SEO LEAGUE

The SEO League Playbook

A 12-week local SEO season plan for small businesses.
Climb Google and the map, week by week.

SEOLeagueMarketing.com · Edition 1 · Educational content. No income or ranking guarantees.

START HERE

How to use this guide

Read it once, then work it chapter by chapter.

This playbook treats local SEO like a sports season: a preseason audit, a keyword draft, training on your pages, home and away games for your profile, links and reviews, then the stats. Do the chapters in order over 12 weeks. Every chapter ends with the one decision it asks you to make.

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CHAPTER 1

Preseason: the 20-minute SEO audit

Find out where you stand before you change anything.

Why start with an audit

Most small businesses jump straight to tactics: a new blog, a new plugin, someone selling backlinks. The audit tells you what is actually holding you back, so your season starts with the right fixes instead of random effort.

Run these five checks

1. **Search your business name.** Do you show up first, with a Google Business Profile on the right? Is the information correct?
2. **Search your main service + your town.** Where do you appear on the map and in the results? Note the top three competitors.
3. **Check your site on a phone.** Does it load fast, read easily, and show your phone number or main button without scrolling?
4. **Check your page titles.** Search *site:yourdomain.com*. Do the titles say what each page is about and where you work?
5. **Count your reviews.** How many do you have versus the top three, and how recent are they?

Write your scorecard

Use the Local SEO Scorecard to mark each check red, amber or green. Reds are your first fixes. Most businesses find two or three quick wins they can sort out this week.

THIS CHAPTER DECIDES

Your starting position in the league and your top three fixes.

CHAPTER 2

The draft: picking your keywords

Choose the searches worth competing for.

Keywords are what customers type

Forget jargon. A keyword is just what a real person types when they need you: "emergency plumber Tulsa," "best birthday cakes near me," "how much does a roof repair cost." Your job is to pick the ones that bring buyers, not just browsers.

Build your draft list

- Type your main services into Google slowly and note the autocomplete suggestions.
- Open "People also ask" and write down the questions.
- Look at the bottom-of-page "related searches."
- Add your town, neighborhoods and nearby cities to each service.

Aim for 30 to 50 phrases.

Pick your starting lineup

Score each phrase: Is it clearly a buyer (service + location, "price," "near me")? Could you realistically compete (are the top results small businesses, not national giants)? Do you actually offer it? Keep the best 10. These are your starting lineup for the season.

THIS CHAPTER DECIDES

Ten target keywords, each assigned to one page on your site (Chapter 4).

CHAPTER 3

Home ground: your Google Business Profile

Win the map before anything else.

Why the map matters most

For local searches, the map pack often appears above the regular results. A complete, active Google Business Profile is the single biggest free lever most local businesses have.

Complete every field

- Exact business name (no keyword stuffing; it can get you suspended)
- Most specific primary category, plus relevant secondary categories
- Address or service area, hours, phone, website
- Services or products with short descriptions
- A description that naturally mentions your main services and area
- At least 10 real photos, added to regularly

Keep it active

Post an update weekly, add new photos monthly, answer questions, and reply to every review. Activity signals that you're open, real and engaged.

THIS CHAPTER DECIDES

A fully complete profile and a weekly 10-minute upkeep slot on your calendar.

CHAPTER 4

Training: on-page basics

Make each page clearly about one thing.

One page, one job

Each of your ten target keywords gets its own page: a service page, a location page, or a question page. A single "Services" page trying to rank for everything usually ranks for nothing.

The on-page checklist

- **Title tag:** keyword + town + business name, under about 60 characters.
- **Main heading:** says plainly what the page is about.
- **Opening paragraph:** answers the search directly.
- **Details:** prices or price ranges, process, area served, FAQs.
- **Proof:** photos of real work, reviews, credentials.
- **Next step:** a clear call or booking button.
- **Internal links:** link related pages to each other.

Speed and mobile

Compress large images, remove clutter, and test on your own phone. If you can't find the phone number in three seconds, neither can a customer.

THIS CHAPTER DECIDES

Ten pages, each matched to one keyword and passing the checklist.

CHAPTER 5

Away games: citations and links

Build your reputation across the web.

Citations

A citation is any listing of your business name, address and phone. Consistent citations across major directories help search engines trust you. List your business on Bing Places, Apple Business Connect, Yelp, and the main directories for your industry, with identical details everywhere.

Links that actually help

Links from other real websites act like recommendations. The best ones for local businesses are local: chamber of commerce, local news, sponsors of community events, suppliers and partners, local blogs and associations.

Avoid the shortcuts

Never buy bulk links or join link schemes. They can get your site penalized. One genuine local link is worth more than a hundred junk ones.

THIS CHAPTER DECIDES

Five citations fixed or added and three local link opportunities pursued this season.

CHAPTER 6

Fan base: reviews

Earn the reviews that win clicks and trust.

Why reviews matter

Reviews affect both where you rank on the map and whether people click. Recency matters as much as count: a steady trickle beats a burst from years ago.

A simple review system

- Ask at the moment of delight: job done, customer happy.
- Send a direct link to your review form, never "search for us."
- Make it a habit: a line in your invoice email, a card at the counter, a text after the job.
- Reply to every review, briefly and professionally.

Play fair

Never write fake reviews, buy reviews, or offer payment for positive ones. It breaks platform rules and consumer law, and it's easy to get caught.

THIS CHAPTER DECIDES

A review request built into your normal workflow and a target of a few new reviews each month.

CHAPTER 7

The stats: tracking your progress

Know whether it's working.

Free tools to set up

- **Google Search Console:** which searches show your site, and how often people click.
- **Google Business Profile insights:** calls, direction requests and website clicks from the map.
- **Analytics:** visitors and what they do on your site.

What to watch monthly

Impressions and clicks for your ten keywords, map actions (calls, directions), and enquiries or sales from search. Ignore day-to-day swings; SEO moves over weeks and months.

Adjust

If a page gets impressions but few clicks, rewrite its title. If it gets clicks but no enquiries, improve the page. If it gets nothing after three months, revisit the keyword choice.

THIS CHAPTER DECIDES

Tracking set up and a monthly 30-minute stats review on your calendar.

CHAPTER 8

The 12-week season plan

Put it all together, one week at a time.

Weeks 1–2: Preseason

Run the audit. Fix the reds. Build your keyword list and pick your starting ten.

Weeks 3–4: Home ground

Complete your Google Business Profile. Add photos. Set up review requests.

Weeks 5–8: Training

Create or improve one target page per week, using the on-page checklist. Link them together.

Weeks 9–10: Away games

Fix citations. Pursue three local link opportunities.

Weeks 11–12: Review the table

Check your stats. Rewrite weak titles, strengthen weak pages, and plan next season's targets. SEO is a long game: keep the habits and each season builds on the last.

Final whistle

Results depend on your market, competition and consistency, and no one can guarantee rankings. But businesses that do these basics steadily usually pull ahead of competitors who don't.