

HUSKY DIGITAL PLAYBOOK • LOCAL SEO FOR HOME SERVICES

Google Maps for Contractors: How to Rank in the Top 3 & Win Calls

A step-by-step operating standard for Google Business Profile without spam or suspension risk. Deconstructing ranking signals on real US job sites (and why a 50-review profile can lose to one with 10).

Segment: Home Services (Remodeling, Trades, HVAC)

Market: United States

Standard: Google Guidelines Compliant

3 Core Ranking Factors in Google Local Results

Google keeps the precise ranking weights confidential, but explicitly states that local results are primarily driven by three core components:

1. RELEVANCE

How well a business profile matches what a customer is searching for. Google evaluates this through primary and secondary categories, services listings, business description, and website content.

2. DISTANCE

The physical distance between the searcher's location and the business. This is a geographic constraint that cannot be manipulated via SEO tactics.

3. PROMINENCE

How well-known and prominent the business is offline and online. Google directly highlights review count and review score, along with inbound web links. In practical Local SEO, we also account for organic website visibility and tier-1 directory consistency.

Warning: Keyword Stuffing in the Business Name:

Adding keywords like “Austin Kitchen Remodel” or “Denver HVAC Repair” to your business name is tempting — competitors often do it and see temporary ranking spikes. But unless those words appear on your legal business entity, signage, and tax documents, **this violates Google Guidelines**: profile details may be forcibly reverted, and the profile risks severe penalties up to suspension. Endangering your core business asset for a temporary edge is never worth the risk.

Key Takeaway: All three factors work together. Final rank is calculated dynamically for each individual query and location: the closest business with the most reviews will not automatically win #1.



Categories & Service Menus: Establishing Relevance

Choosing the wrong category degrades your profile's relevance for high-intent searches. Here is how to configure relevance without losing search volume:

PRIMARY CATEGORY

Business Identity over Highest Ticket: Choose what your company actually is, not just your most expensive job. If 80% of your revenue is kitchen remodels, choose *Kitchen Remodeler* rather than the generic *General Contractor*.

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES (UP TO 9)

Google permits 1 primary and **up to 9 secondary categories**. Only select trades you actively perform (e.g., *Bathroom Remodeler*, *Deck Builder*), avoiding dilution and spam.

USE SERVICES, NOT PRODUCTS

For contractors and home service businesses, use the **Services** section rather than *Products* (which is engineered for retail with items on physical shelves). Detail every offering with an accurate title, scope description, and starting price. This provides Google with explicit context on your scope of work while helping homeowners verify that you handle their exact project.

Job-Site Photography: Operating Standard

In Home Services, homeowners often shortlist contractors before placing their first phone call. Real job-site photography showcases your actual crew, process, and craftsmanship.

- ☐ **3-Shot Standard per Project:** Crew documents the initial "Before" state, active in-progress work featuring crew and tools, and the pristine "After" completion.
- ☐ **Prioritize Real Photos over Stock:** Stock imagery damages credibility. Upload real branded work vans, uniformed crews, and active job-site progress rather than internet mockups.
- ☐ **Geotagging & EXIF:** Do not waste operational hours manually geotagging images — Google does not list EXIF GPS coordinates as a local ranking signal. Authentic, high-quality job-site photos deliver far greater value.



Review Collection Protocols under Google Policy

Reviews are directly tied to Prominence and serve as a decisive trust signal for homeowners. However, policy violations invite review removal and profile-level restrictions.

Prohibited Tactics under Google Policy:

- Offering discounts, cash, gifts, or incentives for reviews (all compensation is banned).
- Review gating (filtering out unhappy clients while funneling satisfied customers to Google).
- Asking customers to insert specific keywords or cities. The solicitation must remain unbiased and authentic.

Compliant Review Request Script for PMs & Field Leads:

«Hi [Name]! This is [Name] from [Company]. Thank you for trusting us with your home! We'd really appreciate it if you could share your honest experience on Google. Your feedback helps other homeowners understand what it's like to work with our team:

[Direct Google Review Link or Business Card QR Code]

Thank you for your time and feedback!»

RESPONSE CADENCE

Acknowledge Every Review: Respond to 100% of feedback — both 5-star praise and complaints. Prospective clients actively inspect how management handles friction.

TONE & DEMEANOR

Professional and respectful. Express genuine gratitude, mention the specific scope of work completed, and maintain accountability without generic boilerplates.

Profile Updates & External Directories

- ☐ **NAP Consistency:** Name, address, and phone number must be represented consistently across your website and core external directories (Apple Maps, Bing Places, Yelp, BBB). This preserves clean data signals across the local search ecosystem.
- ☐ **Google Posts (Updates):** Recommended cadence — 1–2 weekly updates showcasing recently completed projects, seasonal promotions, or company announcements featuring action buttons (such as "Call now" where supported).



Full-Service Management

What Husky Digital Handles For You

We manage your Google Business Profile end-to-end: eliminating operational drag for your team, operating strictly under current Google Guidelines, and reporting verifiable grid-rank growth every month.

REPUTATION**Review Responses**

Continuous monitoring of inbound reviews with professional, on-brand responses deployed under an agreed SLA.

PROCESS**Field Crew Protocols**

Equipping technicians and PMs with compliant request scripts and custom QR cards to earn reviews without platform risk.

CONTENT**Google Posts (Updates)**

Drafting and publishing weekly updates highlighting completed jobs, seasonal promotions, and team announcements.

MEDIA**Job-Site Photo Management**

Extracting raw job-site photos from internal crew chats, curating the best angles, and uploading them on a weekly cadence.

MEASUREMENT**Local Grid Tracking**

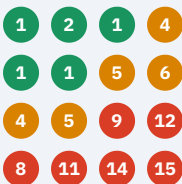
Measuring profile rankings across a multi-point geo-grid on key search queries (query × location). Concrete data instead of guesswork.

DIRECTORIES**Local Directory Sync**

Auditing and synchronizing business data across tier-1 platforms (Apple Maps, Bing, Yelp) to eliminate duplicate listings.

Google Business Profile Management — \$1,000 / mo

Fixed scope, weekly execution, multi-point geo-grid monitoring, and a transparent monthly report you can actually read.

[EXPLORE SERVICE ↗](#)**Local Grid Tracking: Multi-Point Proximity Measurement**

A business never holds a single fixed rank across an entire metro area: you may rank #1 near your yard, but rank significantly lower a few miles away. Geo-grid tracking maps your real visibility footprint and identifies growth targets. For self-serve rank monitoring, you can use accessible tools like localgridtracker.com to track your grid coordinates.