

# Google Maps SEO Checklist for 2026

A complete, printable audit for ranking in Google Maps without spending on ads. Work top to bottom, since the earlier items carry the most ranking weight. Tick each box once it is fully done, not just started.

Prefer to skip the manual work? [Affordable SEO Services](#) handles every item on this list for small businesses, at a price built for small budgets.

**Business:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

## 1. Google Business Profile

- Profile claimed and verified (business verification complete)
- Most specific primary category selected
- Relevant secondary categories added, up to nine
- Business name matches real world signage exactly, no keyword stuffing
- Business description written in natural customer language, up to 750 characters
- Every service listed with its own short description
- Products added where relevant
- Hours accurate, holiday hours included
- Q and A section seeded with five to ten real customer questions
- Fresh, descriptively named photos uploaded this week
- Geotagged photos used where possible
- A Google Post published in the last week

## 2. Reviews

- A systematic ask process in place by text, QR code, or in person
- Direct review form link used instead of the profile homepage
- Review requests made right after a positive interaction
- Every review answered, positive and negative, within about 48 hours
- Review velocity is steady rather than a one time burst
- No purchased or incentivized reviews (suspension risk)

## 3. NAP and Citations

- Citation audit completed with BrightLocal, Moz Local, or Semrush Local
- NAP (name, address, phone number) identical across every directory and your website
- Major data aggregators corrected first

- Listed on the core directories: Yelp, Apple Maps, Bing Places, Tripadvisor, Yellow Pages, Foursquare, Facebook, Better Business Bureau, Chamber of Commerce
- Listed on the niche directories that fit your industry (HomeAdvisor, Angi, Houzz, Healthgrades, Zocdoc, Avvo, etc.)
- Quality prioritized over volume

#### **4. Website**

- A location page with full NAP in text, an embedded map, hours, and service list
- A distinct, geo-targeted landing page for each service area
- Core Web Vitals passing in Google PageSpeed Insights
- Phone number tappable on mobile, address links to directions
- LocalBusiness JSON-LD schema on every location page
- Schema validated with Google's Rich Results Test

#### **5. Authority and Backlinks**

- Locally relevant backlinks earned (Chamber, local news, event sponsorships)
- Brand mentions across trusted local sources
- Social profiles linked and consistent

#### **6. 2026 AI and Voice Signals**

- Profile Q and A and website FAQ written in plain, conversational language for voice search
- Bing Places listing complete for ChatGPT and other AI tools
- Apple Maps listing complete and consistent
- Ask Maps tested in your area for your main category queries
- What the AI says about your business checked for accuracy

#### **7. Tracking**

- Geo grid rank tracking set up with Local Falcon, GMB Crush, or Places Scout
- Effort focused on neighborhoods where you are close to the top three
- Rankings reviewed monthly, not just average position

---

#### **How to use this checklist**

Complete sections 1 through 4 in your first 30 days, then keep the maintenance steady: weekly Google Posts, prompt review replies, monthly photo uploads, and one or two quality

citations per week. Local rankings compound the way interest does, so consistency beats intensity.

---

**Want this handled for you?**

Affordable SEO Services builds and maintains the entire local SEO foundation in this checklist, from your Google Business Profile to citations, schema, and reviews, so you can stay focused on running your business. Visit [theaffordableseoservices.com](http://theaffordableseoservices.com) for a free local search audit.

*Built from the three pillars of local ranking: relevance, distance, and prominence.*