Google Maps Domination Playbook

A Comprehensive Guide by Optymizer

Google Maps Domination Playbook (2026)

How to Rank #1 in the Local Pack and Dominate Your Market

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Why Google Maps Matters More Than Ever

The Statistics:

• 46% of ALL Google searches have local intent

• 76% of people who search for something nearby visit a business within 24 hours

• 28% of local searches result in a purchase

• **The Local Pack (top 3 map results) gets 44% of all clicks**

The Reality:

If you're not in the top 3 Google Maps results (the "Local Pack"), you're invisible to most potential customers.

What is the Local Pack?

When someone searches "plumber near me" or "dentist in Austin," Google shows 3 businesses with a map. Those are the Local Pack. Position #1 gets 3x more clicks than position #3.

This playbook will show you exactly how to dominate the Local Pack in your market.

How Google Ranks Local Businesses

Google uses three main factors (they literally tell us this):

1. Relevance (25% weight)

How well does your business match the search query?

• Business category selection

• Services listed

• Keywords in business description

• Website content

2. Distance (20% weight)

How close is your business to the searcher?

• Physical address proximity

• Service area definition

• City/neighborhood mentioned

• Less controllable, but important

3. Prominence (55% weight)

How well-known and trusted is your business?

• Number and quality of reviews

• Citation quantity and consistency

• Backlinks to your website

• Google Business Profile engagement

• Website authority

Bottom Line: You can't control distance (unless you open new locations), but you CAN control relevance and prominence. That's where we'll focus.

Your Google Maps Audit

Before we optimize, let's see where you stand.

Quick Audit (Do This Now)

Step 1: Check Your Current Ranking

• Open Google Maps in incognito mode (to get unbiased results)

• Search for "[your service] near [your city]"

• Example: "plumber near Austin" or "dentist in Phoenix"

• Are you in the top 3 (Local Pack)?

• What position are you?

Step 2: Analyze Your Top Competitors

• Who's in positions 1, 2, and 3?

• Write down their business names

• What are they doing that you're not?

Step 3: Profile Completeness Check

• Go to your Google Business Profile

• Click "Info" tab

• Check your "Profile Strength" percentage

• Is it 100%? If not, what's missing?

Your Current Position: _

Goal Position: #1

Section 1: Profile Optimization (Relevance)

This is the foundation. If your profile isn't 100% complete and optimized, nothing else matters.

Step 1: Claim and Verify Your Listing

If You Haven't Claimed It:

1. Go to google.com/business

2. Search for your business

3. Click "Claim this business"

4. Choose verification method:

• **Postcard** (most common): 5-7 days

• **Phone** (some businesses): Instant

• **Email** (if you have verified domain): Instant

Verification Status: _ (Claimed / Not Claimed / Pending)

Pro Tip: If someone else claimed your listing (previous owner, employee, agency), you'll need to request access or prove ownership. Google has a recovery process.

Step 2: Choose the RIGHT Categories

This is the most important optimization decision you'll make.

Primary Category = Your Main Service

• You get ONE primary category

• This is the #1 factor for showing up in searches

• Choose the most specific category possible

Example (Plumber):

• ■ BAD: "Contractor" (too broad)

• ■ GOOD: "Plumber" (specific)

• ■ EVEN BETTER: "Emergency Plumber" (if that's your focus)

Secondary Categories = Additional Services

• You can add up to 9 secondary categories

• Add every relevant category (more isn't bad, irrelevant is bad)

• Choose categories that customers actually search for

Example (Plumber):

• Primary: "Plumber"

• Secondary:

1. Emergency Plumber

2. Drain Cleaning Service

3. Water Heater Repair Service

4. Septic System Service

5. Bathroom Remodeler

6. Kitchen Remodeler

Your Primary Category: _

Your Secondary Categories (list): _

Category Selection Guide by Industry:

Plumbing:

• Plumber, Emergency Plumber, Drain Cleaning, Water Heater Repair, Septic System Service

HVAC:

• HVAC Contractor, Air Conditioning Contractor, Heating Contractor, Air Duct Cleaning, Furnace Repair

Roofing:

• Roofing Contractor, Roof Repair Service, Gutter Cleaning Service

Electrical:

• Electrician, Electric Repair Service, Lighting Contractor, Electrical Installation Service

Legal:

• Lawyer, Personal Injury Attorney, Family Law Attorney, Criminal Justice Attorney (specific practice area)

Dental:

• Dentist, Cosmetic Dentist, Pediatric Dentist, Orthodontist, Emergency Dental Service

Auto Repair:

• Auto Repair Shop, Brake Shop, Transmission Shop, Oil Change Service, Tire Shop

Landscaping:

• Landscaper, Lawn Care Service, Tree Service, Sprinkler System Contractor, Landscape Designer

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Step 3: Optimize Your Business Name

Google's Rule: Your business name should be your ACTUAL registered business name. Don't keyword stuff.

■ WRONG (Keyword Stuffing - Google Will Penalize):

• "ABC Plumbing | 24/7 Emergency Plumber Austin TX"

• "Best Dentist Austin - Dr. John Smith DDS"

• "Austin Roofing | Free Estimates | Licensed & Insured"

■ RIGHT:

• "ABC Plumbing"

• "Dr. John Smith, DDS"

• "Austin Roofing & Repair"

Your Business Name (as registered): _

Pro Tip: If your business name happens to include keywords naturally ("Emergency Plumbing Services Inc."), that's fine and beneficial. Just don't artificially add keywords.

Step 4: Write a Keyword-Rich Business Description

You have 750 characters. Use them wisely.

Description Formula:

1. **First 100 characters** (most important):

• Who you are

• What you do

• Where you serve

• Include PRIMARY keyword

2. **Next 300 characters:**

• Services offered

• Years in business

• Unique selling points (24/7, licensed, insured)

3. **Last 350 characters:**

• Secondary services

• Service areas (cities/neighborhoods)

• Call to action

Example Description (Plumbing):

ABC Plumbing has been Austin's trusted plumbing company since 2008. We specialize in emergency plumbing repairs, water heater installation, drain cleaning, and leak detection. Our licensed and insured plumbers are available 24/7 for residential and commercial plumbing needs.

Services include: water heater repair and replacement, drain cleaning, leak detection, pipe repair, repiping, bathroom and kitchen plumbing, sewer line service, and emergency plumbing.

We proudly serve Austin, Round Rock, Cedar Park, Georgetown, Pflugerville, and surrounding areas. A+ BBB rating. Call today for same-day service and upfront pricing.

Character count: 689 / 750

Your Optimized Description:

[Write yours here - aim for 700+ characters]

Pro Tips:

• Use "Austin plumber" not just "plumber" (include city)

• Mention service areas (cities, neighborhoods)

• Include credentials (licensed, insured, years in business)

• Add unique benefits (24/7, same-day, free estimates)

• Natural language - don't keyword stuff

Step 5: Services Section (NEW in 2025 - Critical!)

Google added a dedicated Services section. Use it!

Why It Matters:

• Services appear in search results

• Each service can have description + pricing

• Helps you rank for "water heater repair austin" not just "plumber austin"

How Many Services to Add:

• Minimum: 5-10 main services

• Recommended: 15-25 services

• Maximum: No limit (add every service you offer)

Service Entry Template:

Service Name: Water Heater Repair

Description: Expert water heater repair for gas and electric units. We diagnose and fix no hot water, leaks, strange noises, and pilot light issues. Same-day service available.

Price: Starting at $150 (or "Get a Quote")

Your Top 10 Services:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Pro Tip: Add pricing when comfortable (builds trust). "Starting at $X" or "Free estimate" or "Call for quote" all work.

Step 6: Attributes (Check ALL That Apply)

Attributes are special features Google highlights.

Common Attributes:

- ■ Identifies as women-owned

- ■ Identifies as veteran-owned

- ■ Online estimates

- ■ Onsite services

- ■ Offers same-day service

- ■ Offers repair services

- ■ Offers installation services

- ■ Offers maintenance services

- ■ Offers consultations

- ■ Emergency services available

- ■ Licensed

- ■ Insured

- ■ Accepts credit cards

- ■ Accepts cryptocurrency (if true)

Check every single attribute that applies. More = better visibility.

Step 7: Business Hours (+ Special Hours)

Regular Hours:

- Set accurately (Google hates incorrect hours)

- If you're 24/7, mark "Open 24 hours"

- If you offer emergency service but office closes, note in description

Special Hours:

- Update 1-2 weeks before major holidays

• Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, July 4th, etc.

• "Closed" or "Modified hours"

Why It Matters:

• Google shows "Open now" or "Closes soon" in results

• Incorrect hours = frustrated customers = bad reviews = ranking drop

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Step 8: Service Area Definition

Two Types of Businesses:

Type 1: Physical Location (Storefront)

• Customers come to you (restaurant, retail, office)

• Show your address publicly

• Service area = city you're located in

Type 2: Service Area Business (SAB)

• You go to customers (plumber, electrician, landscaper)

• Can HIDE your address (but still have one for verification)

• Define service area (cities/zip codes you serve)

For Service Area Businesses:

1. Click "Edit service area"

2. Add all cities you serve (up to 20 cities or 100-mile radius)

3. Be specific - list every city/neighborhood

4. Don't exceed realistic service area (Google can tell if you're lying)

Example (Austin Plumber):

• Austin

• Round Rock

• Cedar Park

• Georgetown

- Pflugerville

- Leander

- Liberty Hill

- Lago Vista

- Bee Cave

- Dripping Springs

- West Lake Hills

- Rollingwood

Your Service Area Cities (list all):

_

Pro Tip: If you serve a large metro area, add the big city plus all suburbs and neighborhoods. The more specific, the better you'll rank in each area.

Section 2: Visual Content (Engagement Boost)

Google tracks engagement. More engagement = higher rankings.

Step 9: Photos (Minimum 20, Recommended 50+)

Why Photos Matter:

- Businesses with 100+ photos get 2x more interest than average

- Recent photos signal active business

- Shows you're real and trustworthy

Photo Categories & Quantities:

Exterior (5-10 photos):

- Building/storefront (multiple angles)

- Signage (close-up of your sign)

- Parking area

• Street view

• Seasonal (different times of year)

Interior (5-10 photos):

• Reception/waiting area

• Office space

• Clean, professional work areas

• Equipment (trucks, tools)

Team (5-10 photos):

• Owner/manager professional headshot

• Team photo (everyone together)

• Individual team member headshots

• Team at work (candid shots)

Work Showcase (20-50 photos):

• Before/after transformations

• Completed projects

• Work in progress (shows expertise)

• Close-ups of craftsmanship

• Customer satisfied with results

Products (if applicable, 5-10 photos):

• Equipment you install

• Products you sell

• Brands you carry

Photo Specs:

• **Minimum:** 720px x 720px

• **Recommended:** 1080px x 1080px or higher

• **Format:** JPG or PNG

• **File size:** Under 5MB each

• **Orientation:** Mix of landscape, portrait, and square

Photo Optimization:

• **File name BEFORE upload:** "abc-plumbing-truck-austin.jpg" (not "IMG_1234.jpg")

• **Add locations:** Tag photos with location if specific to area

• **Upload regularly:** Add 3-5 new photos monthly (signals activity)

Your Photo Inventory:

• Exterior photos: _____ (goal: 10)

• Interior photos: _____ (goal: 10)

• Team photos: _____ (goal: 10)

• Work photos: _____ (goal: 30)

• **TOTAL: _____ (goal: 60+)**

Step 10: Video (30-60 Seconds)

Google LOVES video. Profiles with video get 2x more engagement.

What to Include in Your Video:

Option 1: Owner Introduction (30 seconds)

Script:

"Hi, I'm [Name], owner of [Business]. We've been serving [City] since [Year] with [service]. Our team of [X] professionals is licensed, insured, and available 24/7 for emergency service. Call us today at [phone number] or visit us at [address]. Thanks for considering [Business]!"

Option 2: Tour (45-60 seconds)

• Show exterior, interior, team

• Highlight equipment/trucks

• Show work in progress or completed project

• End with call to action

Option 3: Customer Testimonial (30 seconds)

• Happy customer on camera

• Explains problem and solution

• Recommends your business

Video Specs:

• **Length:** 30-60 seconds (Google's recommendation)

• **Format:** MP4, MOV, or AVI

• **Size:** Under 100MB

• **Resolution:** 720p minimum, 1080p recommended

• **Audio:** Clear audio (use microphone, not phone mic)

• **Lighting:** Bright, natural lighting

• **Captions:** Add captions (accessibility + engagement)

Where to Film:

• Exterior: In front of building/truck with signage visible

• Interior: Clean, professional background

• Avoid: Messy backgrounds, poor lighting, loud noise

Filming Tips:

• Use phone in landscape mode (horizontal)

• Stabilize (tripod or prop phone on something)

• Brief (under 60 seconds - people's attention span is short)

• Smile and be friendly (first impression matters)

Video Status: _ (Completed / In Progress / Not Started)

Section 3: Google Posts (Weekly Engagement)

Google Posts are like mini social media posts that appear on your GBP.

Why They Matter:

• Signal active business (Google rewards activity)

• Posts last 7 days (need weekly posting)

• Can include offers, events, updates, products

• Improve engagement = improve rankings

Post Types & When to Use Them

1. What's New Post

• General updates about your business

• New services

• New team members

• Business milestones

Example:

Celebrating 15 Years Serving Austin! ■

ABC Plumbing has been your trusted local plumber since 2008. Thank you to our amazing customers for 15 years of support!

[Photo: Team celebrating]

[Button: Learn More → yoursite.com/about]

2. Offer Post

• Promotions and discounts

• Seasonal specials

• Limited-time deals

Example:

$50 Off Water Heater Installation

Book your water heater installation this month and save $50! We install both gas and electric units with same-day service available.

Code: WH50

Valid through March 31, 2026

[Photo: New water heater]

[Button: Get Offer → yoursite.com/water-heater-special]

3. Event Post

• Upcoming events you're hosting or attending

• Webinars

• Open houses

• Community involvement

Example:

Join Us at the Austin Home & Garden Show

Visit ABC Plumbing at Booth #145 this Saturday, March 15th. Free water quality testing and plumbing consultations!

[Photo: Trade show booth]

[Button: Learn More → yoursite.com/events]

4. Product Post

• Specific products or services

• Great for highlighting individual services

Example:

Emergency Drain Cleaning - Available 24/7

Clogged drain? We'll clear it fast with hydro-jetting technology. No harsh chemicals. Same-day service available.

Starting at $150

[Photo: Drain cleaning in action]

[Button: Book Now → yoursite.com/drain-cleaning]

Weekly Posting Schedule

Post every 7 days minimum (posts expire after 7 days).

Simple 4-Week Rotation:

• **Week 1:** What's New (general update or tip)

• **Week 2:** Offer (promotion or seasonal special)

• **Week 3:** Service highlight (feature a specific service)

• **Week 4:** Customer story or testimonial

Content Ideas (Never Run Out):

1. Seasonal tip ("Prepare your pipes for winter freeze")

2. Before/after showcase

3. Customer testimonial

4. Team spotlight

5. New service announcement

6. Limited-time promotion

7. FAQ answer (common customer question)

8. Community involvement

9. Behind-the-scenes

10. Holiday hours announcement

Post Optimization:

• **Image:** Always include (posts with images get 2x more engagement)

• **Length:** 100-300 words (brief but informative)

• **CTA Button:** Use "Learn More," "Call Now," "Get Offer," "Book Now"

• **Link:** Direct to relevant page on your website

• **Keywords:** Include naturally (not stuffed)

Create Your First 4 Posts Now:

Post 1 (What's New):

[Write your post here]

Post 2 (Offer):

[Write your post here]

Post 3 (Service):

[Write your post here]

Post 4 (Testimonial):

[Write your post here]

Section 4: Reviews (The #1 Ranking Factor)

Here's the truth: Reviews are 50%+ of your ranking.

Review Math:

• 50 reviews, 4.5 stars >>> 500 reviews, 4.0 stars

• Quality > Quantity

• Recency matters (10 reviews this month > 100 reviews 3 years ago)

• Response rate matters (reply to ALL reviews)

Review Benchmarks

Where You Stand:

• 0-10 reviews: You're invisible

• 10-25 reviews: Barely competitive

• 25-50 reviews: Competitive

• 50-100 reviews: Strong presence

• 100-250 reviews: Market leader

• 250+ reviews: Dominant

Your Current Review Count: _

Competitor #1: _

Competitor #2: _

Competitor #3: _

Goal: Be in the top 3 for review count in your market.

Review Generation Strategy

Goal: 5-10 new reviews per month consistently

Step 1: Create Your Review Link

1. Go to your Google Business Profile

2. Click "Get more reviews"

3. Copy your short review link

4. Bookmark it or save in your phone

Your Google Review Link:

https://g.page/r/[YOUR_CODE]/review

Pro Tip: Use a URL shortener for even easier sharing:

• bit.ly/[yourbusiness]-review

• yourwebsite.com/review (redirect to Google)

Step 2: Ask at the Right Time

Best Time to Ask:

• ■ Immediately after service (while happy)

• ■ When customer thanks you or compliments work

• ■ After resolving a problem successfully

Worst Time to Ask:

• ■ Before service is complete

• ■ When customer is unhappy (ask for feedback instead)

• ■ During a stressful part of project

In-Person Script:

"I'm so glad we could help you today! If you have 60 seconds, we'd really appreciate it if you could leave us a Google review. It helps other [city] homeowners find quality service. Here's the link [show phone or business card]. Thank you!"

Step 3: Follow-Up Email (Send Within 24 Hours)

Subject: Quick favor? ■

Body:

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for choosing [Business Name] for your recent [service]! We hope everything went smoothly.

If you have 60 seconds, we'd be incredibly grateful if you could share your experience in a quick Google review. Your feedback helps other [city] residents find quality [service].

■ Leave a Review: [Direct Link]

It takes less than a minute, and it really makes a difference for our small business.

Thanks so much for your support!

[Your Name]

[Business Name]

[Phone Number]

Customize this template and save it as a draft in your email.

Step 4: Text Message Follow-Up (If You Have Permission)

Hi [Name], it's [Your Name] from [Business]. Thanks again for choosing us! If you have 60 seconds, we'd love a Google review: [Short Link]. Really appreciate your business!

Keep it short, friendly, and easy to act on.

Step 5: Automate Review Requests

Tools for Automation:

• **GatherUp ($99/mo)** - Automated review requests

• **Podium ($299/mo)** - Text-based review requests

- **BirdEye ($299/mo)** - Multi-platform review management
- **Broadly ($99/mo)** - Simple review automation

How Automation Works:

1. After completing job, you mark customer as "complete" in system

2. System automatically sends email/text 24 hours later

3. Reminds non-responders after 3 days

4. Tracks who reviewed and who didn't

Worth it? If you do 20+ jobs per month and struggle to remember to ask, yes.

Responding to Reviews (CRITICAL)

Google wants to see you respond to ALL reviews.

Response Rate Goal: 100% within 24 hours

Responding to Positive Reviews

Template:

Thanks so much for the 5-star review, [Name]! We're thrilled we could help with your [specific service]. If you ever need [service] again, you know who to call. Thanks for supporting our small business!

[Your Name]

[Business Name]

Pro Tips:
- ■ Use reviewer's name (personalized)
- ■ Mention specific service (keywords!)
- ■ Keep it brief (2-3 sentences)
- ■ Thank them genuinely
- ■ Include subtle keyword ("plumbing service in Austin")

Responding to Negative Reviews

DON'T:

• ■ Get defensive or argue

• ■ Blame the customer

• ■ Ignore it (makes you look bad)

• ■ Violate customer privacy (don't share details)

• ■ Ask them to delete review (against Google policy)

DO:

• ■ Respond within 24 hours (shows you care)

• ■ Apologize (even if you don't agree)

• ■ Offer to make it right offline

• ■ Stay professional and brief

• ■ Show future customers you care about resolution

Template:

Hi [Name], thank you for bringing this to our attention. We're sorry your experience didn't meet expectations. This isn't the level of service we strive for. Please contact us directly at [phone] or [email] so we can make this right. We'd like the opportunity to resolve this.

[Your Name]

[Business Name]

If Review is Fake or Violates Policy:

• Flag it in Google Business Profile

• Select reason (fake, spam, conflict of interest)

• Provide evidence if possible

• Google will review (can take weeks)

Reality Check: Google rarely removes reviews. Focus on generating more positive reviews to bury the negative ones.

Review Velocity (How Fast You Get Reviews)

Danger Zone:

• 20+ reviews in one week (looks suspicious to Google)

• All reviews from same IP address

• Generic 5-word reviews ("Great service, highly recommend")

• All reviews on same day

Safe Zone:

• 5-10 reviews per month (steady pace)

• Reviews spread over 30 days

• Detailed reviews (50-200 words)

• Mix of 4-star and 5-star (all 5-star looks fake)

Ideal Review Velocity:

• Month 1: 8 reviews

• Month 2: 12 reviews

• Month 3: 10 reviews

• Steady, consistent, natural

Section 5: Q&A; (Seed Questions)

Google's Q&A; section lets anyone ask questions about your business.

The Problem: If you don't control it, anyone can ask or answer questions (including competitors).

The Solution: Seed 10-15 questions yourself and answer them.

How to Add Q&A;

1. Go to your Google Business Profile

2. Click "Ask a question"

3. Write question, switch accounts, answer it

Or simpler: Have a friend/family member ask questions, you answer.

What Questions to Seed

Must-Have Questions (Every Business):

1. Q: Do you offer emergency service?

A: Yes, we provide 24/7 emergency service throughout [city]. Call [phone] anytime.

2. Q: What areas do you serve?

A: We serve [list cities]. If you're not sure if we cover your area, give us a call at [phone].

3. Q: Are you licensed and insured?

A: Yes, we're fully licensed (#[number]) and insured. All our technicians are background-checked and drug-tested.

4. Q: Do you offer free estimates?

A: Yes, we provide free estimates for [services]. Call [phone] to schedule.

5. Q: What payment methods do you accept?

A: We accept cash, check, all major credit cards, and offer financing through [company].

Industry-Specific Questions (Plumbing Example):

6. Q: How fast can you get here for an emergency?

A: Most emergencies within 30-60 minutes in [city].

7. Q: Do you charge extra for evenings and weekends?

A: Emergency service has a slight premium, but we'll always quote you upfront before starting work.

8. Q: What's your warranty on repairs?

A: All repairs come with a [X-year] warranty on parts and labor.

Your 10 Seed Questions:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Pro Tip: Check your Q&A; section weekly. Answer any new questions within 24 hours.

Section 6: Messaging & Booking

Enable Messaging

What It Is: Customers can text you directly from your Google Business Profile.

How to Enable:

1. Download Google Business Messages app (iOS/Android)

2. Turn on messaging in your GBP settings

3. Set up automated greeting

Auto-Greeting Example:

Thanks for messaging [Business Name]! We typically respond within 1 hour during business hours. For emergencies, please call [phone]. How can we help you today?

Why It Matters:
• Google tracks response time (shows publicly)

• "Typically responds in 1 hour" looks great

• Convenient for customers who prefer texting

Goal: Respond within 1 hour, 90% of the time.

Enable Booking (If Applicable)

What It Is: "Book Appointment" button on your GBP.

Who Should Use:

• Service businesses with scheduling needs

• Salons, spas, dental, medical

• Consultation-based businesses

• Auto repair, home services

Booking Providers Google Integrates With:

• Calendly

• Square

• Housecall Pro

• Jobber

• ServiceTitan

• And 50+ others

Setup:

1. Sign up with booking provider

2. Connect to Google Business Profile

3. Test booking flow

Conversion Boost: Businesses with booking see 30% more appointments.

Section 7: Advanced Tactics (Competitive Edge)

Tactic 1: Geo-Tagged Photos

What: Add location data to photos before uploading.

Why: Signals to Google where you work (helps with service area ranking).

How:

1. Take photo at customer location

2. Ensure location services are on (phone automatically geo-tags)

3. Upload to Google Business Profile

Even Better: Use Google Maps app to upload photos

• Open Google Maps

• Search for customer's address

• Click "Add photo"

• Attributes photo to that location + your business

Result: You'll start ranking for specific neighborhoods.

Tactic 2: Google Guaranteed (Local Services Ads)

What: Google's background-checked, guarantee-backed program for service businesses.

Badge: Shows "Google Guaranteed" badge on your GBP and Local Services Ads.

Benefits:
• Appears ABOVE Local Pack (prime position)

• Pay-per-lead (not per click)

• Google backs you with guarantee (refunds customers if dissatisfied)

• Builds massive trust

Requirements:
• Background check ($50)

• License verification

• Insurance verification

• Minimum review threshold

Cost: Varies by industry

- Plumbing: $30-60 per lead

- HVAC: $40-80 per lead

- Legal: $150-300 per lead

- Locksmith: $20-40 per lead

Worth It? If you close 30%+ of leads and have capacity, yes.

Setup: google.com/localservices

Tactic 3: Service-Area-Specific Posts

What: Create Google Posts targeting specific neighborhoods.

Example:

Serving Hyde Park Since 2008

ABC Plumbing has been the go-to plumber for Hyde Park residents for 15 years. We know the unique plumbing challenges of historic Austin homes.

[Photo: Working on Hyde Park home]

[Button: Call Now]

Do this for each major neighborhood/city you serve.

Result: Better ranking in "[service] [neighborhood]" searches.

Tactic 4: Competitor Analysis

What: See what top competitors are doing that you're not.

How:

1. Search your service in your city

2. Look at top 3 Local Pack results

3. Analyze their profiles

Checklist:

• How many reviews do they have? (You need more)

• How many photos? (You need more)

• Do they post weekly? (You should too)

• What categories are they using? (Use same + more)

• What's in their description? (Learn from it)

• Are they using Q&A;? (You should too)

Goal: Match or exceed top competitor in every metric.

Tactic 5: Citations (External Signals)

What: Mentions of your business name, address, phone (NAP) on other websites.

Why: Google cross-references these to validate your business is real and legitimate.

Top Citation Sources:

1. Yelp (required)

2. Facebook Business Page (required)

3. Apple Maps / Apple Business Connect (required)

4. Bing Places (required)

5. Yellow Pages

6. BBB

7. Chamber of Commerce

8. Industry-specific directories

How to Build Citations:

• Claim all top 50 directories (use BrightLocal Citation Builder)

• Ensure NAP is EXACTLY consistent everywhere

• Use same format: "123 Main Street" not "123 Main St"

Citation Audit Tool: moz.com/local/search

Tactic 6: Backlinks to GBP

What: Links from other websites to your Google Business Profile page.

Why: External links = authority = higher rankings.

How to Get Backlinks to GBP:

1. **Local Press:** Get featured in local news (link to your GBP)

2. **Partnerships:** Partner with local businesses (they link to your GBP)

3. **Sponsorships:** Sponsor local events (event page links to your GBP)

4. **Directories:** Quality directories link to GBP

5. **Guest Posts:** Write for local blogs, link to GBP in author bio

Example Outreach Email:

Subject: Partnership Opportunity - [Your Business] + [Their Business]

Hi [Name],

I'm [Your Name] from [Your Business], serving [City] for [X years]. I noticed we serve similar customers in [neighborhood].

Would you be interested in a partnership where we refer customers to each other? I'd be happy to link to your business from our website and social media.

Let me know if you'd like to chat!

[Your Name]

[Phone]

[Email]

Your 90-Day Google Maps Domination Plan

Month 1: Foundation (Profile Optimization)

Week 1: Profile Completeness

• [ ] Claim and verify GBP

• [ ] Choose optimal categories (primary + 9 secondary)

• [ ] Write keyword-rich description (750 chars)

• [ ] Add all services (15+ with descriptions)

• [ ] Set accurate business hours

• [ ] Define service areas (all cities/zip codes)

Week 2: Visual Content

• [ ] Upload 30+ photos (exterior, interior, team, work)

• [ ] Record and upload 30-60 second video

• [ ] Add business logo and cover photo

• [ ] Geo-tag photos when possible

Week 3: Engagement Features

• [ ] Enable messaging

• [ ] Set up booking (if applicable)

• [ ] Check all attributes that apply

• [ ] Seed 10 Q&A; questions/answers

Week 4: First Posts & Citations

• [ ] Create 4 Google Posts (schedule weekly)

• [ ] Claim Yelp, Facebook, Apple Maps, Bing

• [ ] Ensure NAP consistency across all

Month 1 Goal: 100% profile completion, 30+ photos, 5-10 reviews

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Month 2: Review Generation & Content

Week 5-8: Review Blitz

• [ ] Create review request email template

- [ ] Set reminder to ask every customer

- [ ] Goal: 15-20 new reviews this month

- [ ] Respond to ALL reviews within 24 hours

Week 5-8: Content Consistency

- [ ] Post to Google Business Profile weekly (4 posts total)

- [ ] Add 10 more photos

- [ ] Answer any new Q&A; questions

- [ ] Monitor Google Business Profile insights

Month 2 Goal: 25-30 total reviews, consistent weekly posting

Month 3: Advanced Tactics & Optimization

Week 9-12: Competitive Analysis

- [ ] Analyze top 3 competitors

- [ ] Match their review count or exceed

- [ ] Add any missing categories or services

- [ ] Build 20+ citations on industry directories

Week 9-12: Local Signals

- [ ] Get 2-3 local backlinks (press, partnerships)

- [ ] Create neighborhood-specific posts

- [ ] Encourage customers to add photos to your listing

- [ ] Consider Google Guaranteed program

Month 3 Goal: Top 3 Local Pack ranking for primary keywords

Tracking Your Progress

Weekly Checklist

- [ ] Post to Google Business Profile

- [ ] Respond to all new reviews (within 24 hours)

- [ ] Answer new Q&A; questions

- [ ] Add 3-5 new photos

- [ ] Check Google Business Profile insights

Monthly Metrics to Track

Rankings:

• Position in Local Pack for primary keyword: _____

• Position for secondary keywords: _____

• Competitor positions: _____

Reviews:

• Total reviews: _____

• New reviews this month: _____

• Average rating: _____

• Response rate: _____%

Engagement:

• GBP views: _____

• Website clicks: _____

• Direction requests: _____

• Phone calls: _____

• Messages: _____

Content:

• Photos: _____ total

• Posts: _____ this month

• Video views: _____

Citations:

• Total citations: _____

• Consistent NAP: _____%

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Mistake 1: Keyword Stuffing Business Name

DON'T: "ABC Plumbing | Emergency Plumber Austin | 24/7"

DO: "ABC Plumbing" (your actual business name)

Why: Google will penalize or suspend your listing

Mistake 2: Buying Fake Reviews

DON'T: Pay for reviews on Fiverr or review farms

DO: Earn real reviews from real customers

Why: Google detects fake reviews, will remove them, and penalize your ranking

Mistake 3: Inconsistent NAP

DON'T: Use different addresses or phone numbers on different sites

DO: Exact same format everywhere (including punctuation)

Why: Confuses Google, dilutes your ranking power

Mistake 4: Ignoring Reviews (Not Responding)

DON'T: Leave reviews unanswered

DO: Respond to 100% of reviews within 24 hours

Why: Response rate is a ranking factor + shows you care

Mistake 5: Posting Once and Forgetting

DON'T: Post once per month or inconsistently

DO: Post weekly (every 7 days minimum)

Why: Google rewards active, engaged businesses

Mistake 6: Using Wrong Categories

DON'T: Choose vague or incorrect categories

DO: Research and choose most specific categories

Why: Categories are the #1 relevance factor

Mistake 7: No Photos or Stock Photos

DON'T: Use generic stock photos or have under 10 photos

DO: Upload 50+ real photos of your business

Why: Photos drive engagement which drives rankings

Mistake 8: Letting Competitors Control Your Q&A;

DON'T: Ignore the Q&A; section

DO: Seed 10-15 questions yourself and monitor weekly

Why: Competitors or trolls can post misleading answers

When to Hire a Professional

DIY Google Maps Works If:
• ■ You have 5-10 hours/month to dedicate

• ■ You're comfortable with technology

• ■ You can consistently ask for reviews

• ■ You can post weekly without forgetting

Hire a Professional If:
• ■ Your time is worth more than $100/hour

• ■ You've tried for 3+ months with no improvement

• ■ You're overwhelmed by the checklist

• ■ You want faster results

• ■ You're in a highly competitive market

What to Expect from a Local SEO Agency:

• **Setup:** $500-1,500 (one-time)

• **Monthly management:** $500-1,500/month

• **Services included:**

• Profile optimization

• Weekly Google Posts

• Review generation and management

• Citation building

• Monthly reporting

• Q&A; monitoring

ROI: If done right, you should see 5-10x return on investment within 6 months.

Need Professional Help?

Optymizer specializes in Google Maps optimization for local service businesses.

What We Do:

✓ Complete Google Business Profile optimization

✓ Review generation systems (average 20+ reviews/month)

✓ Weekly Google Posts (we write and publish)

✓ Citation building on 100+ directories

✓ Monthly reporting and strategy adjustments

✓ Q&A; management and competitor monitoring

Our Results:

• Average ranking improvement: Top 3 in 90 days

• Average review increase: 50+ reviews in first 6 months

• 500+ local businesses served since 2008

• Specialization in service-based businesses

Pricing:

• Local SEO Setup: $1,500 (one-time)

• Monthly Management: $750-1,500/month

• Includes: GBP management, review generation, citations, reporting

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Free Google Maps Audit

We'll analyze your profile and show:

• Your current ranking vs top competitors

• Profile optimization score (0-100)

• Review generation opportunities

• Citation gaps and inconsistencies

• Custom 90-day roadmap to top 3

No obligation. No sales pressure. Just actionable insights.

■ **Schedule Your Free Audit:** https://optymizer.com/maps-audit

■ **Email us:** hello@optymizer.com

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Growth by Optymizer

Helping local service businesses dominate Google Maps since 2008.