Why your business isn't showing up on Google — and the one-hour fix

> *"I type my own business name into Google and it doesn't come up — or customers say they can't find me on Maps at all."*

Category: lead-management	**Setup Time:** ~45 minutes	**Estimated Hours Saved:** 1 hrs/week	**Direct Software Cost:** $0 / month

SOLUTION SUMMARY

Nine times out of ten the problem is your Google Business Profile, not your website. Either it was never claimed, it's sitting unverified, or it was set up in a way Google won't show — a visible home address on a business that goes to clients is the classic one. Claim the profile, finish verification (Google picks the method: postcard, phone, or video), pick the category that matches what you actually do, and if you travel to clients, hide your address and list your service areas instead. It costs nothing and takes about an hour plus verification wait time.

REQUIRED TOOLS & DIRECT WHOLESALE UTILITIES

- **Google Business Profile: (Free Tier / Wholesale)**
- **Google Search Console: (Free Tier / Wholesale)**

STEP-BY-STEP APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Search like a stranger**
   In an incognito window, search your exact business name plus your city, then just the name, then your category plus city ('plumber palm coast'). Exact-name hit means you're indexed; nothing at all means the profile is unverified, suspended, or missing.

2. **Claim or create the profile**
   Go to business.google.com. If a listing already exists for your business, click 'Own this business?' and claim it; otherwise create one. Use your real business name — not a keyword-stuffed version, which is a suspension trigger.

3. **Finish verification**
   Google chooses the method, not you: postcard (about five business days), phone, email, or a video walkthrough. Nothing else on this page matters until this completes — unverified profiles do not show.

4. **Handle the home-address trap**
   If you work from home or go to clients, you're a 'service-area business': hide your home address and list the cities or ZIP codes you serve. A visible home address is a common suspension trigger; no service areas means Google doesn't know where to surface you.

5 Pick the right primary category

The biggest ranking lever in the whole profile. Be literal — 'Massage therapist,' not 'Wellness center.' Secondary categories can be added, but the primary one decides which searches you're eligible for.

6 Give Google something to rank

Fill every field — hours, services, real photos, booking link — then collect your first reviews. Expect days to a couple of weeks before the profile surfaces for category searches; exact-name searches come first.

5-POINT QUALITY VERIFICATION PROTOCOL

[ ] **Carrier & Webhook Test:** Confirm webhook listener receives test payload and returns HTTP 200 within 500ms.
[ ] **End-to-End Simulation:** Execute live test event from personal device and verify SMS/email delivery.
[ ] **Anti-Spam & Rate Limit Check:** Verify repeated submissions do not trigger duplicate messages to clients.
[ ] **Direct Ownership Audit:** Confirm all API keys, accounts, and credentials belong directly to your practice.
[ ] **Staff Notification Verification:** Verify practice manager/receptionist receives real-time push alert with dial link.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why is my business not showing up on Google at all?
A: Almost always one of three causes: the Google Business Profile was never claimed, it's claimed but unverified, or it's verified but configured so Google won't show it (the classic: a visible home address on a business that travels to clients). Check those in order before touching your website — the profile, not the site, is what Maps and local search read.

Q: How long until I show up?
A: Verification takes days to about two weeks depending on the method Google offers. After that, new profiles typically take a few more weeks to rank for category searches — exact-name searches first, 'near me' searches as reviews and photos accumulate.

Q: Do I need a storefront or office address?
A: No. Service-area businesses hide their address and list the areas they cover instead. That's the correct setup — not a workaround — and showing a home address publicly is what actually gets profiles suspended.