TARGET MARKETEER

SMALL BUSINESS WEBSITE STUDY · OCTOBER 2026

We tested 200 small business websites. *3 in 4* are too slow on phones.

What local customers see when they pull up a small business website on their phone, across five US metro areas, and the five fixes that matter most.

75%
took more than 4 seconds to show their main content on a phone

45%
had no tap-to-call phone link on the homepage

5%
passed all six of the basics we checked

200 independent small business websites · 5 metro areas

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KEY FINDINGS

Most small business websites lose customers *before they load*

We ran 200 independent small business websites through Google Lighthouse, the test behind Google's PageSpeed Insights, and a checklist of the basics a local customer and Google both look for.

75%

took more than 4 seconds to show their main content on a phone, which Google rates as poor.

10%

met Google's 2.5 second mark for a good phone experience.

7.1 sec

was the typical (median) time to show the main content on a phone.

45%

had no tap-to-call phone link on the homepage.

1 in 3

gave a phone visitor no phone link and no contact form at all.

69%

were missing local business schema, the details Google reads for local results.

47%

failed at least three of the six basics we checked. Only 5 percent passed all six.

19%

of websites still listed for local businesses returned an error or did not load at all (47 of 247).

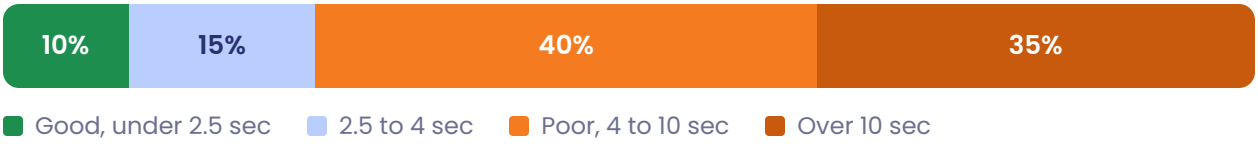
Why it matters: a local customer on a phone decides in seconds. A slow page or a missing phone link does not get a second look. It gets the back button, and the next business on the map gets the call.

SPEED ON PHONES

How long a phone visitor *waits*

Measured the way Google measures it: a mid-range phone on a slow 4G connection, timing how long until the biggest thing on the screen appears.

Time to show the main content on a phone



65 / 100

Median mobile speed score. Only 13 percent scored 90 or better, and 21 percent scored in Google's poor range.

2.9 MB

Median homepage size. 29 percent were over 5 MB, roughly a few full-size phone photos loading before a customer sees your hours.

By metro area

Metro area	Sites	Median speed score	Median time to main content
Triad, NC (Greensboro, Winston-Salem, High Point)	60	69	7.3 sec
Columbus, OH	35	65	7.0 sec
Denver, CO	35	63	7.7 sec
Tampa, FL	35	62	6.9 sec
Sacramento, CA	35	60	7.4 sec

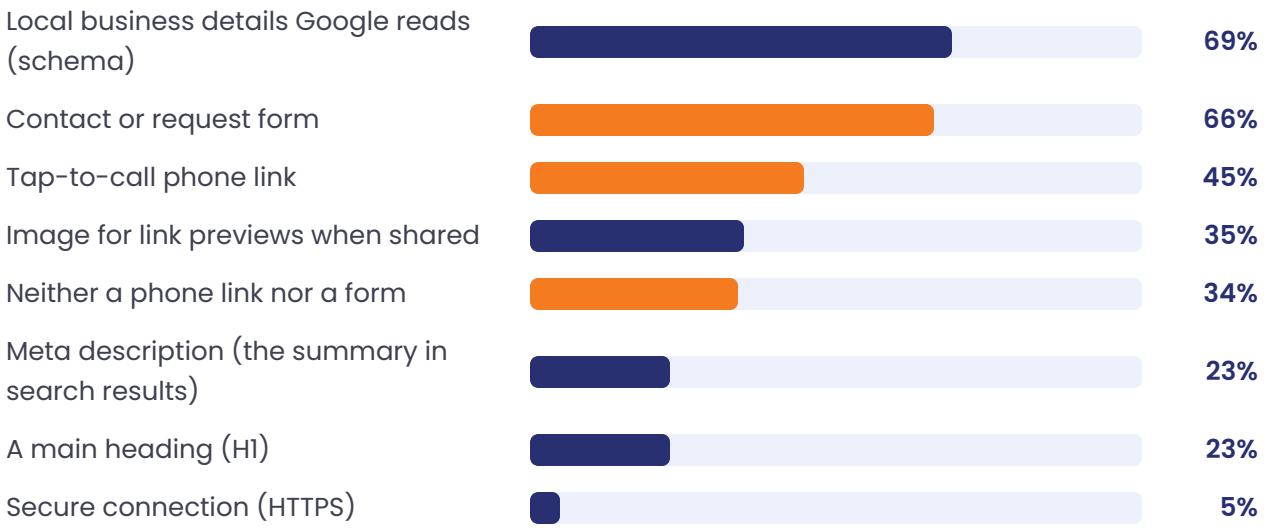
The gaps between cities are small. This is a small business problem everywhere, not a local one. Every website platform we saw had fast sites and slow ones, so what you load onto a site matters more than the builder you use.

THE BASICS

What small business homepages *are missing*

The most common gaps were not technical. They were the things that turn a visitor into a call.

Share of homepages missing each item



1 in 3 homepages

gave a phone visitor no direct way to get in touch. Those visitors have to hunt through menus or copy a number by hand, and many simply do not.

1 in 5 listed websites

did not load. These were sites still listed for local businesses on a public map. A listing that sends customers to a dead page loses them before the website gets a chance.

How we ran this study

A random sample of 200 independent small business websites from OpenStreetMap across five metro areas: the North Carolina Triad (60 sites) and Columbus, Denver, Tampa and Sacramento (35 each). Chains, franchises, government, schools, hospitals and religious organizations were excluded, and each website was counted once. Each homepage was tested once on October 24, 2026 with Google Lighthouse 12.8 using standard mobile settings, plus a checklist read from the homepage HTML. Of 247 sites tried, 47 returned an error, blocked testing or did not load, and were replaced with random backups from the same city. No individual business is named. Limits: one test per site, homepages only, and businesses on OpenStreetMap may differ from all small businesses. Business data from OpenStreetMap, available under the Open Database License, © OpenStreetMap contributors.

WHAT TO FIX FIRST

Five fixes, in the order *that wins calls*

Fix the things that cost you calls before the things that cost you speed points.

1. **Make sure the website your listings point to loads**

   Check your Google Business Profile, Facebook page and directory listings, and click through to your site from each one.

2. **Add a tap-to-call number and a short form near the top**

   Usually a ten-minute change in any website builder, and the fastest way to turn phone visitors into calls.

3. **Shrink your photos**

   Resize to about 2,000 pixels wide and save as WebP or compressed JPG. This often cuts load time in half.

4. **Write a homepage title and meta description**

   Say what you do and where, in plain words. It is what people read in search results before they click.

5. **Add local business schema**

   Most builders and SEO plugins have a setting for it. Enter your name, address, phone and hours once.

Check your own website

Our free Website Checkup runs the same speed test and basics in about a minute and emails you the full report.

targetmarketeer.com/website-checkup

Target Marketeer builds and runs marketing for small businesses nationwide, based in Greensboro, North Carolina. Full study and charts: targetmarketeer.com/website-design/small-business-website-study/. You are welcome to use any figure with a link to the study.