ACCURACY / RELEVANCE / DISCOVERY

Getting Found: A Local Search Starter Guide

Practical foundations for being discoverable, understandable and contactable.



ILLUSTRATIVE DESIGN / NOT CLIENT RESULTS OR PERFORMANCE DATA

What you will take away

Build an accurate local presence that helps people understand what you offer and how to take the next step - without ranking promises or shortcuts.

Start here

01

Search for your business name and inspect the information shown.

02

Check the website link, main category, hours and contact details.

03

List the services and genuine locations your website needs to explain.

Google says local results mainly depend on relevance, distance and prominence. You cannot request or pay Google for a better local ranking. [1]

THE PRACTICAL CHECKS / PART 1

Get the foundations right

Manage an accurate Business Profile

If eligible, claim or manage your profile and complete verification. Choose accurate categories, services, opening hours and customer-facing details. Follow Google's address and service-area rules; do not invent premises or add keywords to your business name. [1]

FIRST MOVE Review your profile categories, hours and genuine contact details.

01

Make important information agree

Use accurate business and contact details on your site and key listings. Update special opening hours and broken booking links. For service-area businesses, describe the genuine area served without pretending to have an office in every town. [1]

FIRST MOVE Correct the important places where business information differs.

02

Create useful service pages

Explain the service, who it suits, what is included and how to enquire. Add genuine location details when useful, such as access, coverage or project examples. Avoid copying the same page and swapping town names. [2,3]

FIRST MOVE Improve one service page before adding more location pages.

03

RELEVANCE

DISTANCE

PROMINENCE

THE PRACTICAL CHECKS / PART 2

Build useful local signals

Make pages understandable and discoverable

Use descriptive page titles and headings, normal crawlable links and useful image descriptions. Check key pages are not accidentally blocked from indexing. Structured data can describe a local business, but does not guarantee an enhanced search result. [2,4]

FIRST MOVE Check that an important page can be reached through normal links.

04

Use genuine reviews and relevant proof

Ask for honest customer feedback without manufacturing reviews or incentives. Respond professionally. Keep work photos accurate, current and used with permission. Google notes reviews and links can contribute to prominence. [1]

FIRST MOVE Use genuine work and honest customer feedback.

05

Measure useful visibility, not just positions

Use available Business Profile performance, Search Console information and enquiry records to see what happens next. Search visibility varies by query and location. A ranking screenshot is not proof of extra customers or revenue.

FIRST MOVE Review useful enquiries alongside search information.

06

In practice / illustrative example

Illustrative example: a mobile hairdresser explains the areas genuinely covered and links to an appointment request. There is no need to publish a home address as a walk-in salon or create artificial branches to target surrounding towns.

A PLAN YOU CAN USE

Turn insight into a next step

1

DAY 1 - Audit accuracy

Check your Business Profile and the five online destinations customers use most. Correct factual errors first.

2

THIS WEEK - Improve one important service page

Answer real buying questions and link clearly to a suitable contact or booking route. Add specific local detail only where accurate.

3

MONTHLY - Review and maintain

Check customer questions, new reviews, useful searches and completed enquiries. Record changes and allow time to observe; do not assume an immediate ranking response.

Your working brief

Profile or listing that needs correcting:

One useful service page to improve:

Genuine area served and supporting evidence:

Enquiry outcome and monthly review owner:

KEEP THE NEXT STEP USEFUL

Genuine coverage. Helpful content. No shortcuts.

Talk through your website with Joseph

Tell Joseph your service, real coverage area and website address. Discuss clearer service content and customer journeys without guaranteed ranking claims.

Start a conversation with Joseph >

A useful decision, not a bigger to-do list

Choose one issue you can evidence. Agree the next action and who owns it. Review an outcome relevant to your business rather than treating a visual refresh as proof of better results.

Research notes and further reading

[1] Google: Improve your local ranking
https://support.google.com/business/answer/7091?hl=en

[2] Google: SEO Starter Guide
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide

[3] Google: People-first content
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content

[4] Google: LocalBusiness structured data
https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/local-business

Research checked 25 October 2026. Examples and diagrams are illustrative, not client results. This guide is educational, not a full technical, accessibility or legal audit. Outcomes depend on the business, implementation and market.