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# Google Business Profile Optimization Guide (2026)

A Step-by-Step Guide to Maximizing Local Visibility

■ GBP Setup

■ Photos & Media

■ Reviews

■ Rankings

■ Authority

40 steps • 1 point each • Score yourself at the end

**How to use this guide** Work through each section in order — the steps are sequenced from basic setup to advanced optimization. Check off each item as you complete it. Score yourself at the end and use any unchecked items as your next action list. Share with your team or use it as a client audit.

1–12

## Business Profile Setup & Core Information

12 STEPS

■ **PRO TIP:** Getting the basics right is the single biggest lever for local rankings. Don't skip any step here.

- 1 Claim your Google Business Profile**  
Go to [business.google.com](https://business.google.com), search for your business, and claim ownership — this is your starting point.
- 2 Complete the verification process**  
Google needs to confirm you own the business — verification is usually done by postcard, phone, or video.
- 3 Enter your exact legal business name**  
Use your real business name only — adding keywords to your name is against Google's guidelines and can get you suspended.
- 4 Select the most accurate primary category**  
Your primary category is the most important ranking factor — choose the one that best describes your core service.
- 5 Add all relevant secondary categories**  
Secondary categories help you appear for related searches — a restaurant might add 'Catering' or 'Takeout Restaurant'.
- 6 Enter your complete and accurate address**  
If you have a physical location, enter the full address exactly as it appears on your website and other listings.
- 7 Set your service area (for mobile/service businesses)**  
If you travel to customers (plumber, cleaner, etc.), list your service areas instead of or alongside your address.
- 8 Add your primary local phone number**  
Use a local area code number if possible — it reinforces your geographic relevance to Google.
- 9 Enter your website URL**  
Link directly to your homepage or a specific landing page — this connects your GBP to your site's authority.
- 10 Set your accurate business hours**  
Enter correct open/close times for every day of the week — inaccurate hours hurt trust and rankings.
- 11 Add special hours for holidays and closures**  
Update your profile before every holiday so customers don't show up to a closed door — Google will also prompt you.
- 12 Verify your map pin is in the right location**  
Open your profile on Google Maps and confirm the pin is placed at your actual physical location — move it if needed.

■ **PRO TIP:** A complete profile gets 7x more clicks than an incomplete one. Every field you fill in is a ranking signal.

#### Write a compelling business description

- 13 Write 2–4 sentences describing what you do, who you serve, and your location — include your city and main service naturally.

#### Add all your services or products

- 14 Use the Services tab to list every service you offer with a short description — this helps Google match you to more searches.

#### Set your appointment or booking link

- 15 If you take bookings, add the direct URL so customers can book from your profile without visiting your website.

#### Enable the messaging feature

- 16 Turn on chat so customers can message you directly — only activate this if you can respond within a few hours.

#### Add your opening date

- 17 Google uses your business age as a trust signal — adding your founding date helps establish credibility over time.

#### Select all applicable business attributes

- 18 Attributes like 'Wheelchair accessible', 'Free Wi-Fi', or 'Women-owned' help customers filter and find you.

#### Add your accessibility attributes

- 19 Mark wheelchair access, accessible parking, and entrance attributes — these appear prominently in search results.

#### List your payment methods accepted

- 20 Let customers know if you accept cash, card, or digital payments — this reduces friction before they call.

#### Turn on the Q&A section and seed questions yourself

- 21 Post the 3–5 questions customers ask most often, then answer them yourself — this fills your profile with useful content.

#### Add an appointment link or online order link if relevant

- 22 Restaurants can link to online ordering; clinics to appointment booking — make it as easy as possible to take action.

■ **PRO TIP:** Profiles with photos receive 42% more direction requests and 35% more website clicks than those without.

#### Upload a high-quality profile photo (your logo)

- 23 Your profile photo is what appears next to your business name in search — use a clean, high-res version of your logo.

#### Upload a cover photo that represents your business

- 24 Your cover photo is the first image people see on your profile — use a professional shot of your storefront or team.

#### Add at least 10 photos of your business

- 25 Include interior, exterior, team, and work photos — variety signals an active, credible business to Google.

#### Upload photos consistently (at least monthly)

- 26 Adding new photos regularly signals to Google that your profile is active — set a reminder to add 2–3 photos per month.

#### Add a short video (30–60 seconds)

- 27 A walkthrough of your location or a quick intro from the owner builds trust and keeps customers on your profile longer.

#### Publish a Google Post every week

- 28 Google Posts appear directly in your profile — use them for offers, news, or tips to show your profile is actively managed.

■ **PRO TIP:** Reviews are the #1 trust signal in local search. Quantity, recency, and your responses all affect your ranking.

**Create a direct Google review link and share it**

- 29 Go to your GBP dashboard, copy your review link, and send it to customers after every completed job or visit.

**Ask every satisfied customer for a review**

- 30 The simplest ask works: 'If you were happy with our service, a quick Google review would mean a lot to us.'

**Aim for a steady stream of reviews — not a one-time burst**

- 31 Getting 20 reviews in a week then nothing for months looks suspicious — consistent monthly reviews rank better.

**Respond to every single review — positive and negative**

- 32 Responding shows Google your profile is active and shows customers you care — make it a weekly habit.

**Include your service and city in review responses naturally**

- 33 When replying, mention your service and location: 'Thanks for choosing us for your plumbing work in Moncton!'

**Handle negative reviews calmly and professionally**

- 34 Respond within 48 hours, acknowledge the issue, and offer to resolve it offline — never argue publicly.

■ **PRO TIP:** These steps separate businesses that show up occasionally from those that dominate their local map pack.

**Ensure your NAP is identical across all online listings**

- 35 Your Name, Address, and Phone must match exactly on Google, Yelp, your website, and every directory — even punctuation...

**Build citations on the top local directories**

- 36 List your business on Yelp, Bing Places, Apple Maps, and your industry's top directories — each one strengthens your presence.

**Embed a Google Map on your website contact page**

- 37 Embedding your GBP map on your site creates a direct connection between your website and your Google listing.

**Add LocalBusiness schema markup to your website**

- 38 Schema markup is hidden code that tells Google exactly what your business is — use Google's Structured Data Markup Helper.

**Track your GBP performance in the Insights tab**

- 39 Check your profile views, search queries, and direction requests monthly — use this data to guide your content and posts.

**Use a call tracking number to measure GBP-driven calls**

- 40 Tools like CallRail let you track exactly how many calls come from your GBP — essential for proving ROI on your efforts.

## ■ How Optimized Is Your Profile?

1 point per completed step • 40 points total • Check off as you go

35–40

**Fully Optimized**

Your GBP is working hard. Focus on maintaining and expanding.

25–34

**Strong Profile**

Good foundation — a few targeted fixes will push you higher.

15–24

**Needs Work**

Important signals are missing. Work through unchecked items now.

0–14

**Major Gaps**

Your profile is likely invisible locally. Start from step 1.

Not where you want to be? Start with the unchecked items in Section 1 — those have the biggest impact on rankings.

MY SCORE:

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### Want us to do this for you?

We offer a free GBP audit that identifies exactly what's holding your profile back — then build a plan to fix it. No commitment, no jargon.

**keenan.digital**

→ **Free Audit**