GETTING FOUND LOCALLY: GOOGLE, MAPS AND REVIEWS

How to show up when people nearby search for what you sell, and how to earn reviews that bring in new customers.

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AT A GLANCE

- When people search "barber near me" or "best tacos," map listings and reviews often decide who they choose.
- A free **Google Business Profile**, plus listings on other maps and review sites, puts you on the map.
- **Reviews** are one of your most powerful marketing tools. Ask every happy customer.

Why it matters

For local businesses, being found on maps is often worth more than a website or ads. Customers ready to buy search, compare ratings and photos, and call or visit within minutes. If you're not listed, or your listing is empty, they choose someone else.

Step by step: your listings

1. **Claim your Google Business Profile** and verify it.
2. **Fill in everything**: name, category, address or service area, hours, phone, website, services, prices and attributes.
3. **Add photos**: storefront, inside, products, team and work. Add new ones regularly.
4. **Claim other listings**: Apple Maps, Bing, Yelp, and industry sites that matter for your business.
5. **Keep your name, address and phone exactly the same** everywhere.
6. **Post updates** and offers on your profile.
7. **Answer questions** people ask on your listing.

Getting reviews

- **Ask at the right moment**: right after a great experience.
- **Make it easy**: send a direct link by text or email, or show a QR code at the counter.
- **Ask everyone**, not just customers you think will be happy.
- **Never pay for reviews or post fake ones.** It breaks platform rules and consumer protection laws, and can get your listing removed.
- **Don't offer rewards only for positive reviews.**

Responding to reviews

Review	How to respond
Positive	Thank them by name and mention something specific.
Mixed	Thank them, acknowledge the issue, and say what you're doing about it.
Negative	Stay calm. Apologize for their experience, offer to make it right offline, and never argue publicly.

> EXAMPLE
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> **Marisol** put a small QR code sign on each table: "Loved your meal? A review helps our small family business more than you know." She texted a review link to catering customers the day after each event. In six months, she went from 12 to 240 reviews with a 4.8 average, and her listing began showing near the top of local searches.

Common mistakes

- **An unclaimed or incomplete listing.**
- **Wrong hours**, especially on holidays.
- **Different addresses or phone numbers** across sites.
- **Ignoring or arguing with negative reviews.**
- **Buying fake reviews.**

Your checklist

- ☐ Claim and verify your Google Business Profile
- ☐ Fill in every field and add 10 photos
- ☐ Claim your listings on other maps and review sites
- ☐ Make a review link and QR code
- ☐ Ask every customer for a review this week
- ☐ Reply to every review

Where to go next

- **L-05 Marketing Basics: Reaching Your First 100 Customers**
- **L-11 Customer Service That Brings People Back**
- **L-02 Your Website: What You Need and What You Don't**

IMPORTANT
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