

CHECKLIST · GETTING STARTED

New Business Local SEO Checklist

Launching a brand new local business? This is the exact setup sequence — from zero Google presence to your first ranking signals — in the order that actually matters.

Why order matters

Setting up citations before your Google Business Profile is verified, or asking for reviews before your listing is complete, wastes effort. Follow this sequence to avoid rework.

• Week 1 — Foundation

1 Create & verify your Google Business Profile

Verification can take days by mail — start this first, before anything else.

2 Choose your exact primary category

The single highest-impact GBP setting. See our GBP Categories Cheat Sheet for the exact category by trade.

3 Lock your master NAP (Name, Address, Phone)

Decide the exact format now — you'll copy this identically everywhere. Changing it later means fixing every listing again.

4 Get your website live with NAP in the footer

Even a single-page site works. Phone number and address must be in visible HTML text, not just an image or map embed.

• Week 2 — Profile & Citations

5 Complete every GBP field

Description, hours, services, attributes, and at least 10 photos. Incomplete profiles rank worse.

6 Submit to the Tier 1 citation directories

Google, Bing Places, Apple Maps, Yelp, Facebook — same NAP everywhere.

7 Add LocalBusiness schema to your homepage

Tells Google your business type, location, and hours directly in the code.

8 Set your title tag with service + city

Example: "Plumber in Austin, TX | 24/7 Emergency Service — [Business Name]".

• Week 3–4 — First Reviews & Content

- 9 Ask your first 5–10 customers for reviews**
Use our Review Request Templates. A GBP with zero reviews rarely ranks, no matter how complete it is.
- 10 Publish one dedicated page per core service**
Don't cram every service onto the homepage — each service deserves its own page targeting its own keyword.
- 11 Submit your sitemap to Google Search Console**
Speeds up indexing significantly versus waiting for organic discovery.
- 12 Publish your first GBP post**
Shows Google — and customers browsing Maps — that your business is active.

• Month 2–3 — Build Authority

- 13 Expand to Tier 2 & industry-specific directories**
Angi, HomeAdvisor, Houzz, or your industry's dedicated directories.
- 14 Reach out for your first 2–3 local backlinks**
Local news, chambers of commerce, supplier or partner websites.
- 15 Run your first full local SEO audit**
Use our free 17-point audit tool to check what's working and what still needs fixing.
- 16 Set up a recurring monthly maintenance routine**
Switch to our Monthly Local SEO Checklist to keep momentum going long-term.

Milestone	Target
GBP verified	End of Week 1
Website live with NAP	End of Week 1
Listed on 5+ Tier 1 directories	End of Week 2
First 5 Google reviews	End of Week 4
All core service pages published	End of Week 4
First local backlink earned	End of Month 3

Want this done for you? **LocalHero** offers fully managed local SEO launches for new businesses — book a free strategy call at localhero.live.

