Tool 02: Website and contact-path inspection

This tool combines the five-second phone test, the contact-methods count, the after-hours self-call and a check of the page's parts.

Purpose

Check whether a homeowner who found you can reach you without effort. Leak 3 (Not called) and leak 4 (Called, but lost). Chapters 8 and 9.

Inputs

- Your own phone, and a second phone that isn't saved as you in the office.
- Someone who hasn't seen your website before (a spouse, a friend, a new hire).
- A timer.
- Full inspection: about 35 minutes in daytime, plus 5 minutes one evening and one weekend.
- Quick check (the after-hours call in step 12 alone): 5 minutes.

Steps

A. The five-second phone test

1. Hand your homepage, open on a phone, to the person who hasn't seen it.
2. Give them five seconds, then take the phone back.
3. Ask: What does this company do? Where? How would you contact them? What happens after you do?
4. Write down their answers word for word. Don't help.

B. The contact path

5. On the phone, without scrolling, note what you can see: phone number, a "call" button, an "estimate" or "book" button, a text option.
6. Tap the phone number. Does it dial?
7. List the ways to reach you: call, text, chat, form, online booking. For each, note who answers it and how fast.
8. Fill in your own form as a homeowner. Note the time. Note when, and whether, anyone replies.
9. If you offer booking, try to book a real time slot, then cancel.
10. Keep a route log, one line per channel you offer: page, where the message goes, test time, what the system recorded, who received it, how fast they replied, result, retest date. A confirmation screen isn't proof that anyone received it.
11. With your web person, on a test copy of the site, never the live one, make a valid request fail to send. The page should say it didn't go, keep what was typed where it can, and offer another way to reach you. A failed optional photo upload shouldn't block the request, and a reload shouldn't send it twice.

C. The after-hours self-call

12. From the second phone, test the after-hours path in one of two ways. (a) If you advertise live answering after hours, call inside those advertised hours. (b) If you don't, call just after your office closes and check that the message gives a truthful callback time, then check that the callback happens by that time.
13. Call again in a weekend hour you advertise (10 a.m. Saturday, say). If you promise 24 hours, add a call overnight, when a different person or service covers the phone.
14. Write down what happened each time: a person, an answering service, an AI, voicemail, a full mailbox, or nothing.
15. If it went to voicemail, leave a message as a homeowner and note when the callback comes.
16. Compare with the hours on your Google Business Profile. If the listing says open or 24 hours, does the call match the promise?
17. Write your availability as four separate facts, and check each: when someone answers; what they can book; when the work can actually be done; what happens outside those hours. An answering service picking up isn't emergency dispatch, and a request form isn't a booking. Test once during coverage, once outside it, and once when no slot is free.

D. The parts of the page (chapter 8)

18. Read only the headings on your homepage and your main service page. Do they answer: do you do this job, do you work in my area, are you legitimate, what drives the cost, what happens when I call?
19. On a phone, scroll down through the page. Are a "Call" button and your main button still in reach?
20. Run your button colors and phone number through a free contrast checker. Text should reach at least 4.5 to 1 (3 to 1 for large text), and the parts of buttons and form fields people need to see to use them 3 to 1 (WCAG 2.2; your designer can check the exceptions).
21. On a computer, is the menu visible, not hidden behind an icon? Are the labels the words homeowners use?
22. Put the mouse away. Using only the Tab and Enter keys, can you reach the menu, the phone link, the form and any chat or booking widget, see where you are at each step, and close any pop-up? Does every form field keep a visible label once you start typing? Send the form with one field left wrong: does it say what to fix, and keep what you already typed? Make the text bigger in your phone's settings: does the page still work? Ask your web person whether the spam check and error messages work with a screen reader. These are practical checks, not a compliance certificate (WCAG 2.2).
23. Count your form fields. Cross out any you could find yourself, ask later or do without. Keep a field only when the answer changes what the office does next (chapter 8).
24. On the service page's cost line: a range with the conditions that change it, or the cost drivers and how you set a quote. Never a range you made up.
25. Look next to the main button. Is there one line of proof: license, rating with review count, years in business?

26. Send your own form. Does the thank-you page say who will call, when, and the number for urgent jobs?
27. If you run search ads, don't click your own ads (each click costs money). Open each ad's landing page from the ad account or Google's ad preview tool. Does it go to the matching service page, with the same offer?

E. Before and after, by landing page (chapter 8)

Fill in one row per landing page for the month before a change and the month after it.

Landing page	Month	Visits from your service area	New inquiries (one person, one new job)	Inquiries that fit (G marks, chapter 10)	Booked jobs

For each inquiry, keep four things apart: the source (and how you know it), the page they entered on, the page they sent the form from, and what the customer says. A form sent from the Contact page doesn't mean the Contact page brought the visit. Where you can't tell, write "unknown".

Event	What it proves
A tap on the phone number	A tap, not a call
A form that failed its checks	Nothing yet; not an inquiry
A call and a form about one job	One inquiry
Your own test submissions	Nothing; leave them out
The city in your analytics	Where the visitor was, not where the job is

To trace a gap between tracked calls and the office log: match calls by number and time; a tracked call missing from the office log was missed or not logged; and check whether the tracking counts repeat callers and existing customers.

How to read it: visits from outside your area are a reason to investigate, not proof of a problem; an analytics city isn't the job's location (someone elsewhere can book work on a local property), so check the calls before changing the service-area message (chapter 10); a how-to page with many visits and few inquiries isn't a contact problem; ad visits landing on the wrong page are an ad problem (step 27).

How to read the result

- Fix in chapter 8's order: a broken path first (a call or form that reaches nobody), then a page so slow the call button never shows, then the first screen. If the five-second reader can't say what you do and where, that's the first-screen fix.
- The first screen should show a next step suited to the job: call for urgent work; an estimate or consultation request for planned work. Say when you'll respond.
- There's no right number of ways to reach you. Make the channels you offer reliable, and add another when it serves a customer need and someone can answer it. A channel nobody answers is a broken promise.
- Any after-hours call that reached nothing, or a full mailbox, is a leak you now know about. A listing that says 24 hours and a phone that doesn't answer is a broken promise.
- A form reply that took more than a day: compare with tool 05 before deciding it matters for your trade.
- Part D items are checks against published guidance (WCAG, Nielsen Norman Group, Google Ads help) and our judgment. None of them is a measured effect on calls for contractors.

Limits

- A crawl or a self-test shows what a page offers. It can't show how many homeowners left. Nobody can claim abandonment from this test.
- One evening call is one call. Run it twice before changing staffing.
- A friend reading for five seconds isn't a homeowner with a burst pipe. It finds confusion; it doesn't measure conversion.
- Booking widgets suit some trades better than others. Remodeling sites show booking far less often than plumbing sites (chapter 8, and Appendix B), and that may be the right choice for project work.

Next action

- Page problems: chapter 8.
- Phone problems: chapter 9 and tool 05 (inquiry-handling review).
- Hours mismatch: fix the Google Business Profile hours the same day (chapter 12).

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