

NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2026

31,495
AI PROMPTS LATER:
WHAT ACTUALLY
GETS A LOCAL
BUSINESS CITED

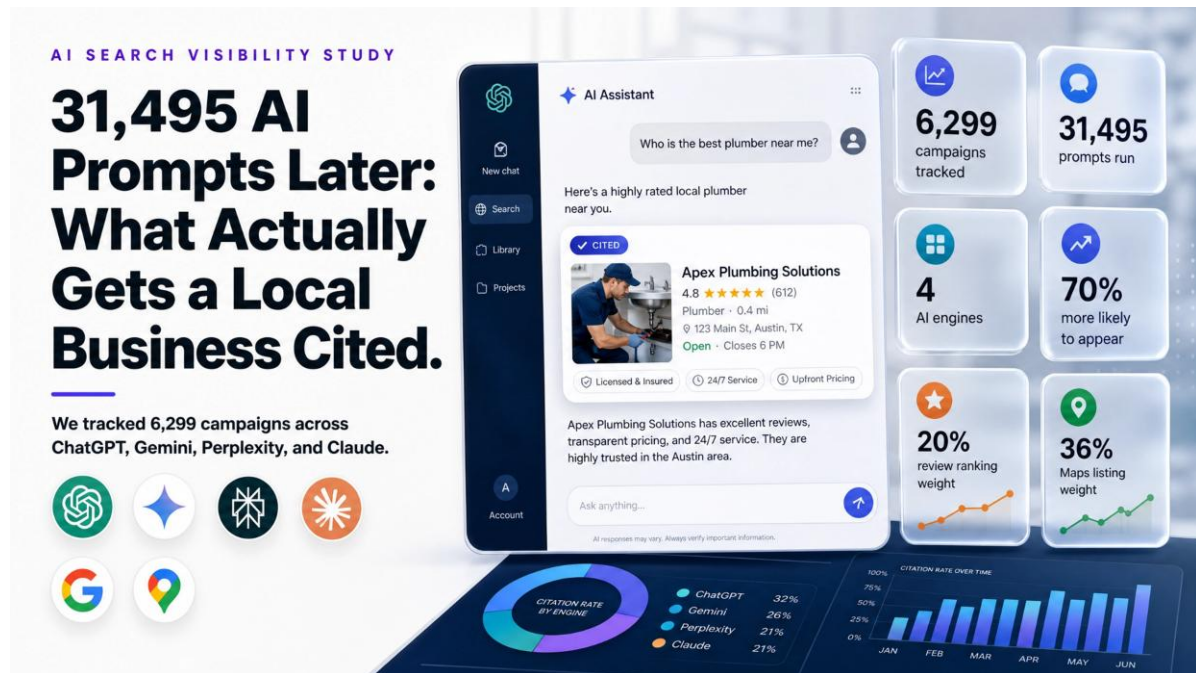
HOW
CUSTOMER
REVIEWS ARE
QUIETLY
INFLUENCING
YOUR SEO
RANKINGS

GOOGLE CAN NOW
CALL YOUR BUSINESS
WITH AI—AND YOU
CAN FINALLY SEE
WHAT IT COLLECTED

GOOGLE SEARCH
CONSOLE NOW
TRACKS YOUR
SOCIAL & VIDEO
CONTENT

IS YOUR BUSINESS
SHOWING UP WHEN
LOCAL
CUSTOMERS
SEARCH?

We tracked 6,299 business campaigns across ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, and Claude. Here's what the visible businesses had in common, backed up by what outside research is finding too.



More people are skipping the search results page and just asking an AI assistant directly: "who's a good plumber near me," "recommend a dentist in [city]." The businesses that get named in that answer get the call. The rest don't exist as far as that customer is concerned.

To find out what separates the two groups, we tracked **6,299 local business campaigns**, each checked against **five different local-intent prompts**, for a total of **31,495 prompts**, run across **four AI engines**: ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, and Claude.

The same handful of factors kept showing up, no matter which engine we looked at.

At a Glance

Factor	Key Data Point
Complete business profile	70% more likely to appear in AI recommendations
Reviews	Now 20% of local ranking weight, up from 16%
Hours of operation	Read in real time for urgent, time-sensitive queries
Verified Maps listing	36% of local pack ranking weight overall
Matching name/address/phone	Mismatches cause AI systems to skip the citation
On-page titles & schema markup	Noticeably higher AI crawl rate when present
Coverage across many phrasings	Visibility varies up to 4.5x across related topics
Time / maturity	+7% more crawler visits per blog post, +4% per page
Brand mentions vs. backlinks	Mentions are 3x stronger predictor of citation
Answer-first content	Meaningfully higher citation rates than generic copy

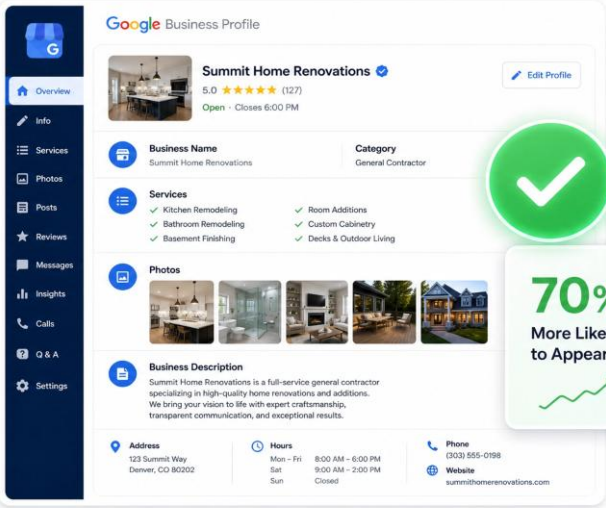
Here's each factor in more detail, along with outside research that points in the same direction.

Factor 1:
A Complete
Google Business
Profile





70% more likely
to appear in
AI recommendations



A complete Google Business Profile. Category, services, photos, and description all filled in properly. This came up more consistently than any other single factor in our data. It lines up with outside research too: one benchmark found businesses with a complete, active profile are roughly **70% more likely** to appear in AI-generated local recommendations, and a separate analysis of over **858,000 small business websites** found sites with synced business information were noticeably more visible to AI crawlers than sites without it.

Factor 2: Reviews



Review signals now carry **20%** of local ranking weight, up from **16%**



★★★★★
5.0 on Google

 **Recent Google Reviews** [View all reviews →](#)

**Sarah M.**
★★★★★
Excellent service and attention to detail. Highly recommend!
2 days ago

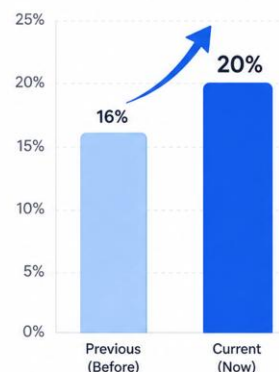
**James T.**
★★★★★
Great experience from start to finish. The team was professional and helpful.
5 days ago

**Linda K.**
★★★★★
Very happy with the results. Will definitely return!
1 week ago

**Business Owner (You)** [Helpful reply](#) 

Thank you so much for your kind words, Linda! We're thrilled to hear you had a great experience. We look forward to seeing you again soon!
1 week ago

Review Ranking Weight ⓘ



+4%
increase in
ranking weight

Reviews. Not just having them, but having a steady flow of them and responding to them. The same large-scale website analysis found businesses with customer reviews present were meaningfully more visible to AI crawlers than those without. Separate local ranking research found review signals now carry roughly **20% of local ranking weight**, up from **16%** two years earlier, one of the biggest single increases of any factor tracked. Responding to reviews with specific, helpful detail (not just a generic thank you) also came up repeatedly as a trust signal AI systems seem to pick up on.

Factor 3: Hours of Operation



AI reads hours in real time for urgent, time-sensitive queries



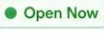
Google Maps



Real-Time Hours

**Trusted Plumbing** 
4.8 ★★★★★ (512)
Plumber · Austin, TX

[Overview](#) [Services](#) [Reviews](#) [Photos](#) [About](#)

Hours 

Monday

7:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Tuesday

7:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Wednesday

7:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Thursday

7:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Friday

7:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Saturday

8:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Sunday

8:00 AM – 10:00 PM

[See more hours >](#)



Google Business Profile

 Which plumber is open after 10pm?

 **AI Assistant**

Trusted Plumbing in Austin is open after 10pm.

**Trusted Plumbing** 
4.8 ★★★★★ (512)

Hours

Mon – Thu

7:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Fri

7:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Sat

8:00 AM – 11:00 PM

Sun

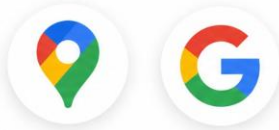
8:00 AM – 10:00 PM

[Source: Google Business Profile](#)

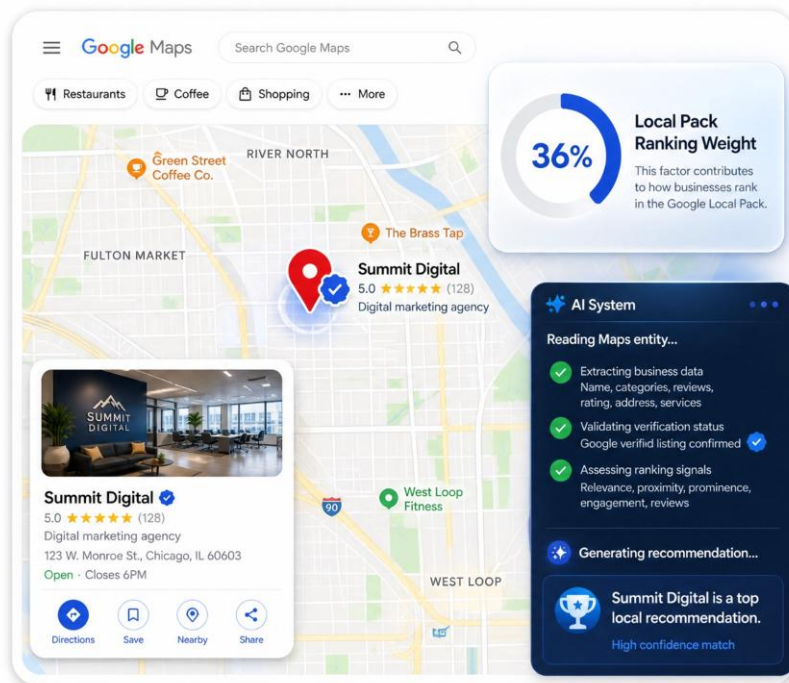
 **Wrong hours = skipped by AI**

Hours of operation, kept accurate. This sounds minor but isn't. Some of the newer AI-powered local search features answer questions like "which plumber near me offers emergency service after 10pm" by reading hours directly off a business's profile **in real time**. Wrong or missing hours don't just annoy customers who show up at a closed door, they can mean an AI system skips the business entirely for any time-sensitive query.

Factor 4: A Verified Google Maps Listing



36%
of local pack
ranking weight overall



A verified Google Maps listing. Not just a claimed profile sitting there, but one tied to a confirmed Maps entity. It gives AI systems a canonical record to pull from instead of guessing. This tracks with how AI-powered local search tools are built now, answering conversational local questions by reading business profile and Maps data directly. Local ranking research puts these profile signals at roughly **36% of local pack ranking weight** overall, up from **33%** two years earlier.

Factor 5: Matching NAP Details Everywhere



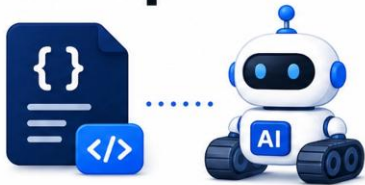
Mismatches cause
AI systems to skip
the citation entirely



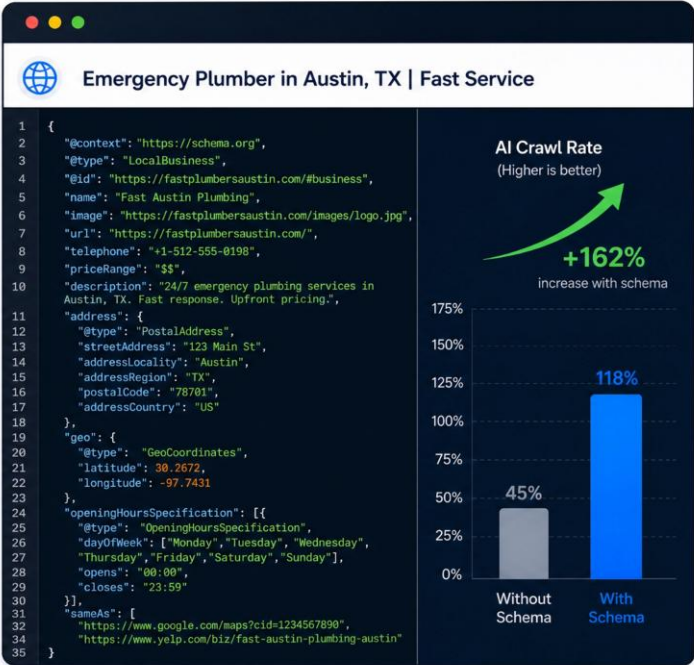
CONSISTENT NAP = AI CITES THIS BUSINESS			
Website	Google Business Profile	Directories	
Summit Home Services	Summit Home Services	Summit Home Services	
123 Mountain View Dr. Boulder, CO 80302	123 Mountain View Dr. Boulder, CO 80302	123 Mountain View Dr. Boulder, CO 80302	
(303) 555-1234	(303) 555-1234	(303) 555-1234	
Website	Google Business Profile	Directories	
Summit Home Services	summit home service	Summit Home Services LLC	
123 Mountain View Drive Boulder, CO 80302	123 Mtn. View Dr. Boulder, CO 80302	123 Mountain View Dr Boulder, CO 80302	
(303) 555-1234	303-555-1234	(303) 555-5678	
AI Skips This Business			

Matching business details everywhere. Same name, same address, same phone number on the website, on your business profile, and across directories. Even small mismatches seem to make AI systems hesitate and skip the citation entirely. AI systems appear to build confidence in a business from **repeated, consistent signals**: when the name, category, and description line up across the website, profile, and major directories, AI tools can identify and recommend the business more reliably.

Factor 6: On-Page Titles and Schema Markup



 Sites with local schema markup have a noticeably higher AI crawl rate.



On-page optimization: titles and schema markup. Page titles that clearly state the service and location, plus schema markup (**LocalBusiness, FAQ, and service schema** in particular) that spells out who you are and what you do in a format machines can read directly, both matter. In one large-scale analysis, sites with local schema markup in place had a noticeably higher AI crawl rate than sites without it. Broader research on AI search ranking factors consistently flags structured data and entity markup as one of the **higher-impact, lower-effort fixes** available specifically for AI visibility, separate from what it does for traditional Google rankings.

Factor 7: Coverage Across Many Phrasings



 AI visibility can vary by more than **4.5x** across closely related topics

PROMPT PHRASING		CITATION RATE (ACROSS AI ENGINES)
1	Who does X in Y?	32%
2	List of X near Y	28%
3	Recommend an X in Y	24%
4	Best X in Y	18%
5	Top X near me	14%

 **4.5x**
GREATER VARIATION IN AI VISIBILITY
ACROSS CLOSELY RELATED TOPICS

Coverage across many phrasings, not one keyword. Businesses that show up for "who does X in Y," "list of X near Y," and "recommend an X in Y" all at once get cited far more often than ones chasing a single exact-match term. This matches a wider pattern researchers have flagged elsewhere: one citation study found a brand's AI visibility can vary by more than **4.5 times** across closely related topics within the same niche, meaning optimization has to happen prompt by prompt rather than as a single one-time fix.

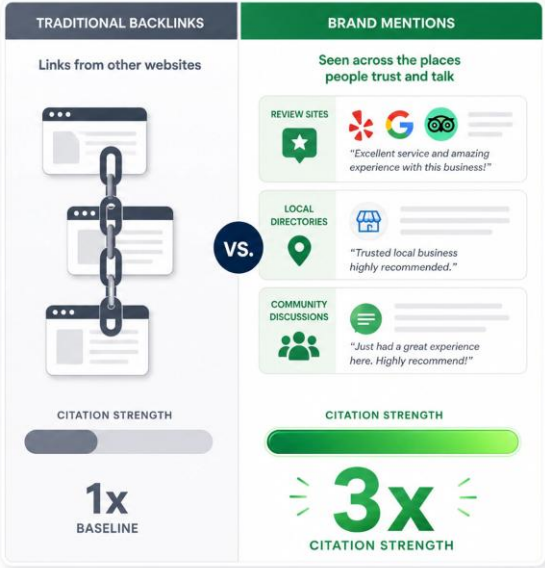
Factor 8: Time and Profile Maturity



Time. Newer, thin profiles are simply less visible. AI visibility builds up over months, not days, and there's no shortcut around it. This shows up in freshness research too: one analysis found AI systems favor content published within the last year roughly **65% of the time**, which rewards businesses that keep adding to their online presence rather than setting it up once and leaving it. A separate large-scale study found a similar compounding effect on the content side:

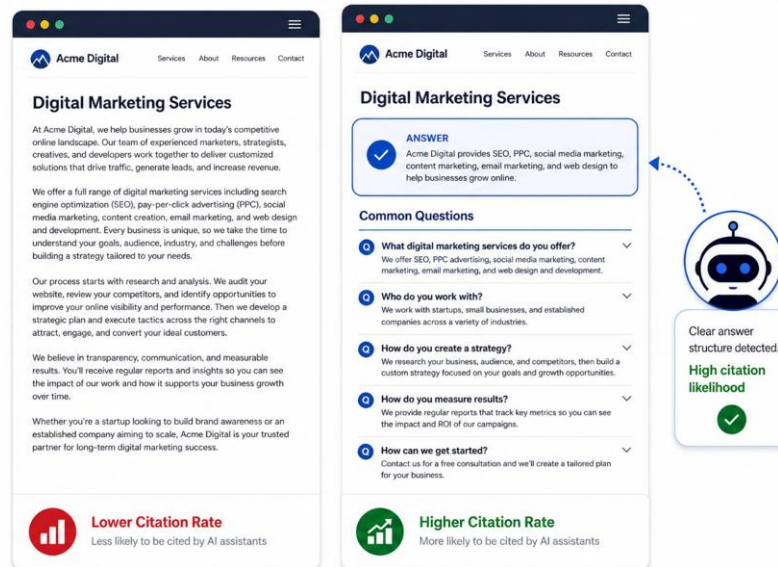
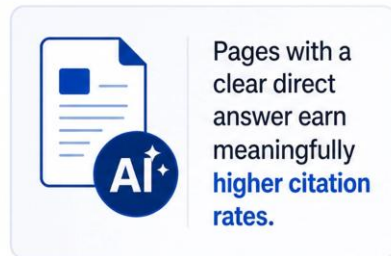
Content Added	Median Increase in AI Crawler Visits
Each additional blog post	+7%
Each additional website page	+4%

Factor 9: Brand Mentions Beat Backlinks



Being talked about beats being linked to. Genuine mentions on review sites, directories, and local discussion consistently outperformed traditional backlink building in what we saw. A large-scale analysis of tens of thousands of brands backs this up directly: brand mentions on other people's content correlated with AI citation about **three times more strongly** than traditional backlinks did, whether or not those mentions included a link at all.

Factor 10: Answer-First Content



Content that answers the actual question. A page built around "emergency plumbing in [city]" beats generic service copy every time. AI engines seem to reward a direct answer over marketing language. Separate research has found pages that open with a clear, direct answer, sometimes called an **answer capsule**, earn meaningfully higher citation rates than pages that make the AI piece an answer together from scattered text, and that structured formats like Q&A and clear headings consistently outperform dense paragraphs.

None of this requires guessing which AI engine your customers prefer. Get the basics right (**Google Business Profile, reviews, hours, Maps, matching contact details, on-page schema**), give it time, get mentioned in more places than just your own site, and write pages that answer real questions instead of selling. That combination showed up again and again in our own data, on every engine we checked, and it's the same combination outside research keeps landing on too.

Want to know if your business is actually showing up when people ask AI for a recommendation?

Get in touch. We'll show you exactly where you stand across ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, and Claude, and what to fix first to start getting cited.

What the data shows about reviews and local search, plus a few things worth fixing this month.

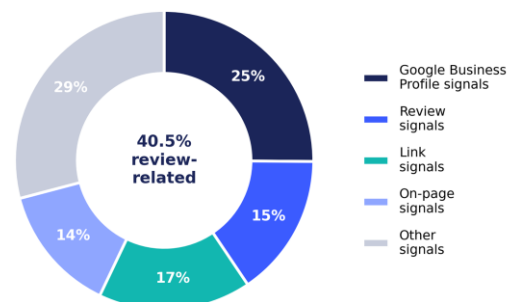


Google handles somewhere around 1.2 trillion searches a year, and 93% of consumers check reviews before deciding who to buy from. Google's ranking algorithm follows that same pattern. Reviews and your Google Business Profile together make up close to 40% of what determines a local ranking. That single category carries more weight than links, on-page content, or anything else Google measures.

Reviews carry more weight than most people assume

The logic is pretty simple. Google wants to send searchers to businesses people actually trust, and reviews are the clearest proof of that. The more genuine, positive reviews a business has, the more Google treats it as a legitimate result worth ranking for local searches. It matters for conversions too. 57% of consumers won't buy from a business rated under four stars, and 75% of searchers never make it past the first page of results.

What actually moves local search rankings



Source: Moz Local Search Ranking Factors

Average Google reviews by local ranking position



Source: BrightLocal Local Search Ranking Factors

Quantity and freshness win the local 3-pack

The local 3-pack captures close to half of all local search clicks on its own. Businesses ranked in the top three spots average 47 Google reviews, right around the 40 reviews consumers say they need to see before they'll trust a star rating at all. Ranking there isn't about one great review. It's about volume.

A quick example

Picture two dentists in the same zip code. Both are rated 4.9 or 5.0 stars. One has 11 reviews, the other has 228. Searchers, and Google, put more trust in the second one even though the average rating is almost identical. That gap between similar ratings and different review counts is exactly what shows up in the map pack rankings, and it's usually the easiest thing on this list to fix.



Bright Smile Dental

4.9 ★★★★★ 11 reviews

Dentist · 90210

Open · Closes 5 PM

Call Directions Save Website

Low review volume
Fewer reviews may impact trust and rankings.

VS.



City Center Dental

5.0 ★★★★★ 228 reviews

Dentist · 90210

Open · Closes 5 PM

Call Directions Save Website

High review volume
More reviews build trust and boost rankings.

Dentists near 90210

- City Center Dental**
5.0 ★★★★★ (228)
Dentist · 90210
Open · Closes 5 PM
- Smile Well Dental**
4.7 ★★★★★ (156)
Dentist · 90210
Open · Closes 6 PM
- Beverly Hills Dentistry**
4.6 ★★★★★ (112)
Dentist · 90210
Open · Closes 5 PM





**Same rating.
Very different trust.**

Review count is often
the easiest gap to close.

Reviews on other platforms count too

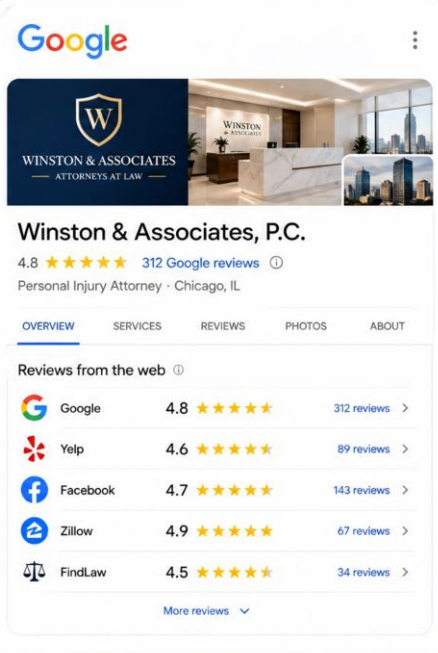
Google doesn't only look at its own reviews. Yelp, Facebook, and industry-specific directories like Zillow or FindLaw all feed into how your business gets evaluated. Google's Knowledge Panel now pulls in "reviews from the web," meaning ratings from wherever your customers are actually posting, not just from your Google Business Profile. If people in your industry tend to check a niche site before booking, reviews there can carry just as much weight as the ones sitting on Google.

Reviews on Other Platforms Count Too

KEY INSIGHT

Google's Knowledge Panel pulls in ratings from wherever your customers post — **not just your GBP.**

Google Yelp Facebook Zillow FindLaw



Winston & Associates, P.C.
4.8 ★★★★★ 312 Google reviews
Personal Injury Attorney · Chicago, IL

OVERVIEW SERVICES REVIEWS PHOTOS ABOUT

Reviews from the web

Google	4.8 ★★★★★	312 reviews
Yelp	4.6 ★★★★★	89 reviews
Facebook	4.7 ★★★★★	143 reviews
Zillow	4.9 ★★★★★	67 reviews
FindLaw	4.5 ★★★★★	34 reviews

More reviews

Yelp 4.6 ★★★★★

Facebook 4.7 ★★★★★

Zillow 4.9 ★★★★★

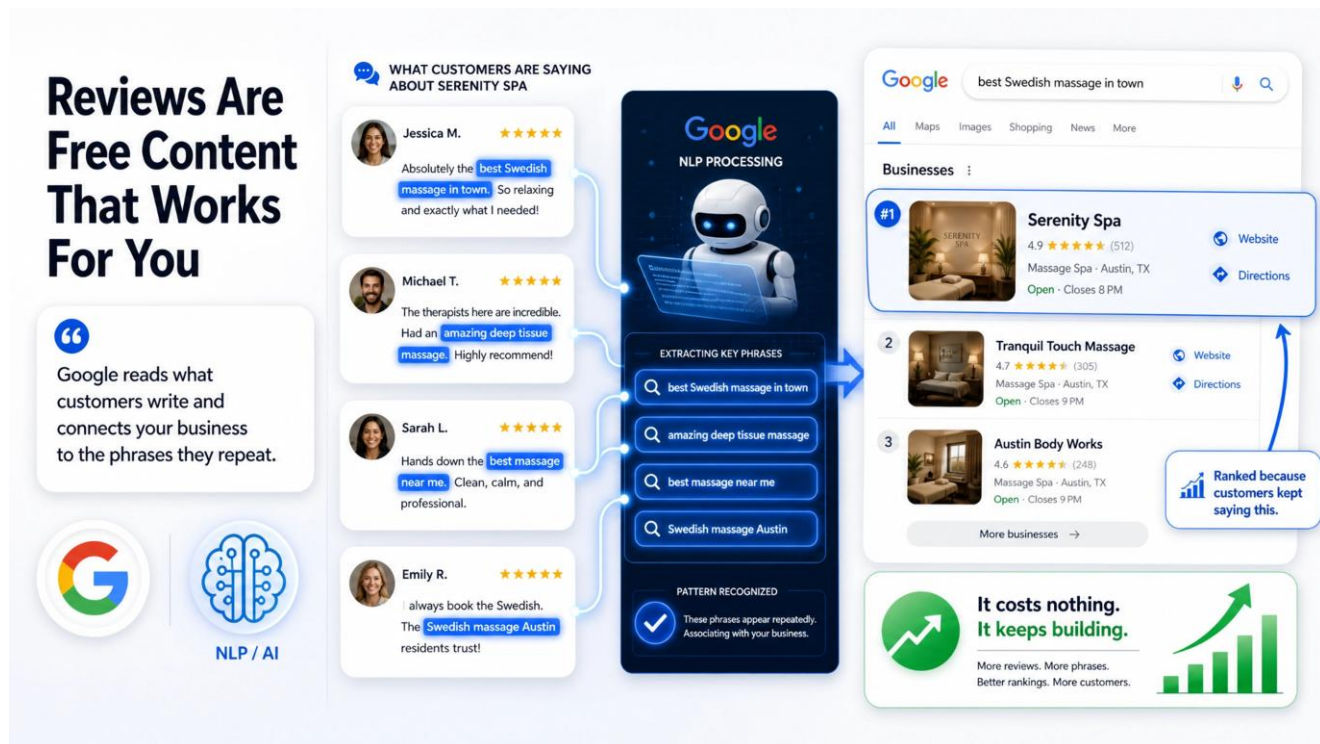
FindLaw 4.5 ★★★★★

Industry Directories
Avvo, Martindale-Hubbell, Justia, Lawyers.com, etc.

Niche site reviews can carry just as much weight as Google reviews.

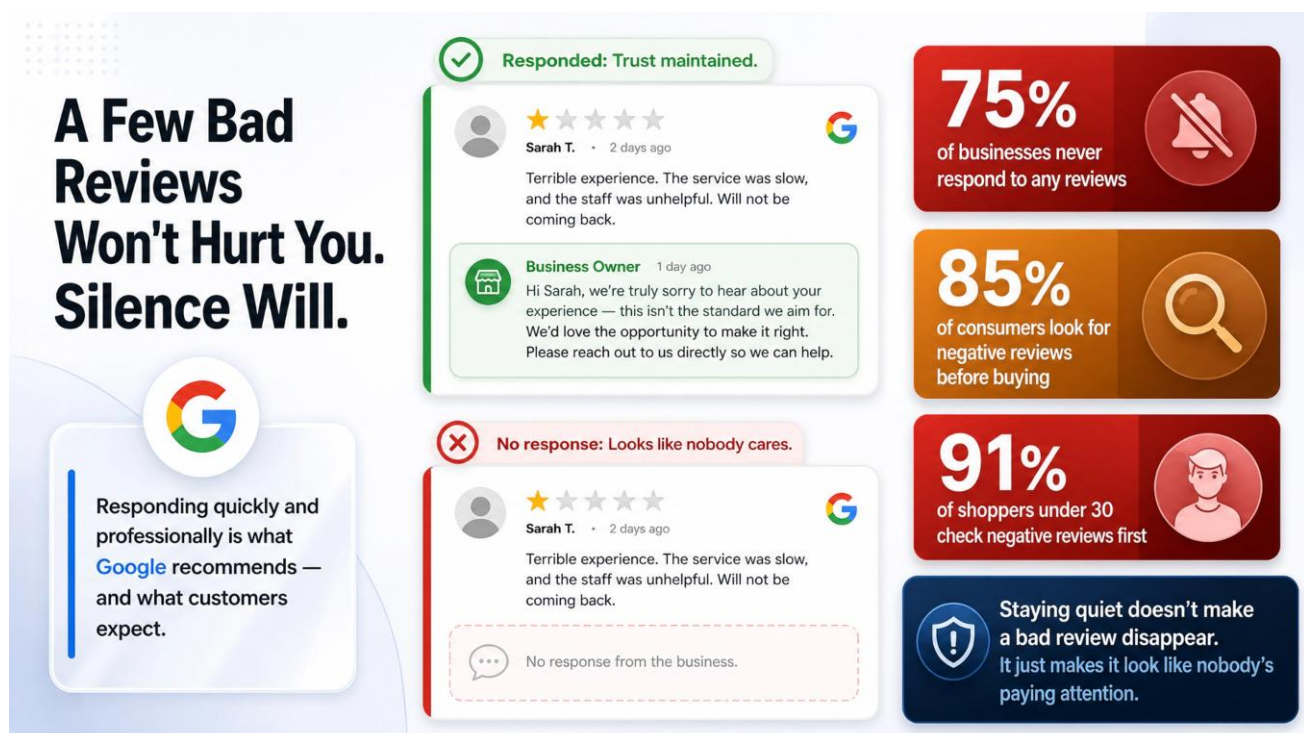
Reviews are free content that talks about your business

Google uses natural language processing to read what people actually write in a review. When customers keep mentioning the same thing, a specific service, a specific fix, a specific product, Google starts connecting your business to that phrase. Enough people write “best Swedish massage in town” and Google starts showing your spa for that exact search. It costs nothing, and it keeps building as long as reviews keep coming in.



A few bad reviews won't hurt you. Silence will.

Negative reviews happen to every business. Google knows this, and a handful of them won't tank your ranking as long as you respond quickly and handle them professionally. Google actually recommends replying to both positive and negative feedback. The real problem is that 75% of businesses never respond to any of their reviews at all. Meanwhile 85% of consumers specifically look for negative reviews before they buy, and that number climbs to 91% for shoppers under 30. Staying quiet doesn't make a bad review disappear. It just makes it look like nobody's paying attention.



What your AgencyPlatform dashboard already handles

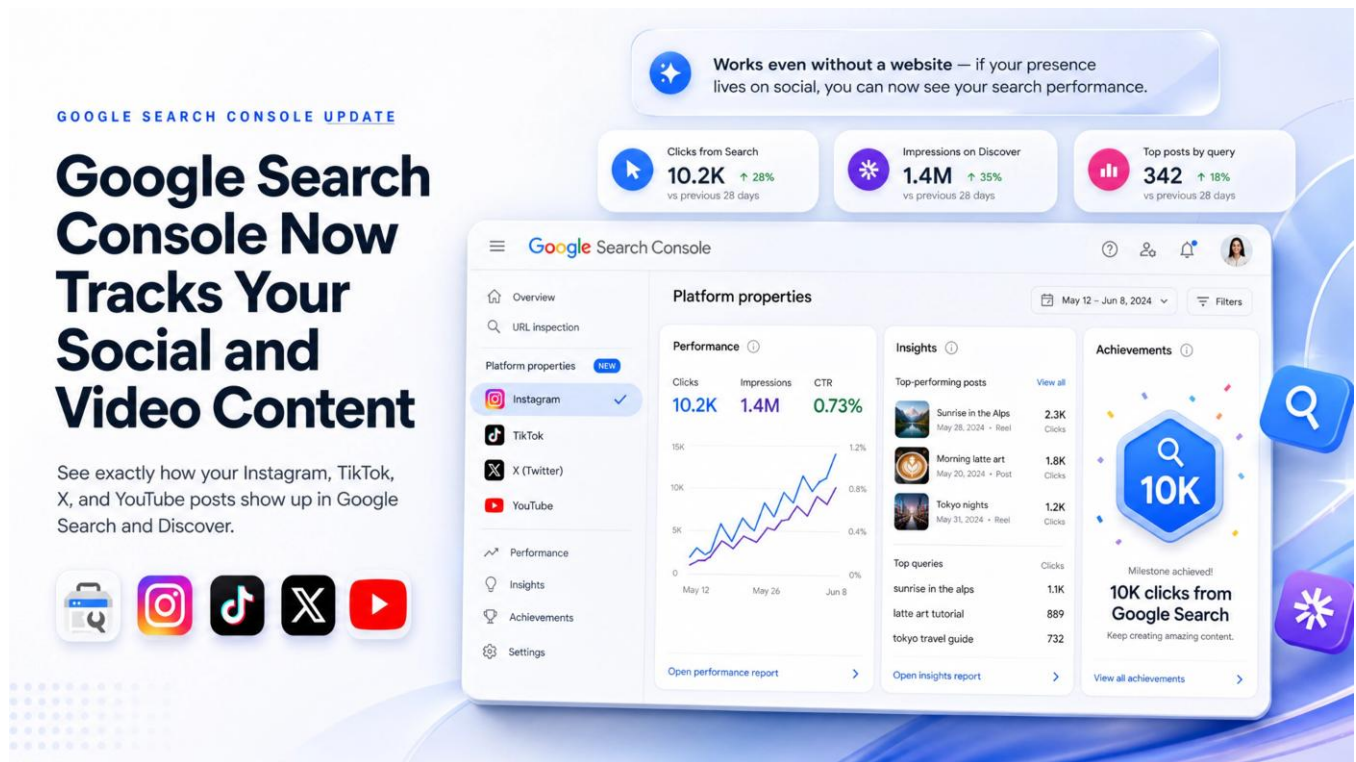
- **Review monitoring and management.** Every review from Google, Yelp, Facebook, and the rest of your listings lands in one inbox, so nothing slips through.
- **Response generation.** Replies that read like they came from an actual person on your team, not a template that Google or a customer could flag as automated.
- **Review-generating surveys.** Short post-visit surveys that point happy customers toward Google, Yelp, and Facebook right when they're most likely to leave a good one.

Three things worth doing this month

- Check how your review count compares to the businesses ranked above you in the map pack.
- Respond to every open review from the last 90 days, starting with the negative ones.
- Turn on post-visit surveys for at least one location and see what comes back in two weeks.

Want to see where your review footprint stands right now? Log in to your AgencyPlatform dashboard, or just reply to this email and we'll walk you through it.

See exactly how your Instagram, TikTok, X, and YouTube posts show up in Google Search and Discover.



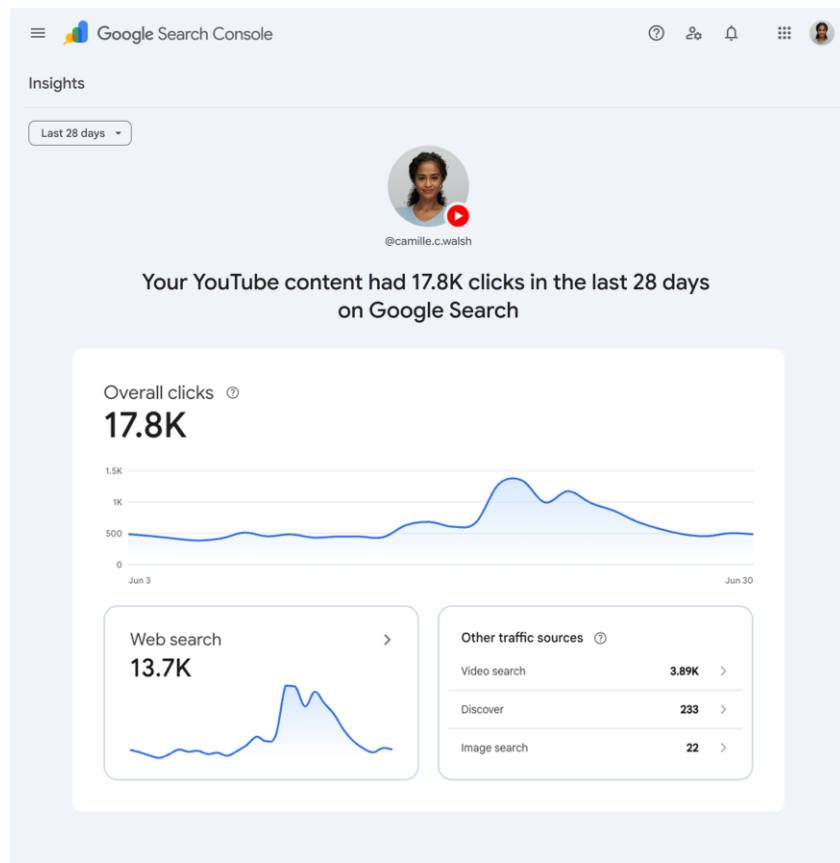
Your audience does not live on your website alone anymore. They find you on **social feeds, short-form video, and search results**. Until now, though, there was no single place to see how all of that content actually performed on Google. That has changed. Google has rolled out a [new Search Console feature](#) called **platform properties**, and it gives brands and creators one consolidated view of how their social and video posts get discovered on **Google Search and Discover**.

Here is the part worth noting. According to Google, this works **even if you do not have your own website**. If your presence lives mainly on social platforms, you can now see the search terms and the behavior that bring people to your content.

What You Can Now See

Inside Search Console, you can create a **platform property** for Instagram, TikTok, X, or YouTube and access three reports:

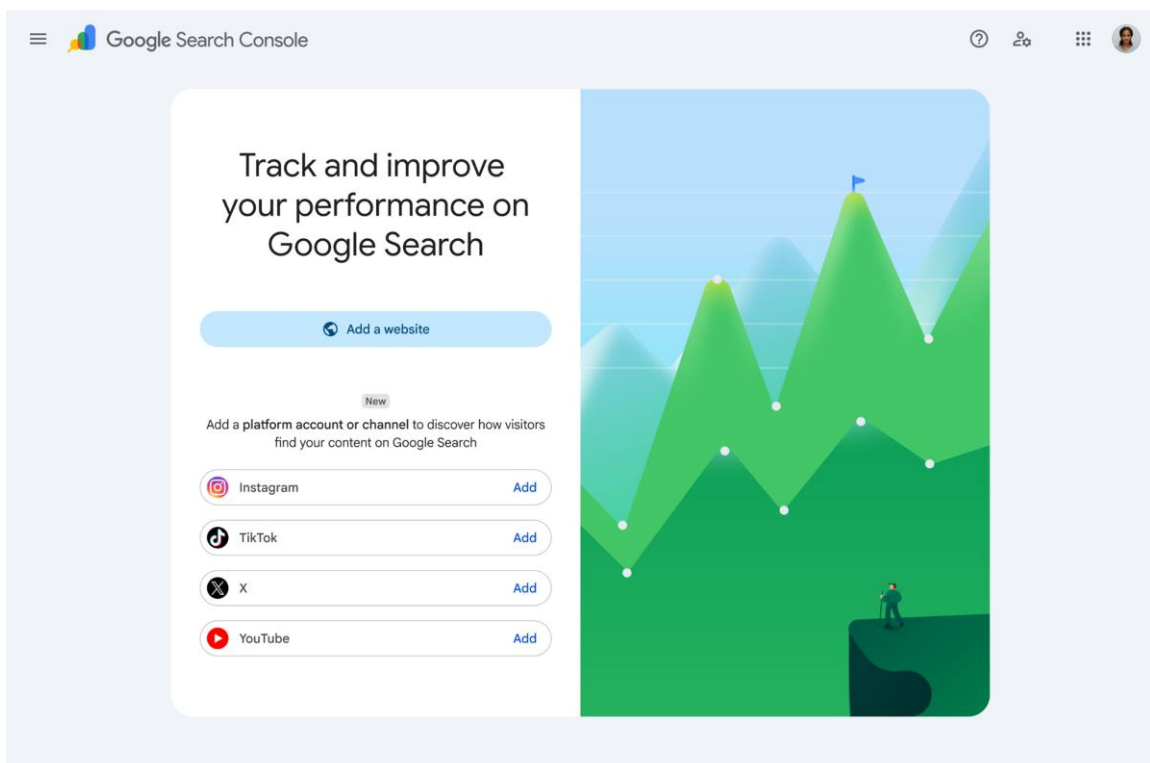
- **Performance report.** See your total clicks, impressions, and other metrics. Filter and sort to find out which posts and search queries drive the most traffic, and export the data if you prefer to work in your own tools.
- **Insights report.** Get a high-level view of your recent traffic trends, your top-performing posts, and how people are discovering your account on Google.
- **Achievements.** Track your growth and mark milestones, like passing a new threshold for total clicks from Google Search over the last 28 days.



Source: google.com

How to Set It Up

1. Open **Google Search Console**.
2. Go to the verification page, or open the property selector drop-down and click **"Add property"**.
3. Select one of the four platforms: **Instagram, TikTok, X, or YouTube**.
4. Follow the on-screen steps to securely authorize the connection.



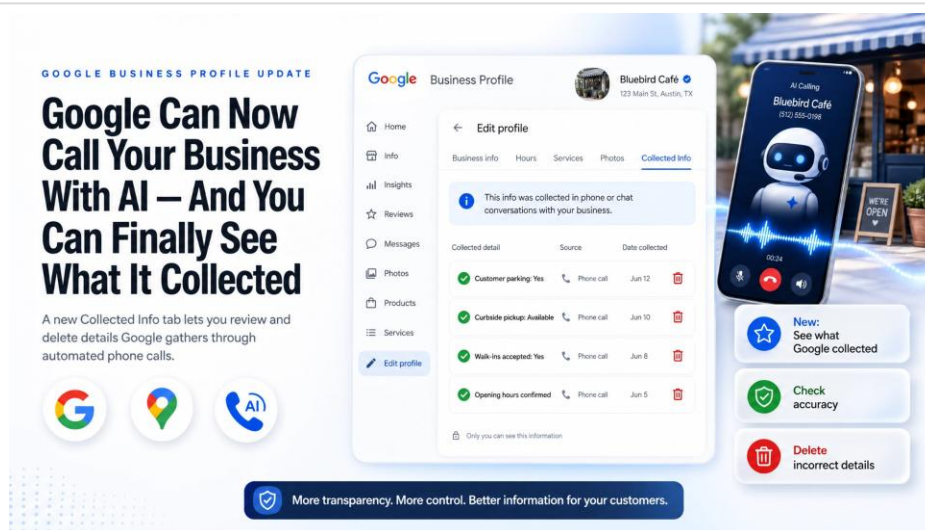
Source: google.com

Why This Matters for Your Brand

This closes a blind spot that has been around for years. You can finally connect **what you post on social** with **what people are actually searching for**, which turns a lot of guesswork into real data. Use it to lean into the posts and topics that are already earning search visibility, see which platforms genuinely drive discovery, and show how social contributes to your wider search presence.

Rolling out now: Platform properties are becoming available gradually over the coming weeks. If you do not see the option yet, check back soon. It is worth setting up early so you start building your data history sooner.

A new “Collected Info” tab lets you review and delete the details Google gathers about your business through automated phone calls.



Google has quietly begun rolling out a new **Collected Info tab** inside the **Google Business Profile** dashboard — the control panel behind the listing customers see on Google Search and Maps. For the first time, business owners can see exactly what information Google has gathered about them through its **automated phone calls**, check whether it's accurate, and delete anything that's wrong. The update was spotted by local-search expert [Darren Shaw](#), and [confirmed](#) by Google.

What's actually happening

Google sometimes calls businesses using an **AI assistant** to confirm everyday details, whether you have customer parking, offer curbside pickup, accept walk-ins, or your current opening hours. These calls are automated (and monitored and recorded by a live supervisor), and Google uses what it hears to keep your profile current. Until now, owners would often notice their profile details change **with no idea where the change came from**.

What the Collected Info tab does

Found under **Edit profile** → **Collected info**, the new tab shows a clear list of the details Google gathered from recent calls or chats — along with the **source** and the **date collected**. In Google's words: "This info was collected in phone or chat conversations with your business. It's used to match your business with customers looking for services like yours." From here you can:

- **See** what was collected from recent calls
- **Check** whether each detail is accurate
- **Delete** any individual detail from Google Search and Maps

Deleting a detail removes it from Google's records but **doesn't change** the other information already on your profile.

Why this matters: The details Google collects feed directly into how you appear when customers search. Inaccurate info: wrong hours, or a “no parking” that should be “yes”, can quietly cost you visits. This tab gives you a clear window into what Google thinks it knows, and a fast way to fix it.

What to do

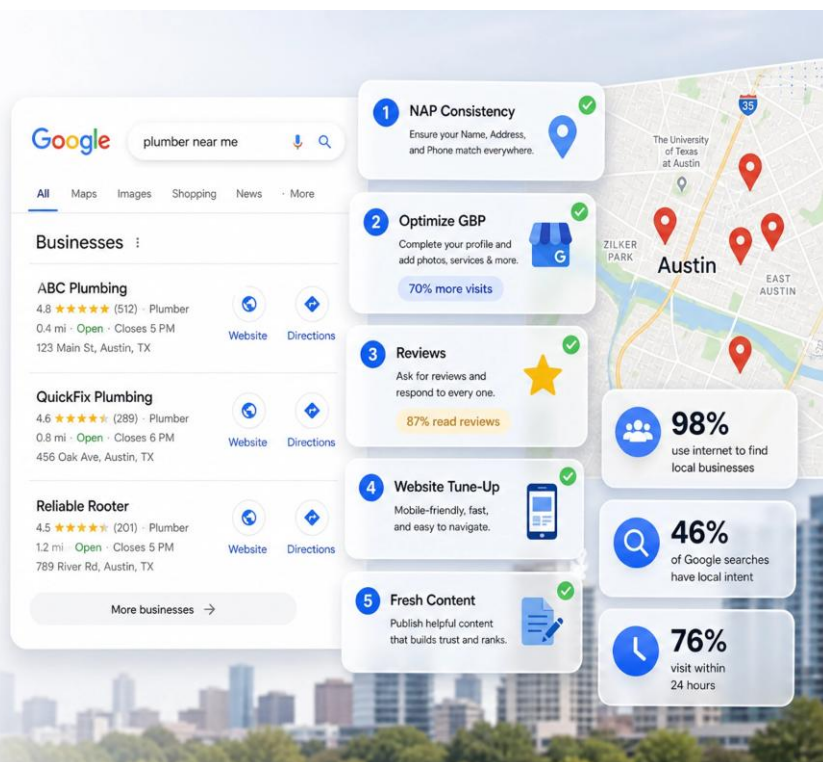
1. **Check for the tab.** Open your Business Profile, click **Edit profile**, and look for **Collected info**. It's rolling out gradually, so it may not appear for you yet.
2. **Review every detail.** Confirm each collected item is accurate, and note where and when it was gathered.
3. **Delete what's wrong.** Remove any incorrect detail so it stops showing on Search and Maps.
4. **Adjust call settings if needed.** To change or stop automated calls, go to **More → Business Profile settings → Advanced settings**, then "Google automated calls and text messages."

A practical local SEO checklist to help customers find you (and choose you) on Google

LOCAL SEO CHECKLIST

Is Your Business Showing Up When Local Customers Search?

A practical local SEO checklist for getting found — and chosen — on Google.



These days, almost every buying decision starts with a search. In fact, **98% of consumers use the internet to find information about local businesses**, and 46% of all Google searches have local intent. The stakes are real, too: 76% of people who search for something “near me” on their phone visit a business within 24 hours. But here’s the catch. Very few searchers ever scroll past the first page of results, so if your business isn’t showing up there, those calls and visits are going to your competitors. The good news? Local search visibility comes down to a handful of fundamentals you can control. Here’s where to focus.

1. Get Your Business Information Right, Everywhere

Google cross-checks your business details across the web, and inconsistencies chip away at both trust and rankings. For every location, make sure you:

- Keep your name, address, and phone number identical across Google, your website, and online directories
- Confirm your hours, email addresses, and any secondary phone numbers are accurate
- List every service you offer, add a short description of each location, and upload high-quality photos

2. Optimize Your Google Business Profile

Your Google Business Profile is often the first impression a customer gets of your business, and sometimes the only one. Businesses with complete profiles get about **70% more location visits** than those with incomplete ones. Here’s how to make yours work harder:

- Claim your profile and fill out every section, including your business categories and attributes
- Write a complete “from the business” description and publish Google posts weekly
- Upload fresh photos regularly, answer customer questions, add your products and services, and turn on messaging

3. Make Reviews Your Competitive Advantage

When someone searches for the “best” business nearby, Google looks at how many reviews you have and how good they are. Your customers do the same: **87% of consumers read online reviews for local businesses, and most won’t consider one rated below 4 stars.** So build your reputation on purpose:

- Ask every customer for a review, ideally through an automated, consistent process
- Keep an eye on new reviews and respond quickly, especially to the negative ones
- Resolve issues in-store before they turn into bad reviews, watch for recurring complaints, and report any spam

4. Tune Up Your Website

Your website backs up everything your profile promises. Cover the essentials:

- Content: clear, current Homepage, About, Contact, and FAQ pages; a separate page for each location and each key service or product; a reviews page or embedded reviews; and a unique title tag (50 to 60 characters) and meta description (about 160 characters) on every page
- Technical: mobile-friendly design, fast load speed, secure HTTPS, proper redirects and canonical URLs, consistent header tags, and short, readable URLs
- Extras: compressed images with alt text, videos with transcripts, social media links, and mentions of your community involvement like sponsorships and charity events

5. Publish Content Your Customers Are Searching For

Write down the top 20 to 30 questions your customers actually ask, then turn the answers into pages and posts. Great topics include your services, staff spotlights, events, FAQs, loyalty programs, awards, and community involvement. Fresh, relevant content shows Google that your business is active and knows its stuff.

Not Ranking Yet? Start Here

Check your Google Business Profile for guideline violations or duplicate listings, look for technical errors on your website, see whether a recent Google algorithm update is at play, and take an honest look at how good and how consistent your content is. Most ranking problems trace back to one of these five.

Ready to Own Local Search in Your Market?

You don’t have to tackle this checklist alone. Our team helps local businesses like yours get found, win more reviews, and turn searches into customers. We’ll even start with a free local search visibility assessment of your business.

Reply to this email or give us a call today to schedule your free assessment.