

Digital Marketing for Local Business — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a working local-growth plan you can execute this month. Move through it in order: fully optimize and verify your Google Business Profile, build local SEO and consistent citations, stand up a review-generation and response system, then launch and measure local ads and community presence. Use the templates to lock your NAP, plan citations, run your review engine, and compare cost per lead across every channel so you scale only what pays.

Owning Your Google Business Profile

Claim, verify, fully optimize, and actively run the profile that decides your local first impression.

Checklist: Profile Setup and Field-by-Field Optimization

- Profile claimed at google.com/business and verification started (postcard, phone, email, or video)
- Business name is the exact real-world name with no keywords or city stuffed in
- Single most accurate primary category chosen, plus relevant secondary categories
- Address set (storefront) or service areas listed (service-area business)
- Accurate regular hours plus special/holiday hours entered
- Local phone number and website link (relevant local page, not just homepage) added
- Services/products listed with descriptions and prices
- Applicable attributes set (accessible, Wi-Fi, walk-ins, women-owned, etc.)
- 750-character description written, natural, no keyword stuffing

Worksheet: Profile Engagement Plan

Set the recurring activity that keeps your profile in Google's favored, active tier. Fill in what you will publish and how often, then put the weekly slot on your calendar.

Starter photo set uploaded (exterior, interior, team, products/work, logo, cover) — list what's still missing

Weekly Google Post theme and this week's post (offer, event, tip, or product)

Messaging: on or off, and where alerts route (only on if you can reply fast)

Five most common customer questions seeded into Q&A (list them)

Booking/ordering/reservation link enabled (which one, or N/A)

Recurring 15-minute weekly profile slot — day and time on calendar

Exercise: Audit Your Profile Like a Customer

Open your profile in Google Search and Maps on a phone as a first-time customer would, and find the gaps a competitor would beat you on.

- Is every field complete, and does the primary category exactly match what you do?

- Do the photos look real, recent, and trustworthy, or thin and stock-heavy?
- When did your last Google Post and last new photo go up — does the profile look active or abandoned?
- Compare to your top-ranked local competitor's profile: what do they do that you don't, and what's your one biggest gap to fix first?

Local SEO and Getting Found in Search

Build the on-page signals and citation consistency that move relevance and prominence in your favor.

Worksheet: Lock Your NAP and On-Page Local Signals

Write the one exact NAP you will use everywhere, then plan the on-page elements that spell out what you do and where. Keep the NAP byte-for-byte identical to your Google profile.

Exact Name (as it will appear everywhere)

Exact Address (including suite format, Street vs. St.)

Exact Phone (one number, one format)

NAP placed in site footer and Contact page (Y/N)

Title tags / H1s with service + city (list your key pages)

Location pages planned (one per real revenue area, unique content) — list them

Service pages planned (one per major service) — list them

LocalBusiness JSON-LD schema added and verified with Rich Results Test (Y/N)

Exercise: Map Tactics to Ranking Factors

Sort your local SEO to-dos by the factor each one moves — relevance, distance, or prominence — so you work the levers you actually control.

- Relevance: which category, services, and on-page terms can you sharpen to match how customers search?
- Distance: as a storefront or service-area business, which areas can you legitimately define and write about?
- Prominence: what reviews, citations, and local backlinks will you build to widen your ranking radius?
- Which single factor is your weakest right now, and what is the first action to strengthen it?

Checklist: Citation Consistency Build

- One exact NAP format written down and used everywhere
- Core directories claimed: Google, Apple Business Connect, Bing Places, Yelp, Facebook
- Data aggregators corrected so consistent data propagates
- Industry-specific and local citations added (chamber, associations, niche directories)
- Existing citations audited for mismatches (Moz Local, BrightLocal, Yext, or Semrush)
- Duplicate listings found and merged/removed so reviews don't split

[] Re-audit scheduled a few times a year (and after any move/rebrand/number change)

Worksheet: Location Page Quality Check

Before publishing any city or neighborhood page, confirm it earns its ranking instead of being a thin doorway page Google ignores.

Area this page targets

Unique, area-specific content included (not city name swapped) — summarize

Local proof on the page (projects, testimonials, parking/service details)

NAP matches the master format exactly (Y/N)

Mobile-friendly and fast (Y/N) — note any speed issue to fix

Reviews and Reputation Management

Stand up an ethical review-generation engine and a response system that turns reputation into ranking and trust.

Worksheet: Current Reputation Baseline and Target

Record where your reviews stand today and set a concrete target. Most local businesses want to clear the rating filter (above ~4.0, ideally near 4.5+) with healthy, recent volume.

Current Google average star rating

Current Google review count

Date of most recent review (recency check)

Top competitor's rating and review count (for comparison)

90-day target: rating, total review count, and reviews-per-month rate

Where you stand vs. the ~4.0 filter line and what's pulling you down

Exercise: Design Your Review-Generation Engine

Build the repeatable, ethical system so every satisfied customer is invited to review at the peak moment, with no review-gating and no paid or incentivized reviews.

- What is the exact peak moment in your process to ask (completed job, great meal, successful appointment)?
- How will you make it one tap — Google review short link, QR code, follow-up text/email?
- Who asks, and how will you personalize it so it isn't a generic blast?
- How will you make the request a fixed final step of every job/visit, and which tool (Podium, Birdeye,

NiceJob, GatherUp) will you use to scale?

Checklist: Stay-Compliant Review Rules

- Asking every satisfied customer (no review-gating / no filtering out the unhappy)
- No paid, traded, or incentivized reviews (FTC + Google prohibited)
- One-tap Google review link or QR code in use
- Follow-up by text or email built into the workflow
- Flow kept steady so recency stays fresh (not one push then silence)
- Review notifications turned on so nothing is missed

Exercise: Negative-Review Response Drill

Write your default approach for a hard review, remembering you're writing for the next customer who reads it, not the upset one.

- Draft a calm, empathetic reply to a realistic 2-star review of your business — acknowledge, apologize for any genuine miss, and offer to take it offline with a name/contact.
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- What is your response-time target (hours to a day), and who owns monitoring and replying?
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- What few flexible frameworks (not copy-paste) will you keep for common situations, positive and negative?
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- Which reviews would actually qualify for removal (fake, spam, hateful, competitor, off-topic) vs. just negative ones you must respond to?
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Paid Local Ads and Community Growth

Launch and measure profitable local ads, then build the community presence competitors can't buy.

Worksheet: Local Ad Channel Plan

Choose and set up the right paid channels for your business, with conversion tracking in place before you spend. Match the channel to whether you live on calls, foot traffic, or awareness.

Do you live on phone calls? If yes, set up Local Services Ads (Google Guaranteed verification status)

Search / Performance Max campaign for broader reach and store visits (geo-target radius/cities/zips)

Geo-targeted Meta (Facebook/Instagram) — radius/cities/zips and demographic+interest layers

Conversion tracking live (calls, form fills, bookings, store visits) before spend (Y/N)

Meta Pixel installed for retargeting and lookalikes (Y/N)

Starting daily budget per channel and the cost-per-lead ceiling you'll accept

Local offer/creative for each channel (clear, time-bound, real local photo)

Exercise: Right-Channel Decision

Decide where your first paid dollars go based on intent, your answer rate, and what a customer is worth to you.

- Are you a service business that wins on high-intent calls (lean LSAs, pay-per-lead) or a place driving foot traffic (lean PMax/Meta)?

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- Can you answer the phone fast every time? (Missed calls waste paid LSA leads and hurt LSA ranking.)
 - What is a new customer worth to you, and what cost per lead / per acquisition can you afford?
 - Which two underused Meta tactics will you use — retargeting site/profile visitors and lookalike audiences?
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Checklist: Community Engagement Moves

- Cross-promotion set up with a complementary, non-competing local business
- A sponsorship of a local team/event/charity (and the backlink it earns)
- An event hosted or attended (workshop, open house, booth) with content to post
- Genuine, non-spammy participation in neighborhood Facebook groups and Nextdoor
- Local content published (neighborhood guide, local news, your involvement)
- Email/SMS list collection live in-store and online to bring locals back

Worksheet: Local Marketing Measurement Dashboard

Track the metrics that map to customers and revenue, monthly, so you scale what pays and cut what doesn't. Ignore vanity counts.

Google profile insights: views, calls, direction requests, website clicks, messages

Map-pack rank for top key terms (BrightLocal or manual local check)

Calls/leads by source (call tracking or CRM)

Cost per lead and per acquisition for LSAs vs. Performance Max vs. Meta

Review count, average rating, and recency (monthly)

Foot traffic / coupon redemptions tied to specific campaigns

This month's winner to scale and loser to cut

Your Action Plan

1. Claim and verify your Google Business Profile, then fill every field accurately with a precise primary category and no keyword stuffing.
2. Make the profile active: upload a real photo set, schedule a weekly Google Post, seed the Q&A, and block a recurring 15-minute weekly slot.
3. Lock one exact NAP and put it in your site footer, then add real location and service pages plus LocalBusiness schema.
4. Claim and make consistent your core citations (Google, Apple, Bing, Yelp, Facebook) and fix or merge any duplicates.
5. Set your reputation baseline and 90-day rating/volume target, aiming to clear the ~4.0 filter line with steady recent reviews.
6. Stand up a one-tap review-generation engine that asks every satisfied customer at the peak moment, with no gating or incentives.
7. Turn on review notifications and respond to every review within a day, handling negatives calmly and taking them offline.

8. Choose your paid channel by intent (LSAs for calls, Performance Max or geo-targeted Meta for reach), and set up conversion tracking before spending.
9. Launch one tightly geo-targeted campaign with a clear local offer, then judge it on cost per lead, not clicks or likes.
10. Add one community move (partnership, sponsorship, or event) and review your measurement dashboard monthly to scale only what produces customers.

