review your CPL trend — note the direction. • Install call-tracking (CallRail or CTM, $30–$80/mo) before week 8. Without it, the week-13 pause decision is guesswork.	• Map-pack rank starts moving on your primary service in your primary city. Usually a 2–5 position lift. • Review velocity hits floor (4+/mo for plumbing/HVAC, 2+/mo for roofing). • On-site FAQ + attributes buildout — add one customer FAQ answer per week and keep services/attributes complete. • Geo-tagged photo per service call going up.

Expected SEO calls this window: 2–6 per month. Still less than Angi. But the trend line is now visibly upward and you did not pay Google a dollar.

WEEKS 9–13

Cross-over zone.

ANGI / THUMBTACK / NETWORX	LSB SEO CADENCE
• Same spend. Same CPL. Same shared-lead dilution. • This is the window where you start comparing Angi-driven calls (from call-tracking) against GBP-driven calls.	• Map-pack rank in primary city now top-3 for primary service in most markets (if cadence has been run honestly). • Long-tail organic traffic starts — city-name + service-name searches you wrote pages for. • Review count + reply velocity makes the GBP a real social-proof asset. • Service-area edits + on-site FAQ library now broad enough to start ranking in secondary cities.

Expected SEO calls this window: 6–15 per month. In many markets, SEO call volume now equals Angi call volume — at zero marginal cost.

THE DECISION

When to pause Angi.

Pause Angi when ALL of the following are true for 30 consecutive days:

1. Map-pack rank for primary service in primary city is top-3.

Check via the Local Falcon free grid or GBP Insights "search queries that show you in the map pack."

2. GBP-driven calls (per call-tracking) ≥ Angi-driven calls.

If you don't have call-tracking installed, you cannot make this decision honestly. Install CallRail ($30–$80/mo) before week 8.

3. Review velocity is at floor.

4+/month for plumbing/HVAC, 2+/month for roofing. Below floor, your GBP is structurally vulnerable to a fresh competitor moving in.

4. You have an emergency-response page on the site that ranks for at least one "near me" query.

Emergency calls are the highest-margin call type — losing them by pausing Angi too early hurts.

Pause Angi as a "phase-down," not a hard cut. Drop spend by 50% for 30 days. Watch the SEO pipeline absorb the slack. If it holds, drop another 50%. If it doesn't, restore 25% and wait another 30 days.

Keep Angi on standby — don't delete the account. When you spin up a new service area, Angi can carry the load for the first 60 days while the SEO cadence kicks in. It's a feeder channel, not a permanent expense.

What to do next

Step 1 — Run the free audit

Go to **localservicebusinessseo.com** and run the free audit. It scores your live GBP + site against the six cadence categories the V5.1 Playbook calls out — Posts, services & attributes, review velocity, photos, service-area, and call-tracking. ~3 minutes. No login. The audit also flags whether you have call-tracking installed (the decision criterion on the previous page).

Step 2 — Set up call-tracking before week 4

CallRail or CallTrackingMetrics. ~$50/mo. Without it, you cannot honestly compare Angi-driven calls to SEO-driven calls — and the "when to pause Angi" decision becomes guesswork. Cheaper than a single shared Angi lead at the high end.

Step 3 — Get the full system

The V5.1 Playbook ($197 one-time) is the 23-chapter system. Chapter 19 is the 90-Day Launch Calendar (the side-by-side timeline above is the public version). Chapter 22 is the GBP Cadence. Chapter 9 is the Review Authority + Velocity layer. Run it yourself, hand the cadence to a single VA, or use the AI Workforce module to operate it for you — typically replaces a $500–$3,000/mo agency engagement at roughly the agency's monthly cost.

Run your free audit at localservicebusinessseo.com
Six cadence categories. ~3 minutes. No login. The audit scores your live GBP against the same items in this guide and tells you which are dormant.

Or read the framework first — the 23-chapter V5.1 Playbook lives at **localservicebusinessseo.com/playbook**.