

The Google Business

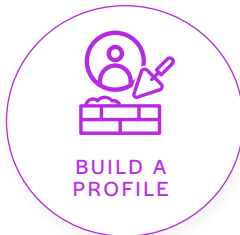
OPTIMIZATION

OVERVIEW

How to win the Map Pack and show up in AI. A playbook built for how people actually search in 2026. This playbook assumes your best customer is asking ChatGPT, Gemini, or Google's AI, not just scrolling a list.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Nearly half of all Google searches carry local intent, and AI-written answers now sit on top of a large share of the search results. It is no longer enough to “rank in the list.” You have to be the answer an answer engine discovers and provides to the end user. Your Google Business Profile is the single richest, most machine-readable signal you own. When you optimize it, you feed both the Map Pack and every other AI out there.



1

Build A Profile: ONE A MACHINE CAN ACTUALLY READ

AI and Google both reward **completeness**. Every empty field lowers your profile score and your Local Pack visibility. Fill in everything: hours, attributes, service areas, products, and photos.



PICK A PRIMARY CATEGORY

This is the single biggest ranking factor in the Local Pack. Pick the most specific category that matches your core money service. It's okay to niche.

FILL OUT “SERVICES” TO COMPLETION

List your services, and add a description to each one. Don't just list “Drain Cleaning.” Add a brief description. Google now cross-references your GBP services against your website to verify you actually do what you claim.

PUT THE CRITICAL INFO “ABOVE THE FOLD”

Your business description is prime real estate for AI. Front-load the facts a machine needs to recommend you. Seems weird, but include each of these in the first two sentences of the description: **location, core service, and business license number**

Template: [Business Name] is a licensed [core service] in [City, State] (License #[number]), serving [area/county]. We help [customer] [main outcome], with [proof/differentiator]. Example: Rooter Pro is a licensed plumbing company in Augusta, GA (License #12345), serving Richmond County. We fix leaks, water heaters, and clogged drains same-day, with upfront pricing and a satisfaction guarantee.

2

Avoid Service Area Business (SAB) Status.

SHOW YOUR ADDRESS

Regardless of whether or not you want your customers to visit you, **display a real, verified address**. A visible address gives Google a precise point to measure proximity from, earns you a pin on the map, and tends to rank stronger than a hidden “service-area” setup. Many businesses see rankings skyrocket when they switch from a hidden service area to a displayed address.



Caution: Don't try to game the system. If you buy a bunch of fake office addresses, it will eventually fail. In a world of AI and digital, it may make sense to have a small physical presence that people can see, touch, and feel.

3

Publish Frequently on GBP (FRESHNESS IS A SIGNAL)

A profile you set once and forget goes stale, and AI models now weigh **recency and freshness** when deciding who to surface. Treat your profile like a living content channel, not a directory listing.

The Fencepost cadence:

- **1 GOOGLE POST/WEEK**
An offer, update, or quick tip. Keeps the profile active and gives Google fresh content to index.
- **2 PHOTOS/WEEK, EACH WITH A CAPTION**
Real job photos, your team, your space. Captions matter: they're readable text that describes what's in the image (like alt tags back in the day).
- **RESPOND TO EVERY NEW REVIEW WITHIN 24 HOURS**
Engagement is now a first-class ranking signal.
- **REFRESH OR ADD ONE SERVICE DESCRIPTION**
Keep them aligned with your website.

4

Prioritize Reviews

Reviews are the currency of trust for both humans and machines. Beyond a star rating, **volume and velocity** decide whether AI assistants will name you at all.



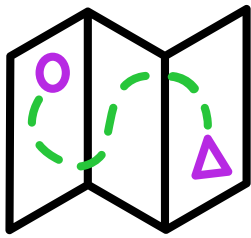
Industry benchmarks in 2026 suggest AI assistants (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini) **rarely name a service business with fewer than ~150 reviews**. Below that line, you're invisible in AI recommendations no matter how good you are. Get to 150+, then aim for consistent frequency of review acquisition. Consistent, frequent reviews beat a big pile earned years ago.

Ask on every job. Use your POS or CRM to automate the request. Never buy or incentivize reviews (Google sees everything).

5

Say The Same Thing Everywhere

AI trusts businesses whose details agree across the web. Make your **Name, Address, and Phone (NAP) identical** on your website, GBP, and every directory. Add a few real Q&As to your profile using the exact questions customers ask (quotable AI nuggets). Consistency plus clear answers is how you get cited, not just ranked.



7 Day ROADMAP

DAY 1

Fill in every field. Set the most specific primary category. Rewrite your description so location, core service, and license # land in the first two sentences. Add every service with a real description, matched to your website. Display your address if customers can visit you.

DAY 2

Publish your first Google Post.

DAY 3

Add two captioned photos. Add three real customer Q&As.

DAY 4

Compile a name, email, and phone number list of your top 100 customers. Onboard a review automation tool (we love NiceJob!)

DAYS 5-7

Find your Google review link. Manually ask your last 20 happy customers for a review by sending a personal text or email. Start the climb to 150 reviews.

Want It Done **For You?**

Getting found is the ingredient a partner moves fastest. If you'd rather not run the weekly cadence, chase reviews, and keep your profile machine-readable yourself, that's exactly what we do at Fencepost. We make local growth inevitable for home-service businesses.

let's chat!



Schedule a consult at fencepost.co or reach out to Ross at ross@fencepost.co.