



THE LOCAL BUSINESS PLAYBOOK • 2026 EDITION

How to Optimize Your Google Business Profile

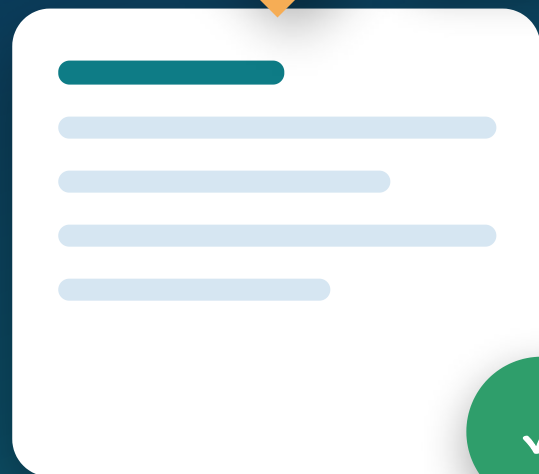
A practical, step-by-step guide, a 30-day action plan and a ready-to-use toolkit for local businesses and professionals.

20 steps

30-day plan

Self-audit

Review & post templates



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Before you begin

Your Google Business Profile (GBP) is one of the most important assets for a local business that wants to be found on Google Search and Google Maps. A profile that is merely claimed is not necessarily a profile that is optimized.

The goal of this book is to make your profile **complete, accurate, relevant, trustworthy and useful** to the people who are about to choose a business like yours.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Work through the 20 steps in order, tick each checklist as you go, then follow the 30-day plan. Use the Toolkit at the back (review scripts, photo guide, post calendar, business-type sheets and troubleshooting) whenever you need a ready-made starting point.

KEEP READY BEFORE YOU START

Official business details, website, logo, photographs, service list, opening hours and a plan for asking customers for reviews.

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PART 1

The 20 Steps

Start with the fundamentals. Tick every box before you move on.

1 Claim and Verify Your Business

Start by making sure you have control of your Google Business Profile.

CHECK THESE FIRST

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Your business profile is claimed | ☐ You have owner access |
| ☐ The business is verified | ☐ Your business name is correct |
| ☐ Your location or service area is correct | ☐ Your phone number is working |
| ☐ Your website is connected | |

IMPORTANT

Verification proves you are authorized to manage the profile. It does not automatically guarantee high rankings.

2 Enter Your Correct Business Name

Use the name by which your business is actually known.

CORRECT

Unnati Digi Services

NOT RECOMMENDED

Unnati Digi Services – Best SEO Company in Mysuru

Do not turn your business name into a list of keywords.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Use your real-world business name | ☐ Avoid unnecessary keywords |
| ☐ Keep it consistent with your website and other references | ☐ Remove unnecessary promotional text |

The objective is to establish a consistent business identity across the web.

3 Choose the Right Business Category

Your primary category helps Google understand what your business is. Choose the one that most accurately represents your main activity, then review the secondary categories available to you.

- ☐ Select the most relevant primary category
- ☐ Add relevant secondary categories where appropriate
- ☐ Avoid unrelated categories
- ☐ Never pick a category just because it contains attractive keywords

EXAMPLE

A digital marketing business might look at categories related to digital marketing, SEO, web design and marketing. The final choice should be based on the actual categories Google offers and what the business genuinely does.

4 Set Your Address or Service Area Correctly

This matters most for businesses that serve customers at their premises and for service-area businesses.

IF CUSTOMERS VISIT YOUR LOCATION, MAKE SURE THE ADDRESS IS

- ☐ Complete
- ☐ Accurate
- ☐ Consistent with your website and other legitimate references
- ☐ Properly verified

IF YOU SERVE CUSTOMERS AT THEIR LOCATION

Make sure your service areas accurately show where you actually work. Do not create artificial locations simply to appear in more cities.

REMEMBER

You want Google to understand your real business footprint, not a manufactured one.

5 Add a Working Phone Number

Your primary telephone number should connect customers to your business.

- ☐ The number is correct
- ☐ It works
- ☐ It matches your website
- ☐ Someone answers or returns genuine enquiries
- ☐ Each location has appropriate contact details

A customer who finds you on Google but cannot reach you has little reason to continue.

6 Write a Useful Business Description

Your description should answer three questions quickly: **Who are you? What do you offer? Where do you serve customers?**

EXAMPLE

Unnati Digi Services is a local SEO and online visibility consultancy in Mysuru helping local businesses, professionals and creative entrepreneurs build stronger digital identities, optimize their Google Business Profiles and improve their presence in local search.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Clearly explain what you do | ☐ Mention your location naturally |
| ☐ Mention important services | ☐ Write for humans |
| ☐ Use keywords naturally | ☐ Avoid keyword stuffing and exaggerated claims |

7 Add Your Website

Your website and your profile should reinforce each other. Add your main website and test the link.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ The website address is correct | ☐ The website loads properly |
| ☐ It works well on mobile | ☐ The homepage clearly explains the business |
| ☐ The business name is consistent | ☐ Contact information is easy to find |
| ☐ Services match those on your profile | |

Think of your profile as the local search front door and your website as the deeper source of information.

8 Enter Accurate Business Hours

Customers often use Google to decide whether a business is open. Enter your normal hours carefully, and update special hours when needed.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Every operating day has correct hours | ☐ Opening and closing times are accurate |
| ☐ Holiday hours are updated | ☐ Website and profile do not contradict each other |

Incorrect opening hours create a frustrating customer experience.

9 Add High-Quality Business Photos

Do not leave your profile looking empty. Photographs help customers understand what your business looks like and what you offer. Use real photographs whenever possible, and avoid building your profile on generic stock images.

BUILD A USEFUL PHOTO LIBRARY

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Exterior or storefront | ☐ Interior |
| ☐ Team | ☐ Products |
| ☐ Services being delivered | ☐ Completed projects and work samples |
| ☐ Equipment or facilities | ☐ Customer-facing areas |

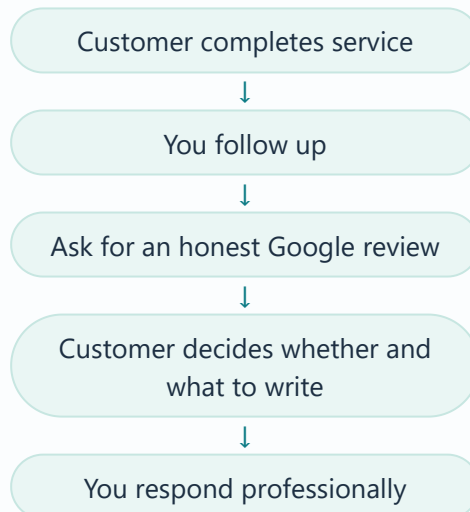
PHOTO CHECKLIST

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Clear | ☐ Relevant |
| ☐ Recent | ☐ Well lit |
| ☐ Represent the actual business | ☐ No unnecessary watermarks |

A shot list and tips are in Toolkit 2.

10 Build a Review System

Reviews are not something to think about only when your rating falls. Build a legitimate process for asking customers for feedback.



NEVER

Do not buy reviews, manufacture reviews or pressure customers to leave a particular rating.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Ask genuine customers for honest feedback | ☐ Make the process easy |
| ☐ Respond to reviews | ☐ Thank customers for positive feedback |
| ☐ Respond professionally to negative feedback | ☐ Learn from recurring complaints |

The objective is not simply to collect stars. It is to build customer trust and a credible reputation. Ready-made scripts are in Toolkit 1.

11 Build Useful Q&A Content

The Q&A section can answer questions potential customers are likely to ask. Think like a customer.

- Do you serve customers in Mysuru?
- What services do you provide?
- Do I need an appointment?
- Do you make home or service-area visits?
- What payment methods do you accept?

☐ Important questions have answers

☐ Answers are accurate and concise

☐ Questions reflect genuine concerns

☐ Information is kept updated

Do not use Q&A to stuff keywords into your profile.

12 Add Services

If your profile has a services section, use it properly. List the services you actually provide.

☐ Use a clear service name

☐ Add an accurate description where available

☐ Make sure it matches your website

☐ Remove services you no longer provide

This builds a clear line: **Business** → **Category** → **Services** → **Website** → **Customer intent**.

13 Add Products When Appropriate

If your business sells products and your profile supports product listings, use them.

☐ Correct product names

☐ Useful descriptions

☐ Accurate pricing where applicable

☐ Appropriate photographs

☐ Links or next steps where supported

Do not list products you do not actually sell.

14 Complete Relevant Attributes

Review the attributes available to your business and select only the ones that genuinely apply. Examples can include facilities, accessibility and payment options.

RULE

Accuracy first. Optimization second. Never select an attribute because you think it might attract more customers.

15 Start Publishing Google Posts

A business profile should not become a forgotten listing. Use posts to share useful, current information.

Type	Example
Educational	5 mistakes local businesses make on Google Maps
Business update	We have launched a new service for local businesses in Mysuru
Offer	Special introductory offer available until [date]
Case study	How a local business improved its online visibility
FAQ	Do you need a website if you already have a Google Business Profile?

REMEMBER

Every post should have a purpose. Avoid posting meaningless content merely to make the profile look active. A 12-week calendar is in Toolkit 3.

16 Keep Your Information Consistent

Compare your profile with your website and your legitimate business references. Check:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Business name | ☐ Address |
| ☐ Phone | ☐ Website |
| ☐ Services | ☐ Opening hours |

The goal is not hundreds of identical directory listings. It is a clear, consistent business identity wherever customers and search engines meet you.

17 Connect Your Website With Google Search Console

For businesses with their own website, Google Search Console gives another layer of visibility into how Google discovers and indexes the site.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Website is added to Search Console | ☐ Ownership is verified |
| ☐ Important pages are indexed | ☐ Major indexing problems are fixed |
| ☐ Website and business information match | |

Your profile and website should not operate as separate digital identities.

18 Review Your Profile for Compliance

Before calling the profile optimized, do a final compliance check. Avoid:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Keyword stuffing | ☐ Fake reviews |
| ☐ Misleading business information | ☐ Unrelated categories |
| ☐ False claims | ☐ Spam |
| ☐ Artificial locations | ☐ Anything that does not represent your real business |

WHY IT MATTERS

A profile designed to manipulate Google may create short-term signals, but it can cause long-term problems.

19 Create a Monthly Maintenance Routine

Optimization is not a one-time activity. Once the foundation is complete, keep a simple routine.

When	What to do
Every week	Check new reviews · respond to customer interactions · publish useful content when appropriate · check customer questions · monitor key profile information
Every month	Review business information and opening hours · add fresh photographs · review services and attributes · check website links · review questions · check your local search visibility
Every few months	Do a complete profile audit · review competitors · review your website · check business information across important platforms · find new services or customer questions · refresh your local SEO strategy

20 Measure the Results

Do not judge your optimization only by whether you feel more visible. Track meaningful business outcomes.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Google Search and Maps visibility | ☐ Website visits |
| ☐ Phone enquiries | ☐ Website enquiries |
| ☐ Direction requests, where applicable | ☐ Customer reviews |
| ☐ Search queries | ☐ Leads and conversions |

THE QUESTION THAT MATTERS

The ultimate question is not “Did I fill every field?” It is “Is my online presence helping the right customers discover and contact my business?”

PART 2

Plan, Audit & Checklist

Turn the steps into a routine you can finish in a month.

A Simple 30-Day Plan

Days 1–7: Build the foundation

- ☐ Claim and verify your profile
- ☐ Correct the business name
- ☐ Select appropriate categories
- ☐ Correct the address or service area
- ☐ Add phone number and website
- ☐ Add business hours
- ☐ Write the description

Days 8–14: Make it useful

- ☐ Add profile and cover images
- ☐ Upload genuine business photographs
- ☐ Add services and products
- ☐ Add relevant attributes
- ☐ Review existing reviews
- ☐ Respond to reviews

Days 15–21: Improve engagement

- ☐ Build a legitimate review-request process
- ☐ Answer customer questions
- ☐ Add useful Q&A
- ☐ Publish useful posts
- ☐ Check website integration
- ☐ Connect Search Console

Days 22–30: Audit & refine

- ☐ Check all information for accuracy
- ☐ Review categories and services
- ☐ Review photographs
- ☐ Check website consistency
- ☐ Check important business references
- ☐ Review customer enquiries
- ☐ Pick your next priorities

The 10-Minute Self-Audit

Give yourself a score from 0 to 10 for each area. Be honest. The gaps are where your next customers are.

Area	Your score
Business information	___ / 10
Categories	___ / 10
Description & services	___ / 10
Photos	___ / 10
Reviews & responses	___ / 10
Q&A & customer engagement	___ / 10
Posts & updates	___ / 10
Website connection	___ / 10
Accuracy & compliance	___ / 10
Ongoing maintenance	___ / 10

Your result

80 TO 100

Strong foundation. Focus on maintaining and improving it.

60 TO 79

Several opportunities remain. Prioritize the biggest gaps.

BELOW 60

Start with the fundamentals before worrying about advanced tactics.

The Bigger Picture

Optimizing your profile is important, but it is not the entire local SEO strategy. Google's local results are influenced by several factors, including **relevance, distance and prominence**. Think beyond the profile itself.

- Your Google Business Profile
- Your website
- Reviews
- Consistency of business information
- Relevant local authority
- Useful content
- Customer experience

The objective is a business presence that Google can understand and customers can trust.

The Final Checklist

Before you call your profile optimization project complete, ask yourself:

- ☐ Is the business information accurate?
- ☐ Is the category appropriate?
- ☐ Is the description useful?
- ☐ Are the services properly listed?
- ☐ Are the photographs genuine and relevant?
- ☐ Are customer reviews being managed professionally?
- ☐ Are important questions answered?
- ☐ Is the website connected and useful?
- ☐ Is the profile compliant?
- ☐ Do you have a system for ongoing maintenance?

WELL DONE

If you can answer yes to most of these questions, you have moved well beyond simply having a Google Business Profile. You have started building a local search asset.

The Toolkit in Part 3 gives you ready-made templates and sheets for the steps that most owners find hardest: asking for reviews, taking photos, planning posts and fixing problems.

PART 3

The Toolkit

Copy, adapt and use. Replace anything in [square brackets] with your own details.

1. Review Toolkit: How to Ask, How to Reply

A steady flow of genuine, recent reviews matters more than one burst. Make asking a normal part of finishing a job.

Asking on WhatsApp

"Hello [Name], thank you for choosing [Business] today. If you were happy with our service, would you share a short, honest Google review? It helps other people in [city] find us. Here is the link: [review link]. Thank you!"

Asking in person

"If you were happy with today's visit, we would be grateful for a quick Google review. I can send the link to your phone right now."

Tip: in your profile, look for the option to share your review link, save it in your phone, and consider a printed card with a QR code at the counter.

Replying to a positive review

"Thank you, [Name]! We are glad [specific thing they mentioned] worked well for you. We look forward to seeing you again. – [Your name], [Business]"

Replying to a negative review

- **Thank** them for the feedback and stay calm.
- **Apologize** for their experience without arguing.
- **State** one fact or what you will do, briefly.
- **Move offline:** give a phone number or email to resolve it.

"Hello [Name], thank you for telling us, and we are sorry your visit did not go as it should. We would like to put this right. Please call us on [number] or message us so we can look into it properly. – [Your name]"

NEVER

Offer gifts or discounts in exchange for reviews, ask only happy customers, or write reviews yourself.

REMEMBER

A mix of ratings looks more believable than a wall of five stars. Reply to every review, good or bad.

2. Photo Toolkit: Shot List and Tips

You do not need a professional photographer to start. A clean, recent photo taken on a modern phone is better than an empty profile.

Photo type	How many	What to show
Logo	1	Square, clear, readable at small size
Cover photo	1	Your best wide shot of the shop, clinic or team
Exterior	3	Storefront from the street, signboard, entrance. Help people recognize you when they arrive
Interior	5	Reception, waiting area, work area, seating
Team	3	Real people doing real work, smiling and in uniform if you have one
Products / services	10+	Your best sellers, treatments or finished work
Behind the scenes	3	Equipment, process, tidy workspace

DO

- Use daylight or good lighting
- Keep lenses clean and shots straight
- Tidy the frame before shooting
- Add new photos every month
- Use photos you own or took yourself

AVOID

- Blurry or dark pictures
- Heavy filters and text overlays
- Stock images of someone else's business
- Photos with phone numbers or offers drawn over them
- Uploading all photos in one day and never again

CHECK GOOGLE'S CURRENT GUIDELINES

Google publishes the accepted formats, sizes and minimum resolution for profile photos, and these can change. Look in Business Profile Help before you upload. As a rule, use clear photos in common formats such as JPG or PNG, and avoid tiny images.

QUICK WIN

Ask your team to take five photos during the week: one at opening, one of a finished job, one of a happy moment (with permission), one of the entrance, and one of a new product or service. That is a month of photos.

3. A 12-Week Google Posts Calendar

One post a week is enough. Each post should have a clear photo, two or three short sentences, and a next step such as Call or Learn more.

Week	Type	Idea
1	Introduction	Who you are, what you do and where you serve
2	Service spotlight	Explain one service and who it helps
3	FAQ	Answer the question customers ask most often
4	Offer	A clear, honest offer with an end date
5	Behind the scenes	Your team or process at work
6	Case study	A real customer story, with permission
7	Seasonal	A festival, season or exam-time message relevant to your trade
8	Helpful tip	One practical tip customers can use today
9	New or updated	A new service, timing change or product
10	Thank you	Thank customers for reviews, in general terms
11	Myth vs fact	Correct a common misunderstanding in your field
12	Recap + contact	Summarize your services and how to reach you

A GOOD POST, IN FOUR LINES

Headline in one line · one clear sentence about the benefit · one real photo · one button (Call, Learn more or Book).

REMEMBER

If a post has no purpose, skip it. Fewer, useful posts beat many empty ones.

4. Quick Sheets by Business Type

Use these as starting points. Always choose the exact categories and options Google offers for your business.

Clinic or doctor

Show: qualifications, specialties, consultation timings, clinic entrance and waiting area.

Q&A: appointment needed? fees? emergency timings? languages spoken?

Watch out: avoid claims that sound like guarantees or cures, and follow the advertising rules for your profession.

Salon or beauty studio

Show: the studio, hygiene, tools, before and after (with permission), the team.

Q&A: appointment or walk-in? price ranges? bridal bookings?

Watch out: keep the service list and prices current.

Restaurant, bakery or cloud kitchen

Show: signature dishes, menu, kitchen, seating, takeaway packaging.

Q&A: delivery? pre-orders? vegetarian options? timings on festival days?

Watch out: update festival and holiday hours early.

Retail shop

Show: storefront, shelves, best sellers, new arrivals.

Q&A: do you have it in stock? delivery? exchange policy? parking?

Watch out: list only products you really stock.

Home-service (plumber, AC, electrician)

Show: uniforms, tools, completed jobs, vehicle.

Q&A: which areas do you serve? same-day visits? warranty? emergency calls?

Watch out: set your service area honestly and do not add areas you do not serve.

Professional (CA, lawyer, consultant)

Show: office, certificates, the team, a clean meeting room.

Q&A: first consultation? documents needed? fees structure? languages?

Watch out: be factual about credentials and follow your professional body's advertising rules.

NOT ON THE LIST?

Think like your customer. What do they search for, what do they want to see before they call, and what do they always ask first? Put those answers in your profile.

5. When Things Go Wrong: Troubleshooting

Most problems have a simple first check. Use Google's official Business Profile Help for the current steps, and be careful of anyone who promises to fix or remove things for a fee.

Problem	Check first	What to do
Profile suspended	Name, category, address and anything that may look misleading	Fix the issue, gather proof of your business, and use Google's official reinstatement or appeal process
Cannot verify	Address is exact and complete; you can receive the verification	Retry the verification options offered, and keep photos or documents of your business ready
Duplicate listing	Two profiles for the same place	Keep the verified one and report the duplicate through Google's tools
Wrong map pin	Pin location versus your real door	Edit the pin on your profile. Our story: a pin that was wrong for five years, fixed in a day
Someone changed my details	Suggested edits and recent updates	Review and correct them, then keep the owner account secure
Unfair or fake review	Does it break Google's review policies?	Report it through your profile. Reply politely meanwhile
Rating dropped	Recurring complaints	Fix the cause, reply to every review, and keep asking happy customers
Not showing for "near me"	Category, distance from searcher, reviews, website consistency	Review steps 3, 10 and 16, and be patient. Local results change with the searcher

PROTECT YOUR ACCOUNT

Use an email address you control, add more than one owner or manager when you can, and keep a written note of who has access.

6. Glossary, AI Assistants and Notes

Term	Plain meaning
Google Business Profile (GBP)	Your free business listing on Google Search and Maps
NAP	Name, Address, Phone number. Keep them identical everywhere
Primary category	The label that best describes your main business
Service-area business	A business that serves customers at their location
Local pack	The short list of businesses with a map shown for local searches
Relevance, distance, prominence	How well you match the search, how close you are, and how well known you are
Attributes	Facts such as accessibility, payment options or facilities
Suggested edit	A change someone proposes to your listing
Citation	A mention of your business details on another website
Search Console	A free Google tool showing how your website appears in search

AI ASSISTANTS AND YOUR PROFILE

More people now ask AI assistants and map apps to find a doctor, a shop or a service. These tools draw on many sources, such as your website, your reviews and your listings. Clear, accurate and consistent information across your profile and your website helps every one of them describe your business correctly.

Your notes

Want a professional Google Business Profile audit?

Use this book as your DIY starting point. If you would like a professional review, Unnati Digi Services provides Google Business Profile optimization and local SEO. A professional audit can identify:

- Missing profile information
- Content gaps
- Local SEO inconsistencies
- Areas where your competitors are stronger
- Category opportunities
- Website issues
- Review-management opportunities

Unnati GeoRank plans from Pro upwards include hands-on Google Business Profile management, with a private progress report showing your real Google data. **Real humans. No call centre. No AI bots.** Message us on WhatsApp on **+91 80508 20814** and a real person will reply.

Keep learning: 5 articles to read next

The Complete Google Business Profile Optimization Checklist for 2026

The full checklist behind this book, in one article.

unnatidigiservices.in/the-complete-google-business-profile-optimization-checklist-for-2026

Relevance, Proximity & Prominence: Three Forces Behind Google Local Search

Why some businesses show up first on the map, and what you can influence.

unnatidigiservices.in/relevance-proximity-prominence

Fixing Your Google Maps Pin in One Day

A real story of a wrong pin and how it was fixed.

unnatidigiservices.in/fixing-your-google-maps-pin-in-one-day

Local SEO Mistakes That Are Killing Your Google Rankings

Common errors to avoid on your profile and your website.

unnatidigiservices.in/local-seo-mistakes-killing-your-google-rankings

Name Is the Game: The “Mylari” Confusion in Mysuru

Why a consistent business name matters so much (see Steps 2 and 16).

unnatidigiservices.in/name-is-the-game-the-mylari-confusion-in-mysuru

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Be the business people find, trust and call.

A complete Google Business Profile helps customers choose you in the moment they are looking. This guide shows you how, one honest step at a time.

20 clear steps

With checklists you can tick off

30-day plan

Know what to do each week

Self-audit

Score your profile in 10 minutes

Ready-made toolkit

Scripts, calendar and fixes

OUR PRODUCTS

Unnati GeoRank

Websites and Google Business Profile for local businesses

UnnatiGeoRank.com

Unnati JotKite

A fast, mobile-first blogging platform

JotKite.com

Unnati LiteCommerce

Your own online shop, with direct payments

LiteCommerce.co.in

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Unnati
DIGI SERVICES
BUILD • OPTIMIZE • GROW

Real humans. No call centre. No AI bots. · Mahesh Bhat & Preethi M