Market report · Cleveland, OH

The State of Outbound Sales in Cleveland, 2026

How outbound selling looks across the Cleveland, OH metro right now: who the buyers are, which trades have room, what is being built, what a rep costs to hire here. Then a 4-tool kit to work the market this month.

5,773

business sites with 20+ people across the categories trades sell to, #28 of our 100 metros

5.4

buyer sites per commercial cleaning company, #12 of 100 markets: the best rank of any trade here

Sites: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2023; rank among the 100 metros on our market pages. Room: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2023 sites per contractor in U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, private ownership, 2026 Q1, among markets with at least 10 contractors.

Executive summary Read this if nothing else

5 things to know about outbound sales in Cleveland

1

Biggest buyer pool

Restaurants: 1,500 sites

with 20 or more people, the largest buyer category in Cleveland, ahead of manufacturing plants (1,108).

2

Where the metro leans

Commercial property managers: 2.17x the U.S. mix

Also over-represented: senior living and nursing (1.79x) and manufacturing plants (1.70x). Trades that serve these buyers have more of them here than the national average suggests.

3

Most room

Commercial Cleaning & Janitorial: #12 of 100 markets

5.4 buyer sites with 20+ people for each of 504 local commercial cleaning companies. The most crowded is commercial landscaping, #83 of 100.

4

Biggest reason to call

Cleveland Browns Dome (Brook Park), $2.4B

In development. One of 9 named, sourced projects in this report.

5

Hiring locally

$124,700 for an in-house SDR's first year (illustrative)

At a $55,000 base salary, once commission, payroll taxes and benefits, tools, recruiting and training, turnover and manager time are added, before ramp time.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2023; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of

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01

Chapter 01 The market

Who buys in Cleveland

5,773 business sites in Cleveland have 20 or more people on site in the categories commercial trades sell to. That ranks #28 of the 100 metros we publish. Here is what those buyers are and where they sit.

The largest buyer categories

Sites with 20 or more people are the ones worth an SDR's time: big enough to have a facility lead, a service budget and a contract that comes up for renewal. The "vs. U.S. mix" column compares each category's share of local employment with its national share (1.00x is the U.S. average).

Business sites with 20+ people in Cleveland, top 10 categories

CATEGORY	SITES WITH 20+	ALL SITES	VS. U.S. MIX	1-YR CHANGE
Restaurants LARGEST POOL	**1,500**	4,781	1.33x	+15
Manufacturing plants	**1,108**	2,951	1.70x	-25
Retail stores	**1,101**	6,468	1.22x	-168
Medical, dental and outpatient offices	**527**	3,732	1.08x	-70
Wholesale distributors	**527**	2,876	1.30x	-172
Senior living and nursing	**325**	777	1.79x	+2
Grocery stores	**214**	1,053	1.34x	-19
Auto dealerships	**150**	341	1.33x	-13
Private K-12 schools	**121**	214	0.84x	-5
Churches and religious organizations	**112**	1,101	0.32x	0

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2023 (sites by size); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, private ownership, 2026 Q1 (concentration and one-year change in establishments). Suppressed size classes count as zero.

Cleveland leans toward commercial property managers (2.17x), senior living and nursing (1.79x) and manufacturing plants (1.70x). A trade that already sells to those buyers elsewhere has a deeper pool here than the national numbers suggest, and a case study from one of them travels well on the phone.

It is thinner than the U.S. mix in churches and religious organizations (0.32x) and hotels (0.71x). A program built around those buyers runs out of fresh accounts sooner here.

Growing fastest over the past year, by establishment count: restaurants (+15), hospitals (+6) and senior living and nursing (+2). New sites have no incumbent vendor yet.

The metro

Cleveland, OH: 6 counties in this report's counts.

Cuyahoga County, Lake County and Lorain County hold 84% of the larger business sites, so most programs start there.

Where the sites are

Business sites with 20+ people, by county, Cleveland

COUNTY	SITES WITH 20+	SHARE OF METRO
Cuyahoga County START HERE	**3,581**	62%
Lake County	**643**	11%
Lorain County	**617**	11%
Medina County	**433**	8%
Geauga County	**203**	4%
Ashtabula County	**176**	3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2023, summed across the buyer categories above. Census withholds some county-level size counts, so 120 of the metro's 5,773 sites are not assigned to a county.

02

Chapter 02 The competition

Which trades have the most room in Cleveland

Buyer sites per contractor is a rough read on how crowded a trade is: more sites for each local competitor means more doors nobody else is knocking on. Each trade's Cleveland figure is ranked against the other markets we track.

How Cleveland ranks for each trade, by buyer sites per contractor (longer bar = more room)

TRADE	RANK AMONG MARKETS	SITES PER CONTRACTOR	CONTRACTORS	1-YR CHANGE
Commercial Cleaning & Janitorial MOST ROOM	**#12 of 100**	5.4	504	-44
Commercial Construction	**#14 of 100**	7.5	303	+1
Fire Protection	**#17 of 96**	63	58	-3
Commercial Electrical	**#19 of 100**	13	231	-13
Commercial HVAC & Mechanical	**#27 of 100**	12	202	+4
Managed Service Providers	**#27 of 100**	4.0	848	-67
Commercial Painting & Coatings	**#32 of 86**	76	45	0
Commercial Roofing	**#47 of 89**	65	49	+1
Commercial Flooring	**#49 of 68**	58	32	+4
Paving & Asphalt	**#78 of 94**	30	86	+6
Commercial Landscaping	**#83 of 100**	2.7	1,047	-23

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2023 (each trade's own buyer categories, 20+ people); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, private ownership, 2026 Q1 (contractor establishments and one-year change). Each trade counts different buyers, so compare ranks across trades, not the raw ratios. Ranked among markets with at least 10 contractors in the trade.

Commercial cleaning & janitorial (#12), commercial construction (#14) and fire protection (#17) rank best in Cleveland. For those trades a program can work longer before it calls the same building twice, and fewer competitors have already pitched each owner.

Commercial landscaping is the most crowded trade here, #83 of 100: 2.7 buyer sites for each of 1,047 local commercial landscaping contractors. Winning there takes a sharper reason to switch than a lower price.

Managed service providers (-67) and commercial cleaning & janitorial (-44) lost contractor establishments over the past year, so the same buildings are split among fewer firms than a year ago. Paving & asphalt (+6) and commercial HVAC & mechanical (+4) added them.

Open programs

Our availability workbook does not cover Cleveland yet. We take one client per trade per territory, so ask before you plan around it.

Check whether your trade is open

03

Chapter 03 The projects

What is being built, and who owns the buildings

9 named, sourced projects and 7 anchor owners in Cleveland. Each one is a reason to call that has nothing to do with your company and everything to do with the buyer's building.

The projects

01 · $2.4B

Cleveland Browns Dome (Brook Park)

In development

A domed stadium complex that will anchor years of construction and event-services demand.

HVAC · electrical · fire protection · cleaning · construction

clevelandmagazine.com

02 · ~$2B

I-90 Innerbelt Rebuild

Multi-year program

One of Ohio's largest highway undertakings, reshaping downtown access.

paving · construction

clevelandmagazine.com

03 · $3B

Cleveland Hopkins Airport Program

Multi-phase modernization

Terminal modernization that touches every commercial trade.

paving · construction

clevelandmagazine.com

04 · $3.5B

Bedrock Riverfront Development

Phased build-out

A generational riverfront district on the Cuyahoga.

construction · landscaping · paving

clevelandmagazine.com

05 · Major capital program

Cleveland Clinic Expansion

2026 milestones announced

One of the world's largest health systems keeps building, and hospital campuses buy every trade on permanent cycles.

HVAC · electrical · fire protection · cleaning · construction

hconews.com

06 · $678 million

Downtown at Valor Acres

Nearing completion; apartments opening August to September 2026

A mixed-use development in Brecksville in southern Cuyahoga County with 221 apartments in its downtown core, office buildings, an AC Hotel by Marriott under construction and a planned Cleveland Clinic outpatient facility.

> Streetscaping is mostly done but the final layer of asphalt is still to be paved, and lawns, courtyards and street landscaping now need grounds contracts; apartment turnover, the hotel finish-out and new tenant spaces keep painters and cleaning crews in demand.

landscaping · painting · paving · cleaning

NEOtrans, 2026-09-28

07 · $140+ million

East Stokes tower at Circle Square

Under construction; completion targeted for June 2028

A 24-story tower at 10700 Chester Avenue in University Circle with 281 apartments, about 17,682 square feet of ground-floor retail and 315 structured parking spaces.

> Sitework started in September 2026, so MEP and electrical packages follow through 2027 and interior painting lands before the mid-2028 opening; the adjoining Stokes Boulevard section is being rebuilt with a streetscape that includes benches and landscaping.

HVAC · electrical · painting · landscaping · construction

NEOtrans, 2026-09-30

08 · $64 million

Warner & Swasey redevelopment

Under construction; completion 2028

Adaptive reuse of the vacant 194,000-square-foot Warner & Swasey factory at 5701 Carnegie Avenue in Cleveland's MidTown neighborhood into 112 affordable apartments in a first phase, with about 28 more units and 20,000 square feet of commercial space to follow.

> A historic factory rehab runs heavy on interior finish work: painting, flooring and new mechanical systems through 2027 and 2028, and the site plan adds landscaping, outdoor gathering spaces and a second-floor rooftop terrace that will need grounds care once residents move in.

painting · landscaping · flooring · HVAC · construction

NEOtrans, 2026-06-02

09 · $217.6 million (financing for residential and hotel components)

Erieview Tower and Galleria redevelopment

Financing closed September 2026; opening scheduled for 2027

Conversion of the mostly vacant 40-story Erieview Tower at East 9th Street and St. Clair Avenue in downtown Cleveland from offices into a 210-key W Cleveland hotel and 215 W Apartments, with a ballroom, spa and fitness center.

> C-PACE money funds VRF mechanical systems, curtain wall and elevator modernization, and an office-to-hotel and apartment conversion of this size means floor-by-floor painting and flooring before the 2027 opening, then hotel housekeeping and common-area cleaning contracts after.

HVAC · painting · flooring · cleaning · construction

NEOtrans, 2026-09-08

Projects current as of 2026-07; each source is linked on its card. Values are as reported by the source.

The anchor owners

Health systems, campuses, large employers and industrial parks hold the biggest concentrations of commercial buildings in Cleveland. One relationship with a facilities team here can cover many buildings.

Health system · Cleveland, Cuyahoga County

Cleveland Clinic main campus

Cleveland Clinic's main campus near downtown Cleveland covers 173 acres.

Health system · Cleveland, Cuyahoga County

University Hospitals

University Hospitals runs an integrated network of 21 hospitals (including five joint ventures) and

> The clinic is planning the next phase of its main campus master plan, including a new central utility plant, new parking structures and two new research buildings totaling 300,000 square feet.

HVAC · electrical · cleaning · fire protection · construction

Cleveland Clinic

more than 50 health centers and outpatient facilities in northern Ohio.

> A second large hospital owner in Northeast Ohio with an academic medical center, community hospitals, outpatient buildings and physician offices.

HVAC · cleaning · fire protection · flooring

University Hospitals

Campus · Cleveland, Cuyahoga County

Case Western Reserve University

CWRU reports fall 2026 enrollment of 12,145 students (headcount, all programs).

> A 267-acre campus in University Circle with research labs, residence halls and athletic facilities.

HVAC · cleaning · roofing · landscaping

Case Western Reserve University

Airport · Cleveland, Cuyahoga County

Cleveland Hopkins International Airport

CLE served 10,003,833 passengers in 2025.

> Ohio's busiest airport, with terminal, airfield, parking and support buildings owned by the City of Cleveland.

paving · cleaning · HVAC · electrical

Cleveland Hopkins International Airport

Logistics hub · Cleveland, Cuyahoga County

Port of Cleveland

The Port handled more than 6 million tons of cargo in 2025.

> Maritime terminals, docks, warehouses and yard space on the Cleveland lakefront, with more than $105 million invested in maritime infrastructure over the past decade.

paving · electrical · roofing · construction

Port of Cleveland

Major employer · Cleveland, Cuyahoga County

Sherwin-Williams global headquarters

Sherwin-Williams opened its new downtown Cleveland headquarters on 11 May 2026, with a 36-floor office tower, a two-storey pavilion and a multi-level parking facility.

> A new high-rise office campus on Public Square with a parking structure, a building type that needs janitorial, mechanical and life-safety service.

cleaning · HVAC · fire protection · electrical

European Coatings

Public owner · Cleveland, Cuyahoga County

NASA Glenn Research Center at Lewis Field

Glenn's Lewis Field main campus in Cleveland covers 350 acres.

> A federal research campus next to Cleveland Hopkins with test facilities, labs and office buildings.

HVAC · electrical · roofing · fire protection

Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

Anchor facts checked 2026-10; each source is linked on its card.

Which trades the work touches

Projects and anchor owners in this report that buy each trade, Cleveland

TRADE	PROJECTS AND OWNERS	
Commercial HVAC & Mechanical		11
Commercial Construction		10
Commercial Cleaning & Janitorial		9
Commercial Electrical		8
Fire Protection		6
Paving & Asphalt		6
Commercial Landscaping		5
Commercial Painting & Coatings		4
Commercial Roofing		3
Commercial Flooring		3

Count of the projects and anchor owners above whose scope includes the trade, from the sourced descriptions.

04

Chapter 04 The calendar

The Cleveland selling calendar

Outbound runs every month, but the weather changes what a buyer wants to hear. These are the NOAA records for the Cleveland metro's counties, month by month.

Cleveland by month: storm reports, degree days and average highs

MEASURE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Hail and damaging wind reports total, 2015 to 2024	14	0	36	43	59	94	119	190	44	16	37	1
Cooling degree days average month	0	0	1	0	43	130	227	186	63	4	0	0
Heating degree days average month	1,187	1,021	875	504	228	38	7	16	94	381	697	1,014
Average high (°F) average month	34	37	46	59	70	78	82	80	74	62	50	39

Sources: NOAA NCEI Storm Events Database, 2015 to 2024: reports of hail 1 inch or larger and thunderstorm wind of 58 mph or more, by month, across the market counties. NOAA NCEI nClimDiv county monthly series, 1991-2020 averages. Degree days count how far the daily average sits above (cooling) or below (heating) 65°F, summed over the month.

NOAA logged 67 hail reports of 1 inch or larger and 586 damaging wind reports across the metro's counties from 2015 to 2024: #49 of 100 markets for hail and #28 for wind. June, July and August carried 62% of the reports. Storms are not the main driver here, so roof age, leaks and budget timing carry the roofing conversation.

The metro averages 652 cooling degree days a year (#67 of 97 markets) and 6,061 heating degree days (#28 of 97). Cooling load peaks in June, July and August; heating in January, February, March, November and December. Peak months are when HVAC calls lead with service and response times; the rest of the year they lead with planned work and budgets.

Trades with no weather season

Cleaning, construction, electrical, flooring and fire protection sell on contract end dates, budgets and inspection cycles. Learn each account's date on the first call and come back before it.

6 months average a high of 60°F or more (May, June, July, August, September and October). That is when exterior painting, paving and landscaping crews are busiest, so in-season calls catch owners while they can see the work that needs doing. The contracts themselves are bid on each property's own dates, so the selling runs all year.

05

Chapter 05 The numbers

What one meeting takes, trade by trade

What booking a meeting has taken on our own calling floor for the trades we run in Cleveland, next to the records we can prospect here. The sales center figures are national; it does not break them out by city yet.

Dials per booked appointment, by trade (lower is faster), national

TRADE	DIALS PER APPOINTMENT	REACHED PROPOSAL	PROPOSALS WON	DIALS FOR 10 MEETINGS
Fire Protection FASTEST TO BOOK	**78**	21.6%	13.2%	about 780
Paving & Asphalt	**86**	32.2%	7.4%	about 860
Commercial Landscaping	**88**	18.8%	12.7%	about 880
Commercial Electrical	**96**	14.6%	21.1%	about 960
Commercial HVAC & Mechanical	**98**	16.6%	24.9%	about 980
Commercial Painting & Coatings	**115**	31.2%	14.4%	about 1,150
Commercial Flooring	**122**	30.8%	9.8%	about 1,220
Commercial Roofing	**140**	25.9%	16.1%	about 1,400
Commercial Cleaning & Janitorial	**142**	23.9%	21.7%	about 1,420
Managed Service Providers	**162**	10.0%	20.5%	about 1,620

All of these trades together: 122 dials per appointment

Source: Abstrakt sales center, Performance Intelligence, national, as of October 2026. Dials per appointment = prospecting calls divided by appointments set. History, not a promise. Full benchmarks and method.

The records behind a Cleveland program

Before a program starts we size the list: the decision-maker records Abstrakt can prospect for each trade in the Cleveland-Akron-Canton territory, which reaches past the Cleveland metro.

10,665
Commercial Roofing

10,665
Commercial Construction

5,175
Commercial HVAC & Mechanical

4,105
Commercial Cleaning & Janitorial

Source: Abstrakt territory record counts, as of October 2026: estimated decision-maker records Abstrakt can prospect for each program in the territory. Shown for the programs the count covers.

Read it this way

Divide the records by the dials one meeting takes and you see how long a list lasts before it repeats. A thin list means a program has to work every record well, not just call more.

06

Chapter 06 Build or buy

What an in-house SDR costs in Cleveland

Before you hire a sales development rep in Cleveland, price the whole job, not just the salary.

The salary is the smallest part of the decision. About 7,710 people hold the role in the Cleveland, OH metro, and every one of their employers is competing for the same hires.

An in-house SDR's first year, at a $55,000 base salary (illustrative model)

COST	YEAR ONE
Base salary	$55,000
Commission and bonus	$15,000
Payroll taxes and benefits (25% of pay)	$17,500
Tools and data ($550 a month)	$6,600
Recruiting and training	$7,000
Turnover (35% a year, rehiring)	$2,450
Manager and QA time (5 hours a week) and admin (4 hours a month)	$21,150
Total, before ramp time	**$124,700**

Headcount: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), May 2025. Sales representatives of services, except advertising, insurance, financial services and travel (SOC 41-3091). The cost lines are the starting values of our SDR cost calculator: $15,000 commission, 25% payroll taxes and benefits, $550 a month in tools, $7,000 recruiting and training, 35% yearly turnover, and manager, QA and admin time. Change any of them there.

$124,700

for one in-house SDR's first year at a $55,000 base salary.

That buys one rep. It does not buy the list, the manager's coaching system or cover when the rep leaves.

Ask us what a program would cost for the same work

Part two Apply this

The Cleveland market toolkit

4 working tools built from the chapters above. Tick the boxes as you go (they stay ticked in this browser), copy the scripts into your CRM, or save the whole guide as a PDF and print this part as a worksheet.

01

Account scorecard

Score an account before anyone dials it.

02

Discovery question bank

The questions that qualify a meeting.

03

Trigger watchlist

The changes that make a buyer take the call.

04

30-day action plan

Four weeks of steps you can start Monday.

TOOL 01

Account scorecard

Before an account goes on the call list, check every line that fits. Call the accounts with the most ticks first, and leave the ones with none for later.

- [ ] **It sits in Cuyahoga County, Lake County and Lorain County**
  84% of the metro's larger business sites are in these counties.
- [ ] **It has 20 or more people on site**
  One of the 5,773 sites this report counts. At that size a facility lead usually owns the building decisions.
- [ ] **It is in a category Cleveland over-indexes on**
  commercial property managers (2.17x the U.S. mix), senior living and nursing (1.79x the U.S. mix) and manufacturing plants (1.70x the U.S. mix).
- [ ] **It belongs to an anchor owner or a named project**
  Cleveland Clinic main campus, University Hospitals, Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.
- [ ] **You can name the person who signs**
  A name and a title before the first dial, not just the main line.

- [ ] **You are calling a business line**
  A business line, not a personal phone. Look up the calling laws for Ohio before you dial.

0 of 6 checked

TOOL 02

Discovery question bank

Ask fewer, better questions. Pick three or four for the call and save the rest for the meeting. Each one comes with the reason it earns its place.

Restaurants: 1,500 sites here

From our fire protection talk track. Staying open and passing inspection. Multi-unit operators are worth more than single locations.

1. **When was your hood suppression system last inspected, and when is the next one due?**
   Due dates tell you when to call and what to offer.
2. **Have you had a failed inspection or a citation recently?**
   Failed inspections threaten the ability to stay open and create urgency.
3. **How many locations do you operate, and does each one use a different vendor?**
   Multi-unit operators are more valuable and often want one vendor across locations.

Manufacturing plants: 1,108 sites here

From our cleaning talk track. Audits and shift schedules. Ask which areas the production crew cleans and which they wish someone else did.

1. **Which areas does your production crew clean, and which do you wish someone else handled?**
   Work that pulls operators off the line is the scope a plant manager will pay to hand off.
2. **What shifts do you run, and when could a cleaning crew work without getting in the way?**
   Shift schedules decide staffing, access and whether the job fits your crews.
3. **Do you have customer or safety audits coming up that look at housekeeping?**
   An upcoming audit creates a date and makes high dusting or floor scrubbing an easy yes.

Retail stores: 1,101 sites here

From our electrical talk track. Lighting cost and fast repair. For chains, decisions often sit in a regional facilities office, so find who owns vendors for your area.

Any first meeting

Plain practice that works in every market.

1. **How are you handling this today, and what would you change about it?**
   The gap between today and what they want is the whole reason to meet.

1. **Who handles electrical service for this store, the store, a regional facilities office or a national provider?**
   For chains, decisions often sit outside the store, so this tells you who to call next.
2. **Is a lighting retrofit or remodel planned for this location?**
   Remodels and retrofits are defined projects with budgets.
3. **How fast does your current electrician respond when lights or signs go out?**
   Slow response during business hours is a common reason to add a vendor.
2. **What happens if nothing changes this year?**
   Tells you whether there is a cost to waiting, or only curiosity.
3. **Who else would need to agree before anything moves?**
   Names the people who can stall the deal, while you can still invite them.
4. **When does the current contract or budget come up for review?**
   Gives you the date to plan around, even when the answer today is no.
5. **What would make a first meeting worth your time?**
   Lets the buyer set the agenda, which is the agenda they will show up for.

TOOL 03

Trigger watchlist

Each of these changes gives a buyer a reason to take the call this month instead of next year. Tick the ones you will track, and set a news alert or CRM field for each so you hear about it first.

- [ ] **Cleveland Browns Dome (Brook Park)**
  In development. A domed stadium complex that will anchor years of construction and event-services demand.
- [ ] **Cleveland Hopkins Airport Program**
  Multi-phase modernization. Terminal modernization that touches every commercial trade.
- [ ] **I-90 Innerbelt Rebuild**
  Multi-year program. One of Ohio's largest highway undertakings, reshaping downtown access.
- [ ] **Bedrock Riverfront Development**
  Phased build-out. A generational riverfront district on the Cuyahoga.

- [ ] **Cleveland Clinic Expansion**

  2026 milestones announced. One of the world's largest health systems keeps building, and hospital campuses buy every trade on permanent cycles.

- [ ] **Downtown at Valor Acres**

  Nearing completion; apartments opening August to September 2026. Streetscaping is mostly done but the final layer of asphalt is still to be paved, and lawns, courtyards and street landscaping now need grounds contracts; apartment turnover, the hotel finish-out and new tenant spaces keep painters and cleaning crews in demand.

- [ ] **Storm season: June, July and August**

  62% of the 653 large-hail and damaging-wind reports NOAA logged across the metro, 2015 to 2024, fell in these months. Owners want an inspection after an event; call the ones you already know first.

- [ ] **New sites: restaurants**

  QCEW counted 15 more restaurants in Cleveland than a year earlier. Every new site has to choose its service vendors; call before the choice settles.

- [ ] **New sites: hospitals**

  QCEW counted 6 more hospitals in Cleveland than a year earlier. Every new site has to choose its service vendors; call before the choice settles.

0 of 9 on your watchlist

TOOL 04

30-day action plan

4 weeks, 15 steps, nothing you need to buy. Tick each one off as you finish it; your progress stays in this browser.

Week 1

Draw the territory

- [ ] Start in Cuyahoga County, Lake County and Lorain County, which hold 84% of the larger business sites.
- [ ] Pull the sites with 20 or more people in restaurants, manufacturing plants and retail stores.
- [ ] Score every account with the scorecard above and sort the list by score.
- [ ] Put the accounts tied to Cleveland Clinic main campus and University Hospitals at the top.

Week 2

Check the rules, then write the talk track

- [ ] Look up the calling laws for Ohio and every state you call into, and confirm them with your own counsel before the first dial.
- [ ] Pick four questions from the question bank for every call and print them next to the phone.
- [ ] Write one opening line per account type that names something local: a project, an owner or the season.

Week 3

Make the calls

- [ ] Call business lines during business hours, 8am to 5pm in the buyer's local time, in the same blocked hours every day.
- [ ] Log every dial, every conversation and every meeting set, so you know your own numbers.
- [ ] Open with the trigger when you know it: cleveland Browns Dome (Brook Park).
- [ ] Close every good conversation with two specific meeting times.

Week 4

Measure and decide

- [ ] Divide your dials by meetings set and compare it with the 78 dials per appointment our sales center averaged on fire protection calls (national, as of October 2026).
- [ ] Put a return date on every "not now", tied to the contract or budget date they gave you.
- [ ] Before you hire, price an in-house rep with the Cleveland pay figures in this report.
- [ ] Keep what worked, rewrite the line that drew the most pushback, and run the next 30 days.

0 of 15 steps done

Sources and notes

- U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2023: business sites by category, size and county, Cleveland, OH.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, private ownership, 2026 Q1: contractor establishments, one-year change and concentration (location quotient).
- Projects: named public sources linked on each card, current as of 2026-07.
- Anchor owners: sources linked on each card, checked 2026-10.
- NOAA NCEI Storm Events Database, 2015 to 2024: hail and damaging wind reports by month across the metro's counties.
- NOAA NCEI nClimDiv county monthly series, 1991-2020 averages: degree days and average highs by month.
- Abstrakt sales center, Performance Intelligence, national, as of October 2026: dials, appointments, proposals and wins by trade. Method.
- Abstrakt territory record counts, as of October 2026: decision-maker records per program in the Cleveland-Akron-Canton territory.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), May 2025: Sales representatives of services, except advertising, insurance, financial services and travel (SOC 41-3091).
- Cover photo: Cleveland skyline with Terminal Tower, by DJ Johnson on Unsplash, Unsplash License.
- The toolkit's discovery questions come from our trade talk tracks; the plan and checklists are sales practice, not data.

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