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DIGITAL MARKETING

FREE SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE

Google Business Profile Optimization Checklist

What to check so customers can find, trust, and contact your business on Google Search and Maps.



6 SECTIONS · 15-MINUTE AUDIT · 3 QUICK WINS

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00 START HERE

Your Google listing is often your first impression.

A **Google Business Profile** is the free listing that shows your business on Google Search and Google Maps: your name, hours, phone number, photos, reviews, and the buttons people tap to call you, visit your website, or get directions.

For a lot of customers, it's the first thing they see, sometimes before they ever reach your website. If it's wrong, outdated, or empty, they don't complain. They just call the next business on the list.

The good news: you don't need to be a marketer to get this right. You need accurate info, real photos, honest reviews, and a quick check once a month.

How Google picks local results, in plain English

Relevance

How well your profile matches what someone searched for. Complete, accurate categories, services, and details help Google understand what you do.

Distance

How far your business is from the person searching, or from the place they typed in. You can't move your customers, but you can keep your address or service area accurate.

Prominence

How well-known your business is. Google looks at things like reviews and ratings, and your website's place in regular search results counts too.

> **Straight talk:** Google says there's no way to request or pay for a better local ranking. This checklist won't game the system. It fixes the problems that keep customers from finding, trusting, or contacting you.

How to use this checklist

01

Check, don't guess

Open your actual profile on your phone and computer. Tick a box only when the "Right if" test passes.

02

Write it down

Anything that fails goes in "My first three fixes" on page 8. Start with the top three, not all of them.

03

Come back monthly

Use the tracker on page 7 and the 15-minute audit to keep the profile current.

Meet our example business. Lone Oak Plumbing is a *made-up* plumbing company based in Burleson, Texas. Its plumbers drive to customers' homes, so it's a service-area business. You'll see it throughout this guide; swap in your own business as you go.

01 Claim & Verify Your Profile

Before you edit anything, find out what Google already shows. A listing may already exist, created by a past owner, an employee, or a customer who added your business to Maps.

- [ ] **Search for yourself first**
  Search your business name and city on Google and in the Google Maps app. **RIGHT IF:** you find exactly one listing for your business, with no old duplicate or outdated address.
- [ ] **Someone else owns it? Request access**
  Google will say someone else may manage the profile. Select *Request access* and fill out the form. The current owner is emailed and has three days to respond. **RIGHT IF:** you received a confirmation email.
- [ ] **Verification is finished**
  After you complete a method, Google can take up to 5 business days to review it and emails you when you're verified. **RIGHT IF:** you've had that email and the profile no longer asks you to verify.
- [ ] **Claim it, or create it**
  Unclaimed listing? Use the claim option on it. No listing? Add one at business.google.com.
  RIGHT IF: it's managed from a Google Account the business controls.
- [ ] **The right people have the right access**
  Owners can add or remove users; managers can edit info and reply to reviews. There's only one primary owner. **RIGHT IF:** the business owner is the primary owner, and helpers have their own logins.
- [ ] **Verification codes stay private**
  Google says not to share verification codes with anyone, including people who help manage your profile. **RIGHT IF:** only the owner ever saw the code.

You don't get to pick the verification method. Google's systems decide which options you see (such as phone, text, email, video recording, or live video call) based on things like your category, public info, region, and hours. You may need more than one. If video is offered, be ready to show your location and that you manage the business.

02 Get the Basics Right

Wrong hours or an old phone number cost you customers and can earn you a cranky review. These are the details people act on.

- [ ] **Name matches the real world**
  Use the name on your sign, truck, and invoices. No added keywords, cities, taglines, or phone numbers; Google can suspend profiles for it. **RIGHT IF:** "Lone Oak Plumbing," not "Lone Oak Plumbing | Best Burleson Plumber 24/7."
- [ ] **Website link goes to your own site**
  Your homepage or the page for this location. Not a social media page or a redirect. **RIGHT IF:** tapping it on a phone opens the right page.
- [ ] **Holiday hours are set ahead of time**
  Use *Special hours* for holidays and short changes (up to six days in a row). Google suggests confirming holiday hours even when they're normal.
  RIGHT IF: the next holiday shows the hours you'll keep.
- [ ] **Phone number reaches this business**
  A local number the business controls, not a shared call center line when you can avoid it. **RIGHT IF:** you call it and your business answers.
- [ ] **Regular hours are accurate**
  List the hours customers can reach you.
  RIGHT IF: they match your website, voicemail, and what actually happens.
- [ ] **Address or service area fits how you work**
  Storefront, service-area, or hybrid: see the next page. **RIGHT IF:** your address shows only if customers can visit it during your listed hours.

02 BASICS, CONTINUED

Storefront, service-area, or hybrid?

This choice decides whether Google shows your address. Pick the one that matches how customers actually get served.

CUSTOMERS COME TO YOU

Storefront

Show your address. Keep permanent signage with your business name at that location.

Example: a bakery on Main Street where people walk in and buy.

YOU GO TO CUSTOMERS

Service-area

Hide your address and list the areas you serve instead. If you work from home, remove the home address.

Example: Lone Oak Plumbing runs from the owner's home, so it hides the address and lists Burleson, Crowley, Joshua, and Mansfield.

BOTH

Hybrid

Show the storefront address, set hours for when it's staffed, and add a service area.

Example: an auto repair shop that also offers roadside help (Google's own example).

Service areas: up to 20 cities, ZIP codes, or other areas, with the overall area no more than about 2 hours of driving from your base. Be as specific and accurate as you can.

One business, one profile. Don't create a separate profile for every city you serve. Google's guidelines say there should be only one profile per business, and duplicates can cause display problems and put your profile at risk. Listing a city as a service area tells customers you work there; it doesn't guarantee you'll show up there. Your website's service pages are the better place to talk about each city.

03 Categories & Services

Categories tell Google what kind of business you are. Services tell customers exactly what you'll do for them.

- [ ] **Primary category = your main business**
  Pick the most specific category that describes the business as a whole. Google's example: "Nail salon," not "Salon." **RIGHT IF:** someone reading only that one word would know what you mainly do. (Lone Oak: "Plumber.")
- [ ] **Services list matches what you actually do**
  Choose from Google's suggested services and add custom ones where needed. Custom names can't include prices, phone numbers, or personal info. **RIGHT IF:** you'd say yes to every listed service if someone called today.
- [ ] **Extra categories only for real parts of the business**
  Google says to use the fewest categories that describe your core business. A grocery store with a pharmacy and deli can add both. **RIGHT IF:** each extra category is a regular line of work, not a wish.
- [ ] **Top services have clear descriptions**
  Where descriptions are available, say what's included and who it's for. Can't find the exact category? Choose a more general one that's still accurate. **RIGHT IF:** a customer could read it and know whether you're a fit.

BEFORE **Water heaters**: "We do water heaters. Call us!"

AFTER **Water heater repair & replacement**: "Repair and replacement of gas and electric tank water heaters, plus tankless units, for homes in Burleson and nearby. We check for leaks, pilot and thermostat problems, and haul away the old unit."

04 Make the Profile Useful to Customers

A complete profile answers the questions people would otherwise call to ask: what you do, what your work looks like, and how to reach you.

- [ ] **The description says who, what, and where**
  You get up to 750 characters, and the first sentence or two matter most. No links, and no sales, discounts, or prices; save those for elsewhere. **RIGHT IF:** a stranger could read it and explain what you do and where.

EXAMPLE DESCRIPTION · LONE OAK PLUMBING (FICTIONAL)

Lone Oak Plumbing is a family-owned plumbing company based in Burleson, Texas. Our licensed plumbers handle leak repair, drain cleaning, water heater repair and replacement, and fixture installation for homes in Burleson, Crowley, Joshua, and nearby communities. We give upfront estimates before work starts, wear shoe covers inside your home, and clean up before we leave.

- [ ] **Photos are real, recent, and show your actual work**
  Use photos of your business, team, and finished jobs, not stock images. Google asks for photos that are in focus, well lit, and without heavy filters, so they represent reality. Photos appear only after the profile is verified.
  RIGHT IF: a customer could recognize your truck, team, or storefront from them.

Storefront businesses

- [ ] Outside, from each direction customers arrive (Google suggests at least three)
- [ ] Inside, showing what the space feels like (at least three)
- [ ] Your team serving customers
- [ ] Products or services customers buy most
- [ ] Logo and cover photo

Service-area businesses

- [ ] Your team at work on real jobs (Google suggests at least three)
- [ ] Finished work, including before-and-after pairs
- [ ] Branded vehicles, uniforms, and equipment
- [ ] The owner or crew, so customers know who's coming
- [ ] Logo and cover photo

Tip: ask before photographing a customer's home, and keep house numbers and faces out of the shot unless you have permission.

- [ ] **Links work from a phone**
  Tap your website, booking, or appointment links on your own phone. **RIGHT IF:** each opens the right page, not a 404 or an old site.

- [ ] **The call button rings the right line**
  Tap *Call* on the profile while you're away from the office. **RIGHT IF:** it connects to someone who can book the job.

- [ ] **Details that apply are filled in**
  Add the extra details Google offers for your category, like accessibility or payment info, if they're true.
  RIGHT IF: nothing listed is out of date.

- [ ] **Google's suggested edits are reviewed**
  Google can update profiles using info from users and other sources. Check your profile for changes you didn't make. **RIGHT IF:** everything shown is still something you approve.

Where do promotions go? Not in the description. If you want to share an offer, an event, or news, use a post on your profile instead. Posts can be useful to customers, but don't expect a post, a new photo, or a longer description to raise your ranking by itself. Accurate, complete info is the goal.

05 Ask for Honest Reviews & Reply to Them

Reviews help customers decide, and Google says more reviews and positive ratings can help local ranking. The keyword is *honest*: real feedback from real customers.

- [ ] **You have your review link and QR code**
  Open your Business Profile, select *Read reviews*, then *Get more reviews*. Copy the link, or download the QR code (QR codes can only be made in a computer browser). **RIGHT IF:** the link opens your review form.

- [ ] **Asking is part of every finished job**
  Google suggests adding the link to thank-you emails, receipts, and the end of chats. **RIGHT IF:** every customer gets the same ask, whether the job was smooth or bumpy.

DO

- ✓ Ask every customer, or the same group every time (for example, every completed job)
- ✓ Ask for honest feedback in your own friendly words
- ✓ Reply to good and bad reviews
- ✓ Keep customer details out of public replies

DON'T

- ✗ Offer discounts, gifts, or prize entries for reviews
- ✗ Ask only the customers you expect to be happy
- ✗ Ask for five stars or tell people what to write
- ✗ Pressure people to review on the spot, or post reviews for yourself

Google's Maps policy bans incentives, discouraging negative reviews, and selectively asking for positive ones. The FTC also bans fake reviews and testimonials.

After the job

Text or email the link the same day, while the work is fresh.

On paper

Print the QR code on invoices, receipts, or a leave-behind card.

Online

Add the link to your email signature and your website's contact or thank-you page.

READY-TO-SEND TEXT

Hi Maria, this is Jake with Lone Oak Plumbing. Thanks for having us out today. If you have a minute, we'd appreciate an honest review on Google. It helps your neighbors know what to expect: [your review link]. Thank you!

REPLY TO A POSITIVE REVIEW

Thanks so much, Maria! Glad the new water heater has you back to hot showers. We appreciate you trusting Lone Oak Plumbing, and we're here if anything else comes up. – Jake

CALM REPLY TO A NEGATIVE REVIEW

Hi Tom, I'm sorry our technician arrived after the time window we gave you. That's not the experience we want anyone to have, and I'd like to understand what happened and make it right. Please call me directly at [phone number] when you have a moment. – Jake Turner, Owner, Lone Oak Plumbing

Before you hit reply on a tough review: wait until you're calm, thank them, own what's fair, and move the conversation offline. Don't argue, and don't mention job details, prices, or addresses in public. If a review breaks Google's policies, report it instead of fighting it in the replies.

06 Track What Customers Do

Your profile keeps score for you. A few minutes a month shows whether people are calling, clicking, and asking for directions, and whether your changes are helping.

- [ ] **On a computer**
  Sign in to the Google Account that manages the profile, open your Business Profile on Google Search, and select *Performance*. Pick a time period, then *Apply*.

- [ ] **In the Google Maps app**
  Tap *Business* at the bottom right, then *See more* next to Performance. Choose a time period and tap *Apply*.

METRIC	WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEASURES
Calls	Taps on the call button on your profile. It doesn't count every call from people who found you on Google, such as someone who dialed your number by hand.
Website clicks	Clicks on the website link on your profile. What visitors do after that shows up in your website analytics, not here.
Directions	How many people asked for directions to your business. Most useful for storefronts and hybrids.
Views	People who viewed your profile on Search and Maps. Each person counts at most once per day.
Searches	The search terms people used to find you. Updates at the start of each month.
Messages, bookings	Conversations and completed bookings, if those features apply to your business.

Only metrics that apply to your business appear. None of them tell you whether a call became a paying job, so compare against your own records and watch trends month to month, not single days.

Monthly tracker

DATE RANGE	CALLS	WEBSITE CLICKS	DIREC-TIONS	VIEWS	WHAT CHANGED THIS MONTH	ONE NEXT ACTION
e.g. Oct 1–31	24	41	–	610	Added 6 job photos, fixed Saturday hours	Send review link to Oct customers

Example row uses made-up numbers for Lone Oak Plumbing.

07 15-Minute Profile Audit

Print this page. Grab your phone, open your profile, and work top to bottom.

BUSINESS NAME _____ DATE _____ CHECKED BY _____

01 ☐ **Only one profile exists**
Search your name and city on Google and Maps. No duplicates or old listings.

02 ☐ **Verified, with the owner as primary owner**
No "verify" prompts. Helpers have their own manager or owner access.

03 ☐ **Name matches your sign**
No extra keywords, cities, or slogans added to the business name.

04 ☐ **Phone and call button reach the business**
Tap *Call* from your phone. Someone from the business answers.

05 ☐ **Website and booking links open the right pages**
Test each one on a phone.

06 ☐ **Hours and the next holiday's hours are right**
Regular hours match reality; special hours are set for the next holiday.

07 ☐ **Address and service area fit how you work**
Address shown only if customers visit. Service areas accurate and within about a 2-hour drive.

08 ☐ **Primary category is the most specific accurate one**
Extra categories cover real parts of the business only.

09 ☐ **Services and description are current**
Every service is one you offer; the description has no links or promotions.

10 ☐ **Recent real photos; latest reviews answered**
Photos show your actual work. Every review from the past month has a reply.

My first three fixes

#	ISSUE	NEXT ACTION	DUE DATE
1			
2			
3			

NEXT AUDIT DATE _____ NOTES _____

08 Three Quick Wins

Three fixes you can finish today, each in under 15 minutes.

1

ABOUT 5 MINUTES

Set your next holiday hours

1. Open your profile and go to *Hours*, then *Special hours*.
2. Confirm or change the hours for the next holiday on the calendar, even if you'll be open as usual.

2

ABOUT 10 MINUTES

Text your review link to your last five customers

1. Copy your link: *Read reviews* → *Get more reviews* → *Copy*.
2. Send the ready-to-send text from section 05 to your five most recent customers. All five, not just your favorites.

3

ABOUT 5 MINUTES

Tap every button on your profile from your phone

1. Try *Call*, *Website*, and any booking or directions buttons.
2. Anything wrong goes straight into "My first three fixes" on page 8.

Need a Hand? We Know Some People.

If you'd rather have someone handle your Google Business Profile, Kre-adiv is here. No pressure. No confusing marketing talk. Just real people helping businesses get found.

kre-adiv.com · connect@kre-adiv.com · 817-223-5583

Let's Talk About Your Business →

Sources

Guidelines for representing your business on Google — Business Profile Help
Manage your service areas — Business Profile Help
Google reviews help and tips — Business Profile Help
Understand your Business Profile performance — Business Profile Help
How to improve your local ranking — Business Profile Help
Verify your business on Google — Business Profile Help
Request ownership of a Business Profile — Business Profile Help
Manage owners & managers — Business Profile Help
Choose a business category — Business Profile Help
Manage your services — Business Profile Help
Set special hours — Business Profile Help
Manage photos & videos — Business Profile Help
Tips for business-specific photos — Business Profile Help
Manage customer reviews — Business Profile Help
Maps user-contributed content policy — Google
Final rule banning fake reviews — FTC

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