Google Is Moving Google Local Services Ads Into Google Performance Max: The Contractor's Migration Guide

Short answer: Google is retiring the standalone Google Local Services Ads dashboard and moving every Google Local Services Ads account into Google Ads, where your campaigns will run as a specialized Google Performance Max campaign type built around pay-per-lead goals. Your ads, your pricing model, and your verified badge stay the same. Where you manage the account, how bidding works, and whether your historical reporting survives all change. The migration is not optional, and the one thing you cannot fix afterward is your historical data. Export it before your migration date.

Real Time Marketing manages Google Local Services Ads for home services contractors every day. This guide is what we are telling our own clients: what is happening, what to do before your account moves, and what to watch in the first 30 days after.

1. What is happening

Since Google Local Services Ads launched, they have lived in their own world: a separate dashboard, a separate login, and a lead-based billing model unlike regular Google Ads. That separation is ending. Google is moving Google Local Services Ads campaigns into your Google Ads account as Google Performance Max campaigns with pay-per-lead goals.

The Performance Max name causes most of the confusion, so let us be clear. A standard Performance Max campaign can run across YouTube, Display, Discover, Gmail, and Maps. Your migrated Google Local Services campaign does not do that. It stays keywordless and keeps running only on Google Search and Google Maps, in the same positions your ads hold today. Google is reusing the Performance Max machinery to run the campaign. It is not handing your budget to the Display Network, and you are not being moved into a different auction. You are being moved into a different building, with some different controls.

Once your account migrates, the old dashboard closes. Logging in there redirects you to your campaign in Google Ads, where you will manage budgets, settings, leads, and replies.

2. The timeline and how you will know your turn is coming

Google is migrating accounts in phases, by business category and account type:

- **Phase 1, August 2026 (underway now):** Select U.S. home and storefront service advertisers, including plumbing, HVAC, electrical, appliance repair, house cleaning, lawn care, roofing, pest control, and moving companies.
- **Phase 2, late 2026:** Broader groups, including service-area businesses without a physical storefront, professional services, and accounts with custom bidding or booking setups.
- **Phase 3, 2027:** Non-U.S. accounts and every remaining category.

If you are a U.S. home services contractor running Google Local Services Ads, your migration is either already done or coming soon. There is no opt-out and no way to delay it. The only variable is your date.

Google notifies you before your turn: an email about 14 days before your scheduled migration date, a reminder about 7 days out, a confirmation once the move is complete, and a banner in your dashboard. The 14-day notice is your working window. Everything in the checklist below needs to happen inside it, and most of it is worth doing today, before the email arrives.

3. What does not change

This is the part that matters most to your lead flow, and it is reassuring:

- **You still pay per valid lead, not per click.** Google charges for valid customer leads such as phone calls, messages, and bookings through the ad. A valid lead can be charged even if it never becomes a booked job. That has always been how Local Services billing works, and it does not change. Keep cost per lead, cost per booked job, and cost per completed job as separate numbers in your own tracking, because Google only reports the first one.
- **Your ads still show in the same places.** Google Search and Google Maps, at the top, in the same positions as today.
- **Targeting stays keywordless.** There are no keywords to build or manage. Your campaign matches to customers based on your service categories, your service areas, and your profile, the same way it does now.
- **Your verified badge carries over.** Your verification status moves with the account automatically, under the Google Verified badge. There is no new application and no repeat of the background check process just because of the migration.
- **Your reviews stay with you.** Your reviews live on your Google Business Profile, and your profile becomes the source your campaign pulls from (more on that below). Your rating and review history do not reset.
- **Your lead history transfers.** Past leads and message threads move into Google Ads. What does not transfer is your performance reporting, covered next. It is the biggest operational risk in this change.

4. What does change

Where you work. Everything moves into Google Ads: budgets, settings, lead management, and replies. If you have never run Google Ads, the interface will feel busier than the old dashboard. It is the same account in a bigger toolbox.

Bidding loses its manual controls. Two settings go away on migration day: manual maximum cost-per-lead bidding, and per-category cost targets (vertical-level Target CPA). After the move, one campaign-level target applies across every service category in the campaign. If you run very different lead values under one campaign, say a high target for water heater replacements and a low one for drain calls, your choices are one blended target, or splitting those services into separate campaigns with their own targets. Decide before your migration date, not after.

Your weekly budget becomes a daily budget. Google converts your historical average weekly budget into an average daily budget by dividing by seven, and your monthly ceiling becomes that daily budget times 30.4. The monthly cap works out about the same, but day-to-day pacing feels different, which changes how you watch spend in the first weeks.

Historical performance reports do not transfer. Past impressions, clicks, weekly spend, and ad-level performance reports stay behind and become unavailable once your account moves. Google has been unusually direct about this and recommends downloading your historical data ahead of your transition date. This is the single most time-sensitive item in the migration.

Your Google Business Profile becomes the source of truth. After migration, your business name, address, and hours sync from your profile into your campaign; to change them, you edit the profile. One caution: major profile changes (name, address, primary category) can trigger a verification review that typically takes 24 to 48 hours and can pause your campaign. Do not make big profile edits near your migration date.

Smaller changes worth knowing. The Better Business Bureau callout disappears from ads after migration; Google directs advertisers to select at least six structured callouts (business hours, specialties, payment methods) in the campaign assets instead. On the plus side, you can now change the phone number your leads route to in real time, right in the campaign.

The "conversions" number is not booked jobs. In Google Ads, conversions on these campaigns counts the leads you were charged for, not appointments booked or jobs completed. Judge this channel by your own booked-job tracking, not by that column.

One related change already in effect: missed calls. Since October 1, 2026, a missed call during your stated business hours can be charged as a valid lead if the caller stays on the line for more than 20 seconds. Voicemail and automated greetings count as connected calls, and message leads are charged when they are sent, with no response window at all. Two

consequences: your listed hours should match the hours someone actually answers, and answering the phone has become a direct cost control, not just good service.

Lead credits are automatic, and feedback is your input. Manual lead disputes are gone. Google's system reviews charged leads and automatically credits the ones it finds invalid, with most credits applied within about 30 days. Rating your leads gives Google your quality feedback, and that feedback informs its assessment, but it does not guarantee a credit. Your first line of defense is setup accuracy: the services, job types, and areas in your account should match the work you actually want.

5. The before-migration checklist

Do these while you still have dashboard access. Most cannot be done afterward.

1. **Export your historical performance data.** Download your reports from the Local Services dashboard: spend, lead volume, and cost per lead by service category, month by month, going back as far as the dashboard allows, ideally 12 to 24 months. Screenshot anything the export does not capture. Once your account migrates, this data is gone, and with it your ability to compare seasons.
2. **Write down your current settings.** Budget, manual bid caps if you use them, per-category targets, service areas, categories and job types, business hours, and lead phone number. Settings are supposed to carry over. Verify them against your notes after the move instead of trusting that they did.
3. **Build your baseline.** From your own records, document cost per lead and, more importantly, cost per booked job by job type for the last 90 days and the same season last year. This baseline is the only honest way to judge whether performance actually changed after migration.
4. **Rate and review your open leads.** Work through your lead inbox so Google has your quality feedback on record before the inbox moves.
5. **Audit your service categories and areas.** Tighten anything loose. Categories or areas you do not truly service were always a source of bad leads, and under automatic credits and the missed-call rules, sloppy setup costs more than it used to.
6. **Audit your business hours against real phone coverage.** Stated hours should be hours a human or a reliable answering setup picks up. Every listed hour is an hour a ringing phone can bill you.
7. **Verify your Google Business Profile.** Name, primary category, address, hours, phone number, services, and photos, all accurate. Your profile now feeds the campaign directly. Fix errors now, but avoid major changes in the days right around migration, since they can trigger a verification review and a pause.
8. **Confirm your tracking number setup.** Keep the number your Google Local Services leads route to distinct from your Business Profile and website numbers, so you can still tell where calls came from after the move.

9. **Settle the campaign split question.** If different services carry very different lead values, decide now which ones get their own campaign and target after migration, so you are not rebuilding structure during your first weeks in the new system.
10. **Know who owns the date.** One person should own watching for Google's notice emails and working this list inside the 14-day window. If you work with an agency, confirm in writing that they are tracking your date and exporting your data.

6. The first 30 days after migration

Week one: verify, do not tinker. Confirm your settings against the notes you took: budget (now daily), service categories, service areas, hours, lead phone number, and callouts. Confirm leads are arriving at the right number and your badge is showing. Resist changing targets or budgets based on a few days of data.

Weeks two through four: compare against your baseline, weekly. Watch four numbers: lead volume, cost per lead, lead quality (your ratings and your own booked count), and credit behavior (are automatic credits arriving, and do they match the invalid leads you see?). Compare cost per booked job, not just cost per lead, because a cheaper lead that never books is not cheaper.

Expect some noise. Converted budgets and automated bidding settling in can move numbers around in the first couple of weeks. One slow week is not a trend. Three or four weeks of drift against your baseline, in the same direction, is a signal worth acting on. And keep rating every lead: your feedback is the input Google's credit system and quality assessment learn from.

Keep your own records from day one. Google's history starts at zero in the new account, so your own log of charged leads, booked jobs, and revenue is now the only continuous record of this channel's performance. Log it weekly.

7. Mistakes to avoid

- **Letting your historical data lapse.** The most common and the only irreversible mistake. If your account migrates before you export, the reporting is gone for good.
- **Assuming every setting carried over perfectly.** Most will. Verify anyway. A wrong service area, a stale phone number, or hours that no longer match your coverage will quietly cost you money.
- **Making major Business Profile edits right at migration.** A name, address, or category change can trigger a verification review and pause your campaign at exactly the wrong moment.
- **Judging the new campaign on week one.** Small samples lie. Judge against your documented baseline, not your memory of a good month.
- **Treating the Google Ads conversions column as booked jobs.** It counts charged leads. Your booking rate is your number to track.

- **Leaving business hours wider than your phone coverage.** Under the missed-call rules, unanswered listed hours are hours you can be billed for ringing phones.

8. FAQ

Is Google Local Services Ads going away? No. The standalone dashboard is going away. The ads, the pay-per-lead model, and the placements continue inside Google Ads.

Will I still pay per lead instead of per click? Yes. You are charged for valid leads such as calls, messages, and bookings through the ad, not for clicks or impressions.

Do I get charged for a lead that does not book a job? You can. Google charges for valid leads, and a valid lead does not have to turn into a booked or completed job to be chargeable. That is why cost per lead and cost per booked job are different numbers, and why lead quality and booking rate matter as much as lead price.

Does my Google Verified badge survive the move? Yes. Your verification carries over automatically. You do not need to reapply or repeat verification because of the migration.

Do my reviews carry over? Yes. Your reviews live on your Google Business Profile, which becomes the source your campaign syncs from. Your rating and history stay intact.

Can I opt out or delay my migration? No. Google is migrating every account in phases, and the schedule is Google's. What you control is whether you are ready when your date arrives.

What happens to my historical reports? They do not transfer, and the old dashboard becomes unavailable after your account moves. Export everything you want to keep before your migration date. Your lead history and message threads do transfer.

How do lead credits work now? Credits are automatic. Google reviews charged leads and credits the ones its system finds invalid, typically within about 30 days. There are no manual disputes anymore. Rating your leads gives Google your quality feedback, but it does not guarantee a credit on any specific lead.

Will my cost per lead change after migration? It can move, mainly because manual bid caps go away and one campaign-level target replaces per-category targets. Which direction depends on your account, which is exactly why a documented baseline matters.

I need help with the transition. Who do I call? Google runs a dedicated support line for migrating Google Local Services Ads advertisers at 1-844-205-0011, Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 8 PM Eastern.

9. What RTM does through the migration

Real Time Marketing is based in Bradenton, Florida, and manages Google Local Services Ads for home services contractors nationwide, on a 6-month minimum agreement, then month-to-month after. For our clients, the migration is a managed work item, not a surprise: we track each account's migration notice, export historical data before the date, document the pre-migration baseline, verify every setting after the move, and watch lead volume, cost per booked job, and credit behavior against that baseline in the first 30 days and beyond.

If you manage your own account, the checklist above is the work. If you would rather have it handled, book a strategy call and we will walk your account through it. Either way, do the export first. That one step is the difference between a migration you can measure and one you have to take on faith.

Real Time Marketing, Bradenton, Florida. Google Local Services Ads management for plumbing, HVAC, roofing, electrical, and other home services contractors nationwide. Month-to-month.