FARMER STUDIO — RESOURCE

Local SEO Checklist for Small Businesses

The practical steps that move your business up in local search results — no agency required, no technical background needed.

SEO MARKETING CHECKLIST

Local SEO Checklist for Small Businesses

When someone searches for "coffee shop Paisley" or "electrician near me," Google's local algorithm decides which businesses appear. Understanding and influencing that decision does not require an agency or technical knowledge. It requires consistency, attention to detail, and some regular maintenance.

This checklist covers the actions that make the most measurable difference to local search visibility.

Google Business Profile (Highest Priority)

Your Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business) is the single most important factor in local search performance. Claiming and optimising it correctly takes about two hours and produces results that compound over time.

- [ ] **Claim your listing** at business.google.com if you haven't already
- [ ] **Verify your business** via postcard, phone, or email verification
- [ ] **Complete every field** — name, address, phone number, website, hours, categories
- [ ] **Add your primary category accurately** — "Italian Restaurant" not just "Restaurant"
- [ ] **Add secondary categories** that apply to your business
- [ ] **Write a complete business description** (750 characters) using natural language
- [ ] **Upload at least 10 photos**: exterior, interior, team, products/services, work examples

- [ ] **Add your opening hours** including holiday hours
- [ ] **Enable messaging** if you can respond within a few hours
- [ ] **Add your services or menu** if applicable
- [ ] **Post an update at least once per week** — events, offers, news

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NAP Consistency (Name, Address, Phone)

Google cross-references your business details across many sources. Inconsistencies — even minor ones like "St" vs "Street" — reduce trust and suppress rankings.

- [ ] Confirm your exact business name, address format, and phone number
- [ ] Check and correct your listing on:
- [ ] Bing Places for Business
- [ ] Apple Maps (via Apple Business Connect)
- [ ] Yelp
- [ ] Thomson Local
- [ ] Yell.com
- [ ] TripAdvisor (if food/hospitality)
- [ ] Facebook business page
- [ ] Any industry directories relevant to your sector

Reviews

Reviews are a significant local ranking factor and the primary trust signal for new customers. Acquiring them systematically — not by incentivising them — is an ongoing activity, not a one-time task.

- [ ] Respond to every existing review: thank positive reviewers specifically, address negative reviews professionally
- [ ] Create a short direct link to your Google review form and save it
- [ ] Add your review link to:

- [ ] Post-purchase email or receipt
- [ ] Email signature
- [ ] Website footer or contact page
- [ ] A QR code at your physical location
- [ ] Ask for reviews in person at the right moment — after a successful job, after a customer expresses satisfaction
- [ ] Set a target: one new review per week is achievable for most businesses

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Website Basics

Your website must support your local SEO or it undermines everything else.

- [ ] **Include your city/region in your page titles** — "Coffee Shop in Paisley | Your Business Name"
- [ ] **Add your full address to every page** — footer is standard
- [ ] **Create a Contact page** with address, phone, email, and an embedded Google Map
- [ ] **Add LocalBusiness schema markup** — this tells Google exactly what your business is and where it is
- [ ] **Ensure your site loads in under 3 seconds** on mobile — check at pagespeed.web.dev
- [ ] **Make sure your site is mobile-friendly** — the majority of local searches happen on phones
- [ ] **Create location-specific content** — a page or blog post that mentions local landmarks, area names, and community context

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Local Content

Content that is genuinely local signals geographic relevance to search engines and provides value to local customers.

- [ ] Write at least one piece of content per quarter that is specifically local — a local event you sponsored, a collaboration with another local business, an area guide relevant to your industry
- [ ] Mention local area names naturally in your website copy, not just your address

- [ ] Consider a case study or testimonial from a recognisable local customer or organisation

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Citations and Links

Links from other local websites carry particular weight in local search.

- [ ] Join your local Chamber of Commerce or Business Improvement District — most have a members directory with a link back to your site
- [ ] Get listed on your local council's business directory if one exists
- [ ] Ask local press (even small town newspapers or blogs) to link to your site when covering relevant stories
- [ ] Collaborate with complementary local businesses on content that earns mutual links

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Ongoing Maintenance

Local SEO is not set-and-forget. The following should happen on a regular schedule:

Weekly:

- Post one update to your Google Business Profile

Monthly:

- Respond to any new reviews
- Check for and correct any new incorrect listings
- Review your Google Business Profile insights for search term data

Quarterly:

- Check your site speed and mobile experience
- Publish a piece of local content
- Audit your NAP consistency across directories
- Review your primary and secondary Google Business categories

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Quick Wins (Under 30 Minutes Each)

If you're starting from zero, do these first — they have the highest impact-to-effort ratio:

1. Claim and verify your Google Business Profile 2. Upload 10+ photos to your Google Business Profile 3. Write a complete business description 4. Add your address and phone number to your website footer 5. Send your review link to your five most satisfied recent customers