

## 5 KEYS TO GETTING FOUND ONLINE IN 2021

Building a green industry business is hard work, including when it comes to developing your online presence. But if you **focus on the right things**, you *can* have an impact on how visible your business is online.

### THERE ARE ONLY TWO REASONS YOU DON'T HAVE MORE CUSTOMERS

1. Visibility
2. Perception

### YOU CANNOT BE EVERYWHERE

- Be where your ideal customers are and where you get the most bang for your buck
- You need a rifle, not a shotgun – do what it takes to achieve your goals (the rest can wait)
- Business goals tell you **WHAT** do to online – develop an effective strategy, set a marketing budget, assign resources, determine the right tools to use, etc.

### KEY #1 - KNOW 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

### KEY #2 – GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

- 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 [monicahemingway.com/oan](http://monicahemingway.com/oan) 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?

### **KEY #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 = \$\$\$
- “Word of mouth” has moved online
- 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**)
- **Facebook or LinkedIn** are strong additional options, depending on whether your business sells B2C (use Facebook) or B2B (use LinkedIn)
- 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 an automated **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).

### **KEY #4 - IMPROVE TECHNICAL SEO AND WEBSITE CONTENT**

- Google uses EVERYTHING on your website to determine relevance
- Your website is the hub of all your marketing activities. If it doesn’t convert visitors into customers, then even the best marketing campaigns won’t be successful.

#### ***Here’s what to do:***

- Make sure you own your domain (buy it on GoDaddy or NameCheap)
- Build it on the right platform (WordPress or Squarespace, *not* a free website builder)
- Take care of the website basics
  - Phone # at top right
  - Service area, products, and/or services in header on ALL pages
  - Use simple navigation – and include availability, if relevant
  - Create helpful, relevant content – photos and descriptions, ordering details, where you ship to, etc.
- 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.
- Create other helpful content
  - Do a video preview or livestreaming of your crop or what's growing in the greenhouse – SHOW what you have, explain what's coming next so they have something to look forward to rather than just being frustrated about what's not available
  - Give a virtual tour or consultation to buyers (have them set up an appointment)
  - Keep buyers/customers informed on inventory, order fulfillment – website, social media, GMB, newsletter
  - Put product/plant profiles on website – both written and video with lots of photos

#### **KEY #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.

##### ***Here's what to do:***

- 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.

#### **BONUS KEY #6 - DON'T STOP MARKETING!**

- It takes longer and costs more to regain market share / name recognition than it does to just keep going.



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## RESOURCES – Go to <https://monicahemingway.com/oan>

- Free SEO tools & SEO Checklist
- Local SEO Citations Guide
- [OneThing] weekly email and the GROWth Report monthly newsletter
- How to claim & optimize your Google My Business listing (video)
- Does Your Website Measure Up? – Checklist
- Top 10 Website Mistakes
- 8 Essential Pieces of Content Every Green Industry Website Must Have
- 10 Questions to Ask Your Website Designer
- Reputation Builder
- And much more!