The Launch-Ready Checklist.

Eight things to check on your website and your Google listing, in about 15 minutes, with nothing to install and no account to open. Most of them you can fix yourself the same afternoon.

What you need

Your phone on cell data (turn Wi-Fi off), a pen, and the logins for your website and your Google account if you have them handy.

How it works

Go item by item. Check a box only when you have actually seen it work today, not when you believe it does. Count the checks at the end.

Keep it

This list is yours. Print it, forward it, use it every few months. Nothing in it needs us.

1 Phones

Most first visits to a small business website come from a phone, usually from a Google result or a text from a friend.

- [ ] The home page opens on your phone on cell data, not Wi-Fi
- [ ] You can read every line without zooming in
- [ ] The phone number is tappable and opens the dialer
- [ ] Buttons are big enough to hit with a thumb
- [ ] Nothing hangs off the right edge; the page does not scroll sideways

Fix in ten minutes: Open each page of the site on your phone and fix the one that fails first. If you edit the site yourself, use the phone-width preview before you publish. If someone else built it, send them this page.

2 Speed

A page that takes more than three or four seconds on a phone loses a good share of the people who tapped it.

- [ ] The home page shows something useful within three seconds on cell data
- [ ] It stops loading soon after it looks ready, not ten seconds later
- [ ] No video plays by itself with sound
- [ ] Photos are a normal size (a phone photo straight from the camera is usually too big)
- [ ] Google's free PageSpeed Insights (pagespeed.web.dev) gives the mobile view a score you are comfortable with

Fix in ten minutes: Resize photos to 1600 pixels wide or less before uploading them, and remove the add-ons and plugins you do not use. Those two steps fix most slow sites.

3 The contact form works

A broken form is silent. Nobody tells you it failed; the message is just gone.

- [ ] You sent yourself a test message from the form today
- [ ] It arrived in your inbox, not in spam, within five minutes
- [ ] Replying to it goes to the visitor, not to the website
- [ ] The phone number and email shown on the site are the ones you actually answer
- [ ] Someone reads that inbox every business day

Fix in ten minutes: If the test never arrives, the form is probably sending from an address your mail provider does not trust. Whoever built the site can set it to send from your own domain. Until then, put your email address next to the form.

4 Your Google Business Profile is complete

When people search for what you do near them, the map and the business panel come before the regular results. An incomplete profile is easy to skip.

- [ ] Searching your business name shows your panel, and it says Verified
- [ ] You can edit it from your own Google account (you are the owner)
- [ ] The main category is what you actually do
- [ ] Address or service area, phone and website are right
- [ ] There are at least ten real photos of your work, your team or your place

Fix in ten minutes: Go to google.com/business, claim or sign in, and add the photos from your phone. Write the description in plain words, under 750 characters, and read it back once.

5 Reviews are answered

People read the replies as much as the reviews. A thoughtful answer to a bad review often does more than five good ones.

- [ ] Every review from the last twelve months has a reply
- [ ] Replies to good reviews thank the person and mention one specific thing
- [ ] Replies to bad reviews apologize for the experience and offer to sort it out by phone or email
- [ ] No reply argues, names the customer's private details, or blames them
- [ ] You have asked a recent happy customer for a review this month

Fix in ten minutes: Reply to the oldest unanswered review first, then work forward. Keep a short note of two sentences you can adapt, and answer new reviews within a week.

6 Hours are right

People check your hours on Google first, on your site second, and on the door last. When the first two are wrong, they drive over and find it shut.

- [ ] The hours on Google match the hours on the door
- [ ] The hours on your website match Google
- [ ] Special hours are set for the next two holidays
- [ ] The phone is answered during those hours, or the voicemail says when you call back
- [ ] If you work by appointment only, both places say so

Fix in ten minutes: Set the next two holidays on your Google profile now (Google asks for them ahead of time), and add one line to the contact page of your site.

7 The domain and email are in your name

The most expensive failure we see is a domain that expires because the only person with the login left two years ago.

- [ ] You know which company the domain is registered with
- [ ] The account login is yours, with your email and your card on file
- [ ] Auto-renew is on and the expiry date is more than sixty days away
- [ ] Your business email is at your own domain (you@yourbusiness.com)
- [ ] You, not a former designer, own the email account too

Fix in ten minutes: Search "whois lookup", enter your domain, and note the registrar and the expiry date. If the account is not yours, ask whoever set it up to add you as the owner this week, then put the renewal date in your calendar.

8 Backups

Sites break, accounts get locked, and people stop answering. A copy you control turns a crisis into an afternoon.

- [ ] You know where a complete copy of your site lives (hosting backup, an export, or the developer's code repository)
- [ ] There is a copy from the last thirty days
- [ ] You could get that copy without asking the developer
- [ ] Your logo files, photos and texts are also in a folder you control
- [ ] A monthly reminder exists to check all of the above

Fix in ten minutes: Download one export of your site today and drop it in a cloud folder with your logo files. Set a reminder for the first of each month. Done is better than perfect here.

Count your checks

8
Launch-ready. Keep the list and run it again in three months.

5 to 7
A morning of work. Start with the items that protect the business: the form (3), the domain (7) and the backups (8).

Under 5
Nothing to be embarrassed about; it is how most sites arrive. Pick one item a day for a week, or let us run it with you.

Want us to run it for you?

Book a free 15-minute call. We go through the eight items with you on the call, you keep the list, and you decide what happens next. No sales pitch, no obligation.

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weblandscapes.com/QR/lead-checklist-en
(786) 608-8489 (call or text) · contact@weblandscapes.com · weblandscapes.com

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