

Local Seo Ranking Checklist

A Comprehensive Guide by Optymizer

47-Point Local SEO Ranking Checklist

Your Complete Guide to Ranking #1 in [Your City]

By Optymizer - Local SEO Specialists Since 2008

How to Use This Checklist

This comprehensive checklist covers all critical elements that Google uses to rank local businesses in the "Local Pack" (the top 3 map results) and organic search results.

What You'll Learn:

- Essential Google Business Profile optimizations
- Website on-page SEO requirements
- Citation building and review strategies
- Proven tactics used by top-ranking local businesses

Timeline for Results:

- **Weeks 1-2:** Initial rankings improvement from quick wins
- **Months 1-3:** Significant Local Pack visibility
- **Months 3-6:** Consistent top 3 rankings for target keywords
- **Months 6+:** Market dominance and lead generation machine

How to Complete:

1. Print this checklist or use digitally with checkmarks
2. Work through each section systematically
3. Track completion date for each item
4. Review monthly and maintain optimizations
5. Monitor rankings weekly using Google Search Console

Section 1: Google Business Profile (15 Points)

Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business) is the #1 ranking factor for local search. A fully optimized profile can increase your visibility by 500%+.

Profile Basics

■ ****Claim and verify your GBP listing****

- Visit google.com/business and claim your listing
- Complete phone or postcard verification
- Ensure you have owner-level access
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Complete all profile sections to 100%****

- Business name (match legal business name exactly)
- Address (use USPS-verified format)
- Phone number (local area code preferred)
- Website URL
- Business hours (including special hours)
- Business category (primary + all relevant secondary)
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Choose primary & secondary categories correctly****

- Primary category: Most specific description of your business
- Secondary categories: Add 5-9 additional relevant categories
- Examples: "Plumber" (primary), "Emergency Plumber Service," "Water Heater Repair," "Drain Cleaning Service"
- Avoid irrelevant categories (hurts rankings)
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Write keyword-rich business description (750 characters max)****

- Include primary keywords naturally in first 100 characters
- Mention service areas and specialties

- Add credentials, years in business, certifications
- Include unique selling propositions
- Example: "Family-owned plumbing company serving [City] since 2008. Licensed, bonded, and insured. 24/7 emergency service for residential and commercial plumbing repairs, water heater installation, drain cleaning, and repiping. A+ BBB rating. Serving [neighborhoods]."
- Date completed: _____

Visual Content

■ **Add 20+ high-quality photos**

- Exterior: Building, storefront, signage (5+ photos)
- Interior: Office, workspace, clean facilities (5+ photos)
- Team: Uniformed employees, professional headshots (5+ photos)
- Work: Before/after projects, equipment, completed jobs (10+ photos)
- Minimum 720px x 720px resolution
- Upload weekly to signal activity
- Date completed: _____

■ **Upload 30-second introduction video**

- Owner/manager introducing the business
- Show facilities, team, equipment
- Mention service areas and specialties
- Keep under 30 seconds (Google's sweet spot)
- Add captions for accessibility
- Date completed: _____

Engagement Features

■ **Post updates weekly (Google Posts)**

- Post types: Offers, Events, Updates, Products
- Include photos, CTA buttons, keywords
- Posts expire after 7 days - create new weekly

- Best practices: 100-300 words, 1-2 photos, clear CTA

- Date completed: _____

■ ****Respond to ALL reviews within 24 hours****

- Thank positive reviewers by name
- Address negative reviews professionally
- Include keywords naturally in responses
- Never argue or get defensive
- Response rate affects rankings
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Enable messaging feature****

- Turn on messaging in GBP dashboard
- Respond within 1 hour for best results
- Use Google Business Messages app for notifications
- Average response time is displayed publicly
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Add Q&A; answers (seed 10+ questions)****

- Create FAQs yourself to control narrative
- Include keywords in questions and answers
- Examples: "Do you offer 24/7 emergency service?", "What areas do you serve?", "Are you licensed and insured?"
- Monitor for new questions from customers
- Date completed: _____

Products & Services

■ ****Add products/services with descriptions****

- List all services you offer (minimum 10)
- Include pricing if comfortable (builds trust)
- Write 100-300 word descriptions per service

- Add photos for each service
- Use keywords naturally
- Date completed: _____
- ****Add special hours for holidays****
 - Update hours 1-2 weeks before holidays
 - Mark closed days clearly
 - Add temporary hours for special events
 - Keeps customers informed and reduces frustration
 - Date completed: _____
- ****Add booking links if applicable****
 - Connect scheduling software (Calendly, Square, etc.)
 - Enable "Book Appointment" button
 - Test booking flow monthly
 - Increases conversion rate by 30%+
 - Date completed: _____

Monitoring & Optimization

- ****Track GBP Insights weekly****
 - Monitor: Views, searches, direction requests, calls, website clicks
 - Identify trending keywords
 - Track competitor performance
 - Adjust strategy based on data
 - Date completed: _____
- ****Verify NAP consistency monthly****
 - Name, Address, Phone must match everywhere online
 - Check citations, website footer, social media
 - Inconsistencies hurt rankings significantly
 - Date completed: _____

Section 2: Website On-Page SEO (18 Points)

Your website must be optimized to support your Google Business Profile. Google evaluates website quality as a major ranking factor.

Title Tags & Meta Descriptions

■ ****Optimize title tags with city name + service****

- Formula: [Primary Keyword] in [City] | [Business Name]
- Example: "Emergency Plumber in Austin, TX | Fast Plumbing Repairs"
- Keep under 60 characters
- Unique title for every page
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Write compelling meta descriptions (155 chars max)****

- Include primary keyword, city, and call-to-action
- Use action verbs: "Call now," "Get a quote," "Schedule today"
- Mention unique benefits: "24/7 service," "Same-day," "Licensed & insured"
- Example: "Need a plumber in Austin? 24/7 emergency service, licensed plumbers, upfront pricing. Call (512) 555-1234 for fast, reliable repairs."
- Date completed: _____

Content Optimization

■ ****Add H1 tag with primary keyword + location****

- Only ONE H1 per page
- Example: "Austin's Most Trusted Emergency Plumbing Service"
- Include city name and primary service
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Create location pages for each service area****

- Separate page for each city/neighborhood you serve
- Minimum 500 words per page with local content
- Include: Local landmarks, service testimonials, area-specific FAQs
- Example: /plumber-in-downtown-austin, /plumber-in-westlake-austin
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Create service-specific landing pages****

- Unique page for each service you offer
- 800+ words with H2 subheadings, images, FAQs
- Include pricing if possible, process, testimonials
- Examples: /water-heater-repair, /drain-cleaning, /emergency-plumbing
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Add FAQs section with local questions****

- Answer 10-20 common customer questions
- Use question format for headers (H3 tags)
- Include keywords naturally in answers
- Examples: "How much does a plumber cost in Austin?", "Do you offer same-day service?"
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Create local content (neighborhood guides, local events)****

- Write blog posts about local topics
- Examples: "Best Restaurants Near Our Austin Office", "Austin Building Codes: What Homeowners Need to Know"
- Shows Google you're genuinely local
- Publish 2-4 posts per month
- Date completed: _____

Technical SEO

■ ****Add schema markup (LocalBusiness, Service, Review)****

- Use schema.org vocabulary

- Include: Business name, address, phone, hours, geo coordinates
- Add service schema for each service offered
- Add review schema to display star ratings in search
- Test with Google's Rich Results Test tool
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Optimize images (compress, descriptive file names)****

- Compress all images to under 200KB (use TinyPNG, ImageOptim)
- Rename files: plumber-austin-water-heater.jpg (not IMG_1234.jpg)
- Serve in next-gen formats (WebP)
- Lazy load images below fold
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Add image alt text with keywords + location****

- Every image needs descriptive alt text
- Include keywords naturally: "Licensed plumber repairing water heater in Austin home"
- Helps accessibility and SEO
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Optimize for mobile (responsive design)****

- Test on Google Mobile-Friendly Test
- Ensure buttons are large enough (48px minimum)
- Text readable without zooming (16px minimum)
- No horizontal scrolling
- Fast load time on 3G connection
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Improve page speed (< 3 seconds)****

- Test with Google PageSpeed Insights (target 90+ score)
- Minimize CSS/JavaScript
- Enable browser caching
- Use CDN for images

- Eliminate render-blocking resources
- Date completed: _____

Conversion Elements

■ **Add click-to-call buttons (mobile)**

- Use tel: links in header and footer
- Sticky phone button on mobile
- Track calls with Google Ads call tracking
- Date completed: _____

■ **Embed Google Map on contact page**

- Shows physical location
- Helps with local relevance
- Allows customers to get directions easily
- Date completed: _____

■ **Add NAP (Name, Address, Phone) to footer**

- Consistent format on every page
- Schema markup around NAP
- Match GBP listing exactly
- Date completed: _____

■ **Add customer testimonials with locations**

- Include customer's city/neighborhood
- Example: "Great service! Fixed my water heater in 2 hours. - John S., Westlake Hills"
- Add star ratings visually
- Link to Google reviews
- Date completed: _____

■ **Add trust signals (BBB, licenses, certifications)**

- Display badges prominently
- Link to verification pages

- Examples: BBB accreditation, industry certifications, licensing numbers
- Builds credibility and conversions
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Add internal linking structure****

- Link service pages to location pages
- Link blog posts to service pages
- Use keyword-rich anchor text
- Helps Google understand site structure
- Date completed: _____

Section 3: Citations & Reviews (14 Points)

Citations (online mentions of your business name, address, phone) and reviews are critical trust signals for local SEO.

Citation Building

■ ****Build citations on top 50 directories****

- Top platforms: Yelp, Facebook, Apple Maps, Bing Places, Yellow Pages
- Industry directories: Angie's List, HomeAdvisor, Thumbtack (for contractors)
- Local directories: Chamber of Commerce, local newspapers, city business directories
- Use consistent NAP formatting everywhere
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Ensure NAP consistency across all citations****

- Use exact same format everywhere
- Don't abbreviate street (use "Street" not "St")
- Use same phone number format: (512) 555-1234
- Inconsistencies dilute ranking power
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Claim Yelp listing****

- Verify business on Yelp for Business
- Add photos, business hours, services
- Respond to all reviews
- Yelp is 2nd most important citation
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Claim Facebook Business Page****

- Complete all business information
- Enable reviews
- Post weekly updates
- Run local awareness ads
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Claim Apple Maps listing****

- Use Apple Business Connect
- Critical for iPhone users (50%+ mobile searches)
- Add all business details
- Date completed: _____

■ ****List on industry-specific directories****

- Find niche directories for your industry
- Plumbers: Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Association
- Lawyers: Avvo, Justia, FindLaw
- Dentists: Healthgrades, Zocdoc
- Higher quality citations = stronger rankings
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Fix duplicate listings****

- Search for your business on Google Maps
- Find duplicate or incorrect listings

- Report duplicates to Google
- Merge or delete old listings
- Date completed: _____

Review Generation

■ ****Generate 50+ Google reviews (5-star target)****

- Ask happy customers immediately after service
- Send follow-up email with review request
- Make it easy: Include direct review link
- Goal: 5-10 new reviews per month
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Create review request email template****

- Personalize with customer name
- Thank them for their business
- Ask for honest feedback
- Provide direct Google review link
- Keep email under 100 words
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Respond to all reviews (positive & negative)****

- Thank reviewers by name within 24 hours
- For negative reviews: Apologize, offer to make it right, take offline
- Include keywords naturally in responses
- Example: "Thanks John! We're glad our emergency plumbing service could help you quickly."
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Add review widgets to website****

- Embed Google reviews on homepage
- Show star rating and review count

- Link to "Leave a Review" button
- Social proof increases conversions 34%
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Monitor review sites monthly****

- Set up Google Alerts for business name
- Check Yelp, Facebook, industry sites
- Respond to all new reviews
- Address negative feedback promptly
- Date completed: _____

Local Listings & Partnerships

■ ****Add business to local chamber of commerce****

- Join your city's chamber
- Get listed in online directory
- High-authority local citation
- Networking opportunities
- Date completed: _____

■ ****Get listed in local news/blogs****

- Pitch local news story angles
- Sponsor local events (get backlink)
- Guest post on local blogs
- High-quality local backlinks boost rankings significantly
- Date completed: _____

Bonus: Recommended Tools

Free Tools:

- Google Business Profile Manager (manage your listing)

- Google Search Console (track rankings, keywords)
- Google Analytics (website traffic insights)
- Google PageSpeed Insights (speed testing)
- Google Rich Results Test (schema validation)
- Moz Local Listing Score (citation audit)
- BrightLocal Local Search Results Checker (rank tracking)

Paid Tools (Worth the Investment):

- **BrightLocal (\$29/mo):** Citation building, review monitoring, rank tracking
- **GatherUp (\$99/mo):** Review generation and management
- **Whitespark (\$25/mo):** Citation finder and builder
- **Semrush (\$119/mo):** Comprehensive SEO platform
- **Yext (\$199/mo):** Citation distribution and management

Local SEO Tracking Spreadsheet

Track your progress with this simple spreadsheet structure:

Tab 1: Weekly Rankings

Tab 2: Monthly Metrics

Tab 3: Citation Checklist

Review Request Email Templates

Template 1: Simple & Direct

Subject: Quick favor? ■

Hi [First Name],

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

If you have 60 seconds, would you mind leaving us a quick Google review? Your feedback helps other [city] homeowners find great local businesses.

■ Leave a Review: [Direct Google Review Link]

Thanks again for your business!

[Your Name]

[Business Name]

[Phone Number]

Template 2: Incentivized (Check Local Laws)

Subject: \$25 off your next service + help us out

Hi [First Name],

We loved working with you! As a thank you, here's \$25 off your next [service].

Also, if you have a minute, we'd be grateful for a Google review. Real customer feedback helps our small business grow.

■ Leave a Review: [Direct Google Review Link]

Thanks for supporting local!

[Your Name]

Template 3: Feedback Request (Safer for Negative Experiences)

Subject: How did we do?

Hi [First Name],

Thank you for choosing [Business Name]. We'd love to hear about your experience.

If everything went great, we'd appreciate a Google review: [Link]

If there's anything we could improve, please reply to this email. We're committed to making things right.

Thanks!

[Your Name]

Next Steps Guide

Week 1: Quick Wins

1. Claim and verify Google Business Profile
2. Add 10 photos to GBP
3. Complete business description
4. Enable messaging
5. Add your top 5 services

Expected Impact: 20-30% increase in GBP views within 7 days

Week 2-4: Foundation Building

1. Optimize title tags and meta descriptions (all pages)
2. Add schema markup to homepage
3. Create 3 service landing pages
4. Build citations on top 20 directories
5. Request reviews from recent customers (goal: 10 reviews)

Expected Impact: Enter Local Pack for 1-3 keywords

Month 2-3: Content & Authority

1. Create location pages for each service area
2. Publish 8 blog posts (2 per week)
3. Build 30 more citations
4. Generate 20-30 more reviews
5. Improve page speed to 90+ score

Expected Impact: Top 3 Local Pack for primary keywords

Month 4-6: Market Dominance

1. Maintain weekly Google Posts
2. Publish 1-2 blog posts weekly
3. Reach 50+ Google reviews
4. Build industry-specific citations
5. Get 3-5 local backlinks (news, blogs, partnerships)

Expected Impact: #1 Local Pack position, 300%+ increase in organic leads

Scoring Your Progress

Check items as you complete them and calculate your score:

- **0-15 points:** Getting started - focus on Google Business Profile first
- **16-30 points:** Good foundation - continue building citations and reviews
- **31-40 points:** Strong presence - optimize for competitive keywords
- **41-47 points:** Market leader - maintain and expand to new service areas

Your Score: _ / 47

Need Help Implementing This?

Optimizer specializes in local SEO for service businesses.

Since 2008, we've helped 500+ plumbers, lawyers, dentists, and contractors dominate their local markets.

What We Do:

- ✓ Complete Google Business Profile optimization
- ✓ Citation building on 100+ directories
- ✓ Review generation systems (50+ reviews in 90 days)

- ✓ Local content creation and SEO
- ✓ Monthly rank tracking and reporting

Results You Can Expect:

- Top 3 Local Pack rankings in 90 days
- 3-5x increase in organic leads within 6 months
- Complete hands-off management (we do everything)

■ Schedule a Free Local SEO Audit

We'll analyze your current rankings, identify quick wins, and create a custom 90-day roadmap for your business.

Book your free audit: <https://optimizer.com/free-seo-audit>

Call us: (512) 814-8211

Email: hello@optimizer.com

This checklist is updated quarterly with the latest Google algorithm changes. Last updated: January 2026

Documentation by Optimizer | <https://optimizer.com>

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