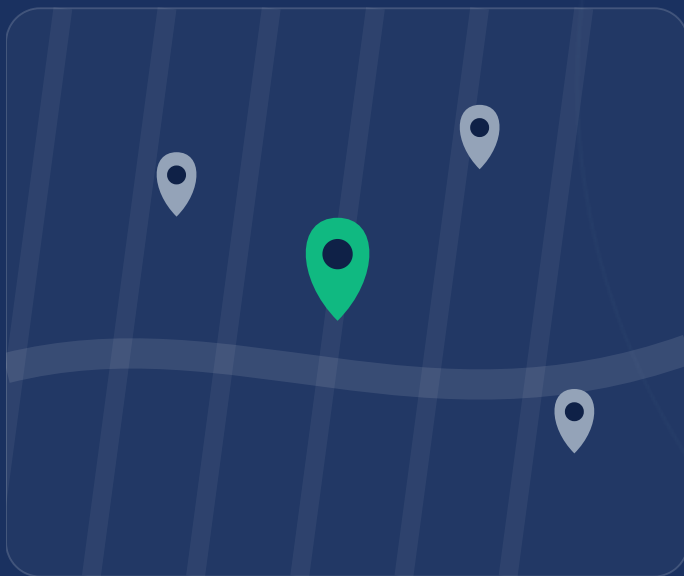


 TOOLKIT

Google Business Profile & **Reviews** Kit

Make your profile complete and trusted, earn genuine reviews every week, and measure what it brings in.



Your business

★★★★★ 4.9 · 212 reviews

Call 86

Directions 184

Book 41

Last 20 days

60-check profile audit

46 review scripts and replies

Printable review card

Review tracker spreadsheet

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01

How Google decides who shows up

Google ranks local results on three things: relevance, distance and prominence. You can't change the distance between a searcher and your door, so this kit works on the other two, and on turning views into calls, visits and bookings.

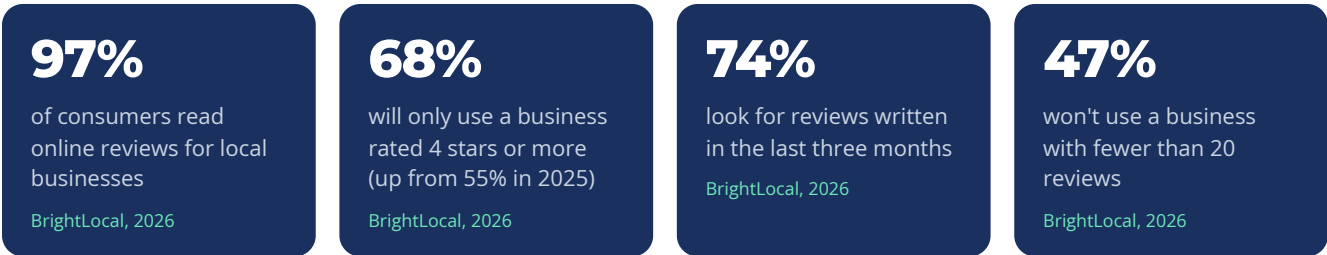
The three factors, in Google's words

Google's own help page names the factors and says plainly that "There's no way to request or pay for a better local ranking on Google" ([Google Business Profile Help](#)).

Factor	Google's definition	What you control
Relevance	"how well a Business Profile matches what someone is searching for"	Categories, services, products, description, attributes, and the words customers use in reviews
Distance	"how far each business is from the customer who's searching"	Almost nothing. Your address is your address
Prominence	"how well-known a business is", including "how many websites link to your business and how many reviews you have"	Review count and rating, photos, a real website, being talked about offline

Google adds that "More reviews and positive ratings can help your business's local ranking", and that "Businesses with complete and accurate info are more likely to show up in local search results" ([Google, 2026](#)). That is the whole case for chapters 2 to 7.

Why reviews carry so much weight with customers



The survey covers 1,002 adults, published February 2026. Two more findings shape the rest of this kit. People who read reviews want recent ones: 32% look for reviews from the last two weeks, up from 20% a

year earlier. And Google's share of review reading fell from 83% to 71%, while use of ChatGPT and other AI tools for local recommendations rose from 6% to 45% ([BrightLocal, 2026](#)). Complete, consistent facts about your business now feed more than one place people ask.

What changed between 2024 and 2026

If you set up your profile a few years ago, several features you relied on have gone or changed.

Change	When	What to do now
Chat and call history removed from Business Profile	July 31, 2024 (Google)	Make phone, WhatsApp or a booking link your contact route. Remove "message us on Google" from signs and emails
Q&A: the Q&A API was switched off, and Google said it is replacing the public Q&A section on Maps with an AI "Ask" experience. Owners answer aggregated questions instead of single ones	API: November 3, 2025. Change confirmed: December 2025 (PPC Land)	Put the answers to your top 10 questions in your services, attributes, description and website. AI answers draw on that data
Review link and QR code live under Read reviews → Get more reviews (QR on a computer only)	Current help page (Google)	Chapter 6
Restrictions for fake engagement: no new reviews for a period, existing reviews unpublished, or a public warning that fake reviews were removed	Current help page (Google)	Chapter 5's rules keep you clear
Video recording is the recommended verification method where offered	Current help page (Google)	Chapter 10
FTC rule on fake reviews and review suppression in force	October 21, 2024 (FTC)	Chapter 5

DO THIS

- ☐ Search your business name on your phone, logged out, and screenshot the profile exactly as a customer sees it. You'll compare against this after chapter 4.
- ☐ Note which of the six changes above affect your signs, emails or staff scripts.

02

The 60-minute profile audit

Sixty checks in nine timed blocks. Do it at a computer with your profile open in one tab and your phone beside you. Tick what's true today. Every unticked box is a task, and the first block holds the ones that can cost you the profile itself.

Work top to bottom. If a block runs over its time, note the open items and move on: finishing the pass matters more than perfecting one section.

The audit: 60 checks

ACCESS AND OWNERSHIP (5 MINUTES)

- ☐ The primary owner is a Google account the business controls (a shared company address), not a former employee's or an agency's personal account
- ☐ At least one other owner is listed, so primary ownership can be transferred if needed
- ☐ Every manager on the list still works with you; anyone who left has been removed
- ☐ The profile is verified: no **Get verified** button showing
- ☐ No duplicate profile exists for this location (search your name and your phone number on Maps)

NAME, ADDRESS AND CONTACT (8 MINUTES)

- ☐ The name matches your signage exactly, with no added keywords, locations or taglines
- ☐ The address matches your signage and mail, and the map pin sits on your entrance
- ☐ Service-area business: the address is hidden if customers don't visit, and the service area is set
- ☐ The primary phone is a local number the business controls, not a call-center line, and it's answered during your listed hours (make a test call now)
- ☐ Additional numbers (Google allows up to 2) are added only if a customer would use them
- ☐ The website field points to the page for this location, with a UTM tag (chapter 9)
- ☐ The site loads on a phone in under a few seconds, and Googlebot isn't blocked
- ☐ A booking or appointment link is present if your category allows it, also tagged
- ☐ Social profiles are linked (Google allows one link per platform)

CATEGORIES AND DESCRIPTION (8 MINUTES)

- ☐ The primary category is the most specific one that fits your core business
- ☐ Each additional category matches a real department or service, not a keyword wish
- ☐ You've compared your categories with the 3 businesses that outrank you (worksheet, chapter 3)
- ☐ The description is under 750 characters, with no URLs or HTML

- ☐ The first two sentences say what you do and who it's for, in words customers use
- ☐ The opening date is set (month and year)

HOURS (5 MINUTES)

- ☐ Regular hours match the hours customers can actually walk in or call
- ☐ **More hours** are set for services that run on different times (kids' classes, takeout, delivery)
- ☐ **Special hours** are set for every holiday and short closure in the next 3 months
- ☐ Any closure of 7 days or more uses **Temporarily closed** instead of special hours

SERVICES, PRODUCTS, MENU AND ATTRIBUTES (10 MINUTES)

- ☐ Services are listed with the plain names customers type, not internal package names
- ☐ Each main service has a short description, and a price where you're able to show one
- ☐ Services are grouped into categories if you offer more than 8 to 10
- ☐ Products are added if you sell from the location (retail, showroom, dealership), with a photo each
- ☐ The menu or price list is current (restaurants and cafés: check today's items)
- ☐ Accessibility, amenity and payment attributes are all answered (entrance, parking, restroom, Wi-Fi, cards)
- ☐ Identity attributes are used only where true
- ☐ The booking flow works end to end: you made a test booking on your phone

PHOTOS AND VIDEO (8 MINUTES)

- ☐ The logo is set and readable at small size, and the cover photo shows the business as it looks today
- ☐ At least one exterior photo shows the entrance as a first-time visitor sees it
- ☐ At least 3 interior photos show the space customers use
- ☐ At least 2 photos show your team at work
- ☐ At least 3 photos show the product, the result or the service
- ☐ At least one video of 30 seconds or less is live
- ☐ Your newest photo is less than 30 days old
- ☐ No stock images, heavy filters or text-heavy graphics (Google asks that photos "represent reality")
- ☐ Customer-uploaded photos have been checked, and any that break policy have been reported

POSTS (3 MINUTES)

- ☐ A post went live in the last 30 days
- ☐ Post buttons link to tagged URLs, not your bare home page
- ☐ The next offer or event is scheduled

REVIEWS (8 MINUTES)

- ☐ You know how many reviews arrived in the last 90 days
- ☐ You know your reply rate across the last 50 reviews
- ☐ Every 1-, 2- and 3-star review from the last 12 months has a reply
- ☐ The review link is copied and saved, and the QR code is downloaded
- ☐ There is a written routine for who asks, when, and on which channel (chapter 5)



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