



SEO Basics: Getting Found in Ontario

A beginner's guide to local visibility, search rankings, and conversions

A GUIDE BY FRAYZE

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What SEO Actually Means (in 2025)

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) isn't about tricking Google anymore. In 2025, it's simply about making your business easy to find, understand, and trust online.

The Simple Truth:

When someone in Ontario searches "plumber near me" or "best accountant Thunder Bay," you want to be one of the first results they see.

Why SEO Matters for Ontario Businesses



97% Start Online

Almost every customer journey begins with a Google search. If you're not there, you're invisible.



Local Searches = Ready Buyers

People searching "near me" have high intent. They're ready to call, visit, or buy.



Trust Factor

Businesses on the first page of Google are perceived as more credible and established.



Free Traffic

Unlike ads, organic rankings don't cost per click. It's ongoing visibility without ongoing ad spend.

What's Changed in 2025?

- ✓ AI-powered search results (Google's SGE shows AI summaries at the top)
- ✓ Voice search optimization ("Hey Google, find a dentist near me")
- ✓ User experience signals (page speed, mobile-friendliness matter more than ever)
- ✓ E-E-A-T: Experience, Expertise, Authority, Trust are ranking factors
- ✓ Video and visual content rank higher in search results

Google My Business, Maps & Schema

For local Ontario businesses, these three elements are your SEO foundation. Get them right, and you'll show up when customers are searching nearby.



Google Business Profile (formerly GMB)

This is your free business listing on Google. When someone searches for your business or services nearby, this is what they see.

Essential Setup Steps:

1. Claim and verify your business (Google will send a postcard with a code)
2. Complete 100% of your profile (hours, photos, services, description)
3. Choose accurate business categories (primary + secondary)
4. Add high-quality photos (exterior, interior, products, team)
5. Enable messaging so customers can text you directly
6. Post weekly updates (offers, news, events)
7. Respond to ALL reviews (good and bad) within 24-48 hours

Real Impact Example:

A Sudbury HVAC company fully optimized their Google Business Profile. Within 30 days:

- Map views increased 340%
- Phone calls up 127%
- Direction requests up 89%
- Cost: \$0 (it's completely free)

Google Maps Optimization

Maps results appear above regular search results. Here's how to rank:

1. Proximity

Use your real business address. Google shows businesses closest to the searcher.

2. Relevance

Match your categories and description to what people search for.

3. Prominence

Reviews, ratings, and backlinks boost your map ranking.

Schema Markup (Structured Data)

Schema is code that tells Google exactly what your content is about. It helps you get rich results like:

- ⭐ Star ratings in search results
- 💰 Pricing information
- 📅 Event dates and times
- 📍 Business location and hours
- ❓ FAQ accordion in search

Pro Tip: Most modern website builders (like those from FRAYZE) automatically add schema markup. If yours doesn't, tools like Google's Structured Data Markup Helper make it easy.

Why Your Website Doesn't Show Up

If your website isn't showing up in search results, it's usually one (or more) of these common issues:

Problem #1: Google Can't Find You

Your website hasn't been indexed by Google yet. This is common for brand new websites or those with technical issues.

How to Check:

Type "site:yourwebsite.com" into Google. If nothing appears, you're not indexed.

Fix:

- Submit your sitemap to Google Search Console
- Request indexing for your main pages
- Check that your robots.txt isn't blocking Google

Problem #2: Slow Loading Speed

Google prioritizes fast websites. If yours takes more than 3 seconds to load, you're losing rankings AND customers.

How to Check:

Use Google PageSpeed Insights (free tool). Aim for a score above 85.

Common Fixes:

- Compress images (use WebP format)
- Enable caching
- Use a CDN (Content Delivery Network)
- Minimize JavaScript and CSS

Problem #3: Not Mobile-Friendly

Over 70% of local searches happen on mobile. Google uses mobile-first indexing, meaning it judges your site based on the mobile version.

How to Check:

Use Google's Mobile-Friendly Test or just open your site on your phone.

Requirements:

- Responsive design (adapts to screen size)
- Readable text without zooming
- Buttons and links easy to tap
- No horizontal scrolling



Problem #4: Weak or Missing Keywords

You haven't told Google what your business does or where you're located. Your content doesn't match what people search for.

Fix:

- Include your city/region in titles, headings, and content
- Use natural language people actually search ("Thunder Bay plumber" not "plumbing solutions provider")
- Create dedicated service pages for each offering
- Answer common customer questions in your content



Problem #5: No Backlinks or Local Citations

Other websites aren't linking to you. Google sees this as a lack of authority and trust.

Quick Wins:

- Get listed on Yelp, Yellow Pages, and industry directories
- Partner with local businesses and ask for links
- Get featured in local news or blogs
- Join local chambers of commerce (they usually link to members)

Content That Actually Ranks

Great content answers questions, solves problems, and matches search intent. Here's how to create content that Google loves.

The Golden Rule:

Write for humans first, optimize for Google second.

What Search Intent Means

People search for four main reasons. Your content should match their intent:

Informational

They want to learn something

Example: "how to fix a leaky faucet"

Navigational

They're looking for a specific site

Example: "frayze thunder bay"

Transactional

They're ready to buy

Example: "buy furnace installation toronto"

Local

They want nearby services

Example: "dentist near me"

Content That Ranks: The Checklist

✓ **Target One Main Keyword per Page**

Don't try to rank for everything. Focus each page on one primary search term.

✓ **Use Keywords Naturally**

In your title (H1), first paragraph, headings (H2/H3), and throughout content. Don't stuff.

✓ **Write Compelling Titles**

Include keyword + benefit. Max 60 characters. Example: "Emergency Plumber Toronto | 24/7 Service | Fast Response"

✓ **Craft Meta Descriptions**

155 characters that make people want to click. Include keyword and a call-to-action.

✓ **Structure with Headers**

Use H1 for main title, H2 for sections, H3 for subsections. Makes content scannable.

✓ **Answer Questions Directly**

People ask Google questions. Answer them clearly and early in your content.

✓ **Add Multimedia**

Images, videos, infographics make content engaging and increase time on page.

✓ **Internal Linking**

Link to other relevant pages on your site. Helps Google understand your site structure.

Content Length

There's no magic number, but research shows:

- Top 10 results average 1,800-2,500 words
- Longer content tends to get more backlinks
- Quality beats quantity—don't add fluff just to hit a word count
- Local service pages can rank well with 500-800 words if thorough

Local SEO for Ontario Businesses

Local SEO is about dominating search results in your geographic area. Here's your complete local SEO playbook.

NAP Consistency

NAP = Name, Address, Phone Number

Your business information must be EXACTLY the same everywhere it appears online. Even small differences (like "St" vs "Street") confuse Google and hurt rankings.

Where to Check NAP:

- ✓ Google Business Profile
- ✓ Your website footer
- ✓ Facebook page
- ✓ Yelp, Yellow Pages, directories
- ✓ Industry-specific listings

Get More Google Reviews

Reviews are a top-3 local ranking factor. More reviews = higher rankings = more customers.

How to Get Reviews Ethically:

- ✓ Ask happy customers right after service (timing matters)
- ✓ Send follow-up emails with a direct link to your review page
- ✓ Make it easy—include QR codes on receipts or business cards
- ✓ Train your team to ask (most customers are happy to help)
- ✗ Never buy fake reviews (Google will catch you and penalize)
- ✗ Don't offer incentives for reviews (against Google's policy)

Create Location-Specific Content

Service Area Pages

Create separate pages for each city or neighborhood you serve. Include local landmarks, testimonials from that area, and specific service details.

Example: "Emergency Plumbing in Thunder Bay | Fast Response to Westfort, Current River, and Northwood"

Local Blog Content

Write about local events, community involvement, Ontario-specific tips.

Example: "Preparing Your Toronto Home's Plumbing for Winter" or "Best HVAC Practices for Ontario's Climate"

Community Involvement

Sponsor local events, partner with charities, support sports teams. Get local press coverage and backlinks.

Local Link Building

Getting links from other Ontario websites signals relevance and authority to Google.

✓ High-Value Local Links

- Local news coverage
- Chamber of Commerce
- Business associations
- Local supplier partnerships
- Community event pages
- Local .edu or .gov links

✗ Links to Avoid

- Paid link schemes
- Spam directories
- Unrelated websites
- Low-quality blog comments
- Link farms
- Foreign irrelevant sites

Measuring What Matters

SEO without measurement is guesswork. Here's what to track and how to interpret the data.

Essential Tools (All Free)

Google Search Console

Shows exactly how your site appears in Google search. Track clicks, impressions, rankings, and technical issues.

Key Metrics:

- Total clicks from search
- Average position for keywords
- Click-through rate (CTR)
- Which pages get traffic
- Mobile usability issues

Google Analytics (GA4)

Tracks user behavior on your website. See where visitors come from, what they do, and if they convert.

Key Metrics:

- Organic traffic (visitors from Google)
- Bounce rate (% who leave immediately)
- Average time on page
- Conversion rate (calls, forms, purchases)
- User flow through your site

Google Business Profile Insights

See how customers find and interact with your business listing.

Key Metrics:

- How customers search for you (direct vs discovery)
- Phone calls from listing

- Direction requests
- Website visits from profile
- Photo views

What Good Looks Like

Benchmark These Monthly:

Organic Traffic

Growing 10-20% month over month is healthy

Keyword Rankings

Aim for page 1 (top 10) for target keywords

Conversion Rate

2-5% is typical for service businesses

Reviews

Aim for 5+ new reviews per month

Red Flags to Watch

- ⚠ Sudden drop in rankings (check for Google algorithm updates or penalties)
- ⚠ High bounce rate (>70% means content doesn't match intent)
- ⚠ Low time on page (<30 seconds means content isn't engaging)
- ⚠ Declining click-through rate (your titles/descriptions need work)
- ⚠ Traffic but no conversions (your call-to-action needs improvement)

Your 30-Day SEO Starter Plan

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Week 1: Foundation & Setup

- ✓ Claim and fully optimize Google Business Profile
- ✓ Set up Google Search Console and Analytics
- ✓ Submit your sitemap
- ✓ Audit NAP consistency across all platforms
- ✓ Test mobile-friendliness and page speed

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Week 2: Content Optimization

- ✓ Research 5-10 target keywords for your business
- ✓ Optimize homepage title, meta description, H1
- ✓ Create/update service pages with location keywords
- ✓ Add schema markup (or verify it's there)
- ✓ Optimize all images (alt text, compression)

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Week 3: Local & Reviews

- ✓ Create accounts on key directories (Yelp, Yellow Pages)
- ✓ Launch review generation campaign
- ✓ Respond to all existing reviews
- ✓ Add 10+ photos to Google Business Profile
- ✓ Create first Google Business post

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Week 4: Measure & Plan Ahead

- ✓ Review first month of Search Console data
- ✓ Check baseline rankings for target keywords
- ✓ Identify top-performing content
- ✓ Plan next month's content (1-2 blog posts)
- ✓ Set up monthly reporting routine

✓ Your SEO Readiness Checklist

Technical Foundations

- Website loads in under 3 seconds
- Mobile-friendly and responsive design
- HTTPS (secure) enabled
- Google Search Console connected
- Google Analytics set up
- Sitemap submitted to Google
- No major technical errors in Search Console

On-Page SEO

- Every page has unique title tag with target keyword
- Meta descriptions written for all key pages
- Proper heading structure (H1, H2, H3)
- Keywords used naturally in content
- All images have descriptive alt text
- Internal links between related pages
- Schema markup added

Local SEO

- Google Business Profile claimed and 100% complete
- NAP consistent across all platforms
- Listed on Yelp, Yellow Pages, key directories
- At least 10 Google reviews
- Responding to reviews within 48 hours
- Location keywords in content

- Service area pages created

Ongoing Optimization

- Monthly tracking of key metrics
- Regular content updates/new blog posts
- Active review generation process
- Monthly Google Business posts
- Monitoring competitor rankings
- Building quality backlinks

Need Help Getting Found?

FRAYZE builds SEO-optimized websites that rank and convert.
Let's get your Ontario business to the top of Google.

Visit frayze.ca or call +1 807-700-0079