

Map Pack Ranking Blueprint

The exact framework we use to rank local businesses in Google's 3-pack. Covers all three ranking signals and a 90-day action plan.

HOW GOOGLE DECIDES WHO RANKS IN THE MAP PACK

Google uses three core signals to rank local businesses. Understanding them helps you prioritize your time and budget on what actually moves rankings.

Signal	What It Means	How to Improve It
RELEVANCE	Does your business match what the searcher wants?	Optimize GBP categories, services list, website keywords
DISTANCE	How close is your business to the searcher?	Add service areas, create location landing pages
PROMINENCE	How well-known and trusted is your business?	Build backlinks, earn reviews, get citations, add content

THE LINK TYPES THAT MOVE LOCAL RANKINGS

Not all backlinks are equal for local SEO. These are ranked from highest to lowest impact for Map Pack rankings specifically:

#	Link Type	Impact	How to Get Them
1	Local news site mentions	Very High	Press releases, community involvement, data studies
2	Chamber of Commerce listing	High	Join your local chamber (~\$200-500/yr)
3	Industry association directories	High	BBB, trade orgs (NARI, PHCC, ADA, etc.)
4	Local business directories	Medium-High	Yelp, Angi, Thumbtack, Houzz (niche-specific)
5	Sponsor local events/teams	Medium	Little League, charity events, school fundraisers
6	Guest posts on local blogs	Medium	Neighborhood blogs, local news sites, city guides
7	Partner links (non-competing)	Medium	Referral partners, suppliers, complementary services
8	General business directories	Low-Medium	Foursquare, Manta, Superpages — for citation signals

THE REVIEW VELOCITY FORMULA

Volume alone is not enough. Google also measures how frequently you receive new reviews (velocity) and the diversity of reviewers. Here is the formula that works:

Step	Action	When
1	Complete the job / service delivery	Day 0
2	Send review request SMS within 2 hours of completion	Day 0
3	If no review in 5 days, send one follow-up email	Day 5
4	Respond to every review within 24 hours	Ongoing
5	Track monthly — aim for 2+ new reviews per month	Monthly

90-Day Map Pack Action Plan

A week-by-week roadmap to move from invisible to the top 3 results.

Week	Focus	Key Actions
1-2	Foundation	Claim/verify GBP, audit NAP, fix citations on top 20 directories
3-4	On-Page	Add LocalBusiness schema, create/optimize service pages, fix Core Web Vitals
5-6	GBP Depth	Add all services with descriptions, upload 10+ photos, set up Q&A
7-8	Reviews	Launch review request system, get 5+ new reviews, respond to all existing
9-10	Links	Join Chamber of Commerce, submit to 3 industry directories, sponsor one local event
11-12	Content	Publish 2 blog posts targeting local keywords, build 2 location landing pages
Month 3+	Scale	Weekly posts, monthly links, 2+ reviews/mo, track rankings weekly in GSC

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