



FOR MERITLY VERIFIED BUSINESSES

The Winner's Playbook

Your customers earned you this. Here is exactly where to put it, what to say about it, and how to turn a verified award into more walk-ins, more calls and fewer price objections.

Ten minutes to read. One afternoon to do.

YOUR SEAL

The Meritly Verified seal

This is yours to display for the awarded year — website, Google profile, social pages, email signature, window.



Web-ready file

For websites and social profiles use the PNG (transparent background, 1024 px): meritly.us/seal.png. Right-click, save. It is also attached to your claim email.

Rules

- Display it with the award year and your rating — “Top-Rated [Business Type] 2026 · 4.8★ across 214 reviews.”
- Link it to your verification page wherever links are possible.
- Do not alter the mark, recolour it, or transfer it to another business.

Where the decision actually happens

A stranger decides whether to trust your business in four places, usually in this order. Every one of them is a spot the award can be seen. Most winners put it in one. Put it in all four.

1. Google	They search, they see your rating, they read three reviews. The award belongs in your profile photos and description — page 4.
2. Your website	They click through and look above the fold for a reason to believe. The seal goes there, linked to your public verification page — page 5.
3. The door	They walk up. A window decal is the last signal before they commit — page 8.
4. The counter	They are inside, deciding how much to spend and whether to come back. The plaque lives here — page 8.

Why it works

“Award-winning” answers the question every prospect silently asks — *is this place any good?* — before they ask it. Businesses with visible recognition get fewer objections and defend higher prices. Yours is different from most: it is dated, it is verifiable by anyone in ten seconds, and nobody can buy it.

One rule for everything that follows

Always pair the award with the number. “Top-Rated Barbershop 2026” is good.

“Top-Rated Barbershop 2026 — 4.8★ across 214 Google reviews” is the version people believe.

Your Google profile

This is the highest-traffic page you own and most owners never update it. Twenty minutes, once.

Add the seal as a photo

Google Business Profile → Photos → Add. Upload the seal PNG from your claim email (or download it again from your award page). It shows in your photo carousel next to the shop.

Post the award

Profile → Updates → Add update. Posts sit right under your rating for a week. Use this:

We've been independently verified as a Top-Rated [Business Type] for 2026 – based on our public Google record: [4.8]★ across [214] customer reviews. Thank you to every customer who wrote one. Verify it yourself: [your verification link]

Update your description

Add one sentence to the “From the business” description:

Independently verified Top-Rated [Business Type], 2026 – [4.8]★ across [214] Google reviews (meritly.us).

Reply to a recent review

Pick a recent five-star review and reply publicly. Reviewers read replies, and so do prospects:

Thank you – reviews like yours are the reason we were verified Top-Rated this year. We appreciate you.

Do not

- Put the award in your business *name* field. Google removes it and can suspend the profile.
- Ask for reviews in exchange for anything. The award only means something because the reviews are clean.

Your website

The seal earns its place above the fold — near your phone number or booking button, where a visitor is deciding whether to act. Link it to your public verification page so a skeptic can check it.

Placement, in order of impact

- **Header or hero**, next to the call to action. Small is fine; it is a trust mark, not a banner.
- **Booking / contact page**, beside the form. This is where doubt costs you a customer.
- **Footer**, on every page.

Alt text and link

Alt text: *Meritly Verified — Top-Rated [Business Type] 2026*. Link the image to your verification page (the link is in your claim email and on your award page). The page re-checks your live Google rating every time it is opened — that is the part skeptics respect.

One line of conv to go with it

Verified Top-Rated [Business Type] 2026 – [4.8]★ across [214] Google reviews. Independently checked, never bought.

Email signature

One line under your name, on every email you send:

[Your Name] · [Business] · Meritly Verified Top-Rated [Business Type] 2026 · [verification link]

Announce it

One post per platform, then pin it. Photograph the plaque in your shop if you have it; use the seal if you do not. Real photos of real walls out-perform graphics every time.

Facebook / Instagram

We didn't apply for this. You earned it for us. [Business] has been independently verified as a Top-Rated [Business Type] for 2026 – [4.8]★ across [214] public Google reviews. No committee, no entry fee, no way to buy it. Just customers. Thank you. [verification link]

LinkedIn (if you are B2B or local-professional)

Recognition you can verify: [Business] is a Meritly Verified Top-Rated [Business Type] for 2026, based on [214] public Google reviews averaging [4.8]★. The award is issued only from the public record and is re-checked live on the verification page. Proud of the team behind that number. [verification link]

Stories / short video

Fifteen seconds, phone camera, no script needed: hold the plaque, say “our customers just got us this — [4.8] stars across [214] reviews, independently verified,” and put it on the wall. Post it. That is the whole thing.

Tag @meritly and we will reshare it.

Local press

Local papers, neighborhood blogs and chamber newsletters run short business-recognition items constantly — they need copy. A verified, numbers-backed award is an easy yes. Send this. It takes five minutes.

The email

Subject: Local [business type] independently verified Top-Rated for 2026 Hi [Name], [Business] on [Street] was just verified as a Top-Rated [Business Type] for 2026 by Meritly, based on our public Google record – [4.8] stars across [214] customer reviews. The award can't be applied for or bought; it is issued only from the review record and anyone can verify it here: [verification link]. Short release below, photo attached. Happy to answer anything. [Your Name], [Business], [phone]

The release (paste under the email)

[CITY], [Month Day, 2026] – [Business], a [business type] at [address], has been independently verified as a Top-Rated [Business Type] for 2026 by Meritly, a verification service that issues awards solely from a business's public Google review record. To qualify, a business must hold a rating of at least 4.5 stars across 30 or more reviews; [Business] currently holds [4.8] stars across [214]. "[One or two sentences from you – what the reviews mean to you, or thanking customers.]" said [Your Name], owner. Meritly awards cannot be entered or purchased. Each award has a public verification page that re-checks the live rating whenever it is viewed: [verification link]. [Business] is at [address], [phone], [website].

Where to send it

- The local newspaper's business desk (search "[paper name] business editor email").
- Neighborhood Facebook groups and Nextdoor — as a plain post, not a press release.
- Your chamber of commerce newsletter, if you are a member.

In the shop

Online signals get people to the door. What is inside decides whether they spend, how much, and whether they come back. This is where a physical award does its work.



Behind the chair, at eye level from the seat.



At the front desk, where the card comes out.

Where it goes

- **The plaque:** where the customer waits or pays. Eye level. Never in the office.
- **The framed certificate** (plaque + certificate set): the wall behind the counter. A certificate reads as official in a way a plaque alone does not.
- **The window decals:** one on the door at hand height, one at the register. The door decal is the last thing a walk-in sees before committing.

What staff say when asked

Customers will ask. The answer is one sentence and it is the best sales line you have:

“Our customers got us that — it’s based on our Google reviews, and it’s checked. You can look it up.”

Ask for the review while it is on the wall

The award makes asking easier, not harder. At the end of a good visit:

“If you’ve got a minute, a Google review really helps us — that’s how we earned that one on the wall.”

IF YOU WANT IT ON THE WALL

The plaque and certificate

Everything in this playbook works with the free seal and verification page. If you want the version that customers stop and look at, the plaque and framed certificate are made to order from the same artwork you approved on your award page.



- **The award plaque** — mahogany frame, black acrylic face, display stand. Your name, title, city and year in archival UV print. \$299, free US shipping.
- **Plaque + framed certificate** — the plaque, your certificate printed and framed, and two 4" window decals for the door and register. \$399, free US shipping.

Made and delivered in about one week. Cancel within 24 hours for a full refund; misprints and damage replaced free. Order from your award page — the link is in your claim email.

Thank you for running a business people want to write about.

— Meritly