

5 Steps to Get Your Business Ranking Higher in Google

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Introduction

In this guide, we will walk you through our proven, step-by-step process to get your business ranking higher in Google.

But first, let's look at the main reasons why SEO is so essential. Here are 3 reasons why all businesses should invest in SEO:

1. Google is the New Yellow Pages

Before Google, most locally-focused businesses would rely on the Yellow Pages to make the phone to ring. Today, 97% of people search for local businesses online, and Google is by far the most popular option. If you're not showing up on the first page of Google, you're missing out on new potential business - and those customers are going to your competitors instead.

2. "Free" Traffic

Not many things in this world are truly free. Even when it comes to SEO, you'll either need to invest some time and effort (if you manage it yourself) or some money (if you hire an agency or consultant to help with SEO). But once your business is ranking on the first page of Google, you really will receive a stream of free traffic to your website.

3. Level Playing Field

Local SEO in particular is one area where small local businesses are on an equal playing field with larger, national businesses. And if you implement Local SEO best practices, it's not uncommon to gain first-page rankings in as little as 30 days.

In this report, you'll learn the 5 steps to get you started...

To Your Success!



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Phil Frost".

Phil Frost
Founder & COO
Main Street ROI



Step 1. Select Your Keywords

The first step to improving your Google rankings is to know what your prospective customers are searching for.

To start, brainstorm a **“seed list”** of potential keywords you’ll want to target. The best way to do this is by listing out the words and phrases that describe your services, and that prospects may search to find a business like yours in Google. For example, an accountant might choose “accountant” or “cpa.” A dentist may list “cosmetic dentistry,” “pediatric dentist” and so on.

Keep going until you have a reasonably comprehensive list, and then sign up for a free Google AdWords account. You don’t need to create or fund an ad campaign, but a Google AdWords account gives you access to the free **Google Keyword Planner**:

<https://adwords.google.com/KeywordPlanner#search>

Simply put in your seed keywords, and Google will tell you how often people are searching for different variations, plus you’ll receive some suggestions for other phrases to consider.

(Note: Keyword Planner now only shows specific search volume data if you’re spending a certain amount of money with Google AdWords. But it’ll at least show you volume ranges, and that’s good enough to give you an idea for what people are searching for.)

As you conduct keyword research, you’ll notice that keywords fall into 2 main categories:

1) **“Buying Intent” keywords**

People searching for buying intent keywords are looking for your product or service now. For example, someone who searches for “tax help Orlando” likely needs to have specific tax questions answered as soon as possible.

Your initial focus should be on buying intent keywords, since those are the searches that are more likely to generate leads and customers for your business.

As we’ll see in Step 2 below, you’ll want to optimize your “core” pages (homepage, services pages) for these “buying intent” keywords. Your homepage should be focused on your #1 most important “buying intent” keyword. And then each of your service pages should be optimized for keywords related to those specific services.



2) Research-Intent keywords

Research-intent keywords show that a prospect is “just researching” a topic, or potentially looking to handle the work himself. The person might want your services eventually, but not today.

“How to” keywords are classic research-intent keywords. For example, if you’re a fence contractor, a “how to” search could be “how to repair a picket fence.” Or, a person searching “how to plant a tree” is just researching and isn’t looking to hire a landscaper right now.

Targeting research-intent keywords should not be your top priority, since they do not drive quick conversions. Hang onto them, though, as they are excellent for FAQs and blogs. These informational posts introduce you to prospects who might remember you when they are ready to make a purchase.

Also, there are some research-intent phrases that can attract people looking to make a hiring decision. Specifically, cost-related phrases can help to attract people who are looking to hire your services. For example, a dentist may want a blog post or FAQ post related to the “cost of dental implants” or “cost of invisalign” to get in front of patients who are doing pricing research.

Here are some tips on creating a big list of research-intent keywords:

1. In Keyword Planner, add “Keywords to include”

By adding keywords like “how” and “how to” and “what” in your Keywords Planner search, you can filter for research-intent keywords.

And if you want even more research-intent ideass...

2. Use Ubersuggest (<https://ubersuggest.io/>) to create a big seedlist of research-intent keywords.

Ubersuggest compiles all of Google’s suggested search phrases about a particular topic. For example, if you’re an orthodontist, you could input the keyword “invisalign” and Ubersuggest will return hundreds of keyword phrases related to Invisalign. You can then download this keyword list into a CSV spreadsheet, and then upload it to Keyword Planner to check which of these search phrases have volume.

At this point, you should have a solid list of hiring-intent keywords as well as a list of research-intent keywords. Now it’s time to put those keywords to work for your business...



Step 2: Optimize For Your Keywords

The next step is to “optimize” for these keywords, and there are 3 places we’ll focus:

- Core pages (homepage, services pages) for hiring-intent keywords
- Google My Business profile page (if you operate locally)
- Content pages for research-intent keywords

Let’s get started...

A) Core Website Optimization for Hiring-Intent Keywords

Your homepage and services pages are what we call your “core” pages. These are the most important pages to optimize, and we’ll optimize them for hiring-intent keywords.

(Later, you will optimize your blogs and FAQs, or content pages, for your research-intent keywords.)

Homepage

The most important element on your homepage is your **title tag**. Your title tag should be 50-65 characters in length, and you can think of it as like a chapter in a book. We recommend putting the target keyword phrase early in the title, and then the brand name towards the end. And if you operate a locally-focused business, be sure to include your city/town in the title tag too.

As an example, an orthodontist’s homepage might use a title tag like this:

Orthodontist in {Your City} | {Name of Your Practice}.

Next is the **meta description**, which should be 100 to 150 characters long, describe your core services, and end with a call to action. For an orthodontist, it might look like this:

{Name of Practice} offers quality {braces and Invisalign treatment, or similar} in {Your City}. Call {Phone Number} today to schedule your appointment!

Next, make sure you’ve got a well-written **H1**, the visible headline on your page. It should be concise and easy to read, and should include your main Google category. Here’s an example H1 template for an orthodontist:

{Name of Practice} – {Orthodontist} in {City, State}.

Finally, consider your **page copy**. It should be 500 to 1000 words in length, tightly written and edited, and peppered with your primary keyword in a natural fashion. Give readers background



information on your company, briefly describe your main services, and end with a strong call to action.

Also, make sure you have a prominent call to action “above the fold” on your homepage, so it’s obvious how to contact your company, without scrolling down the page.

Service Pages

Each of your core services should have its own separate service page. Optimize each for a buying intent keyword, following the same steps that you used for your homepage.

Important: Back in Step 1, you created a list of all of the services that you provide. It’s critical that your website has a dedicated page for each of your services. If you find that you’re missing any pages for your services on your website, be sure to add the missing service pages to your website right away. Google’s mission is to show the most relevant pages for any given query. And if you don’t have a separate, focused page for one of your services, then you’re putting your business at a disadvantage in the search results.

For example, if you’re an attorney with multiple practice areas, you’d want to have a separate page for each practice area (such as estate planning, criminal defense and personal injury). And each of those pages should be optimized for the service keyword as well as the geographic keyword.

The title tags for separate service pages would follow a similar template, like this:

Estate Planning Attorney in {City, State} | {Name of Practice}

Criminal Defense Attorney in {City, State} | {Name of Practice}

Personal Injury Attorney in {City, State} | {Name of Practice}

Locations & “Service Area” Pages

If you have multiple locations, we recommend building out a page for each location.

Also, if you travel to your customers/clients, we recommend building out a “Service Area” section of your website, with 5-10 pages optimized for your 5-10 top priority towns within your service area.

Each page’s title tag could then have the service keyword and the geographic keyword pertaining to your primary service and the town.



Add Your “NAP” on Every Page

Make sure that your business NAP (name, address, and phone number) are up to date, and are identical across your website, and other online listings (including your Google My Business profile).

It's important to get your NAP listed on every page of your website, and an easy way to do that is to add your business Name, Address and Phone number in the footer of every page on your site.

B) Google My Business

If you operate a locally-focused business, it's critical that you have a verified, optimized Google My Business profile.

Think of your Google My Business page as a mini website that will show up in the “map” section of Google's search results. It offers a brief snapshot of your business.

The important thing to recognize is that Google prefers to show Google My Business pages for lots of local searches. Google realizes that when people are searching for a dentist or a yoga studio, they want to see local results -- and Google shows the “Map” results (Google My Business listings) above the regular website results, typically in a 3-pack.

In order to rank on the first page, your Google My Business page must be fully completed and entirely accurate.

Here's a checklist to get you started:

- **Verification:** First, claim your page and submit it through the Google verification process. You will know this is done when you see a checkmark and the word “Verified” next to your company name when viewing your profile page. For example, view Main Street ROI's Google My Business profile page here and you'll see the checkmark to the right of Main Street ROI: <https://plus.google.com/+Mainstreetroi>
- **NAP:** Make sure that your business NAP (name, address, and phone number) are up to date, and are identical across your Google My Business profile, your website, and other online listings. You can check accuracy and consistency of your NAP with MozLocal (<http://moz.com/local/search>).
- **Categories:** Google categories must be focused on services rather than results. For example, a fence company might choose Fence Contractor and Fence Supply Store, along with any supplementary services such as Handyman. Aim for 3 to 5 categories in

total. Here's a handy database of Google My Business categories from Mike Blumenthal: <http://blumenthals.com/google-lbc-categories/>

- **Description:** Your description is a brief overview of your business that closes with a call to action, and should be between 100 and 200 words long. A fence company might use something like this:
 - {Name of Company} offers professional {fence building and repair or similar} in {Your City}. {Provide some information about your company and/or why customers choose you.} Call {Phone Number} today for a free estimate!
- **Hours:** Make sure that your hours of operation are correct and are identical across the internet. If you provide expanded hours during certain times of year, include that information in a new paragraph.
- **Images:** Images help to humanize you to potential customers, and can increase customer engagement. Depending on the nature of your business, you might add a few photos of your office and your staff, your team at work, or even your satisfied customers (with permission). All images must be sharply focused, be between 10KB and 5MB in size, and have a minimum resolution of 720px x 720px. We also recommend replacing the generic Google My Business background image with a branded image.

C) Website Content for “Research-Intent” Phrases

Once you've optimized your website for your hiring-intent phrases, it's time to focus on research-intent phrases.

There are two main categories of research-intent phrases:

1. “How to” keywords

For example, “how to plant a dogwood tree” is an example of a “how to” keyword phrase. These how to phrases are good topics for informational blog posts

2. Question keywords

For example, “how much does a locksmith cost” is an example of a question keyword. These are good topics for either blog posts for Frequently Asked Question pages



Step 3. Develop Citations and Links

Once you've selected your keywords, and you've optimized your website (and Google My Business profile), the next step is to build links and citations. For locally-focused businesses, citations are very important for establishing first-page rankings.

Citations

A citation is a listing of your business NAP (name, address, and phone number) on a web page, such as an online directory. The more citations you have, and the more consistent they are, the better. Having a consistent NAP gives Google confidence that you operate a legitimate business.

Here are some steps to build citations and establish a consistent NAP:

1. Use the MozLocal citation scoring tool to audit your citation accuracy

Enter your business name and zip code and check the accuracy of your NAP:

<https://moz.com/local/search>

2. Register with data aggregators such as

- Infogroup
- Acxiom.com
- Neustar Localeze
- Factual

We recommend using BrightLocal.com to get listed in all four for \$55/year:

<https://www.brightlocal.com/local-seo-tools/local-data-aggregators/>

3. Get listed in online directories

We recommend submitting your business to relevant national, local, and industry-specific directories.

Here are some lists of directories you can consider submitting your business to:

Top 50 Local Citation Websites (US, UK, Canada)

<https://www.brightlocal.com/2013/09/11/top-50-local-citation-sites/>



Local Citation Websites for Top 100 USA Cities

<https://www.brightlocal.com/2015/03/31/local-citation-sites-for-top-100-usa-cities/>

Best Niche Citation Websites for 41 Business Categories

<https://www.brightlocal.com/2014/10/09/top-citation-sites/>

If you'd prefer to hire a firm to handle submissions for you, here are the two companies we recommend:

- Whitespark.ca: <https://whitespark.ca/services/>
- BrightLocal.com: <https://www.brightlocal.com/local-seo-tools/citationburst/>

4. Competitor citation research

Finally, we recommend researching where your competitors are getting citations, and then getting listed on those websites too.

Here are some options:

- Search in Google for your competitors' business names and phone numbers to find their citations.
- Whitespark.ca offers a citation research tool (<https://whitespark.ca/local-citation-finder/>)

4. Issue press releases

Finally, we've found that issuing press releases with your Name, Address, Phone in the byline ("About XYZ Company" section) of the releases is another effective way to build citations.

Here's a relevant case study:

<https://www.mainstreetroi.com/seo-case-study-the-power-of-press-releases/>

We recommend the "Advanced" package from PRWeb.com (\$249).

Links

In addition to building citations, it's also important to build a foundation of links to your website.

Here are some ways to build links to your website.

1. Directories



Directories are a good starting point for building links as well as citations. (Many citations will also include a link to your website.)

2. Real-World Relationships

Take inventory of the relationships you have in the real world, and brainstorm potential linking opportunities.

For example:

- Do you have personal contacts who have websites who may be interested in linking to your website?
- Do you have business partners (such as referral partners) who may be able to link to your website?
- Are you a member of any associations? And if so, is it possible to have a listing with a link to your website?
- Are you sponsoring any events or charities or local sports teams, and if so, is there an opportunity for the organization's website to post a link to your website?

3. Competitor Research

As with citations, we recommend conducting competitor research to identify new linking opportunities.

Enter your competitors' websites into these tools to see which websites are linking to them. And then you can conduct outreach to those websites (or submit a listing, if they are directory websites) in order to gain more links.

Recommended link research tools:

- Ahrefs: <https://ahrefs.com/>
- Open Site Explorer: <https://moz.com/researchtools/ose/>

4. Guest Blogging

In addition, another way to gain links to your website is by contacting relevant blogs, and offering to contribute an article to their website. In the byline of your article, you'd then include a link back to your website.

We recommend researching relevant blogs in Google by doing a search such as:
[keyword] "guest post"

Step 4. Request Reviews

For locally-focused businesses in particular, it's very important to get reviews. And specifically, you'll want to have customers post reviews for you on your Google My Business profile.

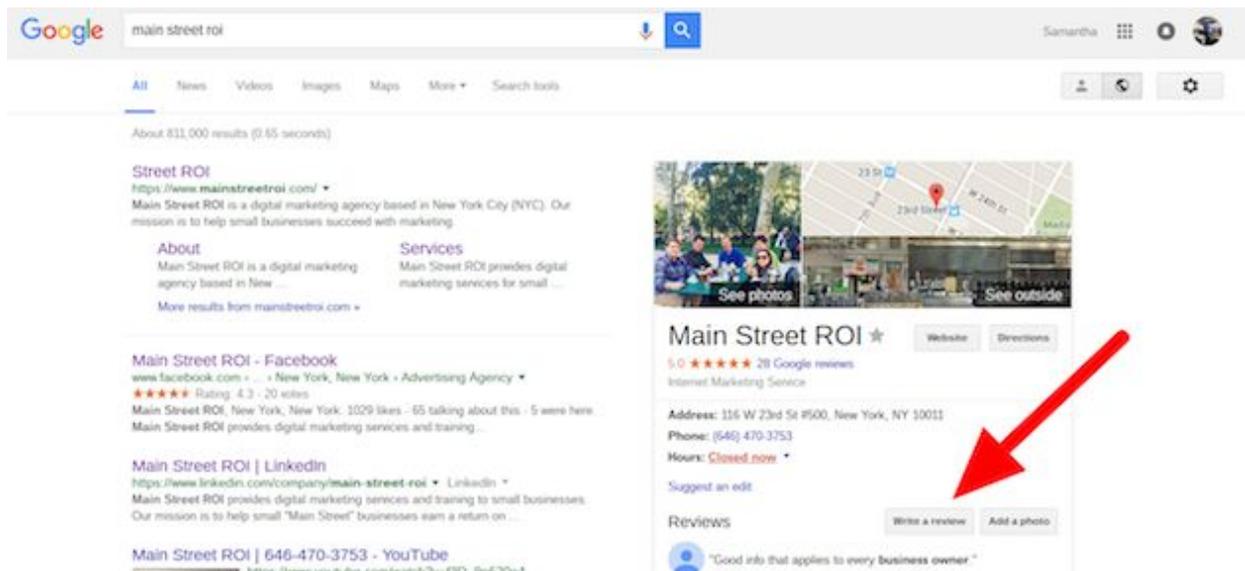
So how do you actually get reviews?

First, you'll be way more likely to get reviews if you actually ask for reviews. And timing is everything. It's a good idea to ask for reviews immediately after you've completed your services, or after customers have expressed satisfaction with your service.

Then, you need to make it easy for your customers. We recommend sending a link via email to where your customers can leave you a review in Google.

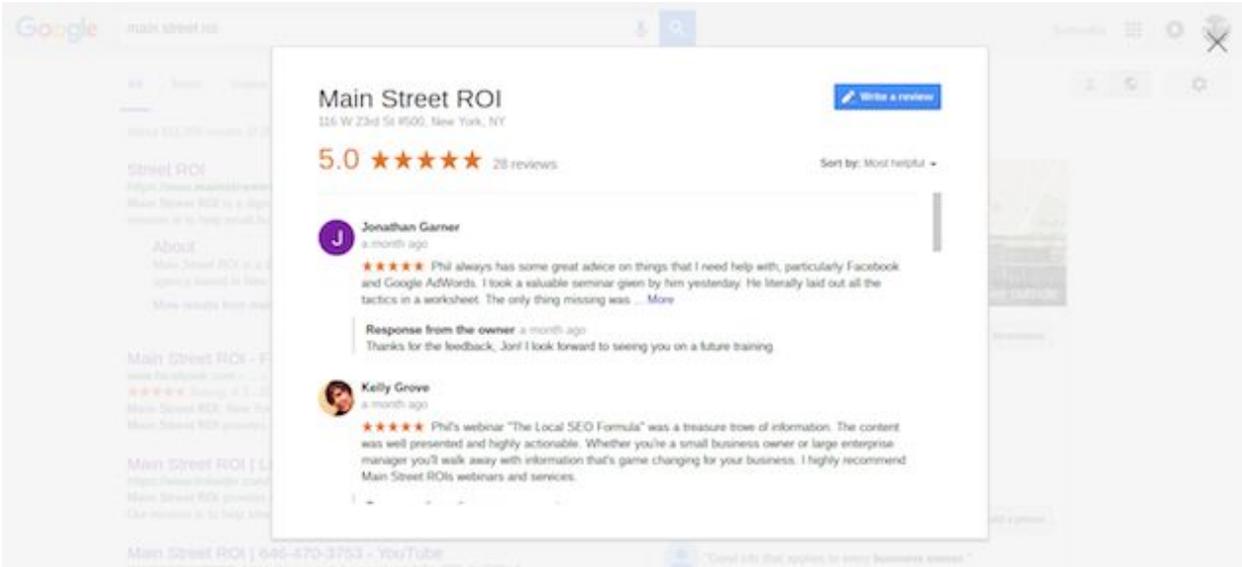
Here's how to create your review link:

1. Search in Google for your company name. A preview of your Google profile should show up in the search results. In this example below, we searched in Google for our company name "main street roi."
2. Click on the "Write a Review" button.

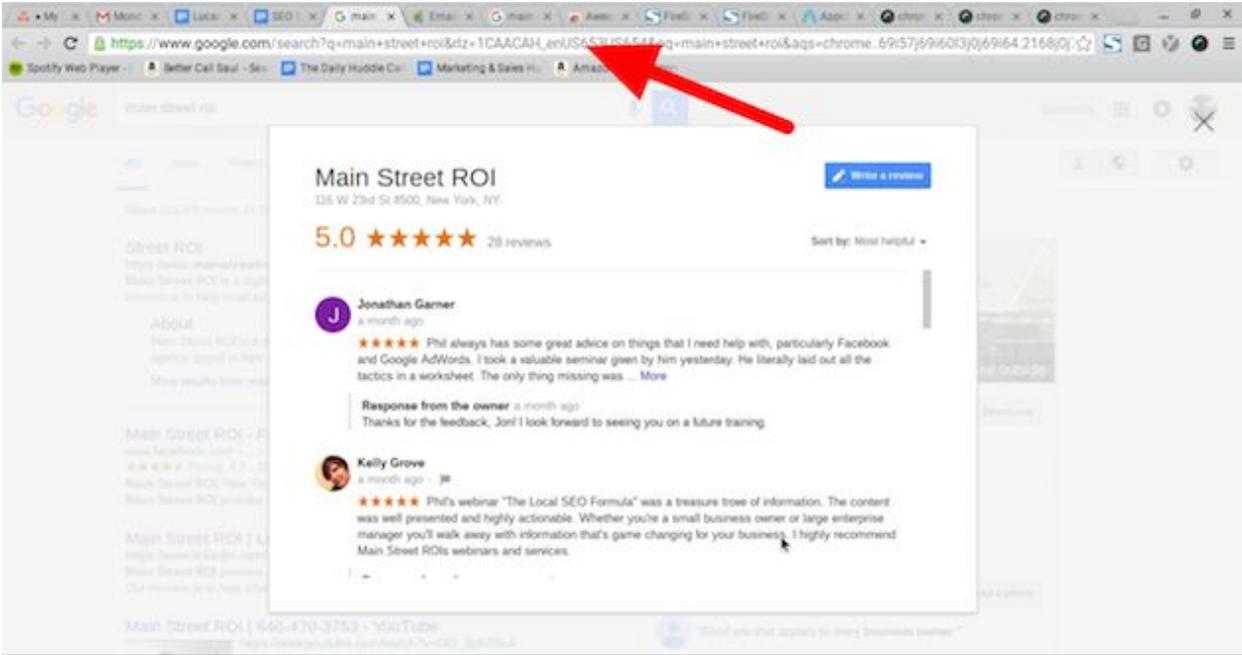


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Once you click “Write a Review,” you’ll see that a preview of all of your reviews show up, along with a big 5-star rating image. It’ll look like this:



Copy and paste the long URL in your browser and send it to your customers.





Step 5. Track Your Results

It's important to track your results, so you know what's working and what's not, and how to improve over time.

Here are the 3 most important metrics to track:

1. Rankings

The search results that Google displays are customized based on location and your previous browsing activity. The best way to get consistent ranking metrics is to use a tool (rather than checking manually). Our favorite tool for tracking Local SEO rankings is [RankRanger.com](https://www.rankranger.com). This convenient tool provides automatically updated ranking data from all of your SEO campaigns, and tracks not only your webpages, but also your Google My Business page. That means you can get accurate local SEO ranking metrics.

2. Traffic

To track your traffic, or visitors to your website, use Google Analytics.

We recommend keeping an eye on organic search traffic trends on a long-term and short-term basis. For example, you should review the long-term SEO traffic trends over the past year, and also compare the most recent month to the previous month, as well as to the same month from the previous year.

That way, you'll have a sense for whether your traffic is growing over time, and you'll also know how each month stacks up to previous months. And if you have a seasonal business, then it's important to be measuring against the same month in the previous year versus the previous month.

3. Leads (aka Goal Completions)

Finally, it's critical to track the leads you're generating from your website. For example, you'll want to set up Google Analytics Goals to track webform completions when people submit a contact form on your website, or sign up for a coupon or for your email newsletter.

Using Goal tracking in Google Analytics, you can track how many leads you're generating from SEO, as well as which pages on your website are generating the most conversions.



I hope you've enjoyed this free report!

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<https://www.mainstreetroi.com/seo-bundle/>

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