A FREE PLAYBOOK

momentum by The Next Right Move



Run It Like They Would

The private equity playbook for owners who aren't selling.



Coach AK
Author of The Next Right Move

Free to use. Yours to keep.

The companies beating you aren't better at the work. They run on a structure: clear numbers, clear systems, a clear rhythm.

This playbook gives you that same structure. It's free. Use it, run it yourself, and keep everything you build. You don't have to sell to anyone to use it.

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WHO THIS IS FOR, AND WHO WE WORK WITH

Anyone can read this. We only work with a few.

The trades we work with fix a problem that gets worse every day or stops the house from working. Big tickets, real urgency, and a customer who is already looking:

- **Foundation repair**
- **Basement waterproofing and crawl space**
- **Restoration and mold remediation**
- **Sewer line replacement**
- **Roofing**
- **HVAC system replacement**
- **Select remodelers with high margins**



The owners we work with

They want to grow. They want to know their numbers, run it like a business, and have the option to sell it someday on their terms.

Who we don't work with

If your average job is a $79 service call, the math of paid marketing is hard, and we'll tell you that up front. If you've run it the same way for twenty years and want to keep it that way, that's your call. We respect it. We're just not the fit.

We're not a marketing agency. Marketing is one piece. We start with your numbers, because the numbers decide everything else.

WHO'S BEHIND THIS

They call me the Coach.

I'm also a founder, an operator and an author, and I've spent my whole life inside high performance, first on the track, then in the boardroom.



Coach AK Author of The Next Right Move

- I wrote **The Next Right Move**, a 100 day self coaching guide on starting strong and becoming who you want to be.
- I coached **Google's global sales team** and its leaders, and taught Google's courses on Google Ads and search on Coursera.
- I'm a **Google for Startups** mentor.
- I've coached leaders at **Amazon, Walmart and LinkedIn**, worked with teams like Raymond James, Biogen and Duke Basketball, and I teach on LinkedIn Learning.
- I've coached leaders at **private equity backed companies**, including in home services.
- I was ranked **top 10 in the world in the 4×400** and was a four time All American in track and field at the University of Oregon, where our relay set the school record and took third at the 2005 NCAA Championships.
- I've worked in **more than 30 countries**, from China to the Philippines to Haiti, including sports diplomacy with the U.S. State Department.
- I cofounded **LeadLyft**, a behavioral AI company. I build with AI every day, so I know where this industry is headed.
- I'm a founding member of **The Honest Builder**, working side by side with contractors.

I've sat with people who run some of the biggest companies in the world. I chose the trades. This playbook is what I brought with me.

WHY PRIVATE EQUITY KEEPS WINNING

It's not magic. It's structure.

I've coached leaders at private equity backed home service companies, so I've seen how they run from the inside. They win on six things.

01

They buy big, need based jobs with a known price.

Foundation, waterproofing, roofing, HVAC replacement.

02

They know their numbers.

What a click costs, what a customer costs, what a customer is worth.

03

Then they outspend you.

When you know $500 in ads turns into a $15,000 job, you keep spending while everyone else is scared to.

04

They answer every call

and run a system that doesn't depend on the owner.

05

They plan for the slow season

before it comes.

06

They grow profit every month,

because profit is what a buyer pays for.

You can resent them, or you can learn how they work and get a leg up. You don't have to become private equity. You need the same structure, and you already have what they can't buy:

your name, your town and your reputation.

This playbook is how.

WHERE YOU STAND

The three tiers

A tier isn't about how much money you make or what you pay yourself. It's about whether your business is built to scale.

TIER 1

Runs on the owner

No real numbers. Leads come from word of mouth and the owner's phone. If the owner stops, the business stops.

TIER 2

Measured

Knows what a customer costs and what one is worth. Calls get answered. Every lead has a source. Still leans on the owner for most decisions.

TIER 3

Built to scale

Profit grows every month. Service plans bring in steady revenue. The systems are written down and run without the owner in the room. Ready for a second location or a buyer.

Where are you today? Score yourself in five minutes.

NEXT PAGE

SELF SCORE

Score yourself in five minutes.

Tick every line that's true today. Be honest. Nobody sees this but you.

- [ ] I know my revenue, expenses and profit for each of the last 12 months.
- [ ] I know what it costs me to land one new customer.
- [ ] I know what an average customer is worth to me over time, including repeat work and service plans.
- [ ] Every lead is tracked back to where it came from.
- [ ] A real person answers at least 8 of every 10 calls, even when I'm on a job.
- [ ] New web leads get a reply within an hour.
- [ ] Every job ends with photos, a review ask and a service plan offer.
- [ ] My Google profile, website and reviews look better than my top three competitors'.
- [ ] I have a weekly meeting with my numbers and my top problem for the week.
- [ ] My crew could explain our values and our job checklist without me there.
- [ ] I know how much cash I need to get through my slowest months.
- [ ] The business could run for two weeks without me.

0 to 4 ticked	5 to 9 ticked	10 to 12 ticked
Tier 1	**Tier 2**	**Tier 3**

Most owners we talk to land in Tier 1. That's not a judgment. It means there's money on the table you can go get.

THE THREE NUMBERS YOU RUN ON

CAC, job cost and LTV

Everything in this playbook comes back to three numbers.

CAC

Cost to win a customer

Everything you spent on marketing and sales in a month, divided by the new customers you won.

Job cost

Cost to do the work

Materials, labor, subs, permits, dump fees and equipment, per job. Price minus job cost is your gross profit.

LTV

Lifetime value

What a customer pays you over the whole relationship: the job, the service plan, repeat work and referrals.

Job cost comes off first. What's left has to beat CAC.



Count LTV in gross profit, not sales: a $30,000 customer at a 40% margin is worth $12,000 to you. A common rule of thumb is **LTV in gross profit at least 3 times CAC.**

Raise LTV	Offer a service plan on every job. Ask every happy customer for a referral.
Protect the margin	Price for profit, not to win the bid. A 50% markup is only a 33% margin. Count callbacks, card and financing fees, and commissions on the job they came from.
Lower CAC, two ways	**Brand and trust:** people who already trust you say yes faster. **Stop the leaks:** every missed call, slow reply and unanswered estimate is a lead you paid for and lost. Fixing leaks is the cheapest growth there is.

BENCHMARKS

How you compare

NUMBER	BELOW MARKET	MARKET	TOP PERFORMERS	SOURCE
Net profit margin	Under 10%	10 to 20%	**20% and up**	ServiceTitan, CT Acquisitions
Gross margin	Under 50%	50 to 55%	**60% and up**	ServiceTitan
Close rate on in home estimates	Under 20%	About 27% (national average)	**35% and up**	Siro
Calls answered by a person	About half (industry: 52%)	80% and up	**95% and up**	Invoca via Hicira
Reply to a new web lead	Over an hour	Within an hour	**Within 5 minutes**	Jobber via Hicira
Google Ads cost per lead	Above $91	About $91 (home services median)	**Below $91**	LocaliQ
Revenue from service agreements	Under 10%	15 to 30%	**40% and up**	CT Acquisitions
Largest single customer or referral source	Over 20% of revenue	Under 20%	**No single source dominates**	CT Acquisitions

Why it matters

In one 2026 report, top and bottom quartile companies of the same size and trade sold for **2 to 3.5 times profit apart.** About 27% of calls to home service businesses go unanswered, and fewer than 3% of people sent to voicemail leave a message.

What's ours, not the industry's

The top performer close rate, the 80% and 95% answer rates, and the 5 minute reply are our targets. The margin and service agreement numbers come from HVAC data, the trade with the best published numbers. Your trade may differ, which is why the first step is measuring your own.

GROW · STEP 1

Get your real numbers

You can't grow profit you can't see. Sit down with your accountant and get:

01 Monthly revenue, expenses and profit for the last 12 to 24 months

02 Average job size and profit by service

03 Close rate on estimates

04 Payroll by month, so you know what a slow month really costs

Ask one more question: is the paperwork in order? Clean books, taxes filed, licenses, insurance, contracts. A buyer or a lender will ask for all of it.

GROW · STEP 2

Track every lead and dollar

Every lead gets a source. Every job gets traced back to it.

Google Ads · Local Services Ads · Your Google profile · Website · Referrals · Partners · Repeat customers · Social · Offline

Then, every month, look at each service on its own: revenue, leads, profit and service agreements. A busy service isn't always a profitable one.

Put the money behind the winners.

Score every channel with ROES and the multiplier on pages 20 and 21, then track it every month with the worksheets on pages 22 to 24.

GROW · STEP 3

The sales process

The ad gets you the lead. The process gets you the job. On a $10,000 job, this is where most of the money is won or lost.

1. **Answer fast.**
   Call back or reply within 5 minutes. The first company to respond usually gets the visit.

2. **Show up like a pro.**
   On time, branded, in uniform. Text a photo of who's coming before you arrive.

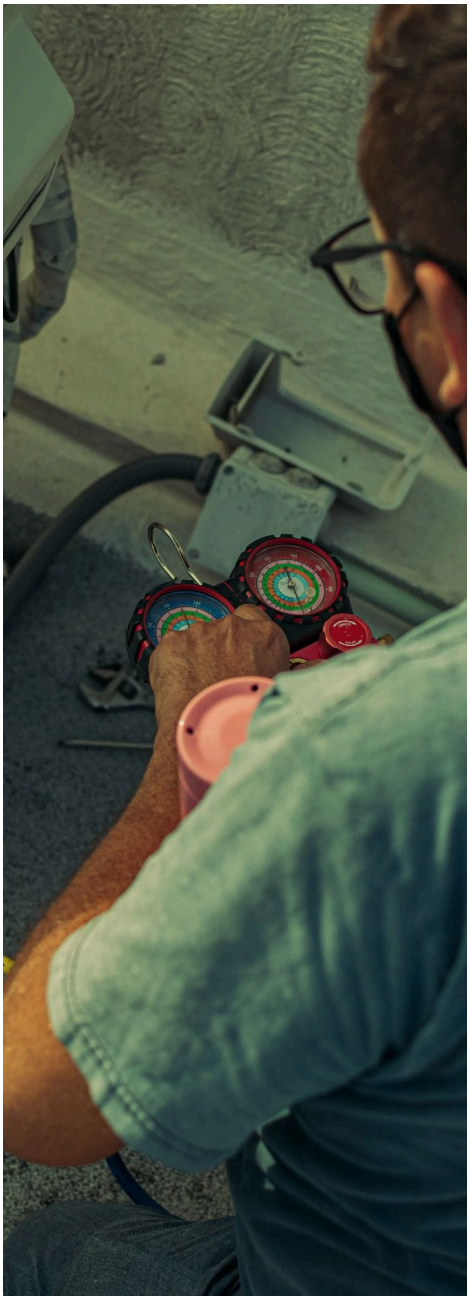
3. **Inspect with the customer, not for them.**
   Photos and video of what you find. Walk them through it in plain words.

4. **Give options.**
   A good, better and best price. People like to choose.

5. **Offer financing on big jobs.**
   A monthly payment can turn a no into a yes.

6. **Offer the service plan**
   with every job.

7. **Follow up every estimate that didn't close.**
   Day 1, day 3, day 7, day 14, day 30. Most owners stop after one call. Track it, and watch your close rate climb.



GROW · STEP 4

Brand dollars and performance dollars

You spend money two ways. Measure both.

	Brand dollars	Performance dollars
WHAT IT DOES	More people know you exist and trust you	Turns people who need help now into booked jobs
WHERE	Social, videos, blogs, community events, partners	Google Ads, Local Services Ads, Google profile, website
HOW YOU MEASURE	Searches for your name, followers, “I saw you on…”	Cost per click, cost per booked job, revenue per dollar

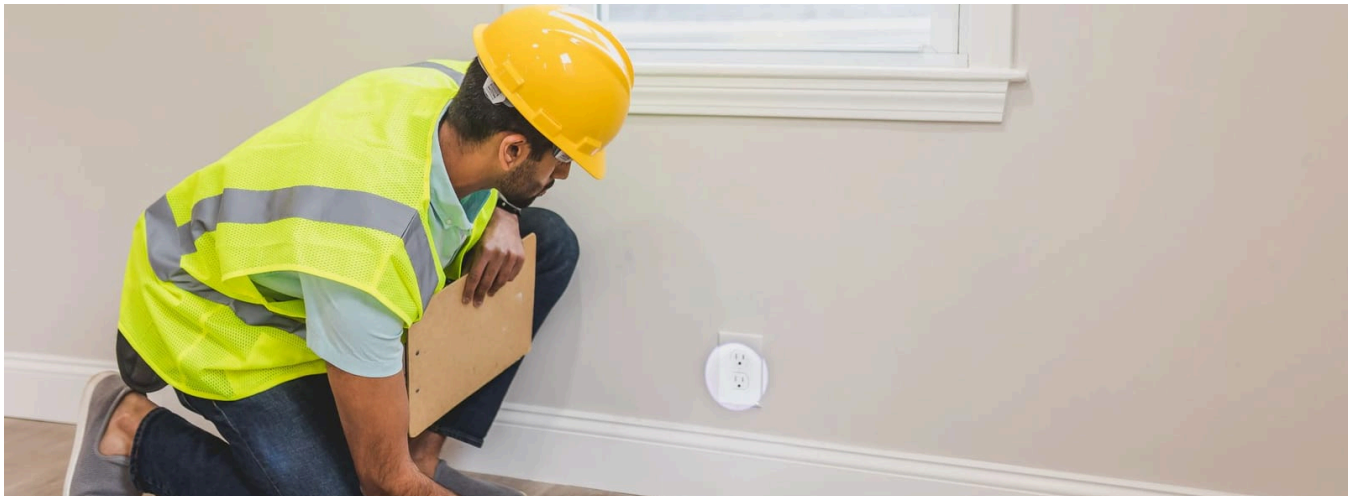
Strong brand makes ads cheaper, because people who already know you say yes faster.

Track offline and partner revenue too: home inspectors, realtors, property managers, other trades.

WRITE A BRAND KIT	Who you serve, what you promise, how you sound, your colors and photo style. **Every truck, post and text follows it.**

GROW · STEP 5

Every job markets the next one



ON EVERY JOB, NO EXCEPTIONS

01	**10 photos.**	Before, during, after.
02	**Signs.**	A sign at the job and door hangers on the neighbors' doors.
03	**A review for everything.**	Inspections, service calls, plans, not just big jobs.
04	**Post it.**	Photos and short videos go to your Google profile and social.
05	**Automate it.**	Everything drops into one media library and posts on its own.

ONE RULE ON REVIEWS

Ask every customer, never only the happy ones, and never offer anything in return. **That's Google's policy.**

GROW · STEP 6

Know your market and win it

Search yourself like a customer. Google it, ask ChatGPT. Who comes up? Who looks better?

Study your top competitors: their reviews, photos, offers, and what they say that you don't.

Write a SWOT: your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Update it every quarter.

Pick one clear reason a homeowner should choose you, and say it everywhere.

Add commercial and partner work where it fits: property managers, multi family buildings, realtors clearing inspection repair lists. Often cheaper to win than a homeowner from an ad.



GROW · STEP 7

Grow profit, not just headcount

Hiring is the most expensive way to grow. Staff for what the season really needs.

Use AI where it saves real money

Answering and texting back missed calls, follow ups, scheduling, review asks and reports.

Question every expense you can't tie to revenue.

RUN IT

The team is the brand

In the good transitions I've seen, finding inefficiency doesn't mean firing everybody. It means finding where old habits cost money and training everyone to think like the business.

A logo on the truck means nothing if the person getting out of it doesn't represent you.

Write values you can test, not slogans.

"Good customer service" means nothing until it's spelled out:

- On time
- Sign out
- Photos taken
- Spot left cleaner than you found it
- Findings explained in plain words
- Review asked for

Show the crew what good looks like, then quiz them on it.

Hire with a checklist, not just a good personality.

Every hire should help in at least one of these:

EFFICIENCY
Do they make the work faster or cheaper?

MORE BUSINESS
Do they help win jobs, even through their own relationships?

COMPLIANCE
Do they follow the protocol and keep everyone safe?

MORALE
Do they make this a better place to work?

RUN IT

The weekly rhythm

“You fall to the level of your systems.”

As James Clear puts it

So run on a simple rhythm, the way companies using the EOS operating system do:

EVERY QUARTER

Quarterly goals

A few clear goals each quarter, each with one owner. Pick from:

- More efficiency
- More profit
- Higher revenue
- Better compliance
- Better visibility
- Fewer holes in the system

EVERY WEEK

A weekly meeting

Same time, same agenda:

1. What's the biggest problem we solve this week?
2. What are our numbers?
3. Did we keep the job cadence?
4. Did anything hit us that our rules didn't cover?

RUN IT

Rules for bad moments

Good weeks run themselves. Decide how you handle the bad ones before they happen. Here are examples to start from. Make them yours.

WHEN THIS HAPPENS	A STARTING RULE
A bad review	Reply within a day, calm and short. Thank them, own what's fair, offer to make it right offline. **Never argue in public.**
Something goes wrong on a job	Stop, make it safe, tell the owner within the hour, tell the customer the same day with a plan. **Photograph everything.**
Someone doesn't show up	One backup per crew, a call to the customer before they notice, and a conversation the next morning. **Twice is a pattern.**
Hiring or letting someone go	Hire against the checklist and the four buckets. Let go with a documented reason and a written warning first, unless it's a safety issue.
A new competitor shows up	Look them up the same week. Compare their reviews, photos and offers to yours. Don't race to the bottom on price. **Win on trust and speed.**

When something new hits you, write the rule that week, so it never surprises you twice.

PROTECT IT

Money and risk

Money

Fast growth can still break a business. Protect the cash and keep the numbers clean.

Know your cash timing. On big jobs you often pay for materials, labor and marketing weeks before the customer pays you. Track how many days that takes, so growth doesn't cause a cash crunch.

Build a slow season reserve. Know what your slowest months cost and set that cash aside before they come.

Keep an add back list every month. Personal expenses, one time costs and one off equipment buys. A buyer adds these back to your profit, but only if they're documented.

Pay yourself a real salary on paper. A buyer subtracts what it would cost to hire a manager to replace you. If you underpay yourself, your profit looks bigger than it is.

Clean books, monthly. Standard categories, reconciled every month by your accountant.

Risk

Buyers dig into these, and each one can come straight off your sale price.

Warranties. Long promises on foundation, waterproofing and roofing work carry real liability. Write clear terms, cap the liability, log every claim, and set money aside for them.

1099 versus W2. Using 1099 subcontractors for core crew work can be a misclassification risk. Rules vary by state. Review it with your accountant or attorney.

Safety and insurance. Crawl spaces, roofs and attics are dangerous. Written safety procedures, training and a clean safety record protect your crew and keep your workers' comp costs down.

Contracts. A standard customer contract for every job, with the warranty, payment terms and change order rules in writing.

SCALE IT

Bigger than the owner

A buyer doesn't pay much for a business that walks out the door with its owner. Scaling means making it work without you in every room.



01	**Write it down.**	Step by step procedures for inspections, installs and service calls.
02	**Name a second in command.**	A lead tech or ops coordinator who runs the day to day on site.
03	**Grow recurring revenue.**	Service plans and maintenance turn one job into years of income, and buyers pay more for revenue they can predict.
04	**Open a second location**	once the first runs on its own. Proving the system works in a new market is what makes the business worth more.
05	**Check your value every quarter.**	Run a mock valuation against the benchmarks, so you always know where you stand and what moves the number.

Whether you ever sell or not, a business built this way pays you more, stresses you less, and gives you the choice.

BEFORE THE WORKSHEETS

Free isn't free.

Some owners won't touch a lead service because it charges. Who cares what it charges? The question is what it gives back. And the free stuff isn't free. The networking breakfast, the door knocking, the posting every night: you pay for all of it with hours.

ROES

Return on Effort Spend

ROAS sees your ad dollars. ROES sees your dollars and your hours.

Real cost = dollars spent + (hours × what an hour is worth)

ROES = gross profit ÷ real cost

Under 1x
It's costing you money. Fix it or stop.

1x to 3x
It's working. Keep it and make it better.

3x or more
Double down. Move money and hours here.

EXAMPLE MONTH, WITH AN HOUR WORTH $100

CHANNEL	DOLLARS	HOURS	REAL COST	GROSS PROFIT	ROES	CALL
Lead service	$1,000	5	$1,500	$4,800	**3.2x**	**Double down**
Networking group	$100	16	$1,700	$2,000	**1.2x**	**Make it better**
Door knocking	$0	20	$2,000	$1,600	**0.8x**	**Fix or stop**

The one that charges is the winner. The one that felt free is losing money.

Use gross profit, not sales.
$2 back in sales at a 40% margin is 80 cents of profit for every $1 in. That's a loss.

Give slow channels 90 days.
Referrals and partners are seeds, not fruit. Don't pull them up before they grow.

Give an hour one price.
Use what you'd pay someone to do that work, and use it for every channel.

Hand off the effort.
A channel that's 1× on your hour can be 3× on someone else's.

You don't judge a workout by whether it was free. You judge it by whether it made you faster.

THE MULTIPLIER

Measure it. Scale it.

Word of mouth is great, but you can't turn it up or see where it came from. Ads you can: put more in, get more back, and see exactly what came back.

	EASY TO SCALE	HARD TO SCALE
EASY TO MEASURE	**×1.5** Paid ads, LSAs, lead services	**×1.25** A networking group you track
HARD TO MEASURE	**×1.25** Truck wraps, billboards, radio	**×1** Word of mouth

Measurable: you can count the leads and the jobs it brought.

Scalable: put in more money or hours and it brings more, without you doing it yourself.

Growth score = ROES × multiplier The top score gets the next dollar and hour.

THE EXAMPLE MONTH, RANKED, WITH REFERRALS ADDED

CHANNEL	ROES	MEASURABLE	SCALABLE	MULTIPLIER	GROWTH SCORE
Lead service	3.2x	Yes	Yes	×1.5	**4.8**
Referrals	4.0x	No	No	×1	**4.0**
Networking group	1.2x	Yes	No	×1.25	**1.5**
Door knocking	0.8x	Yes	Yes	None	**Under 1x: fix or stop**

Under 1× gets no multiplier. Losing money is losing money, however easy it is to scale.

Earn the multiplier. Ask every lead how they heard about you and give each partner a code: now referrals are measurable. Ask every happy customer for a referral, with a thank you: now they're scalable. 4.0× times 1.5 is 6.0, your best channel.

Word of mouth is a gift. A referral system is a business.

WORKSHEET 1

Where your leads come from

Name every source you have today. Use the same names every month on worksheet 2, so the numbers line up.

Referrals
Past customers, friends, your crew

Paid ads
Google Ads, Local Services Ads, Meta

Lead services
Angi, Thumbtack, HomeAdvisor

Channel partners
Other trades, BNI, realtors, adjusters

Organic and social
Google profile, website, AI, social

Outbound and direct
Cold calls, direct mail, door knocking

Repeat customers
Service plans and return customers

Other
Anything else, or you don't know yet

Ask every lead: "How did you hear about us?" Write down their answer, even when your tracking says something else. Tracking misses word of mouth.

Where they came from isn't how they reached you. Someone can see your yard sign, Google you, then call. Source: yard sign. Reached you by: phone. Worksheet 3 tracks the second part.

WORKSHEET 2

Your monthly numbers, by channel

One sheet per service, every month. Fill in the white rows. The green rows are the math.

Service _____ **Month** _____ **An hour is worth $** _____

Number	Referrals	Paid ads	Lead services	Partners	Organic	Outbound	Repeat	Other	Total
Spend ($)									
Hours spent									
Impressions									
Leads									
Junk leads									
Appts booked									
Appts held									
Cancels									
No shows									
Estimates given									
Closed jobs									
Revenue ($)									
Job costs ($)									
Multiplier ×1, ×1.25 or ×1.5									
Close rate closed ÷ held									
Average job revenue ÷ closed									
Gross profit revenue – costs									
Margin profit ÷ revenue									
Cost per lead spend ÷ leads									
CAC spend ÷ closed									
Real cost spend + hours × $									
ROES profit ÷ real cost									
Growth score ROES × multiplier									

Appts are appointments. Held means it actually happened. Count a lead once, under the source the customer gave you. Leave impressions blank where a channel can't measure them. Job costs are materials, labor, subs, permits and equipment. ROES and the multiplier are on pages 20 and 21: under 1× ROES, fix it or stop.

WORKSHEET 3

How they reached you, and what got away

How they reached you

Month _____

The first way they contacted you	Leads	Booked	Closed	Avg reply time
Phone call				
Form on your website				
Form on an ad landing page				
Text message				
Chat on your website				
Direct message on social				
Google profile message or booking				
Email				
In person or partner handoff				
Total				

What got away, and why

Reason	How many	Est. value ($)	What we change next month
Price			
Timing, not ready yet			
Went with a competitor			
Financing declined			
Not a fit for us			
Never answered our follow up			
Cancelled or didn't show			

Average days from lead to signed job

_____

New customers who added a service plan

_____

Referrals from this month's customers

_____

YOUR NEXT STEP

You have the playbook.

You can run all of it yourself, and some of you will. Good.

Our audits find an average of

$30,000

in missed deals and revenue opportunities, by our estimate.

If you'd rather see exactly where you stand first, book a free revenue audit. **Thirty minutes, on a screen share.** We score your business against the tiers with you, find where money is leaking, and you leave with a 30, 60, 90 day plan to move up a tier.

The only catch: we give you everything we find, so you can walk away and do it yourself. Some owners would rather not. If that's you, and you're a fit, we'll do it for you. No hard sell.

Book your free revenue audit →

momentum.tnrmconsulting.com/free-audit

SOURCES

ServiceTitan: Understanding HVAC profit margins · CT Acquisitions: The 2026 Home Services M&A Multiples Report · Siro: In home sales industry benchmarks · Hicira: Missed call statistics, citing Invoca and Jobber · LocaliQ: Home services search advertising benchmarks