more hands

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Getting found and cited by AI

A practical guide for UK small businesses

More Hands by Foundry Works

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Start here

People now ask AI assistants for recommendations as well as using search. Some assistants name businesses, some link to websites, and some do both. No one can promise you a place in those answers, and anyone who does is guessing.

What you can do is make your business easy to find, easy to understand and easy to check. Google's guidance for site owners says there are no additional requirements to appear in its AI features, and no special markup or files you need to add. The usual search basics apply. The sources at the end of this guide link to that advice.

This guide has ten jobs. Do them in order, and tick each off as you go.

Job 1: Say clearly who you are and where you work

On your home page, in plain words, put:

- The name customers know you by. Use the same trading name on your site, invoices and listings.
- What you do, in one sentence a customer would use ("Emergency plumber in Leicester").
- The towns or areas you serve.
- A phone number and email address that work.
- Your opening hours, and a public address only if customers visit you.

If you need to show your registered company name or number, put it in the footer or on your contact page.

Check yourself: read your home page as if you had never heard of the business. Can you tell what you do and where you work?

Job 2: Give each main service its own page

One page per main service answers one question well. "Boiler repair", "Bathroom fitting" and "Landlord safety certificates" are three pages, not three lines on one.

Each page can say what the service is, who it is for, how pricing works, how long it takes, which areas you cover and how to book. Use real photos of your own work.

Job 3: Answer the questions customers ask you

List the questions you hear most often before a sale. Write short, direct answers on your site, in your own voice, using your customers' words. Good places to find the questions are your enquiry emails, your phone log and your reviews.

Say what is true for your business. Do not copy another business's answers.

Job 4: Fix the basics of your website

- It works on a phone without sideways scrolling.
- Every page has its own title and a one-sentence description.
- Each page has one main heading.
- It uses https (the padlock).
- Your contact page or form works.
- Images have short descriptions of what they show.

Check yourself: open your site on your phone, on mobile data, and try to book or enquire. Note anywhere you got stuck.

Job 5: Set up your Google Business Profile, if you are eligible

A Google Business Profile can help local customers find you on Google Search and Maps. Check Google's guidelines to see whether your business is eligible, then complete every section that applies: categories, services, hours, photos, a description and your website link.

If you visit customers at their location rather than serving them from a shop, Google treats you as a service-area business. Set a service area and hide your address. If you work from home, do not show your home address.

Use your real-world business name, as customers know it and as it appears on your shopfront, website and stationery. Do not add keywords or extra words to the name.

Job 6: Keep your public details consistent

Search for your business name. Check the places you use, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Yell, your trade body's directory and any review sites. Make the trading name, contact details and description match where they appear publicly. Fix mistakes, and ask for outdated listings to be corrected or removed.

You do not need to publish private information to match a listing. Keep your home address, personal phone number and regulated or confidential records off public pages. Where a directory asks for your legal company details, enter them in the fields meant for that, separately from your public trading details.

Job 7: Invite reviews from genuine customers

Invite all your customers to leave an honest review, in the same way each time. For example, add a link to the end of your invoice or confirmation email. Google gives a way to create a review link or QR code.

Do not:

- Ask only the customers you expect to be happy.
- Offer discounts, gifts or other rewards in return for reviews.
- Write reviews yourself, or ask friends or staff to.
- Pay for reviews.

Reply to reviews politely and specifically, including the critical ones. A mix of positive and negative reviews tends to look more trustworthy than only perfect scores.

Job 8: Show your proof

Customers and search tools can only use what you publish. Show what is true and checkable:

- Photos and short write-ups of real jobs, with the customer's permission.
- Accreditations and memberships, with a number or a link to the register.
- Insurance details, if you are happy to share them.
- The people customers will meet, with names and photos.

Only claim what you can show. If you say "10 years' experience", be ready to prove it.

Job 9: Get genuine mentions from relevant places

Local press, trade bodies, your council's business directory, suppliers who list their installers and community groups often list businesses like yours. Ask for a listing or a mention where it is real and relevant. Prioritise relevant, genuine mentions over low-quality bulk links.

Job 10: Check it yourself, every month

Choose ten questions people might ask about your kind of business. Here are five examples for a plumber in Leicester. Swap in your own trade and town.

1. Who are the best plumbers in Leicester?
2. Who can fix a leaking boiler near Leicester?
3. How much does a boiler service cost in the UK?
4. Which Leicester plumbers are Gas Safe registered?
5. What should I check before hiring a plumber?

Ask them in a couple of AI assistants and in Google. Write down the date, the question, whether you were named, whether your website was linked, and who else appeared. Repeat next month. Change one thing at a time so the changes are easier to track. A change and a better answer happening together does not prove one caused the other.

Answers differ by person, place and day. One check is a snapshot, not a verdict.

A simple 30-day plan

- **Week 1:** Jobs 1 and 5. Make your home page clear, and set up your Google Business Profile if you are eligible.
- **Week 2:** Jobs 2 and 4. Write your main service pages and fix the website basics.
- **Week 3:** Jobs 3 and 6. Answer common questions and tidy your public details.
- **Week 4:** Jobs 7, 8 and 10. Start inviting reviews, add your proof and run your first monthly check.

Claims to be careful with

- “Guaranteed to be recommended by an AI assistant.” Nobody controls that.
- “A set number of extra leads in a set number of days.” No honest provider can promise a number.
- “You need a special file or markup for AI.” Google says its AI features need no special files or schema.
- “AI visibility score: 72.” A single number hides what happened. Ask what it was based on.

Sources

Sources checked November 2026.

1. Google Search Central, “AI Features and Your Website”: https://developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/ai-features
2. Google Search Central, “SEO Starter Guide: The Basics”: https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide
3. Google Business Profile Help, “Guidelines for representing your business on Google”: https://support.google.com/business/answer/3038177
4. Google Business Profile Help, “Tips to get more reviews”: https://support.google.com/business/answer/3474122

About More Hands

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Results depend on your market and your starting point. We do not promise rankings, citations, traffic or sales.

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