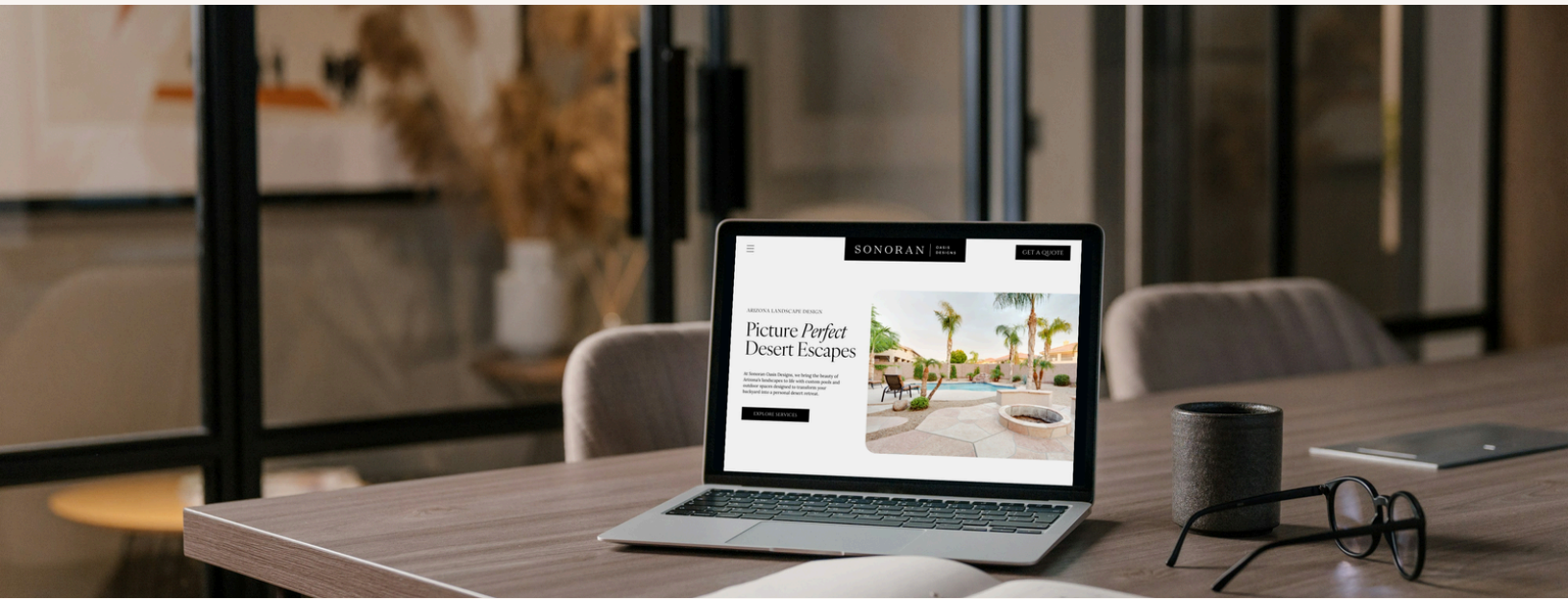


A Quick Guide to Getting Found on Google

SPROUT MARKETING & DESIGN



Getting Found on Google: A DIY Guide



First, a reality check

Most websites don't rank well in Google right away — and that's normal. Ranking takes time, consistency, and a few things working together. The good news: there are free tools that can put your business in front of people right now, without needing to wait for Google to take notice. This guide covers those first, then walks you through how to build long-term credibility over time.

Step 1: Claim Your Google Business Profile

This is the single most important thing you can do. It's free, and it's what shows up when someone searches your business name or "[your service] near me" — often *above* regular search results.

1. Go to business.google.com
2. Search for your business name — if it exists, claim it; if not, create it
3. Fill out everything: hours, phone, address or service area, website link, photos
4. Write a short description that includes what you do and where (e.g., "Family-owned bakery in Austin, TX specializing in custom cakes and pastries")
5. Add at least 5–10 photos — real ones, not stock

THEN KEEP IT ALIVE...!

- Post an update **once a month** (a photo, a promotion, a new service)
- Reply to **every review**, good or bad, within a few days
- Ask happy customers to leave a Google review — **this is huge for local visibility**

Step 2: Get Listed in Free (and some paid) Directories

Google sees links to your site as "votes" of credibility. Directories are an easy way to start earning them with zero technical knowledge.

Start with these — they syndicate to other directories automatically:

- ❑ Yelp ([yelp.com/biz](https://www.yelp.com/biz)) — high authority; syndicates your info to dozens of smaller directories
- ❑ Foursquare ([foursquare.com](https://www.foursquare.com)) — feeds data to a huge network of directories; one listing does a lot of work
- ❑ Bing Places ([bingplaces.com](https://www.bingplaces.com)) — covers Bing search + syncs to other directories

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Essential for every service business:

- ❑ Apple Maps (mapsconnect.apple.com) — reaches all iPhone users
- ❑ Facebook Business Page — Google indexes these; adds a backlink
- ❑ LinkedIn Company Page — trusted, indexed backlink; especially useful for B2B
- ❑ Better Business Bureau (bbb.org) — free listing adds trust signals; the badge matters to customers
- ❑ Manta (manta.com) — small business focused, high domain authority, quick to set up
- ❑ Yellow Pages / [YP.com](https://yp.com) — old school but still well-indexed by Google
- ❑ * Chamber of Commerce — local authority; often links back to members
- ❑ Alignable (alignable.com) — peer referral network; great for local word-of-mouth and B2B connections
- ❑ Nextdoor Business (nextdoor.com/business) — hyperlocal; ideal for home services and neighborhood-based businesses

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Service-specific (pick the ones that fit your industry):

- * Thumbtack (thumbtack.com) — all service businesses; customers actively searching for pros
- * Angi (angi.com) — home services, contractors, cleaning, repairs
- * HomeAdvisor (homeadvisor.com) — same parent company as Angi but indexes separately; worth doing both
- * Houzz (houzz.com) — interior design, renovation, landscaping
- * [Bark.com](https://bark.com) — broad service categories; good for lead gen
- Clutch (clutch.co) — B2B services; consulting, marketing, design, development

**Some starred directories require a paid membership (e.g. Chamber of Commerce), while others offer a free basic listing but will push you toward paid leads or upgrades. Either way, the listing itself still has SEO value — you don't need to pay to benefit.*

Pro-Tip:

Make sure your business name, address, and phone number (formally known as your NAP) are **identical across all of them** — even small differences (St. vs Street) can confuse Google. You don't need to do all of these at once; start with the first two sections and add the service-specific ones as time allows.

Step 3: Ask Partners & Friends for a Link

You don't need hundreds of backlinks. A handful of *real* ones from local or relevant websites matters more than dozens of low-quality ones.

Think about who might link to your site:

- A local blogger or community website ("businesses to support in [town]")
- A supplier or vendor who lists their clients
- A complementary business you refer customers to (they link to you, you link to them)
- A local news outlet, if you have an interesting story or can offer an expert quote
- Any association or trade group you're a member of

A **backlink** is simply a link from someone else's website that points to yours. Think of it as a vote of confidence — when another site links to you, Google sees it as a signal that your business is credible and worth paying attention to. The more reputable the site linking to you, the more weight that vote carries.



How to ask: Keep it casual. "Hey, I just launched my website — would you mind linking to it from your site? I'm happy to do the same for you."

Step 4: Show Up Where Your Customers Already Are

While your website builds authority, stay active on the platforms your customers already use. Each profile and post gives Google more signals that your business is real and relevant.

- Facebook or Instagram — Post consistently; include your website link in your bio
- Nextdoor or local Facebook Groups — Join and participate genuinely (don't just post your link)
- Reddit or niche forums — If there's a community around your industry, be helpful there
- YouTube or TikTok — Even one short video about what you do can drive traffic and links

Step 5: Make Sure Your Website Helps Itself

Your website should make it easy for Google to understand who you are and what you do. You don't need to touch any code — just make sure these things are true (ask your web designer if you're unsure):

- Page titles should include your main service and location — e.g., "Jane's Custom Cakes | Austin, TX"
- Your business name, city, and phone number should be visible text on the page, not buried in an image
- At least one paragraph should naturally describe what you do and where, without stuffing in keywords unnaturally
- Link to your Google Business Profile from your site
- The site should load fast on mobile — Google penalizes slow mobile experiences

If your site has multiple pages, each one is an opportunity: a blog post, a FAQ page, a services page — each gives Google something new to index and rank.

Step 6 (Optional but Powerful): Write Something Worth Reading

If your site allows for it, adding a blog or resources section is one of the best long-term investments you can make. You don't need to post often — one helpful article a month is enough to start.

Write about what your customers actually ask you:

- "How do I know if I need [your service]?"
- "What's the difference between X and Y?"
- "How much does [your service] cost in [your city]?"

These are exactly what people type into Google. A well-written answer, on your own website, can rank for years.

What to Do Each Month:

Task	Time
Post one update to your Google Business Profile	5 min
Reply to any new reviews	5 min
Post once to one social platform with your website link	10 min
Ask one happy customer for a Google review	2 min
(Optional) Publish one short blog post or FAQ answer	30–60 min

Consistency over time beats a big one-time effort every time.

What to Expect:

- Google Business Profile: Can start showing results in 2–4 weeks
- Directory listings: Indexed within a few weeks; authority builds over months
- Backlinks: Take 1–3 months to influence rankings
- Blog/content: Can rank within weeks for niche topics; compounds over time
- Overall visibility: Meaningful improvement in 3–6 months **with consistent effort** – growing and maintaining search visibility is not a “set it and forget it” deal!

Quick Summary

- Claim and complete your Google Business Profile
- List yourself in 5–6 free directories with identical info
- Ask 2–3 people you know to link to your site
- Stay active on at least one social platform
- Make sure your website clearly describes who you are and where you are
- If possible, write one helpful page or post per month
- Do a 15-minute check-in every month

You don't need to understand algorithms to make progress. Show up consistently, keep your information accurate everywhere, and ask happy customers for reviews. That's 80% of local visibility right there.

Ready to Grow? Reach Out!

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