



The Business Growth Association  
Of America

## COURSE 6

# Google Business Profile Ranking Optimization

Show up higher in Google Maps and local search,  
so more nearby customers find you and walk in.

**\$300 - \$1,000**

estimated monthly savings  
by doing it yourself

**5% - 20%**

potential  
sales growth

A 12-month program | 30-60 minutes per week | Simple tools only

# Course Overview

**THE PROMISE** Show up higher in Google Maps and local search results, so more nearby customers see you, call you, and walk through your door, using a simple weekly routine and no technical skills.

## Core Idea

Google ranks local businesses on three things:

### Relevance

How well your profile matches what the person searched.

### Distance

How close you are to the searcher. You can't change this, but you can work around it.

### Prominence

How well known and trusted you are (reviews, mentions, website strength).

Everything in this course improves one of those three.

**A NOTE ON THE NAME** Google renamed "Google My Business" to "Google Business Profile." The course uses the new name so owners can find the right tools, and explains the old name in Lesson 1 since many still use it.

## Format for Every Step

- 30-60 minutes per week
- Each step ends with a clear "**done when**" checkpoint

## Roadmap

| Phase                        | Timeline    | Goal                                                       | Output                                   |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. Foundation                | Month 1     | A fully verified, accurate, complete profile               | Verified, 100% complete profile          |
| 2. Build Prominence          | Months 2-3  | Earn the trust signals Google rewards                      | Steady flow of reviews and posts         |
| 3. Relevance and Consistency | Months 4-6  | Make your profile the best match for what customers search | Gains in views, calls, and map positions |
| 4. Measure, Compete, Protect | Months 7-12 | Turn ranking improvement into a managed system             | Local Ranking Plan                       |

# Why Run It Yourself?

Local SEO agencies and listing services often charge monthly fees to manage a Google Business Profile. A simple weekly routine puts that work in your hands.

## \$300 - \$1,000

Estimated monthly savings when you manage your Google Business Profile yourself instead of sourcing it out

## 5% - 20%

Potential sales growth from ranking higher in Google Maps and local search

## Where the Savings Come From

- **No retainer for profile management.** Claiming, completing, posting, and replying to reviews take 30-60 minutes a week and need no technical skills.
- **Free tools do the heavy lifting.** The profile itself, its Performance data, and a Google Sheets dashboard cost nothing.
- **A review system replaces paid reputation help.** Direct links, QR codes, and reply templates keep review collection in-house.
- **Free ranking checks.** A free grid or searching from several neighborhoods replaces paid tracking tools.
- **Following Google's rules protects you.** No fake reviews, keyword-stuffed names, or fake addresses means avoiding suspensions that cost you visibility.

## Where the Sales Growth Comes From

- **Higher placement in Maps and local search** means more nearby customers see you, call you, and walk through your door.
- **Reviews and weekly activity** build the prominence Google rewards and the trust customers look for.
- **Relevance work and monthly tests** aimed at the phrases customers actually use, guided by calls, direction requests, and bookings.

| Track Your Results            | Month 1 baseline | Month 6 | Month 12 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|---------|----------|
| Monthly local marketing spend |                  |         |          |
| Review count and rating       |                  |         |          |
| Calls and direction requests  |                  |         |          |
| Sales growth vs. baseline (%) |                  |         |          |

*Savings and growth figures are estimates of potential, not guarantees. Actual results vary by business, industry, and how consistently the plan is carried out.*

## Claim, Complete, and Clean Up (Foundation)

*Goal: A fully verified, accurate, complete profile. Incomplete profiles rarely rank well.*

### Week 1: Claim and verify

- Search your business on Google and Maps. Claim an existing listing or create a new one (watch for duplicates).
- Complete verification (video, phone, or postcard, depending on what Google offers).

**DONE WHEN** you can log in and manage the profile.

### Week 2: Get the core information perfect

- Business name (exactly as it appears on your sign and website, with no keyword stuffing, which can get you suspended), address or service area, phone, website, and accurate hours (including holidays).
- Choose your primary category carefully (the most important ranking setting) plus 2-5 secondary categories. Use the category research method provided.

**DONE WHEN** everything matches your Master Business Info sheet.

### Week 3: Fill in every section

- Write a clear business description with your main services and location (naturally, not stuffed).
- Add all services/products with short descriptions, attributes (e.g. wheelchair accessible, women-led), and booking or appointment links if available.

**DONE WHEN** the profile shows as fully complete.

### Week 4: Photos and video

- Upload at least 10 quality photos: logo, exterior, interior, team, work examples, products. Follow the Photo Shot List (with phone tips).

**DONE WHEN** the photo shot list is complete and uploaded.

**DELIVERABLE** A verified, 100% complete profile and a Master Business Info sheet.

## Build Prominence

**Goal:** Earn the trust signals Google rewards (Reviews and Activity).

### Month 2: Reviews system

- Set up your Review Request System: a direct review link and QR code, short scripts for text, email, and in person, and a rule for when to ask (right after a happy moment).
- Target 3-5 new reviews per month. Never buy reviews or offer rewards for them, as this violates Google's rules.
- Reply to every review within 48 hours using the reply templates (positive, neutral, negative). Where it fits naturally, mention the service and location in replies.

### Month 3: Weekly activity and local signals

- Use Posts weekly (offers, updates, events, tips) with the provided post templates.
- Answer the Q&A section with your own common questions, and monitor it for incorrect answers from the public.
- Set up messaging and call tracking if available, and check that your website's contact page, title tags, and location pages match your profile.

**DONE WHEN** you've posted at least 8 times, collected 9+ reviews, and replied to all of them.

**CHECKPOINT** Active, trusted profile with a steady flow of reviews and posts.

## Strengthen Relevance and Consistency

*Goal: Make your profile the best match for what customers search.*

### Month 4: Keyword and service-area strategy

- Find the 10 phrases customers use (e.g. "emergency plumber near me").
- Use the keyword worksheet to align your categories, service descriptions, posts, and website pages with those phrases.
- Check your ranking from different spots using a free grid or a simple "search from several neighborhoods" method.

### Month 5: Citations and local links

- Make sure your name, address, and phone match across directories, social media, and your website (citation cleanup).
- Earn 3-5 local mentions or links from chamber of commerce, partners, suppliers, local news, or sponsorships.

### Month 6: Website and profile alignment

- Build or improve one location/service page per main service area, and add an embedded map and reviews to your website.
- Run your 6-month review: compare rankings, views, calls, and direction requests to Month 1.

**CHECKPOINT** Measurable gains in profile views, calls, and map positions, plus a clean citation set.

## Measure, Compete, and Protect

*Goal: Turn ranking improvement into a managed system and protect what you've built.*

### Months 7-8: Read the Performance data

- Learn what each metric means (searches, views, calls, website clicks, direction requests, bookings) and build a one-page monthly dashboard in Google Sheets.
- Review your top competitors' profiles using the "Competitor Teardown" checklist (categories, review count, photos, posting habits) and close the gaps.

### Months 9-10: Keep improving and test

- Refresh photos monthly, add new services and seasonal offers, and use Products or Services listings and the booking features.
- Test one change per month and note the effect.
- If you serve multiple locations, learn the rules for managing them (separate profiles only for real, staffed locations).

### Month 11: Protect your profile

- Learn how to spot and report fake reviews, spam edits, or competitor sabotage, and set up alerts for changes to your listing.
- Add a second owner/manager and enable two-factor login.
- Learn what triggers suspensions (fake addresses, keyword-stuffed names, virtual offices) and how to appeal.

### Month 12: Annual review

- Compare year-end results to Month 1 and update everything for the new year (hours, photos, services).
- Set review and posting goals, and decide whether to hire help or invest in local ads.

**DELIVERABLE** A one-page Local Ranking Plan with a monthly 30-minute maintenance routine.

# Resources and Pitfalls

## Course Materials to Build

- Profile completion checklist
- Category research guide
- Photo Shot List with phone tips
- Review Request scripts, QR code guide, and reply templates
- Weekly Posts template bank
- Keyword and service-area worksheet
- Citation consistency tracker (Google Sheet)
- Competitor Teardown checklist
- Monthly performance dashboard
- Profile protection and suspension-prevention checklist
- Common Mistakes (a short bonus lesson)

## Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Adding extra keywords to the business name (a fast way to get suspended)
- Choosing the wrong primary category
- Using a fake address or a mailbox as a storefront
- Ignoring or arguing with negative reviews
- Setting up the profile once and never touching it again
- Inconsistent name, address, or phone across the web
- Buying fake reviews