

FOUND
ON THE MAP

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How Local Businesses Win the Small Searches
on Google Maps

ITL Research
New York

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The measurements in this book were made by ITL Research in South Brooklyn and across New York City in October 2026, from public search results, open map data and national search statistics. They describe what we observed and will change over time.

This book is general information for business owners. It is not legal, medical or financial advice, and it promises no particular result. Platform rules change: check the current rules and, where needed, your own counsel.

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Illustrations created for ITL Research.

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SIX THINGS OUR DATA SHOWS

Most of the advice in this book is practical. These six findings from our measurements are what makes it necessary.

Each service has its own rivals. A business does not compete in one market but in many, one per service. In South Brooklyn jewelers hold 90% of the top-three places for *ring resizing*, but watch shops hold 72% for *watch repair* and piercing studios and accessory chains 76% for *ear piercing*. Med spas that offer laser hair removal meet studios built around that one service. ([Chapter 4](#))

Being seen is not being chosen. A clinic we follow in Sheepshead Bay appears in 73% of the map searches in its zone and reaches the top three, where customers choose, in 10%. A jeweler nearby appears in 31% and reaches the top three in 5%. Both owners can truthfully say they show up on Google. ([Chapter 4](#))

The small searches are spread thin and often weakly held. In 312 treatment searches across 13 neighborhoods, 89 different clinics are first at least once, and the five that most often lead the plain *med spa* search are first in only 52. In 13% of med spa searches and 15% of jeweler searches, first place belongs to a business with fewer than 25 reviews or an unclaimed profile. ([Chapter 4](#))

Almost a third of jewelers have never claimed their profile. In South Brooklyn 31% of jeweler profiles, and 7% of med spa profiles, are not

claimed by their owners: a storefront on the map with nobody behind the counter. ([Chapter 3](#))

Paid advertising is thinner than owners assume. Of 100 local med spa pages, 12 run Facebook or Instagram ads, and none of 39 local med spa searches showed a Google search ad. Of 83 local jewelers, 5 run such ads, and 4 of 39 searches showed a paid result, mostly from national sellers. In many local trades the map is the main road to the customer. ([Chapter 11](#))

A click price measures the customer, not the search. In Brooklyn *cash for gold* and *ring resizing* get about the same number of searches, around 280 a month, yet the suggested click prices are \$36.12 and \$6.94. *Watch repair*, with about 5,700 searches, costs \$4.23. Seasons differ as much: coolsculpting searches peak in April at 1.88 times their December low, while IV therapy varies by only 1.26 times. ([Chapter 12](#))

And one conclusion that runs through the whole book: Google now reads much as a person does, so the job is no longer to fool it but to make yourself understood, including the unusual cases a typical customer profile leaves out. ([Chapter 7](#))

South Brooklyn, measured October 2026.

Part One

HOW THE MAP WORKS



1

WHY THE MAP MATTERS MORE THAN YOUR WEBSITE

The internet tends to narrow a market to a few winners. Local business escapes that, until a customer looks for it on a map that behaves like the rest of the internet.

Ask a local owner where the next customer will come from, and you will hear about the website, the social page, the ad budget, the sign on the door. Ask a customer how they found the place, and the answer is usually shorter. They searched on a phone, looked at a map, tapped one of the first names, and called or walked in.

This book makes one argument, and it is worth stating at the start: for most local businesses, the map matters more than the website. The

website still has its uses. The map is where the choice is made, though, and for a growing number of businesses it is the only page a customer ever sees.

Online markets narrow

Digital markets have a habit of narrowing to a few winners, and there are three plain reasons.

A copy costs almost nothing. Once a piece of software, a song or a design has been made, selling the second copy costs close to zero, so the maker who sells the most can spread the cost across more buyers and charge less than anyone else.

Users attract users. A marketplace, a social network or a booking site is worth more when the people you know are already there. The biggest one gets bigger because it is biggest.

Distance disappears. A shop in another country is as close as a browser tab. Nobody has to be near anything to buy from it.

Each of these pushes the same way. The market splits into a handful of names everyone knows and a long, quiet remainder. That is why so many online categories end up with two or three winners and very little in between.

Local business resists this

A salon has a few chairs. A jeweler has one counter and one pair of hands. A dentist can see only so many patients in a day. No local business can physically serve a whole city, and no customer will cross the city for a ring resizing.

When supply cannot scale and demand will not travel, the market stays split among many businesses, and often none of them holds a clear lead. That is the ordinary shape of a local trade.

Our measurements show it plainly. Across New York City we profile 23,349 businesses of 12 types in 18 market areas. In South Brooklyn alone,

89 different clinics are first in at least one of 312 treatment searches. The map itself splits the area into separate micro-markets a few blocks wide, each with its own leaders ([chapter 2](#)). There is no king of South Brooklyn. There are local leaders who own a few blocks each, and a great deal of map held loosely.

The window does not

Now the twist that gives this book its subject. The market on the ground stays split, but the customer no longer walks the street to see it. They choose through an online storefront, the map, and the map works by the rules of the internet.

It shows about three places at a time. The first few take most of the calls and the visits. A business shown first gets more customers, those customers write more reviews, and the reviews help keep it first. That is the narrowing of an online market applied to a market that shows no sign of narrowing on the ground: a split market seen through a winner-takes-most window.

The market on the ground stays split. The window customers look through does not.

Look at what the window shows. Three names on a map, each with a rating, a review count, a category, a photo and a distance. Under them, a list that continues down the screen. Almost everything a stranger needs in order to decide is inside that one small frame, and very little of it comes from your website.

Where that window has already picked its favorites, the contest is expensive. On the head terms, the short general phrases like *med spa*, *jewelry store* or *dentist*, the leader has been collecting customers and reviews for years, and the lead feeds itself. Where the window has not

picked a favorite, there is room: the smaller searches for one service, and the micro-markets a few blocks from the leader's door.

[Chapter 4](#) takes the two halves of that picture apart with our own numbers. For now, keep the shape in mind, because everything else in the book follows from it.

The profile is the storefront

Think about what a customer actually sees before they call or walk in. A card with a name, a few photos, a rating, a phone number, an address, and a button to call. Some people tap through to a website. Many do not.

For a large share of independent businesses there is no website to tap through to. In open map data, only 42% of independent nail salons and 44% of auto repair shops list a website of their own. Those figures come from open data, which is incomplete, so treat them as approximate shares rather than exact counts. The direction is what matters: for a great many businesses, the profile is the website, and every field on it does the work a home page would do elsewhere.

Even where a good site exists, the map usually comes first. A customer picks a name from the three on the screen and opens the site afterward, to check the hours or to book. The site confirms a choice the map has already made.

A website still has a job. It answers the questions the profile has no room for, and it is the only page in the whole chain that you own. But the order has changed. The profile does the introducing, and the site does the confirming, and a business that treats the profile as a formality is leaving the introduction to chance.

That is why the three opening chapters are about the map and the profile rather than about web design. Chapter 2 sets out what Google says it ranks local results on. Chapter 3 walks through the profile field by field, and what each field does for a stranger.

The ground is moving too

One honest correction before the argument gets too comfortable. Local markets are not frozen in their split, small-business form.

Chains and groups buy clinics, practices and studios. In the markets we profile, chains account for 33% of gyms, 24% of nail salons and 24% of veterinarians, with 2% among immigration lawyers. Booking platforms push the same way, gathering customers into one place to compare and book, which tends to favor the businesses that appear everywhere and can pay for attention.

Consolidation is real, and it makes the map harder for an independent over time. But the physical limit has not moved. A group with a dozen locations still cannot serve a city from one door, and the customer in Brighton Beach still wants someone nearby. For as long as that is true, the local market stays split, however much the window above it narrows.

There is one more caveat, about what a place on the list means: being visible in the map results is not the same as being chosen, and [chapter 4](#) shows how wide that gap can be.

What the book offers

This book is for the owner who has a profile, maybe a website, and the feeling that something is happening online that they cannot quite see. There is no secret setting behind the map. What the book offers is a way to find the parts of the map where a small business can win, and a monthly method for working them.

Nobody controls who Google shows first, and nothing here promises a ranking or a number of customers. What it offers is a fair attempt: choose a few searches where the odds are reasonable, make each one easy to find and easy to trust, watch from the same spots on the same day each month, keep what works and drop what does not.

The method is small on purpose. It is built for a team of three or four people who have a business to run, and it fits into an hour or so a week. It also assumes you will keep at it, because a local market takes time to show you anything.

How the book is organized

The book has three parts.

Part I, How the map works. These three chapters. What the map does to a local market, how Google decides who to show, and how to read your own profile field by field. Nothing here asks you to change anything yet.

Part II, Manage your long tail. The method, in six chapters. [The head term is crowded](#) shows why the biggest search is the worst place to start. [Collecting your long tail](#) shows how to find the smaller searches of a trade. [Choosing your seeds](#) picks five. [Plant, watch and deepen and drop](#) run the monthly cycle.

Part III, What supports the method. Reviews and photos, competitors and their ads, seasons and click prices, and a schedule for one hour a week.



2

HOW GOOGLE PICKS WHO TO SHOW

Google names three things it ranks local results on, and keeps the details to itself. Knowing which of the three an owner can move is most of the practical work.

Chapter 1 argued that the map is where a local customer decides. The next question follows on its own: how does a business get onto that map at all, and why do some businesses appear at the top while others sit several screens down?

Google answers part of this in public, and the public part is worth reading closely, because it is the only part anyone outside Google can rely on.

Three things Google names

Google says its local results are ranked on three things: relevance, distance and prominence.

Relevance is how well a business matches the search. It comes from the category, the services the business lists, the words on its profile and its website, and its photos. A jeweler who resizes rings every day but never says so anywhere is a weaker answer for *ring resizing* than a jeweler who says it plainly, even if the work itself is identical.

Distance is how far the business is from the person searching, or from the place named in the search. This is the part that changes from block to block, and we will come back to it.

Prominence is how well known a business is. Google describes it as drawing on things like reviews and ratings, how often the business is mentioned and linked to elsewhere on the web, and its website. A business that many people have dealt with and written about is a safer answer for Google to give a stranger.

Google does not publish the details: no weights, formulas or list of factors in order of importance. Anyone who tells you they know exactly how the three are combined is guessing, and anyone who sells a method based on that guess is selling the guess.

The three also explain most of what an owner finds puzzling about the map. A business can match a search perfectly and still sit fifth, because the two above it are closer. It can be the nearest shop and still sit fifth, because the others are better known. Reading a result this way, as a mix of three separate things, is more useful than reading it as a verdict on the business.

Intent comes before ranking

Before Google can rank anything, it has to work out what kind of question it is answering.

A person who types *ring resizing* may want to read about the job, buy a kit and try it at home, or find a shop to walk into this afternoon. Three different jobs, three different answers. The ranking only starts once Google has decided which one this is.

It reads intent from many signals at once: the words of the search, where the phone is, what the person searched before, the time of day. Nobody reads intent from a few words as well as Google does. The map at the top of the results page is its verdict. When the map is there, Google has decided the person wants to go somewhere.

The words *near me* are a hint, not a requirement. A person standing in Bay Ridge who types *ring resizing* gets a map of jewelers around them without typing the words at all. When Google's suggestions offer to add *near me* to a service, that tells you many people who search for it want a place nearby, which is useful to know, but Google did not need the phrase to work it out.

Because Google now reads much as a person does, the job of a page has changed from fooling a machine to making yourself understood; [chapter 7](#) takes that up. Longer searches state intent more precisely, which is exactly why they are narrower. *Jewelry store* could mean buying, selling, repairing or browsing. *Broken necklace chain repair* means one job, and only businesses that clearly do that job are a good answer. [Chapter 4](#) takes that idea apart with our own numbers, and it is the hinge the whole method turns on.

Distance, in practice

Most people never type a neighborhood. They type the service, or the service and *near me*, and Google takes the place from the phone. So the map is drawn around the customer, not around the business.

This is why the map differs every few blocks. In South Brooklyn our measurements find 8 separate micro-markets for med spas and 7 for

jewelers. Two customers a few blocks apart can see different first places for the same search, and both are being given a correct answer to the question they asked.

The practical consequence is uncomfortable for owners. The area around your door where Google is willing to show you is usually smaller than you hope. An owner who thinks of the whole borough as their territory will read a result from three miles away as bad news, when it is really a different market with different leaders.

It also means the neighborhood name in a search matters less than most owners assume, and mostly when the customer is looking for somewhere other than where they stand: planning a visit near work, or asking on behalf of someone else. [Chapter 6](#) builds its definition of a seed around this.

Prominence compounds

Prominence is the slow one, and the one that decides the big searches.

The favorite on a head term has been collecting attention for years. Being shown first brings it more views and more customers. More customers write more reviews, and reviews are part of what prominence is made of. The advantage compounds quietly, in the background, while everyone else is open for business.

The scale of that lead in our area: the median med spa has 51 reviews and the top tenth have 285 or more. The median jeweler has 18 and the top tenth have 227 or more. Those are not numbers that arrive in a good month. They are what years of steady trade look like when it is written down on a profile.

Prominence is a description of what has already happened, which is why it is slow to gain and slow to lose.

For an owner, that cuts two ways. A big search with a long-standing leader is not a fair fight, and losing it is not evidence that you are doing something wrong. A smaller search with no established leader is a fair fight, and that is where the method in Part II sends you.

What an owner can move

The useful question about the three is which one you can do something about.

Relevance. This is the field you control most directly. Set the right primary category. List the services you actually provide, in the words customers use. Describe the work in plain language on the profile and on a page of your own. Show photos of the work itself. None of it is clever, and all of it is within reach of a small team in an afternoon.

Prominence. You cannot manufacture a reputation, but you can earn one in public. Ask customers for reviews over time rather than in a burst. Answer them. Be mentioned in the places your neighborhood reads: a local paper, a community group, a sponsor's page, a supplier's list of stockists. Keep your website current, since it is one of the things Google reads when it judges how well known a business is.

Distance. You cannot move the shop, and you should not try to fake a second location. What you can do is keep the address and the service area accurate, so Google is measuring from the right door. A wrong pin on the map, or a service area drawn to cover a borough you do not really serve, does not buy you reach. It gives customers a reason to arrive somewhere you are not.

In practice the work runs in that order. Relevance is the fast one: it responds to an afternoon of editing. Prominence is the slow one: it responds to a year of ordinary good trade, written down in public. Distance is fixed, and the honest response to it is to compete where you actually are.

One item sits before all three. A profile that has never been claimed can still be read by customers, but nobody is looking after it, and nobody is answering what is on it. That is the cheapest problem in this book to fix, and [chapter 3](#) starts there.

When the question goes to an AI assistant

More and more people will not type a search at all. They will ask an AI assistant on their phone, often out loud: *where can I get my dog groomed this Sunday, he's big and scared of clippers, somewhere near Bay Ridge*. The assistant answers with a recommendation or two and a sentence about why.

Where does it get that answer? From the same places this book is about. Google's own assistant reads Google Maps and its reviews directly. Other assistants draw on their own map sources and directories, and all of them read the same kinds of material: business profiles on the maps, reviews, the business's own website, local news. An assistant has no way to visit your shop. It knows what is written about you in public, and nothing else.

Three things follow, and none of them changes the method in this book. Each makes it matter more.

The questions get longer. A spoken request is a long tail in its purest form: one service, one problem, one place, one day. The assistant matches the meaning of the request against what it can read, so a profile and a page that describe the work in plain detail are what it can match.

The window gets narrower. A map shows three places. An assistant often names one or two. Being the obvious answer to a small, specific question becomes worth even more.

Reviews become the reason. When an assistant explains its choice, the explanation usually comes from what customers wrote: *good with nervous dogs, fixed my clasp while I waited*. Reviews that say in the

customer's own words what was done and how it went are the raw material of that sentence.

One practical point. Because different assistants read different map sources, the basic facts about the business, its name, address, hours and services, should be the same everywhere they appear, not only on Google.

Where owners usually go wrong

These four mistakes come up again and again, in every trade we measure.

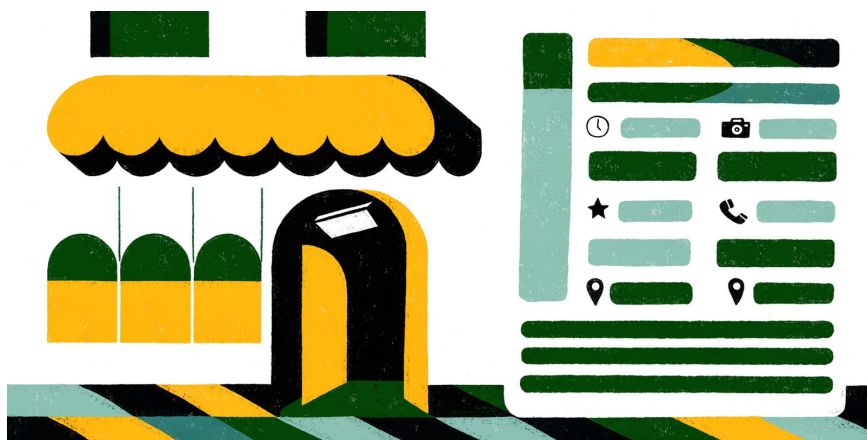
Believing in a secret trick. No setting, hidden field or trick of wording moves a business to the top. The people selling one are selling certainty about a system whose details Google keeps to itself.

Paying for reviews. Bought reviews are against the platform's rules, they are often obvious to customers, and they put the profile at risk. A steady trickle from real customers is worth more, and it is the only kind you can defend if anyone asks.

Stuffing keywords into the name. Words in the name do seem to count on the map, which is exactly why the trick is tempting. Adding words that are not on the sign breaks Google's guidelines and risks the profile; a name that genuinely says what you do is the honest version of the same idea ([chapter 3](#) explains both).

Judging from your own phone, at your own desk. Your phone knows where you have been and what you have searched, and your desk is one point on a map that changes every few blocks. A single reading from one spot is an anecdote. [Chapter 8](#) replaces it with a monthly check from a few fixed places.

All four are what a reasonable owner does when nobody has explained how the map works.



3

YOUR PROFILE, FIELD BY FIELD

Every field on the business profile answers a question a stranger is asking. Here is what each one does, and the mistakes owners make in all of them.

Chapter 2 set out what Google ranks local results on: relevance, distance and prominence. Relevance is the one an owner can move this week, and most of it lives in one place, the business profile.

The best way to read this chapter is with your own profile open on a phone, in a private window, as though you were a customer who has never heard of the business. Each field is a question that customer is asking. The job is to answer it before they have to ask.

Before anything else: claim it

Every time we come across an unclaimed profile, we want to cry. When the business behind it is a good one, with loyal customers and years of honest work, we want to weep.

An unclaimed profile is a storefront with nobody behind the counter. Google often creates a profile on its own, from public information, and it stays open to anyone who wants to suggest a change. The hours can drift, a wrong phone number can creep in, a competitor or a stranger can propose a new category, and nobody who cares about the business gets a say. Reviews arrive and nobody answers them. Photos are whatever customers happened to upload.

Claiming the profile is free. It takes a verification step that Google sets and a little patience, and it is the first thing a local business should do, before any of the advice in this book. Nothing else in this chapter can be done without it.

And still, in South Brooklyn, 31% of jeweler profiles have not been claimed by their owners. Almost a third of the jewelers in one of the busiest shopping areas of New York are leaving their storefront on the map to chance. Among med spas the share is 7%, smaller and still too many. If you are not sure whether your own profile is claimed, find out today.

Once the profile is yours, check who else has access. A former employee, a relative or an agency with manager rights can change hours, categories and photos long after they stopped working for you. Remove access that is no longer needed, and keep the list short.

Business name

The name should be exactly what is on the sign. Google's guidelines ask for the real-world name of the business, without added keywords, locations or marketing phrases.

It helps to be honest about why owners are tempted. Words in the business name do seem to matter on the map. Google does not say so, but people who study local search have seen it year after year, and it is the reason so many profiles carry a neighborhood and three services after the shop's name. That is also why it is risky. Adding words that are not on the sign breaks Google's guidelines, competitors report such profiles, and Google can rename the business or suspend the profile. The customer notices too: if the sign says one thing and the profile another, they see it before they read anything else.

The honest route runs through the name itself. If you are naming a new business, or changing the name of an old one, choose a name that says what you do: *Marina's Jewelry Repair* rather than *Marina's*. Put it on the sign, the website, the receipts and the profile. Then the words are part of the real name, and nobody can object to them.

Whatever the map does with it, a clear name lowers the friction for a customer. A stranger scanning three results understands *Marina's Jewelry Repair* in a second and has to guess at *Marina's*. A brand built over years is worth a great deal, and a name that explains itself is worth something from the first day. The best names usually do both.

Where a legal name differs from the name on the sign, use the customer-facing name and keep the legal record where it belongs.

Primary category and additional categories

The primary category is the strongest single statement of what the business is, both for Google and for a person glancing at the profile. Choose the most specific category that is true. A general retail category is a weak signal for a jeweler if a jewelry category fits. A broad clinic category says less than the precise one that matches the work.

Additional categories cover the other things you genuinely do. A few that you would stand behind on a busy Tuesday are plenty. Categories for

services you rarely perform, or hope to add next year, make the business look uncertain about what it is.

Review the categories once a year. They change when the work changes, not when an owner gets restless.

Services and products

This field is the one that most directly touches relevance, and the one most often left half empty.

List the services in the customer's words. If people ask for *ring resizing*, list ring resizing, not only the trade name your supplier uses. If they ask for *HydraFacial*, use that word. Where the profile lets you add a short description or a price to a service, use a price you will honor, and write the description the way you would say it on the phone.

[Chapter 5](#) shows where the customer's words come from and how to collect them for your own trade. [Chapter 7](#) shows how to use a handful of them for a seed.

Description

The description is your one chance to speak in full sentences. It runs to 750 characters, which is enough for a few short paragraphs and not enough for a catalog.

Say what the business does, for whom, and where. Say how long you have been doing it if that is worth knowing. Mention the parts of the work you are known for. Write it the way you would explain the business to someone at a bus stop: plain, specific, no adjectives doing the work of facts.

A description built from a list of keywords reads like a list of keywords, and it uses up the space where a real sentence could have answered a real question.

Address, service area and hours

The address has to be exact, and it has to match the sign, the website and every directory that lists the business. If the pin on the map sits at the wrong end of the block, fix it before you do anything else, because everything about distance is measured from it.

If you travel to customers instead, set a service area and keep it honest. The neighborhoods you actually reach in a normal week are the ones to name. A service area drawn wide to look bigger does not create reach, and it brings you customers who then find out how far away you are.

Hours are the field customers check most and the one that costs most when it is wrong. Keep regular hours current, set special hours for holidays and one-off closures, and do not leave a placeholder in place while you decide. A customer who drives to a closed door does not come back to see who was right.

Phone, website and booking links

Use one phone number, and use the one you answer. A number that goes to voicemail at lunch is still better than a number that rings nowhere. If the front desk number changes, change it here the same week.

The website link should go to a page about this business, not to a booking platform that hides who you are or to the home page of a group. Where the profile offers a separate link for booking or for a service, point it at the page for that service if you have one.

Check every link on a phone once a month. Links break quietly, and a dead link is worse than no link, because it looks like the business has closed.

Attributes

Where the profile offers attributes, such as accessibility, payment methods or amenities, fill in the ones that are true. They are small facts that decide

whether a person can use the business at all: whether there is a step at the door, whether a card is accepted, whether there is parking.

A customer who arrives and finds an attribute untrue rarely gives the business a second chance.

Photos

Photos answer the question a stranger cannot ask over the phone: what is this place, and what does the work look like.

Take four kinds. The work itself, close enough to see the finish. The outside, so people recognize the door when they arrive. The inside, so they know what to expect when they walk in. The team, where that suits the business and everyone is willing. For a jeweler, a piece before and after a repair, or a finished engraving, tells a customer more than any paragraph. A med spa can show the treatment room, the equipment used for an appointment and the products on the shelf, and describe the appointment rather than what a treatment will do.

Jewelers have one strict rule about what never goes in a photo, set out in [chapter 10](#).

Fresh photos matter more than many. A handful of new ones each month, of the work you are doing now, keeps the profile looking like a business that is open.

Posts

Posts are short updates that appear on the profile. One or two a month is a steady pace: a service you want people to know about, a finished piece, a change of hours, a seasonal note.

Keep them tied to the work and written in the same plain voice as the rest of the profile. A post does not need a graphic or a campaign behind it. A photo and two sentences are enough.

Reviews and replies

Reviews are the field you do not write, and the one customers read most closely. They do two jobs. They tell a stranger whether to trust the business, and they tell Google what the business does and how it treats people.

Ask when the work is done, while the experience is fresh. Ask everyone, not only the customers you expect to be pleased. Do not offer a reward, a discount or a prize, and do not filter out the people who might have something critical to say. Read the platform's rules on reviews before you start asking, and check anything you are unsure about with your own counsel.

Reply to all of them, the good ones included. Reply to a bad one calmly, in public, with the facts and an offer to sort it out offline. Never argue. A defensive reply is read by every future customer, not just the one who wrote it. [Chapter 10](#) goes further into reviews and photos, which are the two things customers check most.

Reply to the review you would rather delete. That reply is written for the next customer.

The order to do it in

Done all at once, this list feels like a rebrand, and most owners close the tab. None of it needs to happen in a week.

An order that works: claim the profile, then name, categories, hours, phone and links, then services and description, then photos, then the review habit. Claiming, the name, the hours and the contact details are facts, and facts are quick to fix. Services and description take an afternoon. Photos become a habit. Reviews take as long as they take.

That order also matches what a stranger checks. They see the name, the category, the rating, the hours and the distance before anything else. Get those right and the rest of the profile has a chance to be read.

Once the profile is in reasonable order, the question becomes where to spend the effort. The profile covers the whole business, while the map is won one search at a time. [Chapter 4](#) explains why the biggest search in your trade is the hardest place to start, and where the smaller ones leave room.

The profile checklist

- ◆ Name exactly as it appears on the sign, with no added keywords.
- ◆ Primary category as specific as the work allows, plus a few additional categories you would stand behind.
- ◆ Services listed in the customer's words, with prices you will honor.
- ◆ Description written in plain sentences, within 750 characters.
- ◆ Exact address or an honest service area, correct hours and special hours, attributes that are true, one phone number you answer and a working booking link.
- ◆ Photos of the work, the outside, the inside and the team, refreshed over time.
- ◆ A review request for every customer and a calm reply to every review, on a profile that is claimed, verified and limited to people who still work with you.

Part Two

MANAGE YOUR LONG TAIL



4

THE HEAD TERM IS CROWDED

Every business in a category fights for the same one or two searches. Most of the searches that bring customers are smaller, and far fewer businesses are fighting for them.

Ask the owner of a med spa which search matters, and the answer is usually two words: *med spa*. Ask a jeweler, and it is *jewelry store*. It is the word on the sign, in the profile's main category and in every conversation about where the next customer will come from.

It is also the search every competitor in the neighborhood is working on. The trade calls it the head term: the short, general phrase that names the category. It is the obvious target, and that is exactly the problem with it.

Google already has a favorite

There is a second problem with the head term, and it is harder to see from the inside. For a search as common as *med spa* or *jewelry store*, Google has usually settled on its favorites long ago.

Google says it ranks local results on relevance, distance and prominence, and prominence means how well known a business is: its reviews, its rating, how often it is mentioned and linked to elsewhere. A business that has led the head term for years has been collecting all of that for years. Being shown first brings it more customers, more customers write more reviews, and more reviews keep it first. The lead feeds itself.

If that favorite is you, good: protect it. If it is not, moving it is slow and expensive. You are not competing with where the leader is today, but with everything it has gathered while it was there. The review counts of established leaders ([chapter 2](#)) take years of steady work to match, and the leader is not standing still while you do it.

The smaller searches are different. Many of them have no long-standing favorite at all, because nobody has worked on them. That is where this chapter is going.

This chapter is about what the map looks like once you stop staring at the head term. The short version: it is far less crowded than it looks from the front door.

What we measured

The numbers in this part of the book come from our own measurements in South Brooklyn, a stretch of 13 ZIP codes that runs from Bay Ridge and Sunset Park to Sheepshead Bay, Brighton Beach, Coney Island and Marine Park. We looked at two very different trades: [med spas](#) and [jewelers](#).

For the head terms we laid a grid of 181 fixed search spots over the area, about half a mile apart, and ran the searches customers run from each

spot. That is 543 map searches per trade. For the smaller searches we went to the center of each of the 13 neighborhoods and searched every service on our list there. The [method page](#) explains the details.

Two things stand out before we even get to the long tail.

The map changes every few blocks. Google does not show South Brooklyn one list of med spas. It shows different lists to people standing in different places. As [chapter 2](#) described, the area splits into micro-markets a few blocks wide. A clinic that leads in one of them can be invisible a mile away.

Being shown is not the same as being chosen. Customers pick from the first few results, so what matters is a place in the top three, not a place somewhere on the list. One clinic we follow in Sheepshead Bay appears in 73% of the searches in its own zone, but in the top three in only 10% of them. A jeweler in the same part of Brooklyn appears in 31% of its zone's searches and reaches the top three in 5%. Both owners could say, truthfully, that they show up on Google. Neither is the obvious answer.

Most owners can find themselves on the map. Far fewer are the obvious answer.

The long tail

Now take the head term apart. A person who needs a laser hair removal appointment rarely types *med spa*. They type *laser hair removal*, often with a neighborhood or *near me* after it. Someone with a broken chain types *jewelry repair* or *necklace chain repair*, not *jewelry store*.

Each of those smaller searches is a separate contest with its own winner. The trade calls the whole set of them the long tail: many small, specific searches, each one narrower than the category. There is no trick to it: this is simply how people search when they know what they want.

Every word narrows the search

Each word a person adds to a search makes it narrower. *Jewelry store* is a whole trade. *Jewelry repair* is one service. *Broken necklace chain repair* is one job. In Brooklyn the first service gets about 1,780 searches a month; *broken necklace chain repair* and *gold chain soldering* get about 10 each.

The reason used to be mechanical. Early search engines looked for the words of the search in the text of a page, exactly or almost exactly. The longer the phrase, the fewer pages contained all of it, so the fewer results there were to compete with.

Search no longer works that way. Google now reads pages, profiles and reviews much as a person does, and it understands what a search means rather than matching its words. A page can answer *gold chain soldering* without ever using that phrase.

Yet the rule still holds, for a different reason. A longer search states the need more precisely, and now the search engine understands that need. *Jewelry store* could mean buying, selling, repairing or just browsing. *Broken necklace chain repair* means one thing, and only businesses that clearly do that job are a good answer. Fewer people type it, and fewer businesses fit it.

Both halves of that sentence matter. Fewer searchers means each long search is small. Fewer good answers means each long search is easier to win, and the person who typed it is close to deciding. That trade, small but winnable, is what the rest of this part of the book is about.

Counting the winners

To see how much room the tail leaves, we counted who wins it. For med spas we searched 24 treatments from the center of each of the 13 neighborhoods: 312 searches, each with one business in first place.

89 different clinics are first in at least one of those 312 searches.

That is far more than most owners would guess. And the five clinics that most often lead the plain *med spa* search are first in only 52 of the 312

treatment searches, about one in six. They are strong, and they earned it. They do not own the map.

A word of caution about what these numbers show. We searched from the center of each neighborhood, and distance counts for a lot, so some of those first places belong to the business that simply happens to be nearest. The numbers show that the small searches are spread among many businesses and that many of them are weakly held. They do not by themselves prove that working on the small searches moves a business up. That is what our weekly tracking is for: watching the same searches from the same points, week after week, to see who moves and after what.

Jewelers tell the same story with a different cast. We searched 29 services from the same 13 neighborhood centers, 377 searches in all, and found **81 different businesses in first place** at least once.

The map is not owned by five businesses. There is a lot of map left over.

The soft spots

Many of those first places are held by businesses that are not hard to compete with.

In 40 of the 312 med spa searches, 13%, the business in first place has fewer than 25 Google reviews or a profile the owner has never claimed. For jewelers it is 57 of 377, or 15%. These are searches where the current answer is, in effect, whoever happened to be there.

Set that against the review counts of established leaders ([chapter 2](#)): a first place held with 20 reviews is not an unbeatable position. It is a vacancy with someone sitting in it.

Unclaimed profiles tell you how little attention some of these searches get, and among jewelers they are common ([chapter 3](#)).

Each search picks its own rivals

There is a second, less obvious reason the long tail matters. Different searches put you up against different kinds of businesses.

When we looked at who takes the top three places across the 13 neighborhoods, the jewelers' searches split into clear camps:

- ♦ *Ring resizing*: jewelers hold 90% of the top-three places. *Jewelry repair*: 82%. *Wedding bands* and *lab grown diamond engagement rings*: 100%.
- ♦ *Watch repair*: watch shops hold 72% of the top-three places, jewelers 26%.
- ♦ *Ear piercing*: piercing studios and accessory chains hold 76%, jewelers 24%.
- ♦ *Cash for gold*: gold buyers and pawn shops hold 67%, jewelers 18%.

A jeweler fighting for *jewelry store* is fighting every jeweler in Brooklyn. A jeweler who wants *ring resizing* is up against other jewelers only, in one neighborhood at a time. A jeweler who wants *ear piercing* has walked into a different market altogether, against studios that do nothing else. Neither is wrong, but they are not the same fight, and it pays to know which one you are in.

Med spas see the same thing. Laser hair removal draws 311,000 US searches a month including *near me*, but in our area dedicated laser studios hold most of the top places. A clinic that offers it as one service among twenty is competing with businesses built around it. [Chapter 6](#) shows how to tell, in a minute and with a phone, which kind of contest a search is.

Why the tail suits a small business

Three reasons, all of which show up in the numbers above.

Less competition. A search for one service in one neighborhood has fewer serious contenders than the head term. You are not trying to outspend a chain. You are trying to be the best answer to a smaller question.

Clearer intent. A person searching for one specific service in one specific place has usually decided what they want and how far they will travel. That is a more useful visitor than someone browsing the category.

Steadier flow. A single head term rises and falls with the season and with competitors' ad budgets. A spread of smaller searches smooths the calendar, because services peak at different times of year. US searches for Botox peak in February and bottom out in December, with the peak 1.7 times the low. Laser hair removal peaks in July. Among jewelers, *wedding bands* peaks in January while *lab grown diamond engagement ring* peaks in June. A business that depends on one search has quiet months built in.

Small numbers add up

The usual objection is that the small searches are small. It is true. In Brooklyn, *watch repair* gets about 5,700 searches a month. *Ring resizing* gets about 280. *Ring engraving*, 120. *Pearl restringing*, 20.

Two things are worth keeping in mind. First, a small search with an easy first place can be worth more than a big one you will never win. Five thousand searches a month go mostly to watch shops; 280 go mostly to jewelers, one neighborhood at a time. Second, the small searches come in numbers. Our jeweler list has 29 services and our med spa list has 24, and most businesses offer more than they think. Ten modest searches you can win add up to real customers, and each one is a customer who came for a specific thing.

Prices tell a similar story from the other side: the price of a click follows the value of a customer, not the size of the search, which [chapter 12](#) shows with our numbers.

Where owners usually go wrong

The most common mistake is to read "long tail" as "more keywords" and start stuffing words into the profile. Google's guidelines rule out adding keywords to the business name, and the same spirit applies everywhere else: describe what you actually do, in plain words. Profiles that try to game the system risk suspension, and customers can tell.

The second is to chase searches for services the business does not really provide. Every search you go after should be one you can serve well on a normal Tuesday. The long tail rewards businesses that are specific and honest about what they do, which is most of what makes it a good strategy for a small team.

The third is to expect a guarantee. Nobody controls who Google shows first, and anyone who guarantees a ranking is selling something else. What the long tail offers is a better set of odds: more contests, fewer contenders, and a clearer view of where you stand.

The head term will still be there

Somebody will always be first for *med spa* and for *jewelry store*, and that is fine. The useful question is a different one: are you the first answer for the smaller thing someone types at nine in the evening, a few blocks from your door?

The next chapter turns that question into a plan. It starts where the plan has to start: collecting the small searches of your own trade, which most tools do not show. After that comes choosing the first five, which we call seeds.



5

COLLECTING YOUR LONG TAIL

Most keyword tools show you the busy searches everyone already fights over. The long tail of your own trade you will have to collect yourself.

Here is how we do it.

The previous chapter showed that the small searches are where a local business has room. Before you can choose any of them, you need to know what they are. That sounds simple. In practice it is where most owners, and many marketers, get stuck.

Why the usual tools fall short

In our own work we use a collection of search phrases that we have built over many years and keep adding to as new trades and new markets come

in. It now holds more than 4.5 billion real search phrases, which is how we can see the small searches of a single trade, down to the way people in one neighborhood word them: *resizing rings in brooklyn ny, jewelry resizing rings williamsburg brooklyn*. It is one of the most valuable things we own, and it exists because we could not buy it.

Most keyword tools on the market are built around the busy searches. They are very good at showing the head terms and the middle of the market, the phrases with thousands of searches a month, along with their prices and competitors. That is what most of their customers ask for, and that is what their business is built on: helping people compete for the searches that already have a crowd. There is nothing wrong with that, and it would be unfair to blame them for selling what sells.

But it leaves a gap. The long tail of a local trade is made of phrases that each get a handful of searches a month: *gold chain soldering, ring prong repair, pearl restringing*. In Brooklyn some of these get about 10 or 20 searches a month, and some tools show such numbers as zero or leave the phrases out altogether. The result is a list that looks complete and quietly misses the part of the market where a small business can win.

So the long tail has to be collected by hand, from places where customers leave their words. Even our own index cannot replace that step: it shows which phrases exist, but only you hear the words your own customers use at your counter. It takes a few evenings. The list you end up with will be more useful than anything you could buy, because it is about your trade, in your neighborhood, in your customers' language.

The long tail is not on the shelf. You collect it from the places where customers leave their words.

Where the words are

Collect first, judge later. For a week or two, write down every phrase a customer might type, from seven sources.

1. The phone and the front desk. Keep a note by the phone and write down how people ask, word for word. This source grows more valuable as people start asking AI assistants out loud, because a spoken question sounds like a phone call, not like a typed search. *Do you fix broken chains? Can you make a ring smaller? Do you do the facial with the suction thing?* Customers describe what they want in their own words, and those words are the search.

2. Your reviews, and your competitors' reviews. Read the last hundred reviews in your trade in your area. Note every service, problem and occasion customers mention: *resized my grandmother's ring, fixed the clasp while I waited, before my wedding.* On Google Maps, many profiles show the topics that come up most often in reviews. Write those down too.

3. Google's search suggestions. Start typing a service into Google and read what it suggests: *ring resizing*, then *ring resizing near me*, *ring resizing cost*, *ring resizing while you wait*. Add a letter after the service, *ring resizing a*, *ring resizing b*, and so on, and the suggestions change. Do the same in the search box of Google Maps, which suggests differently.

4. The bottom of the results page. Below the results, Google shows related searches, and on many searches a block of questions people also ask. Each one is a phrase someone typed often enough for Google to remember it.

5. Competitors' profiles. Open the profiles of the businesses that come up for your trade, including the ones in other neighborhoods. Read their services lists, their categories and their descriptions. You will find services you also do but never thought to name.

6. Your own profile's performance report. It lists the searches people used to find your business. Some will surprise you. Every phrase there is one Google already connects with you.

7. Your own price list and job book. Go through what you actually charged for last year, line by line. Owners routinely forget half of their own services because they do them without thinking: *watch battery replacement, chain shortening, eyebrow tint with a facial.*

Widen each service with modifiers

Now take each service on the list and widen it the way customers do. Most long-tail searches are a service plus one or two extra words. The extra words fall into a few families:

- ♦ **Place:** a neighborhood, a street, a landmark, *near me*. *Ring resizing Sheepshead Bay.*
- ♦ **Problem:** what went wrong. *Ring too big, broken clasp, chain keeps breaking.*
- ♦ **Object or material:** what it is done to. *Gold ring resizing, platinum, wedding band, vintage watch.*
- ♦ **Occasion:** why now. *Before a wedding, gift, for prom, after summer.*
- ♦ **Person:** who it is for. *For men, for kids, for sensitive skin.*
- ♦ **Urgency and convenience:** *same day, while you wait, open Sunday, walk in.*
- ♦ **Price and payment:** *cost, how much, cheap, financing.*

Not every combination is real. *Ring resizing for prom* is probably not something anyone types. The point is to prompt your memory and your suggestions box: try the combinations, and keep the ones that Google suggests, that customers have used, or that you have heard at the counter.

For med spa treatments, keep the extra words to logistics and occasions. Words about effects and results lead into medical claims, which belong with the clinician, not in a search plan.

Keep only searches that bring up the map

A long-tail phrase is only useful for this method if Google answers it with local businesses. Search each candidate on a phone from your neighborhood and look at the top of the results.

If you see a map with three businesses, the search has local intent: people who type it want a place nearby. Keep it.

You are not the one deciding this. Google is. It judges whether a person wants to read about something or go somewhere from many signals at once: the words of the search, where the phone is, what the person searched before, the time of day. Nobody reads intent from a few words as well as Google does, and the map at the top of the page is its verdict. When Google's suggestions add *near me* to a service, that is another hint: many people who search for it want a place nearby. But Google does not need the words *near me* to know. A person standing in Bay Ridge who types *ring resizing* gets a map of jewelers around them all the same.

If you see only articles, videos or online shops, the person typing it wants to read, watch or buy online. *How to resize a ring at home* is a real search, but nobody who types it is looking for your counter. Drop it from this list. It may still be worth answering on your site one day, but it is not a seed.

This one check removes most of the noise, and it costs nothing but a few minutes.

Group by meaning, not by spelling

The list will have many phrases that mean the same thing: *ring resizing*, *ring sizing*, *resize ring*, *make ring smaller*. Since Google reads searches by

meaning, these are one need, and one page can answer all of them. Group them, and give each group a name in the words customers use most.

Then drop what you do not do. If customers search *pearl restringing* and you send pearls out, it is not your search, however small the competition.

What remains is your long tail: a few dozen groups, each one a service, problem or occasion you genuinely handle, each one with its local variants. An owner who goes through all seven sources usually finds more groups than expected. Our own jeweler list for South Brooklyn has 29 services and our med spa list 24, and both are short versions of what a single business could collect for itself.

Keep the list alive

Write the list in a sheet with one row per group: the group's name, the phrases in it, where you found them, and whether Google shows a map for them. Add a column for the season if you know it: *wedding bands* peaks in January, *custom name necklace* in December, *jewelry repair* in July.

Look at it again every quarter. The words on it are not fixed. The way people talk about a service changes with fashion, with new products, with what they saw online last month. A treatment gets a nickname and the nickname becomes the search. A brand name turns into the everyday word for a whole procedure. A new material arrives and brings its own phrases with it, the way *lab grown* and *moissanite* now sit next to *diamond* in engagement ring searches. The phrase your customers used five years ago may still be on your sign while they have moved on to another.

You do not have to like the new words. You have to use them. Dale Carnegie made the point with fishing: he was very fond of strawberries and cream, but when he went fishing he did not bait the hook with what he liked. He baited it with worms, because that is what the fish

wanted. Customers search in their words, not in yours, and the business that speaks their language is the one they find.

The performance report will keep showing you searches you did not plan, and the front desk will keep hearing new ways of asking. A long tail is never finished. That is one reason our own collection has kept growing for years.

Every phrase is a guess

One more thing before you choose. Every phrase on the list is a guess. It is your best reading of what customers might type and what Google might show, and until a customer actually finds you through it, it is a hypothesis waiting for proof.

A garden picture helps here. Having the right phrase is like having nectar: necessary, and useless on its own if no bee ever notices it. Flowers do not wait for bees to find the nectar by chance. They put out petals, color and scent that announce from a distance that something good is here. For a search phrase, the petals are everything around it: photos of that exact service, a plain description in the customer's words, a page that answers their questions, reviews that mention it by name. Without them, a good phrase sits unnoticed. With them, both Google and the customer can see at a glance that you are the place for it.

So the next three chapters treat each phrase as a test. You will choose a few, give them their petals, watch whether the bees come, and keep the ones that prove themselves.

The next chapter turns this list into a short one. Out of thirty groups you will choose five, the seeds, and the rest stay on the list as candidates for later.

Collecting in two weeks

- ♦ A note by the phone: how customers ask, word for word.

Found on the Map

- ♦ The last hundred reviews in your trade and area: services, problems, occasions.
- ♦ Google and Google Maps suggestions for each service, with letters and modifiers.
- ♦ Related searches and questions at the bottom of the results.
- ♦ Competitors' services lists and your own performance report.
- ♦ Keep only phrases that bring up a map. Group them by meaning.
- ♦ Drop what you do not do. Date the sheet and review it every quarter.



6

CHOOSING YOUR SEEDS

A seed is one service in one place. Pick five you can win, write them down, and give them a season. This chapter shows how to choose them.

*In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand:
for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that.*

—Ecclesiastes 11:6

The previous chapter left you with a long list: every search in your trade that brings up a map and that you can serve well. This chapter turns it into a short list you can act on.

We call the items on that list seeds, and the method that follows the seed method. The name is deliberate. A garden is a better model for this

work than a campaign. You do not launch something and walk away. You plant a few things, watch what comes up, feed what grows and pull what does not. Then you do it again. The old verse above says the rest: you cannot know in advance which seed will prosper, so you sow more than one.

What a seed is

A seed is **one service in one place**: *ring resizing in Sheepshead Bay, HydraFacial in Bay Ridge, brake repair in Astoria*.

Both halves matter. The service half is what the customer asks for, in the words they use. The place half is there because the map answers differently in different places. Google says it ranks local results on three things: how relevant a business is to the search, how far it is from the person searching, and how well known it is. Distance alone means the answer in Bay Ridge is not the answer in Sunset Park. That is why the map splits into micro-markets a few blocks wide ([chapter 2](#)).

Be clear about what the place half means. Most people do not type a neighborhood at all. They type *ring resizing* or *ring resizing near me* on a phone, and Google takes the place from where the phone is. So for most searches the place in your seed is not something you write into a phrase. It is the area around your door where Google is willing to show you, and that area is usually smaller than owners hope. A neighborhood name in the search matters mainly when someone is looking for somewhere other than where they stand, for example planning a visit near work.

So a keyword on its own is not a seed. *Laser hair removal* is a whole market. *Laser hair removal in Bay Ridge*, searched by people in and around Bay Ridge, is a contest you can look at, take part in and check on next month.

Why five

Five is not magic, but it is about what a small team can tend properly. Each seed needs a little work every month: a photo, a few lines on a page, a word to the right customers about a review. Multiply that by twenty and it stops happening. Five well-tended seeds tend to beat twenty neglected ones.

Five also makes the monthly check short enough to actually do. You will add and drop seeds as you go. The list stays short.

Step one: two lists

Start with two lists on one sheet of paper.

What you do. The groups on the long-tail sheet from the previous chapter: every service, problem and occasion you actually handle, written the way customers say it. Not *lobe perforation* but *ear piercing*. Not *injectable neuromodulator* but *Botox*. If you are unsure of the customer's words, listen to how people ask on the phone, or read your reviews: customers describe your services in their own language.

Where your customers come from. The neighborhoods, not the city. Your booking system may already know the ZIP codes. If not, ask at the front desk for two weeks: *which neighborhood are you coming from today?* Most local businesses find that a handful of neighborhoods supply most of their customers, and that they are closer to the door than expected.

Then pair them. Ten services and four neighborhoods make forty possible seeds. You need five.

Step two: five questions for every candidate

Run each pair through five questions. A good seed passes all of them.

1. Do you already do it, often and well? Pick a service your team performs every week, not one you are thinking of adding. A seed is

something you can serve well on a normal Tuesday. It will be judged by the customers it brings, and they will write reviews.

2. Do customers already ask for it? The best seeds are services people book without much convincing. If customers already find you for it by word of mouth, the map is likely to follow once you make it visible.

3. Who is first today, and how strong are they? Search for the pair from the neighborhood itself, on a phone, and look at the first three results. Write down who they are, how many reviews they have and whether their profiles look cared for. Then ask what kind of business they are. As [chapter 4](#) showed, each service has its own rivals: *ring resizing* is a contest among jewelers, *watch repair* among watch shops. A soft leader is a good sign, and [chapter 4](#) found many of them.

The first three results also tell you what kind of contest the search is. There are three patterns, and a minute with a phone is enough to see which one you face:

- ♦ **No map at all.** Google shows articles, videos or online shops. People typing this want to read or buy online, and it is not a seed ([chapter 5](#)).
- ♦ **A map, but no specialist.** There are three local businesses, but none of their names, categories or descriptions mention the service. Google is filling the slot with whatever is nearby and roughly related. This is the most open kind of contest: nobody has claimed the service yet, and a business that says plainly that it does the work has a real chance.
- ♦ **A market of specialists.** The top three keep turning out to be businesses built around that exact service, with the service in their name or category, like watch shops on *watch repair*. Entering means joining their league. It can still be worth it, but expect a long climb.

Check the same search from two or three spots before you decide, because one result page can mislead.

4. Does it fit the season ahead? Most services have a season, and a seed needs time to take root before the peak. Microneedling, for example, peaks in March and *wedding bands* in January; [chapter 12](#) has the full calendar. If you are choosing in spring, a March service is already late: pick one that peaks in summer, or plan it for next year and plant it in the fall.

5. Is it different from your other four? Five versions of the same search are one seed with extra steps. Spread the list across services, seasons and, where it makes sense, neighborhoods. When one seed has a slow month, another can hold.

A seed is something you can serve well on a normal Tuesday.

A note on distance

It is tempting to pick a wealthy neighborhood across town. Be careful. Distance is one of the three things Google weighs, and it is also what customers weigh: most people will not cross a borough for a ring resizing. Your own neighborhood is where a seed has its best chance, because that is where Google already sees you as near. The next neighborhood is a second step, and there the odds drop with every block, however good your page. Start at your door, and move outward only when a seed there is established, without expecting the same result further out.

Two examples

These are illustrations, built from the kind of data in this book. They are not recommendations for any real business.

A med spa in Bay Ridge. It does laser hair removal, HydraFacial, chemical peels and a few injectable treatments, and half its clients come

from Bay Ridge and Sunset Park. It is choosing in October. Its first five seeds might be:

- ♦ *HydraFacial in Bay Ridge*: done every day, and the March peak is far enough away to prepare.
- ♦ *Chemical peel in Bay Ridge*: also peaks in March, and a quieter search than the injectables.
- ♦ *Laser hair removal in Sunset Park*: only if the first places there are not all held by dedicated laser studios. The July peak gives it the whole winter.
- ♦ *Lip filler in Bay Ridge*: peaks in January, so it needs work now.
- ♦ One service the team genuinely likes doing and customers keep asking about.

A jeweler in Sheepshead Bay. It does repairs, sizing, custom pieces and wedding bands, and most customers live within a short drive. Choosing in October, it might pick:

- ♦ *Ring resizing in Sheepshead Bay*: a jewelers' contest, steady all year.
- ♦ *Jewelry repair in Brighton Beach*: the neighborhood next door, worth it if the current leader there has a small profile.
- ♦ *Wedding bands in Sheepshead Bay*: peaks in January, so the page and photos need to be ready by December.
- ♦ *Custom name necklace in Sheepshead Bay*: peaks in December, a good fit for the gift season.
- ♦ *Ring engraving in Sheepshead Bay*: small, but it pairs naturally with wedding bands and custom pieces.

Notice what neither list contains: the head term. *Med spa* and *jewelry store* are still on the sign and in the profile's main category. They just are not where the effort goes.

Common mistakes

Choosing by volume. The biggest searches are usually the most contested. *Watch repair* gets many times the searches of *ring resizing* in Brooklyn, and watch shops hold most of its first places.

Choosing what you would like to sell. A seed is not a new service launch. If you want to add a service, add it first, get good at it, then make it a seed.

Choosing five of the same. *Botox in Bay Ridge*, *Botox in Dyker Heights*, *Botox near me*, *Botox deals* and *Botox for men* make one seed, not five. If it fails, they all fail together.

Choosing in the wrong season. A seed planted a month before its peak rarely has time to grow. Look at the calendar first.

Not writing it down. A list in someone's head changes every week. Write the five on a card, put it on the wall, and date it.

Write a seed card

For each seed, write one line with five things: the service as customers say it, the place, who is first today and their review count, the month the service peaks, and why you picked it. That card is the baseline. In a month you will check against it, and in a season you will be glad you did.

The next chapter is about planting: what to change on your profile, your site and your reviews so that each seed has a fair chance to take root.

The seed card

- ◆ Service, in the customer's words.
- ◆ Place: one neighborhood.
- ◆ First place today: name and review count.
- ◆ Peak month of the service.
- ◆ Why this one: one sentence.
- ◆ Date you wrote it.



7

PLANT

Planting a seed means making one service in one place easy to find and easy to trust, everywhere a stranger might check. It takes an afternoon, not a campaign.

The previous chapter ended with five seed cards and a date. This chapter is about the work that follows: making each of those five seeds easy to find and easy to trust, everywhere a stranger might check.

Think of it as giving each phrase its petals. In chapter 5 we called every phrase on your list a guess: nectar that bees may or may not find. Planting is what makes it visible from a distance, so that Google and the customer can both tell at a glance that you are the place for it.

There is no launch, no budget and no big reveal. Planting takes about an afternoon per seed: a profile edit, a page on your own site, a few

photos, a request to the right customers, and a check that the details agree everywhere.

What a stranger checks

Put yourself in the customer's place. Someone in Bay Ridge searches *HydraFacial near me* on a phone. They see a map, three results, maybe ads. They tap one. Then they look at the profile: categories, services, photos, reviews, hours, a link to a website. If the profile looks thin, they may open the site. If the site does not mention the service by name, they go back. If the review says *lovely place* but never says what the person came for, they are less sure. If the phone number on the site differs from the one on the profile, they may stop.

Every one of those places is a chance to confirm the same simple fact: this business does this service, here, and you can book it. Planting is the work of making that fact easy to find.

Use [med spas in South Brooklyn](#) or [jewelers in South Brooklyn](#) as you read this. The examples are illustrations, not recommendations for any real business.

Start with your profile

Your business profile is usually the first thing a stranger sees, and the easiest thing to improve. For each seed, make five small changes.

Put the service in the services list, in the customer's words. If people say *ring resizing*, do not list only *ring sizing* because that is what your supplier calls it. If people say *HydraFacial*, use that word, not only the name of the machine. The services list is not a place for every phrase you can think of. It is a place to be clear about what you do.

Describe it in plain language. A sentence or two is enough: what the service is, what the visit involves and how to book. Write it the way you would say it on the phone, not the way a manufacturer writes it on a box.

Mention the service in the business description where it is honest. If a jeweler does repairs every day, the description can say so. If a med spa offers a treatment only occasionally, do not make it sound like the main event. A description that matches the work is more useful than one that lists everything.

Add photos of the service itself. Not only the waiting room, the front desk or the sign. A jeweler can show a ring before and after resizing, or a finished engraving, as long as the photo shows only the work and the customer-facing area. A med spa can show the treatment room, the equipment used for the service and the products on the shelf, without making claims about what the treatment will do. The point is to let a stranger see the thing they are considering, not just the sofa.

Post about it. A post does not need to be an event. A photo of the work, a plain sentence about what the appointment involves and a link to the page are enough. One post a month per seed is a steady pace.

Keep the main category as the real category. A med spa is a med spa, not a *HydraFacial clinic*; a jeweler is a jeweler, not a *ring resizing shop*. The category is how Google understands the business, and changing it to chase a search is a bad trade. The same goes for the business name, which stays as it is on the sign ([chapter 3](#)).

Make yourself understood

The advice on how to write for search has changed twice, and the change matters for every page in this chapter.

For years Google was a machine, and people tried to fool it: the same phrase repeated down the page, lists of neighborhoods in small print, words written for the crawler rather than the reader. As Google got smarter, fooling it got hard, and the advice became the opposite: write for people. Picture your typical customer and write for them.

That advice was right for its time, and it has a blind spot. A portrait of a typical customer describes the common case. It leaves out the unusual ones: the person with a vintage watch, the customer who needs the work done the same day, the one who is nervous about a first appointment. Those unusual cases are exactly the long tail.

Today Google reads much as a person does, and that is a change in kind, not in degree. There is nothing to fool and no reason to try. What is left is to make yourself understood: say plainly what you do, for whom, where, and in which cases, including the unusual ones. A reader who knows every kind of intent, as Google now does, can only match you to the cases you have actually described. The same is true of the AI assistants that read your pages and reviews.

So the page you write is for a person and for Google at once, because they have become the same kind of reader. Clear beats dense. A sentence such as *we resize gold and platinum rings, usually within a day, at our shop in Sheepshead Bay* tells both of them more than any number of repetitions.

One page per service on your own site

The profile is rented space. Your website is yours. For each seed, write one page for that service, for a person, not for a search engine.

A useful service page answers the questions a customer would ask at the counter:

- ◆ What is the appointment or job? Walk through it in plain steps, from arrival to leaving.
- ◆ How long does it take? Give a normal range, not a best case.
- ◆ What should I bring or arrange before I arrive? Parking, paperwork, what to bring, whether to arrive early.
- ◆ What does it cost, or how does pricing work? A range or a clear explanation is better than silence.

- ♦ Where is it? Name the neighborhood where that is honest, not a list of every neighborhood you would like to serve.
- ♦ How do I book or call? One clear button and one clear phone number.

Write it yourself or have someone on the team write it. Do not copy the manufacturer's page. A manufacturer writes for every clinic in the country; you can write for a person who lives a few blocks away. That local detail is the part a competitor cannot copy.

Link the page from your profile where the profile allows a link for that service, and link it from the other pages of your site. A page nobody can reach is a page that does not exist.

For a jeweler, ring resizing is a good example of a page that can be genuinely useful: what the job involves, how long the work takes, how pricing is set and how to arrange a drop-off. For a med spa, the HydraFacial page can explain the appointment, the time it takes and how to book, without describing results or telling anyone whether it is right for them. For a dentist, an auto repair shop or a hair salon, the same shape works: the appointment, the time, the preparation, the price and the booking. If a customer asks a medical question, the page should say to ask the clinic directly, not answer it in a paragraph.

Reviews that name the service

Reviews do two jobs. They tell a stranger whether the business is trustworthy, and they tell Google what the business does. A review that names the service and says the work was ready when promised is more useful than one that says only that the service was great. The first tells a stranger what the business does and that it kept its word.

So when a customer has just had that service, ask them to say what they came for. Ask everyone, not only the customers you expect to be happy.

No rewards and no filtering: [chapter 10](#) covers the rules and the habit in detail.

A review that names the service is worth more to a stranger than a review that says the place was nice.

Keep the details the same everywhere

Consistency is the least glamorous part of planting and one of the most useful. The same service name, address, phone number and hours should appear on your profile, your site, your social profiles and any directory you control.

This sounds obvious until you look. One page says *ring sizing*, another says *ring resizing*. An old phone number is still on a directory. The hours on the site say Sunday, the profile says closed. Each mismatch is a small doubt. Enough of them and the customer chooses someone else, not because the other business is better but because it is easier to believe.

Pick one name for each service and use it everywhere. If customers use two names, use the more common one in the profile and mention the other on the page, where it reads naturally.

The questions on the phone belong on the page

Keep a note by the phone for a month. What do people ask before they book? Where to park. How long it takes. Whether they need to bring anything. What it costs. Whether they can pay a certain way. For a jeweler, whether a repair can be done while they wait, or how long the shop needs the piece. For a med spa, what the appointment involves and what to bring, not whether a treatment is right for them.

Those questions are free research. Put the answers on the service page and in the profile description where they fit. A page that answers them

does some of the front desk's work before the phone rings and gives a stranger the confidence to call.

An afternoon per seed

Planting one seed well takes about an afternoon: an hour on the profile, an hour or two on the page, a few minutes on photos and a short note to the front desk about reviews. Five seeds means five afternoons, spread over a month or two, not a rebrand.

Do it before the season, not during it. The peak month on the seed card tells you the deadline; [chapter 12](#) has the calendar. A page finished in the peak month has missed the people who were looking.

Common mistakes when planting

Owners who are new to this tend to overdo it. They add keywords to the business name or pad the description with every phrase they can think of. They list services they rarely perform. They offer small rewards for reviews or quietly hide the critical ones. Each of these can cost more than it gains, from a suspended profile to customers who stop trusting what they read.

Some take the customer's language too literally. People do speak oddly, and some searches are clumsy: *ring make smaller near me*. Pasting phrases like that into your own sentences makes the page read badly and can look like an attempt to game the results, which Google's spam policies treat as keyword stuffing. It rarely works and it can bring penalties. Balance the customer's words with natural writing. A simple way to keep both is to quote the customer: *People often ask us whether we can make a ring smaller. We can, usually within a day.*

Some hand the profile to automated tools. Tools that write and publish for you, such as automatic posts, template or machine-written replies to reviews, bulk edits, or services that need manager access to your profile, tend to produce the same flat text everyone else has, and a burst

of automated activity is the kind of pattern that draws a closer look from Google. A stranger with manager rights is also a risk in itself. Tools that only remind you, keep a schedule, or give customers a link to the review form are a different matter and are fine to use.

Others expect the planting itself to settle things. Planting gives a seed a fair chance, and the next chapter is about finding out what it does with it.

The next chapter is about watching. Once the five seeds are planted, you need a simple way to see which ones are taking root, which are standing still and which searches you never planned for.



8

WATCH WHAT SPROUTS

Once a month, from the same few spots, check what each seed is doing.
The pattern matters more than any single reading.

Chapter 7 was about planting: one afternoon per seed, making the service easy to find and easy to trust. This chapter is about the monthly check. It is the part most owners skip, and the part that turns five good intentions into a method.

The rule is simple. Once a month, on the same day, check each seed from the same few spots and write down what you see. Then use the profile's own performance report and the front desk's booking count to see whether the search is turning into customers.

Why one spot is not enough

Google does not show one list for a whole neighborhood. The area splits into micro-markets ([chapter 2](#)). Two addresses a few blocks apart can see different first places for the same search.

The leaders show the same pattern from the other side. In our med spa measurements, zone leaders appear in the top three in 33% to 75% of the searches in their zone. Even the strongest business is not in the top three everywhere. That is normal, and it is why a single check from your own desk can mislead you.

Pick three or four fixed spots for each seed. A street corner, a cafe, a library, a spot outside a subway station: places you can return to on the same day each month. They should be inside the neighborhood you named in the seed, not across the borough. If you can, use a phone at the spot. If you cannot go, ask someone who lives or works there to check and send you a screenshot.

Two cautions. First, personal history affects what you see. Your phone remembers where you have been and what you have searched. Use a private or incognito window, or a device that is not signed in to your account, and do not judge from one spot. Second, for checks you make by hand, monthly is enough. A few readings from a phone cannot tell a real change from an ordinary wobble, and weekly hand checks tempt you to react to noise. Spotting weekly changes reliably takes many more searches from many more points, which is a job for systematic tracking, not for the front desk.

What to write down

Keep one sheet for all five seeds. One row per seed, with columns for the date, each spot, whether you were in the top three, who was first and roughly how many reviews they have.

That last column is easy to skip and worth keeping. A first place held by a business with a handful of reviews is a different kind of contest from one held by a business with hundreds. You do not need an exact count. A rough sense of whether the leader is small, typical or far ahead is enough to see the shape of the competition.

Write *top three: yes or no*, not a rank. Customers choose from the first few results, so the top three is the useful line. A business in fourth place may as well be invisible for this purpose.

A rough number collected every month beats a precise one collected once.

Read the profile's performance report

The profile has a performance report, and it is the closest thing you have to hearing what people type before they call. It shows the searches people used to find the business, and the actions they took: calls, direction requests, website clicks and bookings where the profile reports them.

Use it on the same day as the spot check. Two things to look for.

Seeds that start to bring searches. If you planted *ring resizing in Sheepshead Bay*, watch for searches that contain those words. They may not appear in the first month. When they do, the seed is starting to be understood, even if the top three has not moved yet.

Searches you never planned. The report will show phrases that are not on your seed card. Some will be noise. Some will be customers telling you what they actually want. A jeweler may see *broken necklace chain repair* or *ring prong repair*; a med spa may see *under eye filler* or *lip flip*. Write them down. They are candidates for the next seed, not a reason to abandon the five you have.

Do not expect to see every seed there. The report leaves out or rounds off searches that only a few people used, and long-tail phrases are exactly

that, so the smallest seeds may never appear by name. For those, the spot checks and the front desk count are your evidence.

The report is not a verdict on its own. It counts actions, not reasons. A call might be a price question, a wrong number or a new customer. Read it alongside the bookings and the notes from the front desk.

Count bookings by service

The map is a means, not an end. A seed that appears in the top three and brings no bookings is not a success, and a seed that never appears but brings a steady trickle of customers is not a failure. You need the front desk's count to tell the difference.

Ask the front desk to keep a simple tally by service for the month. It does not need to be exact. A tally mark for each job, grouped by service, is enough. If your booking system already reports by service, use that instead. The point is to connect the search to the work.

When a seed shows searches but few bookings, look at the page before you blame the search. Maybe it does not say how to book. Maybe the price is missing. Maybe the page describes the service in the manufacturer's words and the customer cannot tell whether it is for them. That is a planting problem, and it is fixable.

Write one line of notes

At the bottom of the sheet, write one line about what changed this month. *Added photos to the resizing page. Asked three customers for reviews. Nothing changed.* In three months you will not remember which seed you worked on, and without the note you will not know whether the change made a difference.

The note is also what makes the next chapter possible. Deepening and dropping are decisions, and decisions need a record of what you already tried.

The sheet does not need to be beautiful. A printed page with five rows and a pencil is enough. What matters is that the columns stay the same from month to month, so that this month's reading can be compared with the last one without guesswork. If the front desk is busy, a clipboard by the phone works better than a shared file nobody opens.

An illustration

These are illustrations, not recommendations for any real business.

A med spa in Bay Ridge is watching *HydraFacial in Bay Ridge*. It checks from three spots on the first Tuesday of the month. In the first month it is in the top three at one spot. The first place there is a clinic with a substantial review count. At the other two spots it is not in the top three. The performance report shows a handful of searches for *HydraFacial near me*, and the front desk counted a few HydraFacial appointments. The owner writes one line: *page live, photos added, a review mentions HydraFacial*. Nothing is decided yet.

A jeweler in Sheepshead Bay is watching *ring resizing in Sheepshead Bay* from four spots. In the first month it is in the top three at none of them. The first places are held by jewelers with modest profiles. The performance report shows a few searches for *ring resizing* and *ring sizing*, and the front desk counted a few resizing jobs. The owner writes: *same as last month, a new review names resizing*. Again, nothing is decided. The seed has had one month, not a season.

An auto repair shop watching *brake repair in Astoria* would do the same thing: three spots, the same day each month, the top three and the first place, then the calls and the jobs on the clipboard.

The mistakes to avoid

Judging from one spot. The results differ every few blocks. One spot is an anecdote.

Checking from your own phone while signed in. Your history follows you. Use a private window or a device that is not yours.

Checking every week. You will see noise and mistake it for a trend.

Watching only the map. Calls and bookings are the point. A top-three place that never books is a warning, not a win.

Changing several things at once. If you add photos, rewrite the page and ask for reviews in the same week, you will not know which one mattered. Change one thing, then watch.

Deciding too soon. One month is a reading, not a result. Chapter 9 is about the decision, and it comes after a fair run.

The next chapter is about that decision: when to feed a seed that is growing, when to stop feeding one that is not, and how to keep the whole cycle short enough to repeat.

The monthly watch sheet

- ◆ Date, the same day each month.
- ◆ Seed: service and neighborhood.
- ◆ Spot 1 to spot 4: top three, yes or no.
- ◆ First place: name and rough review count.
- ◆ Performance report: searches, including ones you did not plan, calls, direction requests, website clicks and bookings.
- ◆ Bookings by service from the front desk.
- ◆ One line: what changed this month.



9

DEEPEN THE WINNERS, DROP THE REST

A seed needs a fair run before you judge it. Then feed what is growing, stop feeding what is not, and start again next month.

Chapter 8 gave you a monthly sheet: five seeds, a few fixed spots, the performance report and the front desk count. This chapter is about what to do with it: decide, slowly and on a schedule, which seeds to feed and which to leave alone.

The decision is easier if you accept two mistakes as normal. The first is dropping a seed too early, before the page has been found and read. The second is keeping everything, so you end up with twenty seeds and no time for any of them. The method is built to avoid both.

Give a seed a fair run

A fair run is about a season, roughly three months. That is long enough for a new page to be found, for a few reviews to arrive and for a monthly check to show a pattern. It is not long enough to prove anything, and it is not a promise. It is a fair look.

The season matters because services move with the calendar. [Chapter 12](#) lists the peaks. If you plant a March service in February, three months takes you through the peak and past it. If you plant it in June, you are judging it in its quiet season. Neither is wrong, but you should know which one you are doing.

Write the start date on the seed card. The review date is three months later, not the next time the owner feels anxious about the map.

Signs a seed is sprouting

A seed does not need to be first to be working. Look for one or more of these:

- ♦ It appears in the top three from one more spot than last month, and the other spots hold.
- ♦ The performance report starts to show searches that contain the service and the place.
- ♦ Customers mention the service when they call, or say they found you for it.
- ♦ The front desk counts bookings for that service, even a few.

One of these is a pulse. Two is a pattern. None after a full season is an answer, though not always the answer you wanted.

Keep the scale in view: a business can appear in most of its zone's searches and still rarely reach the top three ([chapter 4](#)). That is why the top-three column and the booking count matter more than a screenshot that shows the business somewhere on the list.

Deepen a winner

There is an old parable about a sower who scattered seed. Some fell on the path and was eaten by birds, some on stony ground where it sprang up and withered, some among thorns that choked it. Some fell on good ground and brought forth thirty, sixty and a hundredfold. The sower could not tell the good ground from the rest by looking. Neither can you. Your seeds show you where the ground is good, and that is where the next effort belongs.

When a seed has a pulse, feed it before the peak, not during it. Deepening means a set of small additions, one at a time, so you can see what changes.

Add photos. More of the service itself, from different angles. A jeweler can show the work at different stages, in the customer-facing area. A med spa can show the room, the equipment and the products, without making claims about what a treatment will do.

Make the page longer and more useful. Add the questions people actually ask on the phone. Parking. Timing. What to bring. How pricing works. What happens on the day. A page that answers the real questions is more useful than a page that repeats the same paragraph in different words.

Post again from a different angle. The first post may have been a photo of the work. The second can be a question from the front desk, or a short explanation of how the appointment runs. The third can be a photo of a finished piece or a treatment room set up for the day, again without claims and without showing anything that should stay private.

Ask a few more customers for reviews that name the service. Not a burst, and not a reward. A steady trickle is more believable than a rush of reviews in one week.

Link the page from other pages. If your site has a repairs page, a services page or a neighborhood page, link to the seed page from there. A reader who lands on the wrong page should be able to find the right one.

Add one more useful thing, then watch.

Extend a winner carefully

Once a seed is steady, it can support a small extension. There are three kinds, and they are not equally useful.

The same service in the next neighborhood. *Ring resizing in Sheepshead Bay* can lead to *ring resizing in Brighton Beach*, if that is honestly where your customers come from. Distance is one of the things Google weighs, and it is also what customers weigh. Start next door, not across the borough.

A closely related service. *Ring resizing* can lead to *ring engraving* and *wedding bands*. *HydraFacial* can lead to *chemical peel*. An auto repair shop can extend *brake repair* to *brake inspection*; a hair salon can extend a *color* appointment to *highlights*. The work overlaps, the customer often asks for both, and the page can link to its neighbor without turning into a catalog. Check the calendar first: related services often share a season, so a March seed and another March seed do not spread your risk.

The customer's other words for the same thing. Some people say *ring sizing* rather than *ring resizing*, or *broken necklace chain repair* rather than *jewelry repair*. If the words are genuinely used, add them to the page and the profile where they read naturally. Do not invent a second name for a service just to make a second seed. If customers do not use the words, they are not a seed.

One extension at a time. If you add a neighborhood, a related service and a few new phrases in the same month, you will not know what worked.

Drop a dud

A dud is a seed that has had a fair run and shows no pulse. Dropping it does not mean deleting the page. Leave the page up if it describes a service you still offer; it costs little, and a customer who finds it directly may still book. What you stop is the feeding: no more new photos, no more posts, no more review requests for that seed.

Move the time to a seed that showed a pulse. Then choose the next candidate from the long list you collected in [chapter 5](#). The list should be longer than five. If it is not, make a new one: the services you do often, the neighborhoods your customers come from.

Many owners treat a dropped seed as a failure. It is better read as information. A dud usually means one of three things: the search is too small to matter, the leader is too strong for now, or the page is not answering the question. Write down which one you think it is. That note will help the next seed.

There is one exception. A small search that brings bookings is not a dud, even if it never reaches the top three from every spot. The map is a means, not the end. Keep the seed that pays.

The cycle, month after month

The cycle is short enough to repeat: plant, watch, deepen, drop. One month you may plant a page for a new seed. The next you watch all five on the same day. The next you deepen one that moved. The next you drop one that did not and replace it. Then start again.

Five seeds tended beat twenty neglected. That is the whole argument for keeping the list short. A garden is a useful picture, as long as you do not take it too far. You plant a few things, you water what comes up, you pull what does not, and you do not dig up a seedling every week to see whether it has roots.

The part in one page

Chapters 4 to 9 are one argument. The head term is crowded, and the customers are in the smaller searches. The map changes every few blocks, so one service in one place is the unit that matters. Collect the long tail of your trade, then pick five seeds you can serve well. Plant each one so a stranger can find it and believe it. Watch from the same spots on the same day each month. Give each seed a season. Deepen what moves, drop what does not, and replace it.

The rest of the book supports that cycle. [Reviews and photos](#) go deeper on the two things customers check most. [Reading your competitors and their ads](#) shows how to look at the businesses around you without copying them. [Seasons and click prices](#) explains how to read the calendar and when paid support is worth testing. [One hour a week](#) turns the whole method into a schedule a small team can keep.

None of it promises a place. What the cycle gives you is a way to make a fair attempt, see what happens and spend your time where it is doing something.

The season review

- ◆ Has the seed had a fair run, about three months?
- ◆ Did it reach the top three from one more spot?
- ◆ Do the performance report's searches include it?
- ◆ Do customers mention it by name, and are there bookings for that service?
- ◆ If yes, deepen one thing at a time, then extend to a neighbor.
- ◆ If no, stop feeding it, keep the page and choose the next candidate.
- ◆ Write the date and the reason on the seed card.

Part Three

WHAT SUPPORTS THE METHOD



10

REVIEWS AND PHOTOS

Reviews and photos are the two fields a stranger checks before deciding. A small team can improve both without a budget, as long as the work becomes a habit.

A customer who has never heard of your business opens the profile and does two things before anything else. They read the rating and a few reviews, then they look at the photos. Everything else on the profile answers questions that come after that first judgment.

What a stranger reads in a review

Reviews are the part of the map a stranger reads most closely. They are also part of prominence, one of the three things Google says it ranks local results on ([chapter 2](#)), and they are increasingly the reason an AI assistant

gives when it recommends a business. When an assistant names a place, the sentence that follows usually comes from what customers wrote.

Wording matters for that reason. A review that says *fixed my clasp while I waited* tells a stranger what was done, how long it took and how it went. A review that says *great place* tells them only that somebody was pleased. The first is worth more to the person deciding, to Google, and to an assistant looking for a reason to recommend you.

Reviews also carry the words Google uses to understand the business. On Google Maps, many profiles show the topics that come up most often in reviews, and those topics are the phrases customers repeat when they describe the work. They are the same material [chapter 5](#) sends you to collect, and they are worth reading even when the reviews are not yours.

You cannot write reviews for customers. You can make it likely that the ones who write them mention the service, by asking at the right moment and asking in the right way.

The scale in our area

[Chapter 2](#) gave the scale: in South Brooklyn the leading tenth of [med spas](#) and [jewelers](#) carry review counts in the hundreds. Those counts are what years of ordinary trade look like when it is written down in public, and they set the scale for what a customer expects to see.

They also show why reviews are not the whole story. Our sample clinic in Sheepshead Bay has 111 reviews against its zone leader's 185, and it posts more photos than its five main rivals. It still reaches the top three in only 10% of its zone's searches.

That result is worth sitting with, because photos are the easy part. A team can add a few photos this week, and a review count takes months or years to change. The clinic is ahead of its rivals on photos, the part that is quick to fix, and it is still not in the top three. Photos make a profile look

cared for. The rest of the gap depends on reviews arriving over time and on the smaller searches in Part II.

A habit, not a campaign

The usual way to get reviews is a burst. A sign goes up at the counter, the team asks for a month, then the sign comes down and the reviews stop. The profile ends up with a cluster of dates that looks like a campaign because it was one.

A habit fits into work the front desk already does.

Ask when the work is done. The moment a customer has the repaired chain in their hand, or is paying for an appointment, is when they are most likely to write and most likely to remember details. A day later, the memory has softened.

Ask so the service comes up. A request for a review produces a sentence about the place. A question about the visit produces a sentence about the work. The front desk can ask customers to say what they came in for and how it went.

Make it easy. A short link or a card with a code that opens the review form, handed over with the receipt. The fewer steps between the counter and the review, the more reviews arrive.

Ask everyone. Customers who had a small problem and were looked after often write the most useful reviews. Asking only the people you expect to be pleased produces a profile that reads like a brochure, and customers notice a wall of identical praise.

Do not offer a reward, a discount or a prize, and do not filter who gets asked. Read the platform's rules on reviews before you change anything at the counter, because they set what is allowed and they change from time to time.

A steady trickle from real customers, in their own words, makes a better profile than a rush in one month followed by silence.

Match the request to the seed

The request can point at the seed without sounding like a script. If *HydraFacial in Bay Ridge* is one of your five seeds, the customers to ask this month are the ones who had a HydraFacial. Their review is likely to name it, and a review that names the service supports the page you wrote for that seed.

The same applies at a jeweler working on *ring resizing in Sheepshead Bay*. The customer who has just collected a resized ring is the one whose review can say so.

This is a reason to ask at the counter rather than by a general email a week later. The person in front of you knows what they came for and has the work in their hand. Ask everyone who comes through, and let the seeds benefit from the reviews that mention them.

Replying to every review

Reply to all of them, including the short good ones. A line of thanks is enough for a five-star review with no detail. The reply is written for the next person reading, who is trying to work out whether the business is run by people who pay attention.

Critical reviews need more care. Reply calmly, once, with the facts as you know them, and offer to continue by phone or in person. If the business made a mistake, say so. If the record differs, say what the record shows without arguing about the customer's experience. What you are writing is a public answer to a public complaint, and a careful one is read as evidence of how the business behaves when something goes wrong.

A useful critical reply does four things in a few lines. It thanks the customer for saying what happened. It names the service, so the next reader knows what the complaint was about. It states the fix, whether that is a refund, a redo or a change in how the desk handles a booking. It gives a phone number or a name to ask for. Anything longer reads as a defense.

If a review breaks the platform's rules, report it and keep a record. Do not argue with it in public while the report is being looked at, and do not ask customers to pile on. A profile with one calm answer to a hostile review is more convincing than a profile with a row of replies from regulars.

Do not reply in anger, and do not reply in a hurry. Draft it, leave it for an hour, then send it.

The best review names the service, the wait and the result, in the customer's own words.

Photos

Photos answer a question a review cannot: what does the place look like, and what does the work look like.

Take four kinds, and keep taking them. The work itself, close enough to see the finish. The door, so a customer recognizes the place when they arrive. The inside, so they know what to expect. The team, where everyone is willing to be photographed. Add a few each month, of the work you are doing now. One large photo shoot followed by a year of nothing makes a profile look abandoned, however good the photographs were.

Give each seed its own photos. If you are working on *ring resizing in Sheepshead Bay*, the profile and the service page should show resizing, not only the shop window. For a treatment, the room, the equipment used for that appointment and the products on the shelf. A photo of a finished job that matches the seed is more useful than another picture of the front desk.

For a med spa, a photo can show the room, the equipment and the products, and can describe what the appointment involves. It should not make claims about what a treatment will do or show results. For a jeweler, the rule is strict: never publish or discuss store security, cash handling,

safes, alarms, staff schedules or when valuables are on site, and keep photos away from safes, back rooms, alarm panels and vault areas. That rule has no exceptions.

Stock photos are easy to spot and tell a customer nothing about your business. A phone photo of the actual work is more useful than a polished picture of someone else's.

What owners get wrong

Buying or rewarding reviews. It breaks the rules described above, it is often obvious in the wording, and it puts the profile at risk.

Asking only happy customers. It produces a profile that reads as staged, and it leaves the useful critical reviews, and the calm replies to them, out of sight.

Arguing in public. A long defensive reply is read by every future customer and rarely by the person who wrote the review.

Stock photos. They answer none of the questions a stranger has.

One big shoot, then nothing. Freshness matters more than volume, and a profile that stopped changing looks like a business that stopped.

Both habits carry into the schedule in [chapter 13](#). They cost the least of the four jobs, because they are made of work the business is already doing.



11

READING YOUR COMPETITORS AND THEIR ADS

The businesses that come first for your seeds are the most useful free research you have. Read them for what customers value and where they are thin, and read their ads for what they are willing to pay for.

The monthly watch sheet from [chapter 8](#) already records who is first for each seed, with a rough review count. It is easy to stop there and go back to your own profile. The names on that sheet are the beginning of a second piece of work: reading those businesses closely enough to understand the contest you are in.

The purpose is to learn what customers in your area respond to and where the leader has left something undone. Neither can be learned from your own profile alone, and neither requires copying anyone.

What to read on a profile

Keep one page per seed and read the same things each month, so the notes can be compared. A sentence under each heading is enough.

Categories and services. Which category is primary, which are additional, and how many services are listed. A leader with a precise category and a full services list is telling you how it wants to be understood. A leader with a broad category and three services may be winning on something else, such as reviews or distance.

Description. Read it as a customer would, and note what it promises and what it leaves out. A description that is one paragraph about the history of the business says little about what happens on a visit.

Review topics. On Google Maps, many profiles show the topics that come up most often in reviews. Those topics are the words customers use for what they value: the waiting time, a particular job, a person at the counter. Write them down. They are better material for your own services list and page than any phrase you would invent.

Photos and posts. How many photos, of what, and how recently. When the last post went up. A leader who posted last month is running a different kind of operation from one that has not posted in a long time.

Replies. Whether reviews get answers, how quickly, and in what tone. A business that answers every critical review in public is showing you that the complaint is read by more people than the person who wrote it.

Do the reading on the same day as the monthly watch, from the same phone if you can, so that the notes and the rankings describe the same week. Write what you see in your own words. The notes are for comparing months, not for producing a report for anyone else.

Where the leader is thin

A business can be strong in reviews and still be thin in places that matter for your seed. The usual gaps are visible from the outside.

- ♦ The service is offered but not listed, so the profile does not answer the search in so many words.
- ♦ The photos are all of the storefront or the waiting room, with none of the work.
- ♦ The reviews mention a service the services list leaves out.
- ♦ The description says little about what a visit involves, how long it takes or how to book.
- ♦ Questions in reviews about price, parking or timing go unanswered.

An illustration, not a recommendation for any real business. A jeweler in Sheepshead Bay is watching *ring resizing in Sheepshead Bay*. The first place has a long review history and a full services list. Its photos show the shop window, the counter and a display case. None shows a ring before and after resizing. Its reviews mention resizing often, and the services list names it once, without a description. The review history and the services list are strong. The profile is thin on the part of the experience a person considering a resizing would want to see.

That gap is a reason to make sure your own seed page shows the work and explains the job. It is not a reason to assume the place will change hands. The leader may be first for reasons that have nothing to do with the page, including distance and years of trade.

Keep the gaps in proportion. A thin spot at a leader is useful when it matches something you can fix in an afternoon, such as a missing service description or a set of photos that never shows the work. A gap that would take years to close, such as a review count, belongs in the slow column and not in this month's plan. The notes are there to separate the two.

A first place with a thin services list is a gap you can see from the outside.

Ads as a signal

What a business pays to promote is evidence of what it finds worth paying for. Facebook and Instagram ads are visible to anyone in Meta's public ad library, and Google search ads appear on the results page, marked as sponsored. You do not need an account to look, and you do not need to guess at a budget. The library shows which ads a page is running, not what they cost.

Our measurements in South Brooklyn suggest that paid advertising in local trades is thinner than owners often assume. Among 100 local med spa pages, 12 run Meta ads, with 84 active ads in total. Google search ads appeared in none of 39 local med spa searches, and the likely reason is platform policy: Google restricts ads promoting prescription drugs such as Botox. Among 83 local jeweler pages, 5 run Meta ads, with 43 ads in all, most of them from one large online watch seller. Only 4 of 39 local jeweler searches showed a paid result, mostly from national online sellers and refiners. The [method page](#) describes how these measurements are made.

Two readings follow. The absence of ads on your seed does not mean the search is worthless. It often means the local businesses in the trade have chosen not to pay for it, which leaves the map as the main route to the customer. And where ads do appear, they show which services someone considers worth buying attention for. A gold buyer pays to reach people searching *cash for gold*, because one seller can be worth a lot. That is trade information, and it is free.

When you look at an ad, read three things: the service it names, the words it uses, and where it sends the click. A local competitor advertising a service is telling you the service has enough demand to support a budget. A national seller advertising in your area is telling you that the

search attracts buyers from outside the neighborhood, and that your own advantage is the door and the counter.

Ads change faster than profiles, so treat a sighting as a reading of this month. Look again on the next round. A competitor who advertised a service last month and stopped is telling you something different from one who has kept the same ad running, and the ad library and the results page will show you which is which.

The same service points at different rivals

Chapter 4 showed that different searches put you against different businesses. For a jeweler, *ring resizing* is mostly a contest among jewelers, while *watch repair* belongs to watch shops and *ear piercing* to piercing studios and accessory chains. A med spa offering laser hair removal competes with studios built around that one service.

So the reading work is per seed. The question on each seed card is who is first for this service, in this neighborhood, and what kind of business that is. The biggest jewelry store nearby may not be first for the service you are working on. A watch shop that leads *watch repair* will have a different services list, a different photo set and different review topics from a jeweler who leads *ring resizing*, and the lessons from each are different.

What owners get wrong

Copying wording. A competitor's description belongs to them, and copying it gives a customer two identical profiles to choose between. Use the topics from reviews and your own customers' words instead.

Obsessing over the head-term leader. The business first for *jewelry store* is not necessarily first for your seed, and its profile says little about *ring resizing*.

Reading one profile once. A snapshot tells you what a profile looks like, not how often it is tended. Read the same businesses each month.

Assuming competitors advertise everywhere. In our area, most local pages in both trades run no Meta ads, and most local searches show no paid result. The absence is common enough that it changes the picture an owner carries around.

The competitor page is small on purpose. Five seeds, one leader each, the same headings every month. In a few months it will tell you which rivals are active and which are coasting, and what the reviews in your seeds say customers value.

The competitor sheet

- ◆ One page per seed, dated, read on the same day as the watch sheet.
- ◆ The leader's primary category and its services list.
- ◆ Its description, in one line of your own.
- ◆ The topics that repeat in its reviews, in the customers' words.
- ◆ Photo count, what the photos show, and the date of the last post.
- ◆ Whether reviews get replies, and how a critical one was handled.
- ◆ Any Meta or Google ad for that service, and where the ad sends the click.



12

SEASONS AND CLICK PRICES AS SIGNALS

The calendar tells you when to plant a seed, and the click price tells you what other businesses think a search is worth. Both are rough signals, and both are free.

Every seed card carries a peak month, and every phrase on your long-tail sheet has a suggested click price attached to it somewhere. One tells you when the work should be finished. The other tells you where paying for a place is expensive. Read together, they help decide the order of the year.

Services have seasons

In our US search data for 2023 to 2025, the treatments in the med spa list peak in different months. Microneedling, HydraFacial and chemical

peel all peak in March. Laser hair removal peaks in July. Lip filler peaks in January. Botox peaks in February, IV therapy in February, coolsculpting in April, tattoo removal in September.

The method already uses this. [Choosing your seeds](#) asks for the peak month on the seed card, and [plant](#) says to finish the page before the peak rather than during it. A page that goes up in the busy month has missed the people who were already looking.

This chapter is about reading the calendar more closely, and about the second signal that sits next to it on the sheet.

How much the calendar matters

The size of the swing is not the same for every treatment. Our med spa data gives a peak-to-low ratio for each one.

- ♦ Coolsculpting peaks in April and bottoms out in December, with the peak 1.88 times the low.
- ♦ Botox peaks in February and bottoms out in December, at 1.7 times the low.
- ♦ Chemical peel peaks in March and bottoms out in July, at 1.52 times the low.
- ♦ Tattoo removal peaks in September, at 1.42 times the low.
- ♦ Microneedling peaks in March, at 1.39 times the low.
- ♦ Laser hair removal peaks in July and lip filler in January, each at 1.37 times its low.
- ♦ HydraFacial peaks in March, at 1.29 times the low.
- ♦ IV therapy peaks in February, at 1.26 times the low.

A ratio of 1.88 means the calendar matters a great deal for that service. A page finished after the peak misses the busiest month and the interest that comes with it, and the next chance is a year away. A ratio of 1.26 means the service brings a steadier flow, so the month of planting matters less and the page can be improved on a calmer schedule.

One service in the list does not follow a season at all. Semaglutide weight loss grows year over year rather than rising and falling with the calendar. A search like that can be worked at any time of year, and the useful habit is to keep the page current as interest grows.

The jewelers' calendar

For jewelers our data gives peak and low months without ratios.

- ♦ Wedding bands peak in January and bottom out in June.
- ♦ Lab grown diamond engagement rings peak in June and bottom out in January.
- ♦ Custom engagement rings peak in August and bottom out in April.
- ♦ Watch repair peaks in December and bottoms out in November.
- ♦ Ear piercing peaks in March and bottoms out in November.
- ♦ Cash for gold and jewelry repair peak in July and bottom out in February.
- ♦ Custom name necklaces peak in December and bottom out in January.
- ♦ Ring engraving peaks in December and bottoms out in June.

The pattern is worth reading before the year starts. December and January carry watch repair, custom name necklaces, ring engraving and wedding bands. July carries cash for gold and jewelry repair, while the spring has ear piercing on its own. A jeweler with five seeds that all peak in December has a quiet year and one crowded month. A jeweler with seeds spread across January, March, July and December has something to work on in every part of the year.

A spread of seeds

A single seed tied to one season leaves the rest of the year thin. Five seeds with different peaks give the business work in every quarter, and give the owner a reason to keep the monthly cycle going when one seed is quiet.

Take a med spa that offers laser hair removal, HydraFacial, chemical peel, lip filler and Botox. Their peaks fall in July, March, March, January and February. Most of them arrive in the first quarter, and the summer depends on one service. A jeweler with ring resizing, wedding bands, custom name necklaces, jewelry repair and watch repair has a different shape: January, December, July and December, plus resizing, for which our data shows no season.

The useful thing is to know which months your seeds cover and which months have nothing, before the year starts. The seed card is where that shows up. Five cards spread across different peak months are a better plan than five cards with the same one, even when each seed is good on its own.

What a click price tells you

The suggested price of a search ad click is a rough signal of how many advertisers want a search, and of how much a customer is worth to them. Ad platforms suggest a price per click when an advertiser sets up a search ad, and we record it for every phrase on our lists.

In our Brooklyn data, *cash for gold* has the highest suggested click price in the jeweler list at \$36.12. *Ring resizing* is \$6.94. Among med spa treatments, at US average prices, *semaglutide weight loss* is the highest at \$33.81, while *microneedling* is \$6.13 and *HydraFacial* is \$5.87.

The price is not a measure of how many people search. In Brooklyn, *cash for gold* and *ring resizing* both get about 280 searches a month, and their click prices sit far apart. *Watch repair* gets about 5,700 searches a month and its click price is \$4.23. A large search can be cheap per click,

and a small one can be expensive, because the price follows the value of a customer to the advertiser.

Two conclusions, both modest. A high price means paying for a place on that search is expensive, so the map may be the cheaper route to the same customer. It does not rule the seed out. *Cash for gold* is expensive because a gold buyer will pay a lot for one seller, which also tells you the customer is valuable. The second conclusion is about competition: a search with many advertisers is one where other businesses have decided the customer is worth paying for. A low price may mean the search is uncontested, or it may mean it is small. The price alone cannot tell you which.

Paid support is optional

Nothing in this book requires an ad budget. If you want to test paid support, keep the test small and bounded.

- ♦ One seed, not five.
- ♦ A budget you are willing to spend without a return.
- ♦ A start date and an end date, written down before you start.
- ♦ The same watch sheet you use for the map, so the test is judged by the same measures.
- ♦ A check of the platform's rules before you write the ad, and your own counsel where the rules are unclear.

Google restricts ads for prescription drugs such as Botox, which is one reason the local med spa searches in our sample showed no paid results. The rules are a practical limit on what can be tested, not a detail to leave until the ad is written.

No promises come with a test. It tells you whether paying for that seed brings calls at a cost you can live with, and it tells you something even when the answer is no.

Seeing the seasons without tools

You do not need a data subscription to find the shape of your year.

Last year's bookings by month. Your appointment book or booking system already has this. Count the jobs or appointments by service for each month, and the peaks will be visible. A service with a strong March will show up in March.

Google's trend charts. Google publishes free charts of how often a term is searched over time. They show relative interest, not local counts, and they are useful for seeing which month is busiest and whether interest is rising or falling over years.

The front desk's sense of the year. The person who answers the phone knows when the calls come in and what people ask for in December that they do not ask for in July. Ask them once a year and write it down.

The click price is about the value of a customer, not the size of the search.

The season sheet

- ◆ The peak month and the low month for every seed on your list.
- ◆ The peak-to-low ratio where we have one, as a note on how much the month matters.
- ◆ The seeds that share a peak, and the quarters with no peak at all.
- ◆ The suggested click price for each seed, and the size of the search it sits on.
- ◆ Any seed where a paid test would be worth one bounded try.
- ◆ A date, so next year's plan starts from a record rather than a memory.



13

ONE HOUR A WEEK

The method fits into an hour a week when each week has a fixed job. Here is a month of hours, a year of seasons, and what to review when.

The cycle in Part II has four kinds of work: watching what the seeds do, planting or deepening one of them, asking for reviews and keeping the photos current, and reading the businesses you compete with. Spread over a month, those four jobs fit into four hours, one for each week.

The month in four hours

- ♦ **Week 1: watch.** The spot checks from the same places, the performance report, and the front desk's count by service ([chapter 8](#)). This is the monthly reading, and it sets what the other three weeks are for.

- ♦ **Week 2: plant or deepen.** One seed gets one part of the planting work: a service on the profile, a section on the page, or a set of photos ([chapter 7](#), [chapter 9](#)). Planting a seed takes about an afternoon in total, so a seed is finished over a few of these weeks rather than in one.
- ♦ **Week 3: reviews and photos.** Read the new reviews, reply to all of them, ask the customers from the past month, and add a few photos of current work ([chapter 10](#)).
- ♦ **Week 4: competitors and the seed cards.** Read the leaders for your seeds, check their ads, and update the notes on each card ([chapter 11](#)).

An hour is enough because the work is divided. The mistake most owners make is trying to do all four jobs in one sitting at the end of the month, which turns into a long afternoon and then none. Four short sessions are easier to keep than one long one, and each one has a clear end.

The schedule assumes the groundwork is done: the profile is claimed, the long-tail sheet exists, and five seeds are chosen. If that is not yet true, the first month's hours go to that work, and the four-week cycle begins when the seed cards are written.

Who does which part

The hour belongs to whoever owns the profile, usually the owner or a manager. Some of the work belongs to the front desk and happens in minutes across the week: asking each customer for a review, writing down how people ask for a service, and keeping the tally by service. Agree on those small jobs once, and the weekly hour is mostly reading and editing.

Write the four weeks on a calendar and keep the same order. The order matters less than the repetition. If a week is missed, do that job in the next week's hour and push the next job along, so each hour still has one

job. Doing two jobs in one hour to catch up is how the schedule stops working.

A year of work, as an example

The calendar below is an example for a med spa and a jeweler, built from the seasonality in our data. It is not a recommendation for any real business, and the months will differ for other trades.

If you run another trade, the shape still applies. Find the peak month for each service, using the methods in [chapter 12](#), and count back from the peak to the months when the page and the photos should be finished. Check the months against your own bookings before you use them.

- ♦ **January.** Lip filler and wedding bands peak this month. Prepare the March services: microneedling, HydraFacial, chemical peel and ear piercing. Botox peaks in February, so its page should already be finished.
- ♦ **February.** Botox and IV therapy peak. Finish the March pages and photos, and prepare coolsculpting for April.
- ♦ **March.** Microneedling, HydraFacial, chemical peel and ear piercing peak. Plant the summer services now: laser hair removal, cash for gold and jewelry repair all peak in July.
- ♦ **April.** Coolsculpting peaks. Prepare the June page for lab grown diamond engagement rings and finish the July pages.
- ♦ **May.** The June and July pages should be ready before the month turns. Lab grown diamond engagement rings peak in June, and wedding bands are at their lowest that month.
- ♦ **June.** Lab grown diamond engagement rings peak. Prepare custom engagement rings for August and check the July seeds before the busy month.
- ♦ **July.** Laser hair removal, cash for gold and jewelry repair peak. Custom engagement rings peak in August, so that page needs to

be finished.

- ♦ **August.** Custom engagement rings peak. Start the December work: watch repair, custom name necklaces and ring engraving.
- ♦ **September.** Tattoo removal peaks. Review the long-tail list and the profile's categories for the quarter, and choose which seeds have a peak left this year.
- ♦ **October.** Finish the December pages. Decide next year's five seeds and write the cards, using this year's bookings by month.
- ♦ **November.** Ear piercing and watch repair are at their lowest. Make the final checks on the December pages before the gift season.
- ♦ **December.** Watch repair, custom name necklaces and ring engraving peak. Botox, laser hair removal, HydraFacial and coolsculpting are at their low, which makes December a good month for editing the pages of the spring services.

A month in practice

These are illustrations, not recommendations for any real business.

A med spa in Bay Ridge has its five seeds chosen. In week 1 it checks *HydraFacial in Bay Ridge* from three spots, reads the performance report and writes down the front desk's count. In week 2 it adds a section to the HydraFacial page about parking and how long the appointment takes. In week 3 it replies to the new reviews, asks the customers from that week, and adds photos of the treatment room. In week 4 it reads the first place for the seed, notices that the photos are all of the waiting room, and writes that on the seed card. The next month, the same four jobs come around in the same order.

A jeweler in Sheepshead Bay is working in November, with *wedding bands in Sheepshead Bay* as one seed. Week 1 is the monthly check. Week 2 finishes the wedding bands page and adds photos of finished bands

before the January peak. Week 3 is reviews and photos. Week 4 is the competitor page for *ring resizing* and a look at whether anyone is advertising watch repair. The December hour is already spoken for by the gift-season services.

Once a quarter

Four times a year, give one of the weekly hours to the longer list. Re-read the long-tail sheet from [chapter 5](#): add the words customers used this quarter, drop services you no longer do, and check the categories on the profile against the work ([chapter 3](#)). This is also the moment to replace a seed that had its fair run and did not move ([chapter 9](#)), and to check that the people with access to the profile still work with you.

Once a year

One hour a year goes to the calendar itself. Look at last year's bookings by month, put the peaks next to the seeds, and choose the five for the coming year so that the busy months are covered. Write the start dates on the cards, and note which services have a page that has not been touched in a year.

The argument, in a few lines

Local markets stay split because a shop can only serve the people near it. The window customers look through does not stay split: it shows a few places at a time, and an AI assistant often names one or two. The big searches are held by businesses that have been collecting for years, and the small searches are where a small business can be the obvious answer. That is why the method works five seeds at a time, one hour a week, with about three months before a seed is judged.

None of it is quick. A seed needs a season, a profile needs a year of ordinary trade written down, and the calendar comes back around. The

four jobs repeat in the same order every month, which is what makes the hour possible.

ITL Research measures local markets week by week and publishes market profiles at itlresearch.com, for owners who want to see their own market measured.

ABOUT ITL RESEARCH

ITL Research is an independent research company. We study local business markets the way an analyst studies an industry: who operates in each one, how customers find them and how that changes week by week. ITL stands for Inside The Local.

Our own index of more than 4.5 billion real search phrases, built over many years, lets us see the small searches of a single trade in a single neighborhood.

We start in New York City, area by area, and publish market profiles openly at itlresearch.com. For owners in the markets we track every week, we prepare a monthly report on their market and their place in it, printed and mailed to their desk with a PDF copy: no dashboards and no logins.

The free PDF of this book, and the market profiles it draws on, are at itlresearch.com/book.

