



HIGHLY FAVORED
DIGITAL

The Google Business Profile Checklist

What your listing may be missing, and how to keep it working
(formerly Google My Business)

INSIDE

How Google decides who shows up in the map pack

What changed in 2025 and 2026

The 40-point profile checklist + your score

A simple weekly, monthly, and quarterly rhythm



START HERE

Your profile is your storefront on Google

When someone near you searches "roofer near me" or "HVAC repair Savannah," the first thing they usually see isn't a website. It's the map, with three businesses listed under it. Those three get most of the calls. The listing that puts you there is your **Google Business Profile** (the product Google called "Google My Business" until 2021).

It's free. Most business owners set it up once and forget about it. That's the opportunity.

How Google decides who shows up

Google says local results come down to three things:

RELEVANCE	DISTANCE	PROMINENCE
How well your profile matches what the person searched. This comes from your categories, services, and how complete your profile is.	How close you are to the person searching. You can't change this, which is why the other two matter so much.	How well-known and trusted you are. This comes from reviews, links, and mentions of your business around the web.
You control it.	Mostly fixed.	You build it over time.

What local SEO experts rank highest right now

Every year Whitespark surveys the top local search experts in the industry. A few 2026 findings surprise most owners:

- #3** A business name that says what you do and where. (This means your **real** name. Stuffing keywords into it breaks Google's rules and can get you suspended.)
- #5** Being **open at the moment someone searches**. Your listed hours affect when you show up.
- #7** A visible business address, compared with a hidden one.
- #11** How **recent** your reviews are. A review from last week counts for more than one from 2022.

WHAT CHANGED IN 2025-2026

Google retired the Q&A section on business profiles in late 2025. Now when customers ask a question, Google's AI answers it using your profile, your reviews, and your website. If those are thin or out of date, the AI will fill the gaps for you, and it may get them wrong. Your profile and website are now doing the talking.

Ranking positions are from Whitespark's 2026 Local Search Ranking Factors survey, which reflects expert opinion, not official Google data. The three ranking factors come from Google Business Profile Help.



THE CHECKLIST

Check off what you already have

Open your profile next to this sheet and go line by line. Only check a box if the answer is a clear **yes**. "Kind of" counts as no.

1. The Foundation

Get these wrong and nothing else matters much.

- ☐ Profile is **claimed and verified**, and you (not a past employee or old agency) are the owner.
- ☐ Business name matches your real-world name or registered DBA exactly, with no extra keywords or cities added.
- ☐ **Primary category** is the most specific one available and matches what the top 3 competitors in your area use.
- ☐ Secondary categories cover your other main services, and none of them are a stretch.
- ☐ Address is accurate. If you're a service-area business, your service areas list the cities you actually serve.
- ☐ Phone number is a local number that someone answers during your listed hours.
- ☐ Website link goes to the right page. For multi-location businesses, that's the matching location page.
- ☐ Regular hours are accurate, and you've considered extending them if competitors close earlier.
- ☐ Holiday and special hours are set ahead of time, so you never show as open when you're actually closed.

2. Profile Completeness

This is how Google learns what you do.

- ☐ Business description uses most of the 750 characters. It explains who you serve, what you do, and where, in plain language.
- ☐ **Services** are listed, using Google's suggested services wherever they fit and adding custom ones for the rest.
- ☐ Every service has a short description written the way customers actually talk about it.
- ☐ Products are added, if you sell any, with photos and prices or "call for quote."
- ☐ All relevant attributes are turned on, such as veteran-owned, women-owned, free estimates, or online appointments.
- ☐ Booking, quote, or appointment link is set up, so people can take the next step without calling.
- ☐ Opening date is filled in. Longevity builds trust.



3. Photos & Video

Customers judge you on your photos before they ever call.

- ☐ Logo and cover photo are uploaded, sharp, and on-brand.
- ☐ **Real photos** of your team, trucks, shop or storefront, and finished work. No stock photos.
- ☐ Before-and-after photos of real jobs, if you're in the trades.
- ☐ At least one short video, like a job walkthrough, a quick shop tour, or a 30-second "meet the owner."
- ☐ New photos are added every month, not just once when the profile was set up.

4. Reviews

This matters more for rankings every year. It's also what gets people to pick you.

- ☐ You have a direct review link and QR code, and your whole team knows how to share them.
- ☐ You **ask every happy customer**, every time, as part of how you close out a job.
- ☐ New reviews come in every month, not in one burst followed by months of nothing.
- ☐ Every review gets a reply, good or bad, within 48 hours.
- ☐ Replies are personal and mention the service or town naturally, with no copy-and-paste responses.
- ☐ Negative reviews get a calm, professional reply that you'd be comfortable having a future customer read.
- ☐ You never offer discounts or gifts for reviews, and never ask only happy customers. Both break Google's rules.
- ☐ You flag fake or spam reviews through your profile instead of arguing with them publicly.

5. Posts & Activity

Posts won't jump your ranking by themselves. They help turn searchers into callers.

- ☐ At least **one post per week**, so your profile never looks abandoned.
- ☐ The first line of every post gets to the point, because mobile cuts off the rest.
- ☐ Every post has a real photo and a button, such as Call, Book, or Learn More.
- ☐ You rotate post types: updates, offers, events, recent jobs, and seasonal reminders.



6. Beyond the Profile

Google checks your profile against the rest of the internet.

- ☐ Name, address, and phone are **identical** everywhere: website, Facebook, Yelp, BBB, Apple Maps, and Bing.
- ☐ Your website has a page for each main service and city, and it matches what your profile says.
- ☐ Your website has a real FAQ page, since Google's AI now uses it to answer customer questions.
- ☐ You show up in local places online, like your chamber of commerce, local news, sponsorships, or industry associations.
- ☐ Calls and form leads get a response fast. Ideally within 60 seconds, and never the next day.
- ☐ You check your profile's Performance data every month for calls, direction requests, and website clicks.
- ☐ Someone watches for edits to your profile. Google and the public can suggest changes, and they sometimes go live without you knowing.

YOUR SCORE _____ / 40	
35-40	You're in great shape. Now it's about keeping it up week after week.
25-34	A solid base, but calls are going to competitors. Start with the gaps in sections 1 and 4.
0-24	Your profile is costing you work. The good news is this is the fastest place to win.



KEEPING IT UP

The rhythm that keeps a profile working

A profile you set up once and never touch slowly loses ground. Here's the routine we use. It takes about 30 minutes a week once it becomes a habit.

WHEN	WHAT TO DO
Every week	Publish 1 post with a real photo and a button. Reply to every new review. Add 1-2 new job or team photos. Send your review link to every customer whose job wrapped up that week.
Every month	Check Performance data for calls, directions, and website clicks, and compare to last month. Count new reviews for the month. Aim for steady, not spiky. Look for edits someone else made to your profile. Update any offers or seasonal services.
Every quarter	Re-run this full checklist. Check your categories against the top 3 competitors in the map pack. Add new services and retire old ones. Update your description and check that your hours still make sense. Spot-check your listings on Facebook, Yelp, BBB, Apple Maps, and Bing.
Before holidays	Set holiday hours ahead of time. Showing "open" when you're closed is a fast way to earn a bad review.

Post ideas that actually work

Job spotlight	"Just wrapped a full driveway pour in Richmond Hill" with a before-and-after photo.
Seasonal reminder	"Hurricane season check: 3 things to look at on your roof this month."
Offer	"Book a free estimate this week, get priority scheduling."
Team / behind the scenes	Introduce a crew member, or show your trucks loading up at 6 a.m.
Answer a common question	The questions you'd have answered in the old Q&A now work as posts.

WANT A SECOND SET OF EYES?

If your score came in lower than you'd like, or you just don't have time to keep this up, that's what we do. Highly Favored Digital builds and manages local visibility for contractors, churches, and local businesses across Georgia and South Carolina. We'll look at your profile against the top 3 in your market and show you exactly where the calls are going. Book a free 30-minute strategy call and we'll walk you through it.

highlyfavoredigital.us/contact | 706-715-8979 | matthew@highlyfavoredigital.us

Sources: Google Business Profile Help, "Tips to improve your local ranking on Google"; Whitespark, 2026 Local Search Ranking Factors; Sterling Sky research on GBP posts. Google changes features often, so this checklist reflects the platform as of September 2026.