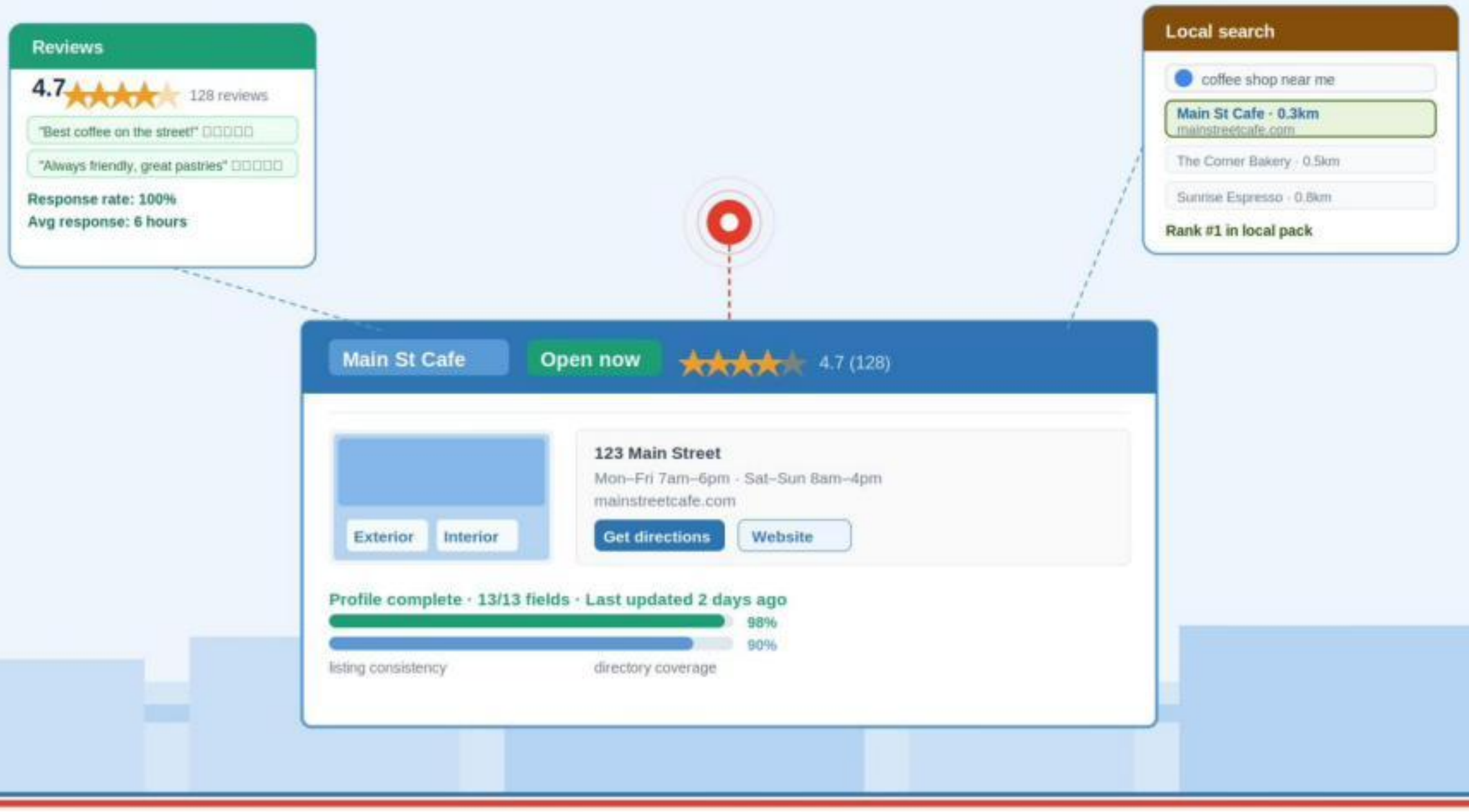


Real Local Partners

Your Business on Google

The Local Business Online Presence Playbook

□ Do-it-yourself

Step-by-step instructions written
for business owners, not tech experts
Free tools · Plain steps · 30 mins/month

□ Done-for-you

What a good partner does, and
what to ask before you hire one
Expert help · Fully managed · You focus on your business

Google Business Profile · Listings · Reviews · Local SEO · Maintenance

For restaurants, shops, trades, services, health & wellness, and more

reallocalpartners.com · Free 15-minute audit for any local business

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Introduction: Two ways to read this guide

You run a small business. You're good at what you do. But when it comes to getting found online — on Google, on maps, in local search results — you probably have one of two problems.

Either nobody has explained it to you in plain English or someone has, and it sounded like too much work on top of everything else you're already doing.

This guide was written to solve both problems. And it does it in a way that respects the reality of running a small business: sometimes you want to do things yourself, and sometimes you just want someone else to handle it.

97%	**88%**	**Zero**
of people search online to find a local business	trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation	cost to set up a Google Business Profile — the most important thing you can do

The most important decision in this guide

Before you read another word, we want you to make one decision. Not a permanent one — you can change your mind at any time. But it will shape how you use this guide.

⚒ Do-it-yourself (DIY)	★ Done-for-you (Partner)
You want to learn how to manage your own online presence	You want someone to handle it so you can focus on running your business
You have time — maybe a few hours a month — to dedicate to this	Your time is your most limited resource right now
You enjoy learning new things and figuring out how tools work	You want results without the learning curve
Your budget is tight and you'd rather invest time than money	You'd rather pay for expertise than spend time on something outside your core skills
You're comfortable with basic technology — email, social media, smartphones	You want it done right the first time, without trial and error
You're happy to maintain it once it's set up	You want ongoing monitoring and management, not a one-time setup

Neither path is wrong. Many business owners start DIY and bring in a partner later when they see the value. Others hand it off immediately and never look back. Some do a hybrid — handle the easy things themselves and get help with the more technical parts.

What matters is that you understand what's involved, what the options are, and what good results look like — so that whether you do it yourself or work with someone, you know what you're aiming for and whether it's working.

How this guide is structured

Every chapter covers one part of your online presence. Each chapter is written in two layers:

- **The Do-it-Yourself section —** written in plain steps, assuming you've never done this before. No jargon. No assumptions. Just what to do, in order, with free tools.
- **The Done-for-You section —** written to help you understand what a good partner does, what questions to ask, and what to expect. So, you can evaluate any agency or service provider with confidence.

The green boxes throughout this guide are your DIY instructions. The blue boxes are your Done-for-You guidance. You can read just the ones that apply to the path you've chosen or read both to understand the full picture.

A note before you start

Online presence is not a one-time project. It's an ongoing part of running your business — like answering the phone or keeping your shopfront clean.

The good news is that once the foundations are in place, maintenance is not time-consuming. A well-set-up online presence can run largely on its own, with occasional check-ins.

The bad news is that if you set it up and never touch it again, it will quietly deteriorate — outdated hours, stale information, unanswered reviews — and you won't notice until a customer does.

This guide will show you how to build it right, and how to keep it that way.

What we cover

Five areas determine whether your business is visible, trusted, and findable when a local customer searches for what you offer:

- **Chapter 1: Your Google Business Profile —** the single most important thing you can do for your local online presence
- **Chapter 2: Listings and directories —** making sure your information is correct everywhere your business appears online
- **Chapter 3: Reviews —** getting more of them, responding to them, and using them to build trust and rank higher
- **Chapter 4: Your website and local SEO —** making sure Google can find and recommend your website to local customers
- **Chapter 5: Keeping it up to date —** the simple habits that keep everything working overtime

At the end you'll find a 90-day action plan — in both DIY and done-for-you versions — so you know exactly where to start.

Let's get into it.

Chapter 1: Your Google Business Profile

If there's only one thing you do after reading this guide, make it this: set up and complete your Google Business Profile. Nothing else you can do online will have a bigger impact on whether local customers find your business.

Your Google Business Profile (often called GBP) is the listing that appears when someone searches for your business on Google or Google Maps. It shows your name, address, phone number, hours, photos, reviews, and a link to your website. It's completely free. And for most small businesses, it drives more foot traffic than their website does.

84%	70%	Free
of GBP views come from people who didn't search for you by name — they found you	of people visit a business after finding it on Google Maps	Google Business Profile costs nothing to set up and nothing to maintain

What your Google Business Profile controls

Think of your Google Business Profile as your business's storefront on Google. It controls what people see when they search for you — or when they search for a business like yours near them.

- **The local pack —** when someone searches 'coffee shop near me' or 'plumber in [your city]', Google shows a map with three local businesses. This is called the local pack. Getting into it is the goal.
- **Google Maps —** your profile determines how your business appears when someone navigates to you or browses nearby businesses in Maps.
- **Your knowledge panel —** the information box that appears when someone searches your exact business name. This is often the first thing a new customer sees about you.
- **Your Google reviews —** all the star ratings and reviews customers leave on Google are part of your profile.

The local pack: the most valuable real estate on the internet for local business

When someone near you searches for what you offer — 'dentist near me', 'best Italian restaurant [your city]', 'emergency plumber' — Google shows three local businesses in a map block above all other results.

Those three spots get the overwhelming majority of clicks. The businesses below them get very little.

Your Google Business Profile is what determines whether you appear in those three spots — or whether a competitor does instead.

Setting up and completing your profile

The most common reason small businesses don't show up in local search is simple: their profile is incomplete. Google rewards businesses that fill in every field. An incomplete profile is like a locked door — customers can't get the information they need, and Google doesn't trust the listing enough to show it prominently.

Profile field	Why it matters	Common mistake
Business name	Must match the sign on your door exactly. No extra keywords.	Adding keywords like 'best plumber' to the name — Google can suspend your profile for this.
Primary category	The single most important ranking factor. Choose the most specific option available.	Choosing 'Restaurant' when you could choose 'Thai Restaurant' or 'Sushi Restaurant'.
Address	Must be your real, precise business address. Exactly as it appears on your website.	Using a PO Box or formatting the address differently than other listings.
Phone number	Use the number customers call. Ideally a local number, not a toll-free number.	Using a different number than what's on your website.
Website	Link to your actual website homepage.	Leaving this blank or linking to a social media page instead.
Hours	Current, accurate hours. Update for public holidays and seasonal changes.	Setting hours once and never updating them. Incorrect hours = negative reviews.

Business description	750 characters. Write naturally about what you do and who you serve.	Stuffing keywords in unnaturally. Write for people, not for algorithms.
Photos	At least 10 photos: exterior, interior, products/services, team.	Using stock photos. Google and customers both respond better to real photos.

⚒ DIY — Do it yourself: How to set up your Google Business Profile

Step 1: Go to business.google.com and click 'Manage now'.

Step 2: Sign in with your Google account (or create one — it's free).

Step 3: Search for your business name. If it appears, claim it. If not, create it.

Step 4: Fill in every single field. Don't skip anything. The more complete your profile, the better you rank.

Step 5: Verify your business. Google will send a postcard to your address with a verification code. This can take 5–10 days.

Step 6: Once verified, add at least 10 photos — exterior of your building, inside your space, your products or services in action, and ideally your team.

Step 7: Create your first post. Go to 'Posts' and write a short update — a special offer, an announcement, or simply a welcome message.

Time required: About 1 hour to complete the setup. Verification takes a few days to arrive by post.

Ongoing: 15–30 minutes per month to keep it current.

★ Done-for-You — working with a Partner: What a good Partner does for your Google Business Profile

- Sets up and verifies your profile correctly from the start, avoiding common mistakes that lead to suspension.
- Optimises every field using knowledge of how Google's local ranking algorithm works.
- Creates a posting schedule and publishes updates on your behalf — events, offers, news — at least twice a month.
- Monitors your profile daily for unauthorized changes (anyone can suggest edits to your Google listing, and Google can accept them without telling you).

- Seeds your Q&A section with the questions your customers most commonly ask, so the answers are accurate.
- Connects your profile performance data to monthly reporting so you know how many people saw your listing, clicked to your website, or asked for directions.

What to ask a potential partner: 'What happens if someone makes an unauthorized edit to my listing? How quickly would you catch it and fix it?'

Keeping your profile active

Google uses activity signals to decide how relevant and trustworthy your profile is. A profile that's never updated looks abandoned. A profile that's regularly updated — with new photos, posts, and review responses — signals that the business is active and engaged.

- Add a new photo every month — seasonal products, team members, your shopfront in different weather
- Post at least twice a month — an offer, a piece of news, a seasonal message
- Respond to every review within 48 hours (more on this in Chapter 3)
- Update your hours before any holiday or seasonal change — do not wait until after
- Check your Q&A section monthly and answer any new questions

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Chapter 1 checklist

Tick these off before moving to Chapter 2.

- □ Go to business.google.com and claim or create your Google Business Profile
- □ Fill in every field completely — name, category, address, phone, website, hours, description
- □ Verify your profile by postcard (or by phone/video if offered)
- □ Add at least 10 real photos of your business
- □ Create your first post
- □ Make sure your hours are correct — including any upcoming holidays

Chapter 2: Listings and Directories

Beyond Google, your business information appears in dozens of other places online — Apple Maps, Yelp, Bing, Facebook, Yellow Pages, and many more. These are called listings or directory listings.

When this information is the same everywhere, Google trusts it. When it's inconsistent — your address formatted differently here, an old phone number there, a slightly different business name somewhere else — Google gets confused, and your local rankings suffer.

The good news: for a single-location business, this is very manageable. You don't need dozens of profiles everywhere. You need the right ones, set up correctly.

What is NAP consistency?

NAP stands for Name, Address, Phone number. These three pieces of information need to be identical everywhere your business appears online.

Not similar. Identical.

That means if your name is 'Sarah's Bakery' on Google, it can't be 'Sarahs Bakery' (missing apostrophe) on Yelp or 'Sarah's Bake Shop' on Facebook. If your address uses 'Street' on Google, it should use 'Street' everywhere — not 'St.'

This sounds fussy. But search engines treat inconsistencies as a sign that the information can't be trusted — and they lower your ranking as a result.

The directories that matter most

You don't need to be on every directory. Focus on these first:

Directory	Why it matters	How to claim it
Google Business Profile	The most important one. Covered in Chapter 1.	business.google.com
Apple Maps	The default maps app on every iPhone. Siri uses it. Very commonly out of date.	mapsconnect.apple.com

Bing Places	Microsoft's search engine. Used more than most people realise.	bingplaces.com
Yelp	High visibility in Google search results. Important for restaurants, services, retail.	biz.yelp.com
Facebook Business Page	Indexed by Google. Also, a discovery channel for local customers.	facebook.com/pages/create
Yellow Pages (YP.com)	Old-school directory that still feeds data to other smaller sites.	yellowpages.com (search for your business)

How to find and fix listing errors

Before you can fix your listings, you need to know where you appear and what those listings say. Here's how to do a quick audit yourself:

⚒ DIY — Do it yourself: How to audit and fix your listings

Step 1: Run a free scan. Go to brightlocal.com or moz.com/local and enter your business name, address, and phone number. The tool will show you everywhere your business appears and flag any inconsistencies.

Step 2: Check the big five manually. Go directly to Google, Apple Maps, Bing, Yelp, and Facebook. Search for your business. Write down anything that looks wrong — old address, wrong phone number, outdated hours.

Step 3: Fix them one by one. Each directory has a 'claim your business' or 'business owner' option. Claim it, log in, and correct the information.

Step 4: Write down your 'master' information. Create a simple document with your official business name, address, phone number, website, and hours. Every time you update a listing, copy from this document exactly — don't retype it, copy and paste.

Step 5: Check back every 3 months. Directories can overwrite your information with old data. A quarterly check takes 20 minutes and catches problems before customers do.

Time required: About 2–3 hours initially. 20 minutes every quarter after that.

★ Done-for-You — working with a Partner: What a good Partner does for your listings

- Runs a complete audit of every directory where your business appears, not just the main five.
- Pushes corrected information to all directories simultaneously, using professional tools that update dozens of sites at once.
- Monitors listings continuously for data drift — when directories overwrite your correct information with old data, your partner catches and fixes it automatically.
- Suppresses listings that can't be edited (some old directories can't be updated, but they can be suppressed so they don't confuse search engines).
- Includes listing health in your monthly report so you always know the status.

What to ask a potential partner: 'How many directories do you monitor? What happens when a directory overwrites my information?'

The most common listing mistake small businesses make

Moving their business and not updating their online listings.

This is the single most damaging thing that can happen to your local search presence. Customers search for you, find an old address, drive there, find your old location (or a different business entirely), and leave a one-star review.

If you have moved — or are planning to move — updating your listings is the first thing to do, not the last. Do it before the move date. Do it on Google first, then everywhere else.

Chapter 2 checklist

- □ Run a free listing scan at brightlocal.com or moz.com/local
- □ Create a 'master NAP document' with your official name, address, phone, website, and hours
- □ Claim and correct your listing on Apple Maps (mapsconnect.apple.com)
- □ Claim and correct your listing on Bing Places (bingplaces.com)
- □ Claim and correct your listing on Yelp (biz.yelp.com)
- □ Claim and correct your Facebook Business Page
- □ Set a calendar reminder to re-check your listings every 3 months

Chapter 3: Reviews

Reviews are the most powerful trust signal your business has online. Not your website. Not your social media. Your reviews.

When someone finds your business on Google, the first thing they look at — after your name and whether you're open — is your star rating and your most recent reviews. A business with 4.6 stars and 80 reviews will almost always get the click over a business with 3.9 stars and 8 reviews, regardless of which one is actually better.

The great news for small businesses: you have a genuine advantage here. A big chain can't respond to every review with warmth and personality the way a small business owner can. That personal touch is your competitive edge.

93%	4.4★	3x
of consumers say online reviews influence their buying decisions	minimum average star rating before most customers will consider visiting	more reviews = roughly 3x more likely to appear in the local pack

The three things that matter with reviews

- **Volume —** how many reviews you have. More reviews = more trust, and Google uses review count as a ranking signal.
- **Recency —** how recent your reviews are. A business with 100 reviews from five years ago ranks below a business with 20 reviews from the last six months.
- **Responses —** whether you've replied to them. Google has confirmed that responding to reviews improves local rankings. It also tells prospective customers that you're engaged and care about your service.

How to get more reviews

The most common reason small businesses have too few reviews is the simplest one: they never ask. Happy customers go home satisfied. Unhappy customers go home motivated. Without a system for asking, your review profile ends up skewed negative by default.

⚒ DIY — Do it yourself: How to ask for reviews — without it feeling awkward

The most effective approach: ask in person, at the moment a customer is most satisfied.

For a shop or cafe: When a customer says something positive ('That was delicious', 'This is exactly what I needed'), respond warmly and then say: 'I'm so glad. It would mean a lot if you left us a quick Google review — it really helps small businesses like ours. Here's a card with the link.'

Create a QR code that links directly to your Google review form:

1. Find your Google Business Profile review link: log into business.google.com, go to 'Get more reviews', and copy the link.
2. Go to qr-code-generator.com and paste the link to create a free QR code.
3. Print it on a small card, a table tent, or stick it near your checkout.

For service businesses (tradespeople, therapists, consultants): send a follow-up text or email after completing a job. Keep it simple: 'Hi [name], thanks for choosing us. If you were happy with the work, a quick Google review would really help. Here's the link: [link]'

Important: Never offer discounts, gifts, or rewards in exchange for reviews. This violates Google's policies and can result in your reviews being removed.

Time required: 2 minutes to set up. Then it's just a habit.

How to respond to reviews

Responding to reviews is not optional — it's one of the most visible things you do online. Every response you write is read by every future customer who looks at your reviews. Respond well, and you turn each review (positive or negative) into a demonstration of how you run your business.

Responding to positive reviews

Keep it short. Be genuine. Reference something specific from the review. Don't use the same template every time — it looks robotic.

Customer wrote	Good response
'Amazing food, will definitely be back!'	Thank you so much — comments like this genuinely make our day. We look forward to seeing you again soon!
'Fixed our boiler in under an hour. Professional and friendly.'	Thank you for taking the time to share this. Glad we could get it sorted quickly for you — especially in the cold!
'Lovely boutique, staff were so helpful finding the right size.'	Thank you! Helping people find exactly what they're looking for is our favourite part of the job. Hope to see you again.

Responding to negative reviews

Stay calm. Stay professional. Never argue. Remember: your response is not for the reviewer — it's for every future customer reading it. A graceful response to a bad review can actually increase trust more than a perfect rating with no engagement.

Customer wrote	Good response
'Waited 40 minutes for a table. No one apologised or acknowledged us.'	Thank you for telling us — a 40-minute wait with no communication from our team is not okay, and I'm sorry. We're addressing this directly with our staff. If you'd like to give us another chance, please reach out to us at [email].
'The repair didn't fix the problem. Had to call someone else.'	I'm sorry to hear this — we stand behind our work and this is not the outcome we want for any customer. Please contact us at [phone] and we'll make it right.

★ Done-for-You — working with a Partner: What a good partner does for your reviews

- Sets up an automated review request system — a text or email sent to customers after each visit or transaction, with a direct link to your Google review form.
- Monitors all review platforms daily so no review — positive or negative — goes unanswered.
- Drafts responses to every review in your brand voice within 48 hours, for your approval or auto-publication depending on your preference.
- Flags urgent reviews (1-star complaints, mentions of specific incidents) immediately for your attention.
- Reports on your review volume, average rating, and response rate monthly.

What to ask a potential partner: 'What is your review response time? Do I get to approve responses before they go live?'

The AI review response question

Many business owners ask whether it's acceptable to use AI to help write review responses. The short answer is yes — with one important caveat.

Google's own policy states: 'Appropriate use of AI or automation is not against our guidelines.' Google itself has even built an AI review response feature directly into Google Business Profile.

What matters is quality, not authorship. A response that feels genuine, personalised, and human — even if AI helped draft it — is perfectly acceptable. A response that is clearly copy-pasted, generic, and makes no reference to what the customer actually wrote is poor practice, AI-assisted or not.

Chapter 3 checklist

- □ Find your Google review link (business.google.com → 'Get more reviews')
- □ Create a QR code linking to your review form and print it for display at your business
- □ Write a simple review request script for staff — or for yourself when speaking to customers
- □ Respond to every existing review that doesn't yet have a response
- □ Set a weekly reminder to check for new reviews and respond within 48 hours

Chapter 4: Your Website and Local SEO

Local SEO is a phrase that sounds technical but describes something simple: making sure that when someone in your area searches for what you offer, Google shows them your business.

For a single-location small business, local SEO does not require a technical background or an expensive agency. It requires a few important things to be in the right place on your website — and it requires that your website and your Google Business Profile are telling Google the same consistent story about your business.

This chapter explains what matters, what you can do yourself, and what a partner would handle for you.

Do I even need a website?

Your Google Business Profile alone can drive significant foot traffic without a website. Many sole traders and small service businesses rank well with just a well-optimised profile.

That said, a website gives you something a Google profile can't: the ability to tell your full story, showcase your work, explain your services in depth, and capture enquiries even when you're closed.

If you don't have a website yet, even a simple one-page site with your business name, what you do, where you are, and how to contact you will meaningfully improve your local search visibility.

The most important things your website needs for local SEO

You don't need to understand how search engines work to make these changes. You just need to know what to look for and where to put it.

What it is	Why it matters	What to do
Your NAP on every page	Google checks that your name, address, and phone number on your website match what's in your Google Business Profile and other directories.	Put your full business name, address, and phone number in the footer of every page. Copy it exactly from your master NAP document.
Your city or neighbourhood in your page title	Google uses page titles to understand what your page is about and where it's relevant.	Your homepage title should include your city. Example: 'Sarah's Bakery — Fresh Bread & Pastries in Oakville'
A clear description of what you do	Google needs to understand what your business is so it can match you to the right searches.	Make sure your homepage clearly says what you do, where you are, and who you serve — in plain language, in the first paragraph.
An embedded Google Map	Embedding a Google Map on your contact page reinforces your location to Google's crawlers.	Go to Google Maps, find your business, click Share → Embed a map, and paste the code on your contact page. If you use a website builder like Squarespace or Wix, search their help for 'embed Google Map'.
Your website linked to your GBP	Your Google Business Profile should link to your website, and your website should be consistent with your profile.	Check that the website URL in your Google Business Profile goes to your actual homepage.

⚒ DIY — Do it yourself: Local SEO basics you can do yourself today

1. Check your homepage title. In a web browser, open your website and look at the tab at the top of the browser window. Does it include your city? If not, ask your web developer or look in your website builder settings for 'page title' or 'SEO title'.

2. Check your footer. Does every page of your website show your business name, full address, and phone number? If not, add it.

3. Search for yourself. Open a private/incognito browser window and search '[your business type] in [your city]'. Does your business appear? If not, your Google Business Profile or website may need attention.

4. Check your Google Business Profile website link. Log into business.google.com and make sure the website URL listed goes to your actual website.

5. Add your location to your homepage text. Make sure the words '[your city]' or '[your neighbourhood]' appear naturally in the text on your homepage. Not stuffed in awkwardly — just mentioned naturally as part of describing your business.

These five steps take about 30 minutes and cover the most impactful basics.

★ Done-for-You — working with a Partner: What a good partner does for your website and local SEO

- Audits your website for the key local SEO elements and identifies what's missing or incorrect.
- Optimises your page titles, headings, and on-page content to include the right location signals without keyword stuffing.
- Implements Local Business schema markup — a piece of code that tells Google structured information about your business (hours, address, category, reviews) in a format search engines can read directly. This can enable Google to show your hours, rating, and location in search results without the customer even clicking through.
- Builds local citations — mentions of your business on local directories, your chamber of commerce website, and other locally relevant sites — that reinforce your geographic relevance.
- Monitors your search rankings monthly and reports on how your position changes over time.

What to ask a potential partner: 'Do you implement Local Business schema markup? Can you show me an example of what that looks like for a business like mine?'

A word about schema markup

Schema markup sounds very technical, but the effect is simple: it's a small piece of invisible code on your website that helps Google understand your business more clearly.

When schema markup is set up correctly, Google can display your hours, star rating, and business type directly in the search result — before the customer even clicks. This means customers immediately see that you're open, that you're rated 4.7 stars, and that you're the type of business they're looking for. More information in the search result = more clicks to your website.

For DIY: if you use WordPress with a plugin like Yoast SEO or RankMath, local schema can be added through those tools with minimal technical knowledge. If you use Squarespace, Wix, or Shopify, check their SEO settings — many now include basic schema options. For anything more complex, this is worth delegating to a partner.

Chapter 4 checklist

- □ Search for your business type in your city in an incognito browser — note where and whether you appear
- □ Check your homepage title includes your city
- □ Make sure your full NAP (name, address, phone) is in the footer of every page on your website
- □ Add an embedded Google Map to your contact page
- □ Confirm the website URL in your Google Business Profile links to your actual homepage
- □ Add your city name naturally into your homepage text if it's not already there

Chapter 5: Keeping It Up to Date

The biggest mistake small business owners make with their online presence is treating it as a one-time project. Set it up, tick the box, never think about it again.

Online presence is more like the outside of your shop: it needs regular attention. Not constant attention — but enough to make sure nothing has gone stale, nothing has broken, and nothing is quietly sending customers the wrong information.

The good news: for a single-location small business, ongoing maintenance is genuinely not time-consuming. If you've done the setup work in the earlier chapters, the ongoing effort is about 30 minutes a month — or zero, if you work with a partner.

What needs to happen, and how often

Task	How often	Time (DIY)	What happens if you skip it
Check and respond to new reviews	Weekly	10 mins	Reviews go unanswered. Ranking signal lost. Customers think nobody's paying attention.
Post an update to your Google Business Profile	2x monthly	10 mins	Profile looks inactive. Google deprioritises stale profiles in local search.
Check hours are correct	Before any public holiday	5 mins	Customers arrive when you're closed. Almost guaranteed to generate negative reviews.
Add a new photo	Monthly	5 mins	Profile looks dated. Fresh photos signal an active, well-managed business.
Spot-check your top 3 listings	Quarterly	20 mins	Directory data drift goes undetected. Wrong address or phone number stays live.
Review your Google Business Profile insights	Monthly	10 mins	You don't know what's working — how many people found you, clicked, or asked for directions.

⚒ DIY — Do it yourself: Your monthly 30-minute online presence check-in

Set aside 30 minutes at the start of each month. Use this checklist:

Week 1: Check Google Business Profile. Respond to any new reviews. Check for any suggested edits that need approving or rejecting.

Week 2: Post an update. A seasonal offer, a new product, a team photo, a piece of news. Anything that signals you're active.

Week 3: Add a new photo. Exterior, product, behind-the-scenes — keep it real and relevant.

Week 4: Check your hours. Any public holidays or closures coming up? Update them now, not the day before.

Once per quarter (takes 20 minutes):

Search your business on Google, Apple Maps, and Yelp. Verify that your address, phone number, and hours are correct on all three.

Once per year:

Do a full listing audit using brightlocal.com or moz.com/local. Fix anything that has drifted.

★ Done-for-You — working with a Partner: What a good partner handles on an ongoing basis

- Daily monitoring of all review platforms — any new review triggers an alert and a drafted response.
- Continuous monitoring of your listings across all directories for data changes, unauthorized edits, or information drift.
- A monthly GBP posting schedule executed on your behalf.
- Monthly reporting: how many people found your listing, how many clicked to your website, how many asked for directions, how your review rating changed.
- Proactive alerts: if anything significant changes (a listing error is detected, a review spike occurs, your search ranking drops) you hear about it from your partner, not from a customer.

What to ask a potential partner: 'What does your monthly reporting cover? Can I see a sample report?'

The single most important habit

Update your hours before any public holiday. Before.

This is the number one source of negative reviews for small businesses. A customer checks Google, sees you're open, drives to your location, finds you closed.

It takes five minutes to update your hours in your Google Business Profile. Set a recurring calendar reminder two weeks before every major holiday in your country — and use it.

Chapter 5 checklist

- ☐ Set a recurring monthly calendar reminder for your 30-minute online presence check-in
- ☐ Set a recurring quarterly calendar reminder for your listing spot-check
- ☐ Set recurring reminders before every major public holiday to update your Google Business Profile hours
- ☐ Look up your Google Business Profile insights right now — how many people found you last month?

Why Real Local Partners?

This guide has given you everything you need to manage your online presence yourself. If you've worked through it and feel ready to take it on, that's genuinely great. The foundations you build will make a real difference.

But if you've read this and thought 'I understand why this matters — but I just don't have the time, or I want someone to do it properly' — that's exactly why Real Local Partners exists.

Here's why local business owners choose to work with us:

1. We focus exclusively on local presence

Most marketing agencies offer local presence management as one of twenty services they sell. It's not their speciality — it's a line item. At Real Local Partners, local presence is all we do. Google Business Profile, listings, reviews, local SEO — we think about this every day for businesses like yours.

That focus means we're better at it. We understand how Google's local ranking algorithm actually works. We know which directories matter for which business types. We know what a well-managed review programme looks like, and what a neglected one costs you.

> *"RLP took the time to understand my business and the neighbourhoods we want customers to come from. They delivered on what they promised, and more!"*
>
> *Heather – Owner of a floor refinishing business in Florida*

2. We do the things most business owners never get around to

You know you should respond to that review. You know you should update your holiday hours. You know you should post an update to your Google Business Profile this month.

But you're also running a business. Serving customers. Managing staff. Dealing with suppliers. Your online presence gets pushed to the bottom of the list — and it stays there.

We remove it from your list entirely. You get a monthly report telling you what we did and how your presence is performing. You don't have to think about it unless something interesting comes up.

> *"These guys do all the things me and my team either don't have time for or just don't want to do. And it's all very important stuff. Very dependable and the results are there."*
>
> *Dean – Owner of an automotive service and engine re-building business in Texas*

3. We catch problems before customers do

Directories overwrite your information constantly. Someone suggests a change to your Google Business Profile and Google accepts it without notifying you. Your hours are still showing last year's Christmas schedule. Your Apple Maps listing has an address from before you moved.

These are not hypothetical scenarios — they happen to local businesses every week. Most business owners don't find out until a customer complains. We monitor your full presence continuously, so we catch these things and fix them silently, long before a customer has a bad experience.

> *"We didn't realize how much our Google Business Profile mattered. Real Local Partners showed us how to get more leads and foot-traffic into our restaurant and they fixed our website and reservation system"*
>
> *Anton and Louisa – Owners of a local sports bar in the Toronto area*

4. We explain what we're doing and why

We wrote this guide because we believe informed clients get better outcomes. If you understand what local presence management involves, you can have a better conversation with us, give us better information to work with, and evaluate whether what we're doing is actually working.

We don't use jargon to make things sound more complicated than they are. We don't send vague reports with metrics that don't connect to your business outcomes. We tell you, in plain English, what we did and what difference it made.

> *"I attended a Real Local Partners Social Media Bootcamp session and immediately hired them to run my social media. I'm building a solid profile and reputation, and people are starting to follow me more than ever before. I got 3 listings in the last 2 moths from their social media efforts.*
>
> *Courtney – Real Estate Agent in the Georgian Bay area of Ontario*

5. We start with a free audit — no commitment, no pressure

We offer a free 15-minute online presence audit for any local business. We'll pull your current listing data, check your Google Business Profile completeness, look at your review profile, and give you a clear picture of where you stand right now.

You'll know exactly what's working, what needs attention, and what fixing it is worth — whether you do it yourself or work with us.

> *"The SnapShot Report audit from Real Local Partners gave me a real level of comfort that what they told me was wrong, broken or hurting our business was accurate. They then addressed all the issues in the report and things have never better. More inquires and leads than ever. And reviews are now on "auto-pilot" and actually helping things overall, for once!"*
>
> *Andrew and Larry – Partners in a local law firm in Calgary, Alberta*

Ready to see what your online presence actually looks like?

Book a free 15-minute audit — we'll show you exactly where you stand.

www.reallocalpartners.com

No obligation. No sales pitch. Just a clear picture of where you are.

Your 90-Day Action Plan

Here's a clear, step-by-step plan for getting your online presence in shape over the next 90 days. Two versions: one for doing it yourself, one for working with a partner.

DIY 90-day plan

When	What to do	Time needed
Week 1	Go to business.google.com. Claim or create your Google Business Profile. Fill in every field. Request verification.	1–2 hours
Week 2	While waiting for verification: run a free listing scan at brightlocal.com. Create your master NAP document.	1 hour
Week 3	Verification should arrive. Confirm your profile. Add 10+ photos. Create your first post.	1 hour
Week 4	Claim your Apple Maps, Bing, Yelp, and Facebook listings. Fix any incorrect information using your master NAP document.	2–3 hours
Month 2	Find your Google review link. Create a QR code. Put it in your business. Ask every satisfied customer for a review.	Ongoing habit
Month 2	Check your website: homepage title includes your city, NAP in footer, Google Map on contact page.	30–60 mins
Month 3	Do your first monthly check-in: respond to reviews, post an update, add a photo, check hours.	30 mins
Month 3	Run another listing scan to catch any data drift. Fix anything that has changed.	30 mins
Month 3+	Keep up the monthly 30-minute check-in routine. It compounds over time.	30 mins/month

Done-for-you 90-day plan

When	What happens
Week 1	Onboarding: you provide your business details and give your partner access to your Google Business Profile. They begin the full audit.
Week 2	Your partner delivers an audit report showing your current listing health, GBP completeness, and review profile. You review and approve.
Weeks 3–4	Clean-up: listings corrected across all major directories. GBP fully optimised. Unauthorized edits fixed. Review response system activated.
Month 2	First monthly report delivered. GBP posting cadence live. Review request flows generating new reviews. You start receiving monthly reports.
Month 3	Website local SEO review completed. Any issues flagged and addressed. Search ranking baselines established.
Month 3+	Ongoing: monthly reporting, continuous monitoring, review responses, GBP posts, listing maintenance. You focus on your business.

Start anywhere — just start

The biggest mistake is waiting until you have time to do everything perfectly.

Setting up just your Google Business Profile will make a difference. Responding to just your existing reviews will make a difference. Correcting just your Apple Maps listing will make a difference.

Every improvement compounds. A business that gets started and keeps going — imperfectly — will almost always outperform a business waiting for the perfect moment.

Start with Chapter 1. Everything else follows.

Get found. Get chosen. Get busy.

Local online presence management for small businesses — done properly.

Whether you choose to manage your online presence yourself or work with a partner, the goal is the same:

- When someone nearby searches for what you offer, your business appears
- When they find you, the information is accurate and up to date
- When they read your reviews, they feel confident enough to walk through your door

If you'd like Real Local Partners to take care of all of it — we'd love to start with a free 15-minute audit. No obligation, no pitch. Just a clear picture of where you stand.

Book your free 15-minute audit

www.reallocalpartners.com

Or email us to schedule a call — we're happy to answer questions, no strings attached.
mike@reallocalpartners.com

Real Local Partners — Online presence for local business.