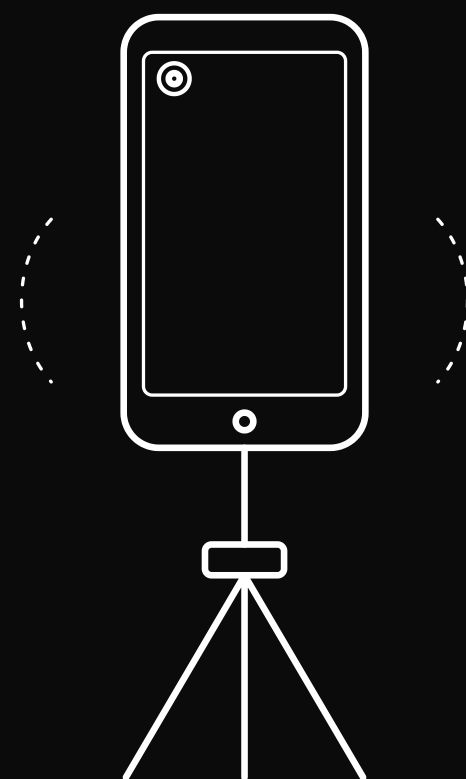


A PHONE-FIRST GUIDE

The Local Business *Reels* Playbook

How to film short
videos that bring
customers through
your door.



WHY REELS, WHY NOW

Your next customer is probably scrolling.



A Reel is a short vertical video on Instagram. A regular post mostly reaches people who already follow you. Reels can also be recommended to people who don't, which is how a business gets seen beyond its own list, sometimes by people a few streets away.

The goal is not viral. The goal is steady visibility with people near you, week after week.

THE ONE RULE

Film for your customer, *not for other businesses.*

The trap is making videos about your industry that only impress your peers. Your customer doesn't care about terminology or technique. They care about what the finished job looks like, what it costs them in time and hassle, and whether they can trust you.

THE TEST BEFORE YOU FILM

Would a customer stop scrolling for this,
or only a competitor?

SEVEN IDEAS FOR ANY LOCAL BUSINESS

Seven ideas to *start with*.

- 1 **Before and after.** The transformation, told in ten seconds.

- 2 **The process.** One step of your work, sped up.

- 3 **The question you hear every week.** Answer it on camera.

- 4 **A day in the business.** Open to close in twenty seconds.

- 5 **Meet the person.** Who actually shows up when someone hires you.

- 6 **The mistake to avoid.** Help them not get burned.

- 7 **The local tie-in.** Your business, your neighborhood, your season.

THE FIVE-SHOT WORKDAY

Five shots you can film *mid-workday.*

A shot list for a normal day, without stopping work:

- 1 **Hands at work.** Three close-up clips of the detail only you notice.

- 2 **The face.** You or your team, one sentence each.

- 3 **The space.** One wide shot, slow pan.

- 4 **The customer moment.** The handoff, the reveal, the reaction. Always ask first.

- 5 **The walkthrough.** Narrate what you are doing while you do it.

Film everything vertical. Hold each shot five to ten seconds. Take more than you need.

TALKING-HEAD PROMPTS

Ten prompts. *Thirty seconds each.*

Look at the camera and answer one of these:

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|--|
| 1 | The one thing I would tell every homeowner before they hire a contractor. | 6 | What happens right after you book with us. |
| 2 | What a visit with us includes, start to finish. | 7 | The product we recommend to everyone, and the one we don't. |
| 3 | Three questions to ask before you sign anything. | 8 | How long the work really takes, honestly. |
| 4 | The mistake I see Birmingham customers make every season. | 9 | A real customer story that made my week (tell it with their OK). |
| 5 | Why we do one step of the job differently. | 10 | Come with me to a job in your neighborhood. |

PHONE FILMING CHECKLIST

Before you *press record*.

- ☐ **Clean the lens.** It is always dirtier than you think.

- ☐ **Face a window or open shade.** Light on your face, never behind you.

- ☐ **Vertical, eye level,** propped or held steady.

- ☐ **Film somewhere quiet.** Wind can ruin phone audio outdoors, so an inexpensive clip-on mic can earn its keep.

- ☐ **Airplane mode,** so a call does not kill the take.

- ☐ **One idea per video.** If you make two points, make two videos.

EDITING BASICS

Cut it down, *keep it clear.*

Cut every second that does not earn its place.

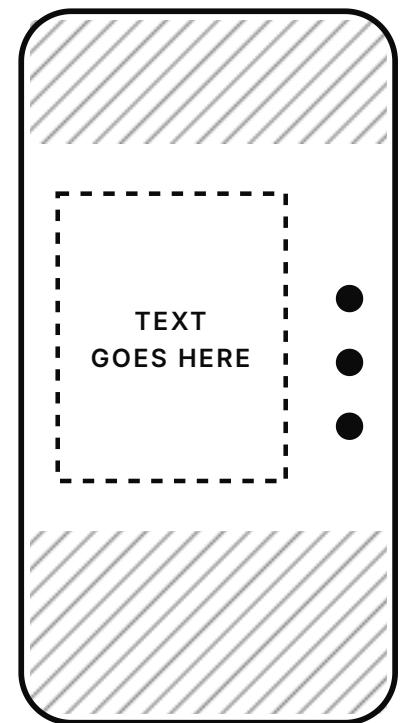
The first two seconds matter most. Open with movement or the finished result, not a logo.

Add captions. Many people watch with the sound off.

Keep text in the middle of the screen, clear of the app's buttons.

Keep music low under talking clips, or skip it. Pick tracks from Instagram's own audio library: music rights are narrower for business accounts, and outside songs can get a video muted.

Export vertical, 1080 by 1920.



HOOKS

Four ways to *open a video.*

The first line, spoken or on screen, does a lot of the work.

1 · CALL OUT THE CUSTOMER

“If you own an older home in Birmingham...”

2 · CALL OUT THE PROBLEM

“Before you replace your AC, check this one thing.”

3 · PROMISE THE PAYOFF

“Watch this bathroom go from 1998 to today in twelve seconds.”

4 · START MID-ACTION

Skip the intro. Begin with the drill, the pour, the reveal.

Make the hook about them. Skip “hey guys, welcome back.”

POSTING RHYTHM

A rhythm you can *actually* keep.

- 1 **Start with three Reels a week.** It is a pace many owners can sustain, and steady output matters more than volume.
- 2 **Batch.** Film two or three videos in one hour instead of facing daily pressure.
- 3 **Rotate the types.** One process, one talking head, one before-and-after each week.
- 4 **Post when your customers scroll.** Morning, lunch, evening. Try all three and watch your own numbers.
- 5 **Judge after ninety steady days,** not nine intense ones.

A SAMPLE MONTH

Steal this *calendar*.

Three posts a week, four weeks.

WEEK	THIS WEEK'S THREE
Week 1	Process clip · Talking head: the weekly question · Before and after
Week 2	A day in the business · The mistake to avoid · A customer moment
Week 3	Meet the person · Talking head: what it costs · Local tie-in
Week 4	Process, sped up · Talking head: seasonal tip · Before and after

Next month, run the same ideas again with new footage. Repeating a format that worked is fine.

CAPTIONS, TAGS AND LOCATION

Finish the *post*.

- 1 **Caption.** One line that adds something, then a question or a next step.

- 2 **Location.** Tag it when you post. It takes seconds and helps local viewers place you.

- 3 **Hashtags.** Three to five: your city, your service, your neighborhood.

- 4 **Comments.** Reply when you can. Each reply is a conversation with a potential customer.

READING THE NUMBERS

What the numbers *can* tell you.

YOU SEE	IT MAY MEAN
Views	The opening grabbed people.
Watch time	People stayed for the video.
Saves and shares	It was useful. A good sign for a local business.
Profile visits and DMs	People are interested enough to take a step.
Follower count	Don't judge by it in the first ninety days.

Once a month: keep your top two formats, drop the bottom one, try one new idea.

FIVE MISTAKES TO SKIP

What *not* to do.

- 1 **Posting only promos.** Sell in one post out of four; help in the rest.

- 2 **Stock footage and graphics-only videos.** People hire people.

- 3 **Starting with "hey guys."** Start with the point.

- 4 **Deleting a video after one quiet day.** Give it time before you judge it.

- 5 **Waiting for perfect.** A good-enough video you post beats a perfect one you never film.

WHAT DONE-FOR-YOU LOOKS LIKE

When the playbook works but *your calendar* doesn't.

This is what handing it off means:

- 1 **A monthly plan.** Your content calendar is mapped before the month starts.

- 2 **A shoot day.** We come to you and film on location.

- 3 **Posting, handled.** Your content goes out on a steady schedule.

- 4 **A plain-language report.** What worked, and what is next.

THE CLOSE

Want this handled *for you?*

If you would rather spend your week running the business, we'll run the camera. JLM Digital Marketing plans, films and posts for local businesses, then reports back in plain language.

START THE CONVERSATION

Message @jlm.digital on Instagram
or visit jlmdigital.com

Know a local owner who needs this? Send it along.