

THE 50-BUSINESS AUDIT: PROOF OF CONCEPT

50 independent Tucson service businesses across five trades, audited unprompted and unpaid. No client relationship existed with any business audited. Business names withheld; every finding traces to a public, checkable source with a check date.

A public-signal audit across 50 real, independent, Tucson-proper service businesses spanning 5 trades, checking AI-answer visibility for the trade's own money questions, email/lead-capture infrastructure, Meta Ad Library presence, and LinkedIn/outbound activity.

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

50 of 50 businesses were independently verified as real, active, and Tucson-proper before inclusion. At least 10 additional candidates were evaluated and dropped across the 5 batches for falling outside Tucson-proper city limits, being large multi-market chains/franchises rather than independent operators, or (in one case) being an out-of-market impersonator, a business surfacing prominently in Tucson search results that is actually headquartered in San Antonio, TX, caught in the garage door repair batch (4 of 14 candidates evaluated there were dropped, the highest verification-overhead rate of the 5 trades).

29 of 30 businesses, across the three trades where email-capture presence was checked and reported as a clean batch count (pest control, plumbing, residential electric), had no findable email capture mechanism at all, no newsletter signup, no popup, no automated follow-up for a lead who doesn't convert on first contact. Residential electricians ran 0 of 10 with any capture mechanism, a trade characteristic rather than an individual failing: this trade's lead model runs entirely on phone/quote-form, meaning the audit finding for that trade is "no capture mechanism exists," a structural absence, not a dead nurture flow.

1 of 50 businesses (a residential electrician) had no independently owned website at all, every public citation was a third-party directory listing. This is the single most severe visibility gap found across the full project, more structural than any single absent AI-answer query, since it caps every other fix until resolved.

Meta Ad Library observability collapsed after Run #1. The pest control batch (Run #1) saw roughly half of automated Ad Library checks blocked. All 4 subsequent trade batches (HVAC, plumbing, garage door repair, electric) saw the tool block 100% of attempts, regardless of trade, strong evidence the block is IP-reputation or rate-limit driven, not trade-specific. No ad-count claim was shipped in any brief where the tool was blocked; every instance is flagged "blocked, manual check needed" for Daniel to spot-check manually, logged in, before any ads-lane outreach.

Garage door repair carried the project's clearest fake-local-listing case. Of 14 candidates evaluated for that batch, one dropped candidate was headquartered in San Antonio, TX while

surfacing prominently in Tucson-local search results, a live, caught instance of the impersonator risk this trade is known for nationally, distinct from the 3 other drops (an out-of-Tucson-proper business and 2 large multi-market chains).

LinkedIn idle-ness recurred as a near-universal pattern, with the specific shape varying by trade.

Garage door repair: 0 of 10 businesses had any discoverable LinkedIn presence. Residential electric: 0 of 10 had a dedicated company LinkedIn page (2 had individual owner/staff profiles only). Plumbing: 7 of 10 either had no findable company page or showed a stark employee-count-to-follower mismatch (one 51-200-employee, decades-old business sat at 50 followers). This mismatch itself became a named, standalone Lead Gen signal after this project (added to the audit template), independent of whether the AI/GEO or email signals were weak.

TRADE BY TRADE

Pest control (Run #1, 10 businesses). All 10 relied on phone/quote-form only with zero email follow-up infrastructure, and 9 of 10 were absent from at least one major "best of" listicle that AI answer engines commonly cite for the trade's money question. One business had recently rebranded and appeared to have orphaned years of built-up AI-citation equity under its old name, a fixable but easy to miss problem. Only 1 of 10 was running any active Meta ad campaign, against a market where the two largest regional players run 20 to 130 active ads apiece.

HVAC (Batch 2, 10 businesses). The AI/GEO gap was the dominant, most checkable signal: 6 of 10 businesses were absent from all three money queries checked despite real reputation assets ranging from 10 to 65 years in business and up to 3,900 reviews. The 2 businesses that did surface in at least one money query were the batch's larger, more digitally active players, and for those the sharper signal shifted to email retention: real content and review volume with no visible capture mechanism. One business produced a site-infrastructure red flag (an SSL handshake failure on automated fetch), the second confirmed instance of that exact tell across the project.

Plumbing (Batch 3, 10 businesses). 9 of 10 were absent from at least one of two money queries checked, and 6 of 10 were absent from both, despite several having 20 to 73 years of operating tenure. 9 of 10 had no findable email capture at all. LinkedIn idle-ness or scale mismatch touched 7 of 10 businesses regardless of company size, reinforcing it as a durable, trade-independent pattern rather than a small-operator issue.

Garage door repair (Batch 4, 10 businesses). This trade required the heaviest verification overhead of the project (4 of 14 evaluated candidates dropped, including the confirmed out-of-market impersonator above). 5 of 10 businesses were cited on the trade's flagship listicle but 0 of those 5 surfaced in a direct check of either money query, a citation-vs-query-visibility gap distinct from outright absence. 0 of 10 had any discoverable LinkedIn presence, making Lead Gen a stronger natural fit for this trade than most others audited, particularly its B2B commercial sub-segment.

Residential electric (Batch 5, 10 businesses). Every business had at least one AI money-query gap across a 4-query grid (general trust, panel upgrade, EV charger, emergency), with 6 of 10 fully absent from the panel-upgrade query specifically despite it being a near-universal service line for the trade. This batch produced

the project's single most severe finding: one business with no independently owned website at all, citation only through third-party directories. 0 of 10 had any email capture mechanism or dedicated company LinkedIn page, both read as trade characteristics (a phone/quote-form-only lead model, a B2C service that doesn't map to B2B outbound) rather than individual failings.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITS

AI-answer-engine visibility was checked via organic web-search results used as a proxy for AI-answer citation in most of this project's audits (no direct ChatGPT/Claude/Gemini/Perplexity chat-query tool was available in this environment for most batches); this is a documented proxy, not a claim of literal AI-chat citation, and is now a required, explicit label on every AI-visibility claim in the audit template (v2). Every other claim traces to a specific checkable source with a check date. Where a tool could not verify something (Ad Library blocks, a site that failed to load), that limitation is stated rather than guessed past.

Compiled 08 August 2026. Findings describe identified opportunity and are not a projection or guarantee of revenue. Full per-business briefs exist for all 50 audits and are shared with each business on request. Daniel Burns, Digital Marketing & Business Growth Consultant, Tucson AZ.