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Get Found on Google Without Paying for Ads

A practical guide to local SEO for South Jersey small businesses.

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You don't need an ad budget to show up on Google.

Local SEO — getting your business to appear when someone nearby searches for what you offer — is one of the highest-return investments a small business can make. It takes consistent effort, not money. This guide covers the five areas that matter most for South Jersey businesses, with specific actions you can take this week.

PRIORITY 1

Your Google Business Profile

Your Google Business Profile (GBP) is the single highest-leverage thing you can work on. It controls what people see when they search your business name, and it determines whether you show up in the “map pack” — the three local results that appear above the organic search results and get the majority of clicks.

What to do this week:

- Claim and verify your GBP if you haven't already.

Search your business name on Google. If a profile appears without a “Owner verified” label, claim it.

- Fill out every field: hours, services, description, website, phone.

Incomplete profiles rank lower. The description (250 words) should mention your service area specifically.

- Add at least 5 recent photos.

Google favors profiles with recent, original photos. Add photos of your work, team, or location. Not stock images.

- Post an update once a month.

GBP posts (offers, updates, events) signal activity to Google. Even a short post about a seasonal service helps.

- Answer every review — including negative ones.

Response rate and recency both factor into rankings. A brief, professional reply to a negative review is better than silence.

PRIORITY 2

Reviews: Volume and Recency Both Matter

A business with 8 reviews from 2021 will often rank below one with 20 reviews from the past 6 months. Google uses review recency as a freshness signal. You need a steady drip of new reviews — not a one-time burst.

How to get more reviews without it being awkward:

- Ask immediately after a successful job, while the experience is fresh.

The best moment is right when the customer says they're happy. Not a week later in an email blast.

- Send a direct link to your Google review page via text.

You can find this link in your GBP dashboard. One click to the review form — no searching required.

- Use a short script: "So glad we could help — if you have 30 seconds, a Google review would mean a lot to us. Here's the link."
- Aim for 2–3 new reviews per month minimum.

PRIORITY 3

Pages for the Towns You Serve

If you serve Medford, Marlton, Voorhees, and Evesham — you should have a page for each one. Not copy-paste pages with the town name swapped in, but pages that genuinely address that area: local references, specific services, any projects you've done there.

Each page should answer: *What do you do? Where exactly? Why should someone in this town hire you?*

Pro tip: Even a simple 300-word page targeting "[your service] in [town name], NJ" can rank for that search term within a few months if your GBP and overall site authority are solid.

PRIORITY 4

Consistent NAP Across the Web

NAP stands for Name, Address, Phone. Google cross-references your business information across directories — Yelp, YellowPages, Bing Places, Apple Maps, your website, and others. Inconsistencies (different phone numbers, abbreviated vs. spelled-out address) quietly hurt your local rankings.

What to audit:

- Search your business name and check the top 5 directory listings that appear.

Look for your name, address, and phone number. Any variation is worth correcting.
- Make sure your website footer exactly matches your GBP information.
- Check Yelp, Bing Places, and Apple Maps specifically — these feed into Google's local data.

PRIORITY 5

On-Page Signals Your Website Sends to Google

Your website and your GBP work together. A strong profile with a weak website will only get you so far. A few on-page changes make a real difference:

- Title tags include your service and your location.
Example: “Tree Removal Service in Cherry Hill, NJ | Green Canopy Tree Care”
- Your homepage mentions the towns you serve in the body text, not just the footer.
Google reads the full page. Town names in headings and paragraphs carry more weight than footer text.
- Your site loads fast on mobile.
Use Google PageSpeed Insights. A slow site loses visitors and ranks lower in mobile search.
- You have at least one unique page per core service.
A single “Services” page that lists everything is weaker than separate pages for each service.

WHERE TO START IF YOU'RE DOING THIS YOURSELF

Week 1	Claim and complete your Google Business Profile
Week 2	Set up a review request process and get 3 new reviews
Week 3	Audit your NAP consistency across top directories
Month 2	Add location pages for your top 3 service areas
Ongoing	1 GBP post/month, 2–3 review requests/month

Want us to pull your current local search data?

We do free local SEO audits for South Jersey small businesses — GBP review, NAP consistency check, keyword ranking snapshot. Reply to the email that sent you this guide or reach out directly and we'll tell you exactly where you stand.

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