
5 Keys to Getting Your Tree Care Business Found Online in 2021

Search engines, like Google, are in the business of selling ads. Your free listing is to get 'eyeballs' on their ads, **not** to make your business more visible. To do well in the search results, you have to play by their rules. And those rules keep changing...

Here's what works in 2021.

FOCUS ON LOCAL SEARCH

Places your local business can appear in search results, but the highlighted ones in italics are your best options. If you can continuously write high-quality content that ranks well, you may also appear in the other highlighted areas.

1. **Ads** – These appear at the top and bottom of the page (plus some in the local pack)
2. **Local Pack** – Only 3 businesses are shown. You want to be one of them!
3. **Organic Results (blue links)** – It's very tough to compete here against large aggregators (e.g., Yelp, Home Advisor, Thumbtack) for generic search terms (e.g., "tree removal near me") BUT with good content you can rank for more specific queries (e.g., "when's the best time to prune fruit trees in Des Moines?")
4. **Knowledge Panel/Graph** - For business queries, summary of info about the business. This is where your Google My Business profile shows up.
5. **Featured Snippet/Answer Box** – For simple answers, often used for voice search results
6. **Video Results** (could also be News or Images) – Shown if they're relevant to the query. If you can create decent videos on specific tree-related questions or issues, you still have a good chance of showing up here.
7. **People Also Ask** – List of questions that relate to the initial query
8. **Related Entities** – Based on the core characteristics of the search query
9. **Searches Related To...** - Differs from People Also Ask (it's not necessarily a question)
10. **Discover More Places** – Provides other options related to but not the same as initial query. Basically, it makes page 2 irrelevant.
11. **Shopping Results** – For products sold online, can appear in multiple places on the page
12. **Related Searches** – Related to the query topic. Good place to get content ideas.
13. **Social media posts**
14. **Upcoming events**
15. And more ...

There are more opportunities to appear on the 1st page than just the first 3 options. BUT, there are also more elements to distract people from your listing.

WHAT INFLUENCES YOUR RANKING IN THE LOCAL SEARCH RESULTS?

Search engines show local search results based on:

1. PROXIMITY
 - Based on searcher's proximity to your business location (physical address) and any locations specified in the search query
 - You **cannot** control or influence proximity
2. RELEVANCE
 - How well your offerings (as described on your website and Google My Business) align with what the searcher is looking for
 - You have **some** influence over relevance
 - Influence this by writing clear, accurate, locally-focused descriptions of your products and/or services
3. PROMINENCE
 - Based on your website's "authority" or trustworthiness
 - You have the **most** influence over prominence
 - Influence this by getting more/better online **reviews & links** from local websites

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR LOCAL RANKING IN GOOGLE

1. Use Google My Business (GMB)

If you don't have a well optimized Google My Business listing, it's **impossible** to succeed in local search.

Here's what to do:

- Claim AND verify your listing (see video at treecaremarketingsolutions.com/treepro for details on how to do that)
- Choose 1 or 2 **most** relevant categories
- Complete ALL relevant information – more is better
- Write a compelling business description, focusing on the first 250 characters (because that's all that usually shows in the knowledge panel, followed by "read more ...")
- Upload new photos and/or short videos regularly (weekly is best)
- Write a weekly Google post with an eye-catching photo and call to action
- "Seed" the Q&A with answered questions, monitor it regularly, and answer new questions
- See what your top-ranking competitors are doing – what have they done with their profile that you can also do with yours?

2. Get Links From Other Websites

This is a crucial signal to Google that you are an authoritative website

Here's what to do:

- Focus on local sites and hyperlocal keywords – you need links that are relevant to your location and industry (e.g., "tree service in Kansas City")

- You want a link from their site to yours, ideally with your location and company name or service/product as the link text
- See where your competitors are getting links. Can you get links from the same sites?
- Good sources for local links include:
 - High-authority local sites – e.g., schools, universities, government associations
 - Local partner sites – Exchange content and links with companies providing complementary services (e.g., landscaping, irrigation, pest control), realtors, developers, builders, etc. Consider setting up a “businesses-we-love” page. But NEVER pay for links! (it’s against Google’s terms of service and can get your site penalized so it doesn’t show up at all in the search results)
 - Local and niche directories from well-known organizations, such as your Chamber of Commerce and BBB – Join them! Participate in events, sponsor learning events, offer to partner on a project (in exchange for some publicity)
 - Local newspapers or media outlets – Can you write a regular column or answer reader questions for them? Do they do features on local companies or topics related to your business? Can you do something newsworthy and invite a local reporter to cover it (e.g., provide a free tree removal for a local family in need)?
 - Local bloggers or groups with an active blog and, even better, a regular newsletter – a small following is ok if it’s all within your locality (e.g., [Triad Moms on Main](#))
 - Sponsor or volunteer for local sports clubs, schools, charities, local events, or other groups. Sponsor to clean up or maintain a highway mile, local park area, etc. in return for a sign and a link back from their website.

3. Get More & Better Online Reviews

More & better reviews = higher ranking = more potential customers finding you online = more clicks and calls AND greater trust = easier to sell to = \$\$\$

- Even if you outrank competitors, if your online reviews aren’t as good, you’ll never succeed online.

Here’s what to do:

- Get more – and better – online reviews
- Start with Google (GMB is **critical**) and then Facebook
- Compare your online reviews against your competitors. Where are the gaps? How can you close them?
- ASK all customers to leave you a review on Google or Facebook – give them a direct link to your review page so they don’t have to search for it
- Follow-up with customers who haven’t yet left you a review
- Respond to ALL reviews (negative and positive)
- Set up a **process** for getting more reviews (e.g., use an online service like [Reputation Builder](#) to actively manage the review process)
- Show your reviews on your website, both in a Customer Reviews page and scattered throughout the site (e.g., place a couple of reviews about tree removal on your tree removal web page).

4. Improve Technical SEO and Website Content

Google uses EVERYTHING on your website to determine relevance

Here's what to do:

- Run a full site audit to make sure your site is sending all the right signals to Google - technical issues can derail a website even if it has great content. You can find a link for a [free SEO audit here](#) (with no follow-up spam emails!).
- Review and improve the meta title & description on each page
- Write helpful local content, such as:
 - City-specific landing pages – Each page must have unique content!!! Include photos taken in the area, customer reviews from that location, talk about what you like about the location and work you've done there. Good for multi-location businesses.
 - State or regional landing pages (e.g., county) – This works better for companies that provide services at the customer's home or business, rather than at a store.
 - Create an FAQ page – Answer all local and relevant questions about your business
 - Location-specific discounts or special offers
 - Host local events – Don't just post it on FB Events or GMB, put a full description of it on your website
 - Partner with or sponsor a local event – Talk about it on the website, maybe offer a special deal
 - Write about local events that are relevant to your business
 - Write a blog!!! Answer the questions you get from customers – services, how to, why, when
 - Create "Best Of" guides (e.g., best trees for shade)
 - Press page – where you were mentioned in local news etc.

HOW TO GENERATE MORE REPEAT BUSINESS & REFERRALS

5. Publish a monthly or bi-weekly email newsletter

Email marketing is still king when it comes to ROI, with approximately \$44 return for every \$1 spent. Plus, it generates visits to your website through links in the newsletter.

- Mailchimp or Mailer Lite are good options – they're easy to set up and affordable
- Create a newsletter template so it's consistent every time you send it out
- Focus on topics that are **of interest to your customers** – you want them to look forward to receiving it
- Include a call to action – the **one thing** you want people to do after reading the newsletter (e.g., call you, fill out a form, download something, register or sign up)
- This is NOT a sales piece! Keep it entertaining and informative but skip the hard sell.

RESOURCES – Go to <https://treecaremarketingsolutions.com/treepro>

- Free SEO tools & SEO Checklist
- Sign up for *Tree Facts* - Free weekly social media posts you can share on your own account (there's no TCMS branding so no one needs to know you didn't create it yourself)
- E-Book – *75 Ways to Grow Your Email List – Fast!*
- [OneThing] weekly email
- *GROWth Report* monthly newsletter
- Google My Business set-up video and services
- Reputation Builder – ***Special offer for webinar attendees***