

THE LOCAL VISIBILITY WORKBOOK FOR UK SMALL BUSINESSES

Get Found on Google

How to show up in Google Maps and local search when customers nearby are looking for what you do.

- 7 practical steps
- Ranking check and competitor tracker
- Service page and search phrase planners
- 30-day action plan and monthly tracker

Before you start

When someone nearby searches for what you do, Google shows a map with three businesses on it. Those three get most of the calls. This guide is about getting you into that map, and into the normal results underneath it.

Local search is one of the most valuable sources of customers a small business can have. The person searching usually needs something soon, is close by, and is ready to call. Being visible at that moment matters more than almost any other kind of marketing.

The good news is that local visibility is mostly earned through steady, practical work rather than big budgets. Google says plainly that you can't pay for a better local ranking. What you can do is give it clear, accurate information and show that local people know and rate you.

How to use this guide

- Start with the basics section and Step 1. You need to know where you stand before you change anything.
- Work through the steps in order. Each one builds on the last.
- Print the planners and trackers, or fill them in on screen.
- Plan on two or three focused sessions to get the foundations right, then around an hour a month to keep it going.

What you'll need

- Your Google Business Profile login (or the details to claim it)
- Access to your website, or the person who manages it
- A list of the services you offer and the areas you cover
- A free Google Search Console account for your website, if you can set one up (Step 7 explains why)
- A notebook or spreadsheet for tracking

If you have our AI search guide

This guide is a companion to *Get Found in AI Search*. You don't need both, but they work well together. Where they overlap, such as your Google profile and listings, this guide goes deeper on what moves you up in Google's local results.

A quick word on expectations

Nobody can guarantee a particular position on Google, and anyone who promises one should be treated with caution. Rankings also change depending on where the person searching is standing. What this guide gives you is a clear way to improve your chances and measure the results.

What's inside

The basics, seven steps, then a plan to pull it all together.

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How Google picks the local results

Google is open about how this works. Once you understand the three things it looks at, the rest of this guide makes a lot more sense.

When someone searches for something local, such as "electrician in Coventry" or "dog groomer near me", Google usually shows two sets of results. At the top is a map with a short list of businesses, often called the **map pack** or **local pack**. These come from Google Business Profiles. Below that are the normal website results. You can appear in either, or both.

Google says its local results are based mainly on three things:

Factor	What it means	How much you control it	Covered in
Relevance	How well your profile and website match what the person searched for	A lot. Clear categories, services and pages make a big difference.	Steps 2, 3 and 4
Distance	How far your business is from the person searching, or from the place they named	Very little. You can't move, but you can make clear which areas you serve.	Steps 2 and 3
Prominence	How well known and well regarded your business is, online and off	Quite a lot, over time. Reviews, activity, links and mentions all help.	Steps 5 and 6

Why your position changes

Because distance matters, your ranking depends on where the searcher is. You might be first for someone on your street and not appear at all for someone three miles away. That's normal. It's also why Step 1 asks you to check from more than one location.

The key idea

You can't change where you are, but you can make Google certain about what you do and confident that local people trust you. Those two things are where nearly all of your effort should go.

Source: Google Business Profile Help, "Tips to improve your local ranking on Google".

STEP 1

Find out where you rank now

A simple, honest check of where you appear today, and who is beating you.

Choose your search phrases

Write down six to eight phrases a customer might type into Google to find you. Use your main services and the towns or areas you most want work from. Mix in at least one "near me" search.

Type of search	Example
Service + town	roofer Wolverhampton
Service + area or district	accountant Jewellery Quarter
Specific job + town	boiler repair Walsall
Near me	mobile hairdresser near me
Urgent	emergency locksmith Dudley
Specialist	wedding cake maker Lichfield

Run the check

1. Open a private or incognito browser window so your own history doesn't affect the results.
2. Search each phrase on Google and note whether you appear in the map pack, and in what position.
3. Scroll down and note whether your website appears in the normal results on the first page.
4. Repeat a few phrases on your phone while you're out in different parts of your area, or ask a friend or customer in another postcode to check for you.
5. Write down the top three businesses for each phrase. These are your real competitors online.

Ranking check

Search phrase	Searched from	Map pack position	On page 1?	Top 3 businesses shown

Date checked: _____