

The CPA's Local SEO Checklist

Rank Higher in Google Maps & Capture More Clients Organically in 2026

By Tom Flann

Local SEO for Professional Services | Proven to Add 6-Figures in Leads via Maps Dominance

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The Reality Most CPAs Ignore

Your best clients - business owners, executives, families - are searching "CPA near me," "tax preparation [city]," or "best accountant [suburb]" right now.

~80% of local organic traffic comes from Google Maps. The top spots get the calls.

Yet most firms leave massive revenue on the table: wrong categories, inconsistent citations, slow review velocity, and websites that don't convert Maps clicks.

I've used these exact strategies to help service businesses dominate competitive markets - adding multiple 6-figures per year per location.

For CPAs, the playbook is the same (and often easier - less national competition).

Implement what you can. When you realize the full potential (custom links, velocity hacks), you'll want the customized roadmap.

Let's fix the basics first.

Top GBP Fixes

Your GBP is free real estate in Maps, but most CPAs treat it like a yellow pages listing - huge mistake.

Actionable Checklist:

- **Primary Category:** See what the top-ranking CPAs in your market are using for their Primary Category. Use a tool like GMB Everywhere (<https://www.gmbeverywhere.com/>) to spy on the Map Pack leaders.

NOTE: Changing your Primary Category can trigger a GBP video reverification or suspension by Google

- **Secondary Categories:** Also check what Secondary Categories the top competitors are using - common ones include "Tax preparation service," "Bookkeeping service," "Tax consultant," etc... Stack the super relevant Categories.
- **Services Section:** Add 6-12 tightly focused Services per category. Use Google-suggested where possible. No city spam (e.g., avoid "- [city]" on every service). Max 300-character descriptions – make the descriptions natural, and benefit-focused: "Expert IRS audit representation for [city] businesses - minimize penalties and resolve issues fast."
- **NAP Exact Match:** Audit all of your local citations (Yelp, BBB, Facebook, etc...). Make sure the Name/Address/Phone match exactly what's listed in your GBP 100% - "St" doesn't mean "Street." Inconsistent NAP will tank your rankings.
- **Photos & Posts:** Upload real team/office photos (professional shots of staff, client meetings, office exterior). Post weekly: seasonal tax tips, limited-time offers, or client wins - with strong calls-to-action directing to your website (e.g., "Schedule your free consultation today").

Impact: These can move most firms into the Map Pack in weeks.

Review Velocity System

Google rewards recent, detailed reviews with photos. Stale profiles lose to active ones - even with fewer total.

Proven Tactics:

- **Review Count:** Review count will always matter. Stack reviews. At the end of a consultation, ask for the review in-person - even provide a QR code so they can leave a review more easily.
- **Target Velocity:** Check your top competitors - see their average new reviews over the last 30-90 days. Beat your competitor's review velocity (depending on your review count, 3-5+ fresh/month can sometimes be enough to pull ahead). Don't get too many reviews too quickly at once, Google can remove them.
- **Coach for Quality:** When asking for reviews, make sure to ask them to mention your neighborhood, specific services (e.g., business tax planning), and team member. If they can add photos, even better.
- **Zero-Friction Requests:** QR code on invoices, thank-you emails, or in-office tablets linking direct to review form.

- **Database Goldmine:** Past clients love helping - do an email/text blast in batches: "Quick favor: Share your experience on Google?"
- **Response Hack:** Reply to your reviews within a day, make them unique and naturally add in your keywords: "Thanks for the review - glad we could help another [city] business. Great that we could handle your full business tax return, and help with your tax strategy planning for the next year!"
- **Employee Push:** Incentive your employees to collect reviews from customers (this is compliant with Google TOS - you can't pay customers to leave reviews).
- **Yelp Watch:** Low Yelp review count? Do a quick campaign - these feed into AI search recommendations.

Impact: Velocity spikes = faster Map climbs + instant trust for high-value clients.

Website Essentials

Clicks from Maps are hot leads. Don't waste them on slow, generic sites.

Must-Fix Checklist:

- **Hero Trust Bomb:** Review count + stars above fold. H1 with main keyword: e.g., "[City]'s Trusted CPA for Tax Planning & Bookkeeping" (this tells Google and searchers exactly what the site is about). Always have a Call-To-Action in sight.
- **Real Proof:** Throughout the website, use real team / office photos (professional shots). Are you part of your Chamber of Commerce, local or national associations, or similar - add the badges in a meaningful way.
- **Unique Service and Location Web Pages:** Don't use templated website copy, multiple pages can't use duplicate copy - there needs to be at least 80%+ unique content.
- **On-Page SEO Basics:** Use keyword-natural page titles / descriptions / H2-H6 titles. Interlink naturally between different pages of your website.
- **Schema Markup:** Add unique schema markup to each of your webpages. LocalBusiness + specific services is a good start, but depends on the webpage - tells Google / LLMs exactly what you do.
- **Speed & Mobile:** Have your website load in under 3 seconds, and make sure it is mobile friendly.

- **Sticky CTA:** Make sure there is a floating phone/email header to your website, your website's only goal is to get people to contact you.
- **Footer Power:** Make sure you have a full, robust footer that links to all your key webpages, includes service area, and has the full NAP with a GBP embed.

Impact: Double+ inquiries from the same traffic.

Bonus Plays & Realistic Upside

- **Ethical Backlinks:** Join local chambers and associations (depending on cost), these will generally get you a link to your website. Backlinks are still the #1 ranking factor.
 - **LLM Edge:** Structure your website for AI tools, also make sure to include Q&A sections (Google is a great way to find good questions to answer) - this will help you rank in ChatGPT/Grok searches.
 - **Expansion Reality:** This is the supercharger to most businesses. Get additional GBPs in the right cities in states that you're licensed - this can eventually \$100k+ revenue/year per location (or much more). Rent an office, get the paperwork, set up the website and backlinks, and then verify the GBP so you can optimize it and collect reviews.
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These fixes deliver quick visibility. Full execution (custom audits, links, content) scales to replace ad dependency.

I've seen it add multiple 6-figures for similar pros.

Are you ready for your tailored plan?

Book a paid growth plan by reaching out to me on LinkedIn or X anytime.

Let's make your phone ring more!

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