

Affordable local SEO: the \$0 plan and 10 questions before you pay

Google scores your category, real name, hours and reviews above almost everything else. Do these seven free steps first; use the ten questions on any offer.

SEOs Hut • Guide

THE \$0 PLAN, IN ORDER

1 Set the right primary category

Edit profile > Business information > Category. One primary category for what you mostly sell; the rest as additional categories.

Check: The category under your name in Maps is the one you set.

2 Make the business name match your sign

Real-world name only. No taglines, service words or town names (Google guidelines).

Check: Profile, website header and sign are word-for-word the same.

3 Fix hours, map pin, phone and website

Regular and holiday hours; pin on your building; one phone number and one website everywhere.

Check: Search yourself at 7 pm Saturday: "Open" or "Closed" is right.

4 List every service and write the description

Each service by its everyday name with one line; 750-character description; real photos.

Check: Every service shows under the Services tab on your phone.

5 Ask for reviews after every job; reply to all

Use the "Ask for reviews" link or QR code. Never offer a discount for a review.

Check: One new review a week; every review answered within two days.

6 Check name, address and phone match everywhere

Run the free NAP Consistency Checker at seoshut.com/tools; fix Apple Maps, Bing, Yelp, Facebook first.

Check: The checker shows identical details on every listing.

7 One page per service on your website

Service + town in the title; who it is for; what it costs. One page, one service.

Check: Searching "service + town + your name" returns that page.

QUOTE CHECKER

Walk away if YES

- ☐ Do they guarantee a #1 ranking or a map pack spot?
- ☐ Do they claim a special relationship with Google, or a "priority submit"?
- ☐ Did they contact you out of the blue, or say they were calling from Google?
- ☐ Will they write, buy or "manage" reviews for you?

Fair only if YES

- ☐ Will you keep ownership of your Google Business Profile and website logins?
- ☐ Did they say what results to expect, and in what timeframe?
- ☐ Can they show previous work for a business like yours?
- ☐ Do they say in writing that they follow Google's Search Essentials?
- ☐ Is there a written list of what is done each month?
- ☐ Can you cancel with notice, with no long lock-in?

Verdict: any YES in the first four: walk away, whatever the price. All six of the second group YES: a fair offer; compare the written scope. Four or five: ask for the missing ones in writing before you pay.

Sources: Google, "Do you need an SEO?" and "Tips to improve your local ranking"; Google Business Profile guidelines and review policy; Whitespark Local Search Ranking Factors 2026; FTC rule banning fake reviews (14 Aug 2024); Ahrefs SEO pricing poll (439 providers). Full guide with the data: seoshut.com/blog/affordable-local-seo/