

FREE RESEARCH-BACKED CHECKLIST

The Google Maps Booking Checklist

21 quick fixes that turn your Google Business Profile
into a booking machine

- + Most fixes take under 15 minutes
- + Every claim backed by published research
- + No website needed for a single fix in it

Why this checklist exists

Your Google Business Profile is the first - often the only - thing local customers see before deciding who to book. The data is blunt about what happens next: **97% of consumers read reviews before choosing a local business** [6], complete profiles make customers **70% more likely to visit and 50% more likely to purchase** [2], and around **70% of consumers would rather book online than phone** [8]. Most small businesses leave nearly all of this on the table.

This checklist walks you through 21 fixes in three parts: **Get found** (rank for the right searches), **Get chosen** (win the comparison against the shop next door), and **Get booked** (turn the look into a confirmed slot). Numbers in [brackets] point to the sources on the last page - every claim here is published research, not folklore.

How to use it: work through the fixes in order. Nothing here needs a website, an agency, or a budget - just your phone and, for most items, under fifteen minutes.

PART 1

Get found

Ranking in the map pack starts with eligibility. Google Business Profile signals are the single biggest local ranking factor - about a third of the total weight [5].

1

Claim and verify your Business Profile

~10 min *Why: you cannot fix, respond, or add anything until you control the listing. Unmanaged profiles drift out of date and Google fills the gaps from strangers' suggestions [1].*

Do it: Search your business name on Google Maps, tap "Own this business?" and complete verification (postcard, phone, or video). If someone else claimed it, use Google's ownership-request process.

2

Set the right primary category

~5 min *Why: the primary category is widely considered the most impactful single field on your profile - it decides which searches you are even eligible to appear for [5].*

Do it: Pick the most specific category that matches what earns you money ("Barber shop", not "Hair salon", if fades pay your rent). Check what top-ranking competitors use.

3

Add every secondary category that genuinely fits

~5 min *Why: secondary categories widen the set of searches you can show for, without diluting the primary [5].*

Do it: Add 2-5 honest extras (e.g. a groomer adding "Pet groomer" + "Dog day care centre"). Never add categories for services you don't offer.

4

Fill in every single field

~15 min *Why: Google reports customers are 2.7x more likely to consider a business reputable with a complete profile, 70% more likely to visit, and 50% more likely to purchase [2].*

Do it: Open Edit profile and work top to bottom: description, opening date, phone, attributes (wheelchair access, payments, amenities), service list. Leave nothing blank that applies.

5

Use your real-world business name - nothing extra

~2 min *Why: stuffing keywords into the name field ("Joe's Barbers | Best Fades Sheffield") violates Google's guidelines and risks suspension of the whole profile [1].*

Do it: Make the name field match your signage exactly. Put keywords in the description and services instead, where they belong.

6

Keep hours accurate - including holidays

~5 min *Why: a customer who arrives at a closed shop that said "open" is a lost booking and a likely 1-star review; recency and accuracy drive trust [6].*

Do it: Set regular hours, then add special hours for every bank holiday in advance. Update the moment anything changes.

7

Pin your map location and service area precisely

~5 min *Why: proximity to the searcher is a core ranking input - a mispinned marker literally moves you away from your customers [5].*

Do it: Drag the map pin to your actual door. Mobile business? Set your service areas by town/postcode instead of a misleading address.

PART 2

Get chosen

Customers compare you side-by-side with the two or three businesses next to you in the results. These fixes win that comparison.

8

Load the photo formula: exterior, interior, team, results

~20 min *Why: Google's own data: businesses with photos receive 42% more direction requests and 35% more website clicks than those without [3].*

Do it: Upload at least: 2x exterior (so people recognise the door), 3x interior, 2x team at work, 6x finished results. Natural light, no stock photos. Add a couple of fresh ones every month.

9

Set a proper logo and cover photo

~10 min *Why: the logo appears beside every review reply and post you make; profiles that look managed get treated as more reputable [2].*

Do it: Logo: square, plain background. Cover: your best single "this is what you get" shot - not your shopfront sign.

10

Rewrite your description with the one-liner formula

~15 min *Why: the first sentence shows in previews. A specific promise beats a generic "welcome to our page" every time; completeness compounds trust [2].*

Do it: First line = who you serve + the outcome + what makes you different: "Sharp skin fades for Hillsborough, bookable online 24/7 - no phone call needed." Then services, area, and experience. No URLs, no keyword lists.

11

Build a simple review-collection habit

~10 min setup *Why: 97% of consumers read reviews for local businesses, and 41% "always" read them; 74% only trust reviews from the last three months - a burst from 2023 won't carry you [6].*

Do it: Save your Google review link (Profile -> Ask for reviews) as a text shortcut. Send it to every happy customer the same day, every week - steady beats bulk.

12

Reply to every review - including the rough ones

~10 min/week *Why: businesses that respond to at least 75% of reviews are perceived as 2.8x more trustworthy; generic templated replies measurably reduce trust, so write like a human [6].*

Do it: Thank by name, mention the service ("Glad the skin fade worked out, Marcus"). For negatives: apologise once, state the fix, take it offline. Never argue.

13

Seed the Q&A; section before strangers do

~15 min *Why: anyone can ask - and answer - questions on your profile. Unanswered or wrongly-answered questions cost bookings silently [1].*

Do it: Post and answer your five most-asked questions yourself (parking? walk-ins? card payments? kids?). Turn on alerts so new questions never sit unanswered.

14

List your services with prices

~15 min *Why: "How much is...?" is the #1 reason people phone instead of booking. Price transparency removes the last excuse to scroll to a competitor; profile completeness is a ranking and trust signal [2][5].*

Do it: Add every service with a from-price and a one-line description. Mirror the exact words customers search ("skin fade", "full groom", "gel nails").

PART 3

Get booked

Being found and chosen still loses the sale if the only next step is a phone call. These fixes convert the look into a confirmed slot.

15

Put a booking link on your profile

~5 min *Why: around 70% of consumers prefer booking online to phoning [8], yet most local profiles still offer nothing but a phone number.*

Do it: Profile -> Edit -> Booking (or Appointment) links: paste your booking page URL. A tappable Book option appears on your listing in Search and Maps [4].

16

Make the booking self-serve and 24/7

~varies *Why: businesses offering 24/7 online booking report roughly 37% more bookings than manual scheduling, and a large share of online bookings happen outside opening hours [7][8].*

Do it: Use a system where customers pick a real, live slot themselves - no "we'll call you back" forms. (This is exactly what BookOnTheMap does for £9.99/month, but any true self-serve tool beats none.)

17

Send the link straight to the slot picker

~5 min *Why: every extra tap between "interested" and "booked" loses people; online bookings also show up more reliably than phone ones [7].*

Do it: Link directly to your choose-a-time page, not your homepage. Test it on your own phone: count the taps from Google to a confirmed slot. Target: three or fewer.

18

Post an update every week

~10 min/week *Why: posts show your profile is alive, surface offers right in the listing, and listing-management activity feeds the profile signals that dominate local ranking [5].*

Do it: One photo + two sentences: this week's availability, an offer, or a before/after. Recycle your best Instagram content - same photo, new caption.

19

Decide deliberately about chat/messaging

~2 min *Why: an enabled-but-ignored message button is worse than none: slow responses tank trust the same way template replies do [6].*

Do it: Turn messaging on only if you can reply within a few hours. Otherwise switch it off and let the booking link do the talking.

20

Read your Performance tab monthly

~10 min/month *Why: the profile tells you exactly which searches, photos and buttons produce calls, direction requests and bookings - most owners never look [1].*

Do it: Check: which search terms found you, calls vs. booking clicks, photo views vs. competitors. Do more of whatever is working; fix whatever gets views but no taps.

21

Run the 15-minute weekly routine

~15 min/week *Why: every signal above decays: reviews age out of the 3-month trust window [6], photos go stale, hours drift. Consistency is the whole game.*

Do it: Same time every week: (1) send the review link to this week's happy customers, (2) reply to new reviews, (3) add one photo, (4) post one update, (5) confirm next week's hours.

Sources

Accessed July 2026. Statistics belong to their respective publishers; figures are as reported at the time of writing.

- [1] Google - Business Profile Help: guidelines for representing your business, Q&A;, and profile management.
support.google.com/business
- [2] Google - cited profile-completeness data: complete profiles are 2.7x more likely to be considered reputable; customers are 70% more likely to visit and 50% more likely to purchase. Reported across Google Business Profile materials and industry summaries (e.g. searchendurance.com/google-business-profile-statistics).
- [3] Google - listings with photos receive 42% more direction requests and 35% more website click-throughs. Reported via Google Business Profile guidance and industry summaries (e.g. sqmagazine.co.uk/google-my-business-statistics).
- [4] Google Maps Help - "Make a reservation in Google Maps" / booking and appointment links.
support.google.com/maps/answer/9322362
- [5] Whitespark - Local Search Ranking Factors (2026): GBP signals ~32% of local pack ranking weight; review signals ~20%; primary category the most impactful single field. whitespark.ca/local-search-ranking-factors
- [6] BrightLocal - Local Consumer Review Survey 2026: 97% read reviews; 41% always read; 74% want reviews from the last 3 months; responding to 75%+ of reviews -> perceived 2.8x more trustworthy.
brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey
- [7] SchedulingKit / Zippia - online booking statistics: ~37% more bookings with 24/7 online booking; higher show-up reliability for online bookings. schedulingkit.com/statistics/online-booking-statistics ;
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- [8] Industry scheduling surveys - ~70% of consumers prefer booking online vs phoning (reported range 60-82% across sources incl. Heallist, GetApp summaries). heallist.com/resources/blog/5-eye-opening-statistics-about-online-bookings

About BookOnTheMap

BookOnTheMap gives barbers, groomers, salons and other local businesses a bookable page they paste straight onto their Google Business Profile - so customers book real slots themselves, day or night, with no website needed. 30-day free trial, no card, zero commission, from £9.99/month.

Start free: bookonthemap.uk/signup - **See a live page:** bookonthemap.uk/b/demo-barbers -

Questions: support@zizweit.uk

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