BUILD A BUSINESS · BEGINNER · 12 MIN READ

Get found online: search, maps and your website

How local customers find businesses today, and the simple steps (and AI shortcuts) to show up in search, maps and AI answers.

Pass the check (4 of 5) online to earn the “Easy to Find” badge:
https://digitalbuilders757.com/university/study/get-found-online

Where customers look

People find local businesses through search engines, map apps, social media and, more and more, AI assistants that summarise the web. They all rely on the same things: clear, consistent, up-to-date information about who you are, what you do and where.

The free basics

- Claim your Google Business Profile (and Apple Business Connect, Bing Places): correct name, address, phone, hours, services, photos.
- Keep your name, address and phone identical everywhere.
- Ask happy customers for honest reviews, and reply to every review, good or bad. Never buy or fake reviews.
- Post updates and photos regularly so profiles look active.

Your website's part (SEO)

Search engine optimisation (SEO) means making pages that clearly answer what people search for. One page per main service and area ('Haircuts in Norfolk, VA'), a clear page title and description, fast loading on phones, real photos with alt text, and answers to common questions in plain words.

Technical must-haves: HTTPS, a sitemap, no broken links, and pages that work without signing in. Hosts like Vercel and builders handle most of this; check with free tools like Google Search Console.

Where AI helps

- Draft service pages and FAQs from your notes, then edit for accuracy and your voice.
- Suggest the questions customers search for in your area.
- Draft review replies you personalise.

- Don't publish pages of AI filler: thin, repetitive content can hurt you. Quality and accuracy win.

Key terms

SEO (search engine optimisation)
Making pages that clearly answer what people search for, so they're found.

Google Business Profile
A free listing that shows a business on Google Search and Maps.

Sitemap
A file listing a site's pages so search engines can find them.

Alt text
A short description of an image for screen readers and search engines.

Landing page
A one-page site that explains an offer and asks for one action.

Domain
Your site's name, like digitalbuilders757.com, rented from a registrar.

Try it: A 30-minute visibility check

1. Search your business (or a friend's) on a map app and a search engine as a customer would.
2. Fix one wrong detail: hours, phone, address or services.
3. Ask AI for the 10 questions local customers search for, and turn the top 3 into a FAQ.
4. Ask one happy customer for an honest review.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

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5 questions. Circle one answer for each; 4 or more correct passes. Answers are at the back.

1. What's the first free step for a local business to show up on maps?

A. Claim and complete its Google Business Profile
B. Buy ads
C. Make a logo
D. Write 100 blog posts with AI so search engines find you faster

2. What does SEO stand for?

A. Site encryption and online security
B. Search engine optimisation
C. Site edit online
D. Social media engagement optimisation

3. Which review practice is right?

A. Buying reviews
B. Writing fake reviews
C. Asking happy customers for honest reviews and replying to all
D. Deleting every bad review

4. Why keep your name, address and phone identical everywhere?

A. It looks neat on your website and business cards
B. It's cheaper to print the same details everywhere
C. It hides your exact location from competitors nearby
D. Maps and search engines trust consistency

5. What's the risk of publishing lots of unedited AI-written pages?

A. Thin, inaccurate content can hurt trust and search visibility
B. None
C. It makes the site faster
D. Search engines now require AI-written pages, so it can only help

Official sites

Google Business Profile: https://www.google.com/business/
Google Search Central: SEO starter guide: https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide
Google Search Console: https://search.google.com/search-console

Last reviewed 2026-11-25. AI tools change fast; check each tool's own site for current features, plans and prices.

ANSWER KEY

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1. A: Claim and complete its Google Business Profile
A complete, accurate profile is the foundation for local search and maps.

2. B: Search engine optimisation
SEO is making pages that clearly answer what people search for.

3. C: Asking happy customers for honest reviews and replying to all
Honest reviews and thoughtful replies build trust; fake reviews break rules and trust.

4. D: Maps and search engines trust consistency
Consistent details help services match and trust your listing.

5. A: Thin, inaccurate content can hurt trust and search visibility
Quality and accuracy win; edit and fact-check everything you publish.