Local SEO checklist for contractors: 12 things to fix before you pay anyone.

This is the list I run through on every new site and on every strategy call. Most of it is free. Most owners have done three or four of the twelve. Do the rest and you will beat half the shops in your town without spending a dollar on ads.

GOOGLE FIRST. THESE BRING CALLS THE FASTEST.

- [ ] **Claim and finish your Google Business Profile.** Pick the exact category first, like "Tree service", not "Contractor". List every service. Add every town you work as a service area. Hours and phone correct. The map with the three names is where most calls start, and an unfinished profile does not make it in.
- [ ] **Put 10 real job photos on it, then add a few every month.** Phone photos are fine. Before and after. Your truck, your crew. No stock photos. Google can tell, and so can the homeowner.
- [ ] **Ask for a review after every job, by text, with the direct link.** Same day, while they are happy. Reply to every review within a day, good or bad. Twenty recent reviews beat two hundred old ones.
- [ ] **Same name, address and phone everywhere.** Google, Yelp, Facebook, Nextdoor, Angi, the BBB. One phone number, one spelling. A different number on Yelp costs you trust with Google.

YOUR WEBSITE. ONE PAGE PER THING YOU WANT TO BE FOUND FOR.

- [ ] **Tap-to-call phone number at the top and bottom of every page.** And a short form that lands on your phone, not in an inbox you check on Sundays. A lead you answer in five minutes books. A lead you answer tomorrow already hired someone.
- [ ] **One page per service.** Brush clearing gets its own page. So does weed abatement, stump grinding, junk hauling. A home page that lists twelve services in one block ranks for none of them.
- [ ] **One page per town you work.** Named for the search: "Tree removal in Sonora, CA". Real detail on each: jobs you did there, the roads, the neighborhoods, the problems that town has. Not the same page with the town name swapped. Google skips those.
- [ ] **A title on every page that reads like something you would click.** Service, town, business name. "Stump Grinding in Jackson, CA | Gold Country Tree". That title is the blue link on Google. Most trades sites say "Home".
- [ ] **Loads in under 3 seconds on a phone.** Most of your visitors are standing in their yard on cell data. Open your own site on your phone with the Wi-Fi off. If you wait, they leave.

EVERY MONTH. THIS IS WHAT KEEPS YOU ON PAGE 1.

- [ ] **Write up one real job.** Where it was, what it was, what made it hard, about what it cost. 300 words and three photos. That beats any stock blog post, and it is a new way in for the next customer with the same problem.
- [ ] **Answer the questions people ask you, in plain words, on the site.** "How much does stump grinding cost?" "Do I need a permit to take down a tree?" Those plain answers are what ChatGPT and Google's AI answers quote when someone asks who to hire.
- [ ] **Look at Google Search Console once a month, and ask every caller how they found you.** Search Console is free and shows which searches bring you up and which pages get clicks. The caller question tells you if any of it is turning into work. Write both down.

Four things not to do

- × Don't buy backlinks or a "$99 a month SEO package" from a cold call. It does nothing or it gets you penalized.
- × Don't repeat the same keyword twenty times on a page. Write like you talk to a customer.
- × Don't run a Facebook page instead of a website. Google and ChatGPT do not send people to Facebook.
- × Don't pay for ads to make up for a site that does not rank. Ads stop the day you stop paying. Pages keep working.

How I know this works. This is the list behind Wacky Weedeating, my own brush clearing company in Sonora, CA: #1 on Google for weed abatement in about 3 months, 70% of leads from search, $0 on ads. The same list took Bramwell-McKay Brick Staining to page 1 in 7 Indiana towns in 1.5 months, and got Sonora Brush Clearing a $2,500 job 4 days after launch. The case studies with screenshots are at tenfoldlocal.com/case-studies/.

Want me to go through this list with you?

Free 30-minute strategy session. We look at your Google profile and your site together, and you leave with the three things to do first. No pitch. Hire me or don't, the session is the same either way.

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