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FREE GUIDE

How Neighbors Search for Local Businesses

What people type when they need what you sell nearby, and how to show up for it.

When someone nearby needs what you sell, they rarely start with your name. Knowing how they look helps you show up.

Four ways people look

1. **By need and place:** "bakery near me," "gift shop in [neighborhood]."
2. **By the specific thing:** "gluten-free birthday cake," "same-day phone screen repair."
3. **By name:** your business, often to double-check a friend's recommendation.
4. **By asking:** in social posts, neighborhood groups, or AI assistants ("Where's a good brunch spot nearby?").

Where they look

- Google Search and Google Maps
- Instagram, TikTok, and other social platforms
- Neighborhood groups and word of mouth
- AI assistants such as ChatGPT

What Google weighs for local results

Google says local results are based mostly on three things:

- **Relevance:** how well your profile matches what someone searched.
- **Distance:** how far you are from the searcher, or from the place they typed.
- **Prominence:** how well known you are, including reviews and what the web says about you.

You can't move your location, but you can improve the other two.

How to show up

- [ ] Complete your Google Business Profile (see our free checklist).
- [ ] Use the words customers use for what you sell, on your website and your profile.
- [ ] Keep your name, address, phone, and hours the same everywhere they appear.
- [ ] Earn reviews from real customers and reply to them.
- [ ] Add real photos of your place and products.
- [ ] Get mentioned by local sources: neighborhood pages, local press, creators, and nearby businesses.

Try it: your 10-minute search test

1. On your phone, search three phrases a neighbor might use. Write them here:

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Do you show up? Where? Who appears above you?
3. Open your profile from the results. Does it look the way you want a stranger to see it?
4. Pick **one** fix to make this week.

Want a hand with this?
Book a free 15-minute intro at publicgoodstudio.com/qualify

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Search results vary by person, location, and time of day, so repeat the test now and then.