

# MASTER

# BUSINESS PROFILES

**THE SME**  
MARKETING GUY



**CHATGPT**  
Prompts Included



# Quick Intro...

Your customers are searching for local businesses like yours every day... the only question is whether they'll find you. A Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business) is one of the easiest and most powerful ways to help your business appear in local searches and on Google Maps. Whether you run a bakery or plumbing business this guide will help you get noticed. Here, you'll learn how to set up your profile, optimise it to stand out from the competition, and use simple local SEO strategies to grow your visibility.

## The 3 Things You'll Learn...

### 01 Build A Google Profile That Gets Found



You'll learn how to create a complete Google Business Profile that helps local customers find you fast. This includes claiming your business and adding your services so you stand out in search results.

### 02 Optimise, Post, And Respond To Build Trust




You'll learn how to keep your profile active by posting updates, sharing offers, and replying to reviews, showing Google and customers your business is active and trustworthy.

### 03 Boost Your Local Presence Beyond Google



You'll learn how to grow your reach with a local-friendly website, accurate listings on sites like Yell, and links from local partners. This all works together to help your business appear more often when people search nearby.

A young woman with glasses and a striped shirt is smiling and holding a brown bag. She is standing in front of a sign that says "OPEN". The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

A Google Business Profile helps local customers find and choose your business on Google, driving more calls, visits, and sales

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# WHAT IS GOOGLE MY BUSINESS? (NOW GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE)

If you run a local café, plumbing business, retail shop, or any service that helps people nearby, your Google Business Profile (GBP) is your digital shopfront. It's what pops up when someone searches for your business name or searches for services "near me." Think of it as your free listing on the world's biggest search engine.

## The Evolution of GMB to GBP

What used to be called Google My Business is now Google Business Profile. It's the same tool, but now even easier to update directly from Google Search or the Google Maps app. Google made this change to streamline how businesses manage their profiles without needing a separate dashboard.

When someone in your area searches for "Italian restaurant near me" or "emergency plumber York," Google will first show them a list of local businesses. This is called the Local Pack and your Business Profile is how you show up there.

**Free exposure  
on Google  
Search & Maps**

**Direct actions  
from potential  
customers**

**First  
impressions  
matter**



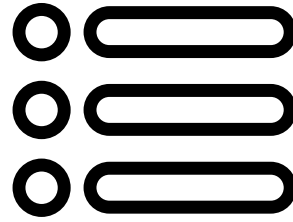
**Claim your Google Business Profile using the same Google account you'll use daily... this makes it quicker to update your hours, reply to reviews, or post an update right from your phone when you're busy running your business.**

## What Information Can You Show?

Your profile can show your:



**Business Name**

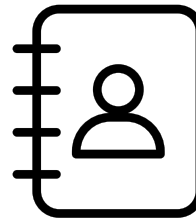


**Category**

(e.g., florist, accountant, car repair shop)



**Location and service areas**



**Contact details**



**Website link**



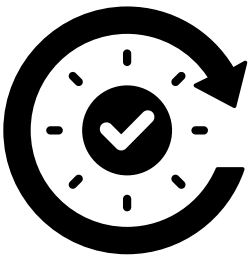
**Opening hours**



**Photos and videos**



**Customer reviews**



**Updates and offers**



**Products and services**

# The Power of Local Search

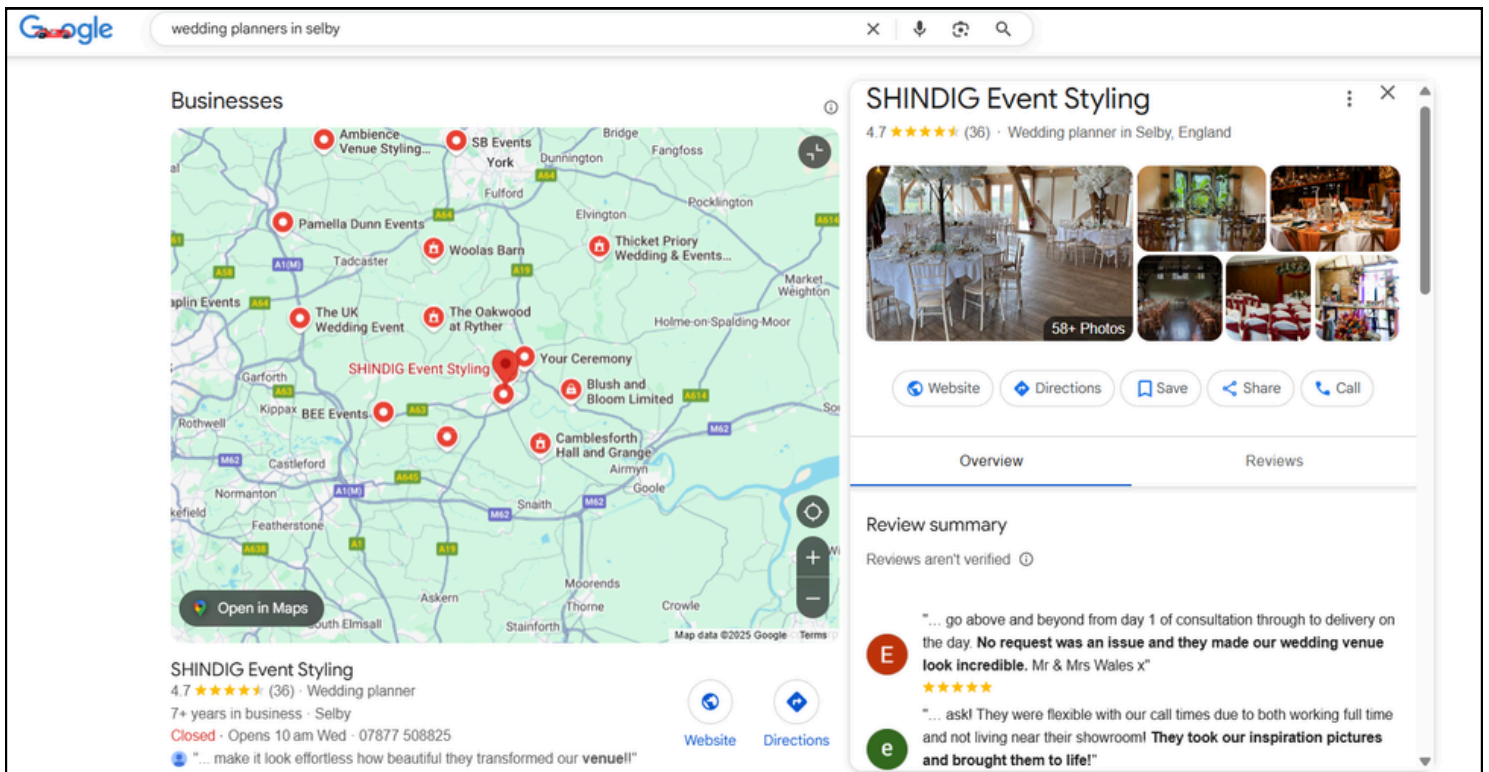
Google prioritises showing local businesses that are:

- Closest to the searcher
- Relevant to the search terms
- Active and well-reviewed

If your competitors are showing up when you aren't, it's often because their profile is better optimised and more active. The good news? You can catch up fast.

Your Google Business Profile is no longer just an optional extra, it's one of the most powerful tools you can use to bring real customers through your door.

Whether someone is searching for a café nearby, a plumber in an emergency, or a gift shop in their town, your Business Profile helps you appear at the exact moment they're ready to take action. Done right, it turns casual browsers into paying customers by making your business easy to find, trust, and contact.





Setting up your Google  
Business Profile is quick,  
free, and essential for  
helping nearby customers  
find and trust your  
business online

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# HOW TO SET UP YOUR GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

## STEP 1 - Sign In to Google

If you don't already have one, create a free Google account at [accounts.google.com/signup](https://accounts.google.com/signup).

We recommend using your business email address to keep things separate from your personal Google account.

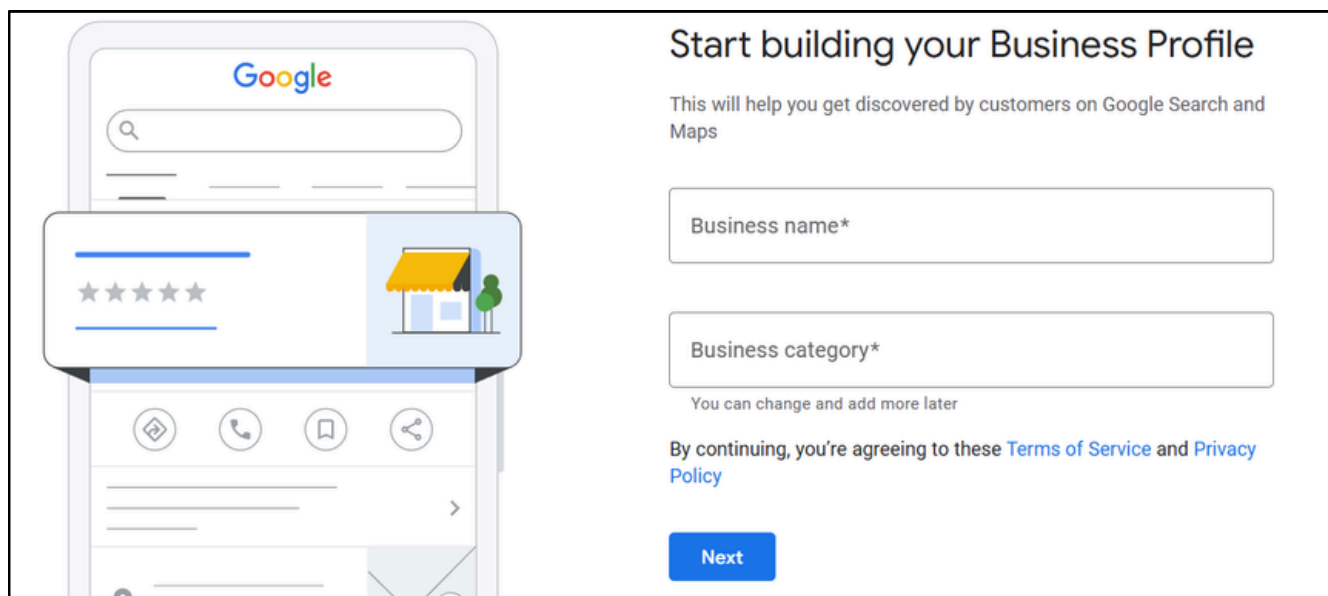
## STEP 2 - Go to Google Business Profile

Head to [google.com/business](https://google.com/business) and click "Manage Now." This will take you through the process of creating your profile.

## STEP 3 - Enter your business name and category

**Type your exact business name. Make sure it matches your website, social media pages, and shop signage to avoid confusion.**

Next, select your business category, this describes what you do. For example "Plumber" or "Marketing consultant". Choosing the right category helps Google match your business with local search results. If your business name is already listed (perhaps by a customer or past owner), you'll be able to request ownership.



**Start building your Business Profile**

This will help you get discovered by customers on Google Search and Maps

Business name\*

Business category\*

You can change and add more later

By continuing, you're agreeing to these [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

Next



## **STEP 4 - Add Your Business Location (If You Have One)**

If customers visit your premises (e.g., a restaurant or shop), add your address.

If you work from home but visit clients (e.g., a plumber), you can choose to hide your address and set your service areas instead.

## **STEP 5 - Add Contact Details**

- Add your phone number.
- Add your website link (if you have one).

This lets people call, message, or visit your website straight from Google Search.

## **STEP 6 - Verify Your Business**

Google wants to make sure your business is real. You'll usually be asked to verify your listing through:

- A postcard sent to your business address (this can take 5 days)
- Phone call
- Email

Follow the instructions carefully, verification unlocks your listing on Google.



**If you serve multiple towns or areas but don't have a shopfront, list your service areas clearly... this helps you show up in searches across nearby locations, not just your home postcode.**




## STEP 7 - Complete Your Profile

After verifying, complete your profile with the following:

- **Add Your Services**
- **Opening hours**
- **Business description (keep it simple and honest)**
- **Photos of your shop, products, or team**
- **Logo and cover photo**

The more complete your profile, the more trust you build with Google and your customers. You can then download the Google Maps or Google Search App where you can now manage your profile directly from those apps on your phone. This means you can update your hours, reply to reviews, or add photos on the go. You can, of course do this directly on the desktop too (where it's much easier!)

The screenshot shows the Google Business Profile management dashboard. At the top, it says "Your business on Google" with a profile strength indicator and a "Complete info" button. Below this are several action buttons: Edit profile, Read reviews, Photos, Add update, Performance, Advertise, Edit products, Edit services, Bookings, Q & A, and Ask for review. There are three main sections: "Complete your profile" (Add details and get discovered by more customers), "Add social profiles" (Build customer trust by adding social profiles), and "Set up booking" (Let customers book appointments and classes directly from your profile). On the right, there is a map showing the business location in Norway, and a business card for "VMV" with contact information: Phone: 0800 246 5681, Hours: Open 24 hours, and options for Reviews, Save, Share, and Call. At the bottom, there is a section "Take the next step to grow your business" with a "Start advertising" button.



A fully optimised profile helps your business rank higher on Google and makes a great first impression when local people are ready to buy

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# OPTIMISING YOUR GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

**Setting up your Google Business Profile is only the first step. If you leave it untouched, it won't perform well in local searches. Optimising your profile means fine-tuning every detail so Google trusts your business and so customers are more likely to visit, call, or buy.**

Let's look at the most important ways to improve your profile today.

## **Add High-Quality Photos And Keep Them Fresh**

Not all keywords are equal... some are broad and highly competitive, while others are more specific and easier for small businesses to rank for.

Google has confirmed it: profiles with photos get more clicks, calls, and website visits than those without.

**People want to see who you are and what your space looks like before they visit, or before they want to deal with you.**

Make sure to upload:

- Exterior shots: So customers can find you easily from the street
- Interior shots: Show a clean, welcoming environment
- Products or menu items: Let your best sellers shine
- Team photos (optional): Add a human touch that builds trust





## Select The Right Business Categories And Attributes

**Choosing the right category is one of the most important factors in where and when your business appears.**

You'll already have a main category, but you can add secondary categories to better reflect your services. For example:

**Main:** Bakery

**Secondary:** Cupcake shop, Coffee shop, Dessert restaurant

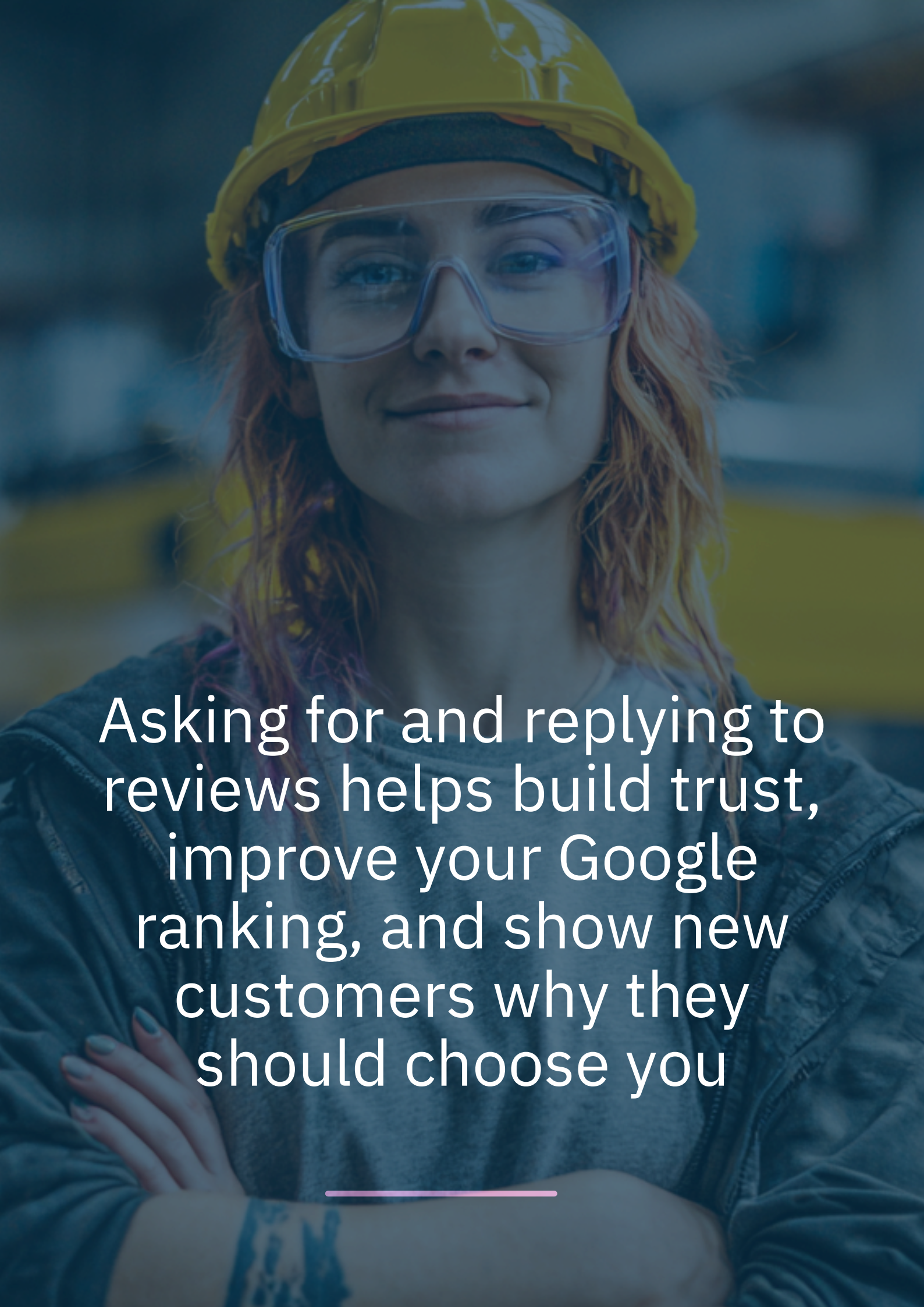
You should also select attributes that apply to your business, such as:

- **Wheelchair accessible**
- **Wi-Fi available**
- **Outdoor seating**
- **LGBTQ+ friendly**
- **Pet friendly**

These details help your profile appear when people search for places with those features like “dog-friendly bakeries near me” or “dessert shops with outdoor seating.”



**Search Google for your competitors and check what categories and attributes they're using... this helps you spot gaps, match what's working locally, and avoid missing important search terms.**



Asking for and replying to reviews helps build trust, improve your Google ranking, and show new customers why they should choose you

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# MANAGING AND RESPONDING TO REVIEWS

Reviews are one of the most powerful parts of your Google Business Profile. They build trust with potential customers and help your business rank higher in local search results. A steady flow of genuine, positive reviews can be the difference between someone choosing your business or your competitor's.

Let's break down how to manage your reviews and respond in a way that grows your reputation.

**1**

Google trusts businesses with consistent, genuine reviews, especially those that actively reply.

**2**

Customers trust other customers. Most people read reviews before choosing a business.

**3**

Your reviews, star rating, and responses are often the first thing people see when they find your profile.

## How To Ask Customers For Reviews

- Ask At The Right Time: Right after a great service, sale, or positive comment.
- Make It Easy: Share a direct link to your Google reviews page. You'll find this link inside your Google Business Profile.
- Keep It Natural: For example: "If you enjoyed your visit, we'd be so grateful if you could leave us a Google review, it really helps others find us."

**Never offer rewards or incentives for reviews...this goes against Google's guidelines.**



## **Respond To Every Review (Even The Positive Ones)**

**Replying to reviews shows potential customers that you care about feedback.**

- Thank people for positive reviews. Example: “Thanks so much for your lovely words, we hope to see you again soon!”
- Respond politely to negative reviews. Say sorry where needed, explain the situation briefly, and offer to resolve it privately.
- Avoid public arguments - stay calm and professional, no matter what.

## **What To Do About Fake Or Unfair Reviews**


**If you spot a fake or offensive review:**

- Report it through your Google Business Profile.
- Google will investigate and remove it if it clearly breaks their policies.

In most cases, still reply politely - future customers will see your response and appreciate your professionalism.



**Build Reviews Into Your Routine...  
Make asking for reviews part of your day-to-day activity. Over time, your review count and average star rating will grow, helping you appear more often in local search results.**

A man with a beard and tattoos, wearing a dark polo shirt and work pants, stands next to a brick wall. A utility meter is mounted on the wall behind him. A toolbox is on the ground to his left. The image has a blue tint.

Regular Google posts help  
turn one-time searchers  
into loyal customers by  
showing them what's  
happening at your  
business right now

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# POSTING ON GOOGLE: OFFERS, UPDATES & EVENTS

Your Google Business Profile isn't just a static listing... it's a living part of your online presence. By posting regularly, you can share offers, news, events, and updates that give people a reason to visit your business right now. Google loves active profiles, and posting keeps your listing fresh in local search results.

**Shows customers you're active and engaged**

**Highlights your latest offers, products, and news**

**Gives Google fresh content to index, helping your visibility**

**Encourages repeat visits from customers checking what's new**

## Types Of Posts You Can Share

Google lets you post several types of content directly onto your Business Profile. Here are the most useful ones for small businesses:

### **Offers**

Perfect for sales, seasonal promotions, or limited-time deals.

Example:  
*"20% off all cupcakes this weekend only."*

### **What's New**

Updates like new product launches, service changes, or announcements.

Example:  
"We now offer gluten-free cupcakes in-store!"

### **Events**

Highlight in-store workshops, or local events you're part of.

Example:  
"Join us for Cupcake Decorating 101 this Saturday."

### **Product**

Feature specific products, highlights or menu items.

Example:  
"Try our new mint choc cupcake... available now."



## Best Practices For Posting

- Keep it short and clear: People scroll quickly, so keep your message simple.
- Add a photo or video: Posts with visuals grab more attention.
- Include a call-to-action: Use buttons like “Call Now,” “Learn More,” or “Order Online.”
- Keep it current: Posts stay live for 7 days (except event posts, which last until the event date). Update regularly to keep your profile fresh.

## How Often Should You Post?

Aim to post once a week to keep your profile active. If you’ve got promotions, news, or events, post more frequently.

**Places**





**Crumbs & Doilies**  
4.5 ★★★★★ (922) · £1–10 · Cake shop

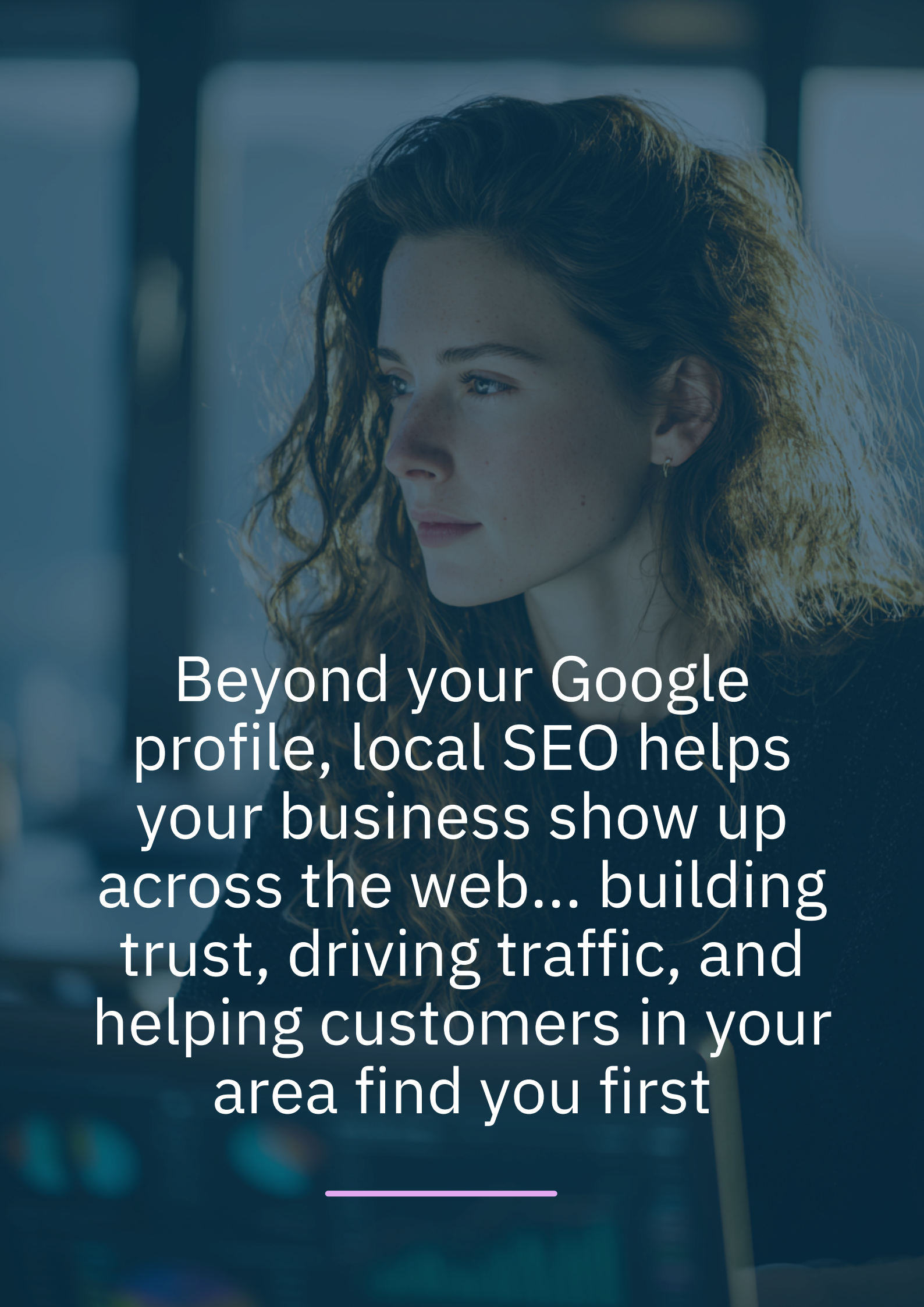
1,227+ Photos

Order collection | Order delivery | Website  
Directions | Save | Share | Call

Overview | Menu | Reviews

**Menu highlights**  
4 dishes related to your query

 Salted Caramel Cupcake 3 reviews · 45 photos	 Raspberry Ripple Plant Based... 43 photos	 Red Velvet Cupcake 8 reviews · 13 photos	 Unic... 2 review
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Beyond your Google profile, local SEO helps your business show up across the web... building trust, driving traffic, and helping customers in your area find you first

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# LOCAL SEO BEYOND GMB

While your **Google Business Profile** is the foundation of local search success, it's not the only way customers find you online. To truly build a strong local presence, you need to support your profile with other local SEO tactics that work together to improve your visibility across the web.

## Build A Local-Focused Website

Even if your Google profile is strong, you still need a website that:

1

**State Your Location And Services Clearly:** Make sure your homepage and about page tell people where you're based and exactly what you do.

2

**Highlight Key Services And Areas Served:** Mention your main services and include your town, city, or region on important pages like your homepage and contact page.

3

**Ensure Fast, Mobile-Friendly Performance:** Your site should load quickly and work well on smartphones, since most local searches happen on mobile devices.

4

**List Opening Hours And Contact Details:** Include up-to-date opening hours, phone numbers, and customer reviews so people can quickly check when you're open and how to contact you.

Think of your website and Google profile as working hand in hand to help local customers find you and feel confident choosing your business.



## Get Listed On Other Local Directories

Google isn't the only place where people search for local businesses. You should also claim your business listings on:

- Yell.com
- Bing Places
- Yelp UK
- Thomson Local
- Apple Maps
- Facebook Business Pages

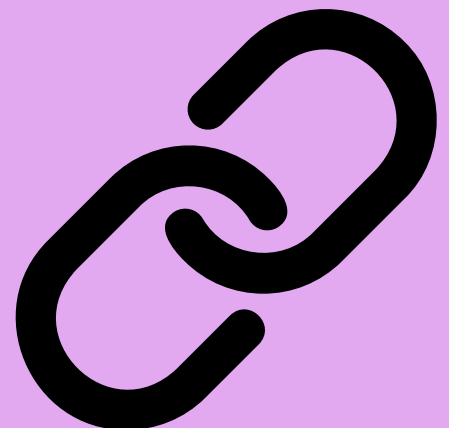
Make sure your name, address, phone number (NAP details) match exactly across all platforms. This consistency helps Google verify your business.

## Encourage Local Backlinks

Backlinks (links from other websites) help Google trust your business. You can build local backlinks by:

- Joining your local Chamber of Commerce or business networks.
- Sponsoring local events or charity fundraisers.
- Getting featured in local online magazines or news sites.
- Partnering with nearby businesses and exchanging links.

The more your business is mentioned in local sources, the more trusted your website becomes.





## Create Local Content

Your blog or news page is a great place to publish articles and updates that mention your local area. Example ideas:

- “The Best Afternoon Teas In Harrogate”
- “How To Keep Your Plumbing Safe This Winter In Sheffield”
- “Our Favourite York-Based Suppliers”

This helps your site rank when people search for services in your town or city.

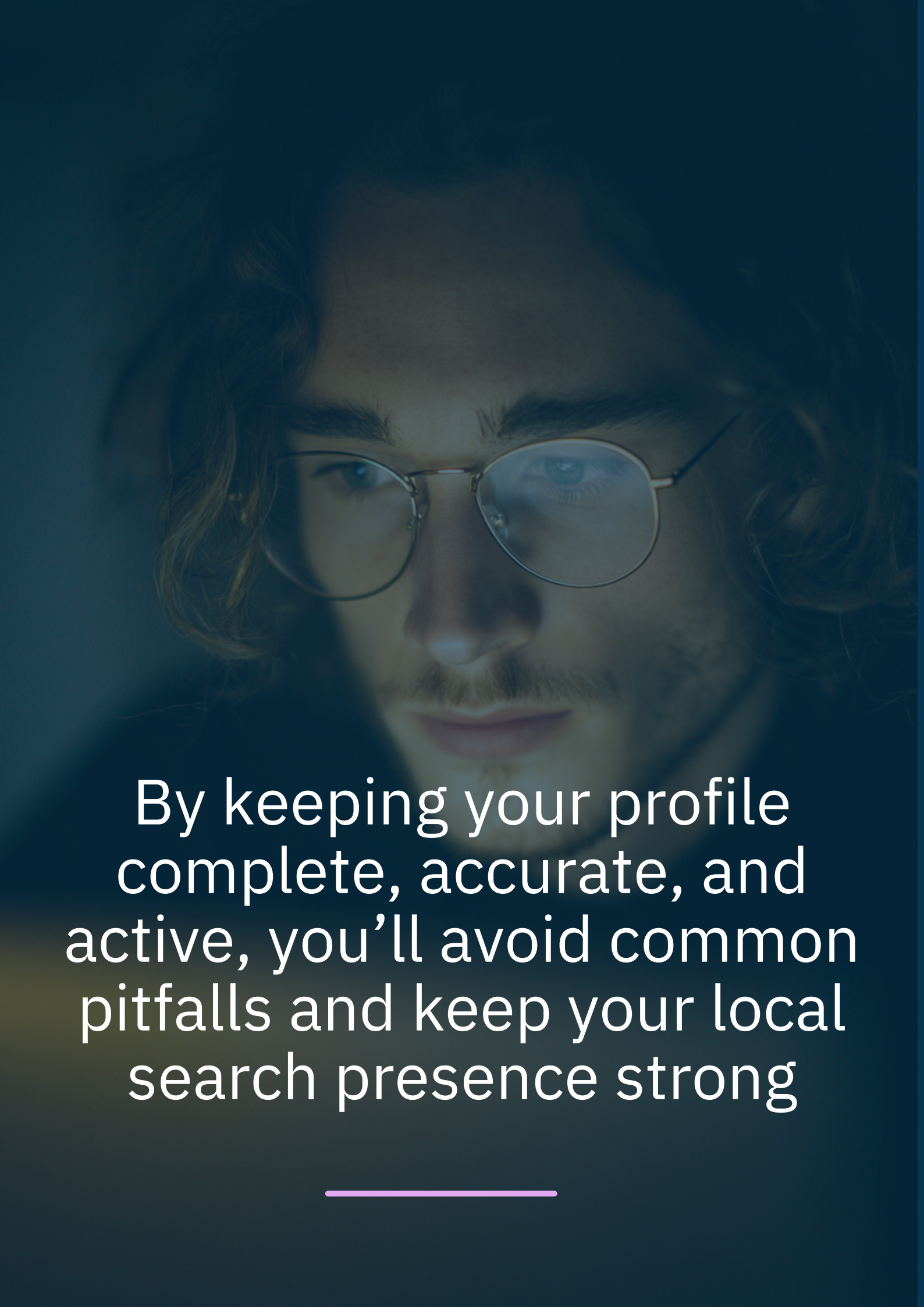
## Stay Active On Social Media

Social media signals aren't a direct Google ranking factor, but being active on Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok keeps your business top-of-mind in your community.

It also creates extra links to your website and Google profile.



**A strong local SEO strategy combines your Google Business Profile with a local-focused website, directory listings, social media, and community engagement, helping you appear everywhere your local customers are searching.**



By keeping your profile complete, accurate, and active, you'll avoid common pitfalls and keep your local search presence strong

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# COMMON MISTAKES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Even with the best tools, it's easy to miss opportunities or slip into bad habits that hurt your visibility. Let's look at some of the most common mistakes small businesses make with Google Business Profiles and how you can avoid them.

1

## Place Your Keywords Smartly

**The mistake:** Businesses leave key sections blank... no business description, missing hours, no photos.

**The fix:** Fill in every section of your profile and keep it updated.

2

## Using Low-Quality Or Outdated Photos

**The mistake:** Uploading dark, blurry, or years-old photos that don't reflect what your business looks like today.

**The fix:** Use bright, clear images of your shop, products, and people... and refresh them regularly!

3

## Ignoring Customer Reviews

**The mistake:** Not asking for reviews, or leaving existing reviews unanswered.

**The fix:** Ask happy customers to leave reviews and reply to every one... good or bad.

4

## Choosing The Wrong Category

**The mistake:** Picking a vague or inaccurate category that confuses Google and your customers.

**The fix:** Choose the most accurate main category, and add secondary categories to reflect your services.



5

### **Forgetting To Update Your Hours**

**The mistake:** Keeping old opening times on your profile, especially during holidays or special events.

**The fix:** Update your hours whenever they change. Use the “Special Hours” feature for one-off closures.

6

### **Not Posting Regularly**

**The mistake:** Setting up your profile and never posting updates, offers, or events.


**The fix:** Aim to post once a week to show Google your business is active and engaged.

7

### **Inconsistent Contact Details Across The Web**

**The mistake:** Having different phone numbers or addresses on other websites like Yell or Facebook.

**The fix:** Make sure your business name, address, and phone number (NAP) are consistent everywhere online.



The businesses that shine  
brightest aren't always  
the biggest... they're the  
ones that show up, serve  
with heart, and never  
stop being found

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# STAY ACTIVE, STAY LOCAL, STAY VISIBLE

**Your Google Business Profile is more than just a listing – it's your local shopfront in the digital world. Every search, every review, every update is a chance to show up when your next customer is looking for a business like yours.**

If you take one thing away what you've learnt in this Playbook, let it be this: Google rewards businesses that stay active. The more effort you put in by posting regularly, updating your details, responding to reviews, the more you'll stand out in your local area.

Success on Google isn't about spending thousands on ads or being a tech expert. It's about showing up consistently, building trust with your community, and making it easy for people to find and choose you.

## Keep Going!

- Review your profile monthly.
- Keep your photos and posts fresh.
- Make it easy for customers to leave reviews.
- Stay involved in your local community, both online and offline.

The businesses that win on local search aren't always the biggest, they're the ones who stay visible, stay helpful, and stay connected to their customers.



**Treat your Google Business Profile like your real-world shopfront... if you wouldn't leave your windows dusty and your door locked, don't leave your profile out of date. A little care each week keeps the customers coming.**



## **Want to turn this Playbook into practical use? (and ask AI to help cheat )**

**1) Open ChatGPT and start a new chat.**

**2) Upload this Playbook by hitting the + button.**

**4) Copy and paste the below into the dialogue box (editing the relevant part)...**

“You are my Google specialist. First and foremost scan my website: [enter url] to understand what I do, my brand and my tone. I’ve attached the playbook “Master Google Business Profiles” - please ensure you follow it’s theory, guidance and advice.”

**followed by any of the below prompts (editing the relevant parts)...**

### **Setting Up & Optimising Your Profile**

- “Help me write a compelling business description for my Google Business Profile as a [type of business]. Keep it clear, friendly, and under 750 characters.”
- “Give me a list of secondary business categories I should consider for a [specific industry] in the UK.”
- “Write 5 variations of a customer-friendly service description for [your service] that include local keywords for [your town/city].”

### **Photos & Visuals**

- “Suggest 10 photo ideas I should add to my Google Business Profile to make my [type of business] stand out.”
- “Write short captions for Google posts featuring new product photos for [business name].”



## Part 2...

### Reviews & Reputation

- “Give me 5 polite ways to ask happy customers for a Google review without sounding pushy.”
- “Write professional responses to these 3 example reviews: [paste reviews]. One positive, one neutral, and one negative.”
- “Draft a short email template I can send customers after a job is completed, encouraging them to leave a Google review.”

### Posting & Engagement

- “Write 5 short Google posts I can use to promote [seasonal offer/event] with a call-to-action.”
- “Give me a weekly posting calendar for my Google Business Profile for the next month, focusing on offers, news, and customer updates.”

### Local SEO Beyond Google

- “List 10 blog ideas that combine my services ([list services]) with my location ([city/town]) to help me rank locally.”
- “Suggest a step-by-step plan to get backlinks from local businesses, community events, or directories in [your town].”
- “Give me a checklist for making sure my business details are consistent across directories like Yell, Bing, and Facebook.”

## Become a ChatGPT Prompt Master

In this Playbook, entrepreneurs learn how to create prompts that save time, spark ideas, and sharpen results. From marketing posts to admin tasks, you'll master practical ways to use AI daily and build a reusable prompt library to streamline their business... Available NOW in the Vault.



become a **chatgpt**  
prompt master

the ultimate guide to writing prompts that save time,  
spark ideas, and get better results

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# WHO IS THE SME MARKETING GUY?

**The SME Marketing Guy is built around a simple idea: marketing should be accessible, practical, and actually make a difference to your business.**

**I'm Ed Carney, a commercially focused marketer with over 25 years' experience working within fast-paced, high-growth businesses, partnering with senior teams to drive real commercial results. I've built and delivered digital marketing, PR, brand propositions and strategic marketing plans, alongside CRM systems and AI-led automation, generating over £1m in annual revenue impact and achieving 400%+ ROI.**

**Everything here is based on real-world delivery, turning complex ideas into clear, practical marketing that generates enquiries, strengthens your pipeline, and supports growth.**

**The SME Marketing Guy is my way of making that experience available to small businesses without the cost, complexity, or commitment of a traditional agency. You can take the strategies for free and apply them yourself, or work with me directly to put them into action in a way that fits your business and your budget.**



If you'd like help putting any of this into action within your business, The SME Marketing Guy can work with you directly to implement it in a way that's practical, focused, and aligned to your goals.

Whether you need support refining the approach, prioritising what to do first, or getting everything set up and moving, you don't have to figure it out alone.

If that sounds useful, get in touch and we can have a straightforward conversation about how to move things forward.

## DISCLAIMER

This playbook has been created by The SME Marketing Guy to provide small businesses with clear, practical marketing guidance. Every effort has been made to ensure the content is accurate, relevant, and useful at the time of publishing.

Marketing is always evolving, and results will vary depending on your business, market, and how the strategies are applied. This guide is designed to offer proven, real-world insights, but should be used as a practical resource rather than a substitute for tailored advice.

The SME Marketing Guy is not liable for any decisions made based on this content or for any outcomes resulting from its use. You are encouraged to adapt the ideas and approaches to suit your specific goals and circumstances.

If you'd like support putting any of this into action, you can get in touch directly to discuss your business and how it can be applied.