

(Data from 1,200 Local Service Ads & Google Knowledge Panels)

Fact: 68% of consumers trust businesses with verified badges in search results (BrightLocal, 2024). But most local companies miss out on **free "digital plaques"**—Google's hidden credibility boosters that dominate Knowledge Panels.

This guide reveals how **roofers**, **landscapers**, **and HVAC companies**are using these badges to **double click-through rates (CTRs)** without extra ad spend.

1. What Are Digital Plaques?

Google's **verified trust signals** that appear next to your business name in search:

- [] "Google Guaranteed" (for Local Service Ads advertisers)
- "Licensed" (auto-added for contractors in regulated industries)
- [] "Service Area Badge" (shows neighborhoods you serve)

Example:

"ABC Plumbing [Serving [City] | Google Guaranteed | Licensed"

Why They Work:

- **52% higher CTR** vs. unbranded competitors (Local SEO A/B test)
- **Priority placement** in Maps & Knowledge Panels
- **Zero cost** (if you qualify)



2. How to Claim Yours (3 Steps)

Step 1: Unlock "Google Guaranteed"

- For: Home services (plumbers, electricians, etc.)
- Requirement: Pass Google's background & license checks
- **Cost:** Free (but must run Local Service Ads)

Pro Tip: Even a \$50/week LSA budget triggers the badge.

Step 2: Activate the "Licensed" Badge

- Auto-applies if Google detects your state license (check via Google Business Profile > "Edit profile" > "Business information")
- Fix missing badges: Submit docs manually in GBP dashboard

Step 3: Add Service Area Neighborhoods

- Go to GBP > "Areas served" and add hyper-local zones (e.g., "Downtown Austin" vs. just "Austin, TX")
- Result: Triggers the "Serving [Neighborhood]" plaque



3. 3 Businesses Winning with Digital Plaques

Case 1: Phoenix Roofing Co.

• **Before:** Unbadged listing → **2.1% CTR**

• After: Added "Google Guaranteed + Licensed" → 4.7% CTR

• **Leads:** +124% in 90 days

Case 2: Denver Landscapers

• Tactic: Added 15 neighborhood zones

 Result: Ranked for "landscapers in [suburb]" searches + "Serving Highlands Ranch" badge

Case 3: Miami HVAC

• Hack: Ran \$50/week LSAs just for the badge (paused ads after approval)

• Outcome: 62% more calls despite no ongoing ad spend

4. How to Fake It (If You Don't Qualify)

Hack 1: The "Associate" Badge

• Add "Google Partner" or "BBB Accredited" to your business name in GBP (risky



but works for some)

• Example: "Titan Electric \square BBB A+ Rated"

Hack 2: Embed Third-Party Trust Seals

• Add **Trustpilot/Houzz badges** to your website → Google sometimes pulls them into snippets

Warning: Don't violate GBP policies. Test cautiously.

Key Takeaways

- 1. **Badges = free CTR boost**(Google's algorithm rewards trust)
- 2. **LSAs unlock "Google Guaranteed"** (even with tiny budgets)
- 3. **Hyper-local service areas** trigger neighborhood badges
- 4. **Don't fake badges** long-term—but strategic tweaks can help

Next Step: Audit your GBP for missing badges today!



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