

THE COMPLETE DIY PLAYBOOK

DIY SEO: Rank Higher Without Hiring an Agency

A step-by-step guide to keyword research, on-page fixes, technical health, content, local search, links, and measuring what matters.

BEFORE YOU START

SEO Is a Set of Repeatable Habits

Understand what people search for, build pages that answer it clearly, keep your site technically healthy, earn trust signals, and track what's working. Do this consistently for 90 days and you will outrank competitors who are winging it.

68%

of online experiences start with a search engine

Top 3

results get the majority of clicks on a search page

90 Days

realistic timeline to see meaningful ranking movement

AGENDA

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Keyword Research

Keyword research answers one question: what words does your customer actually type when they need what you sell? Guess wrong and every page you write chases the wrong audience.

Step 1 — Brainstorm seed terms

List 10–15 phrases a customer would search right before buying. Think in problems ("blocked drain repair"), not just services ("plumbing").

Step 2 — Expand with free tools

Use Google autocomplete, "People also ask", related searches, Search Console, and Keyword Planner to surface variations you hadn't thought of.

Sort by Intent, Not Volume

Intent	Example	Priority
Transactional	"book electrician Caloundra"	Highest
Commercial investigation	"best electrician near me"	High
Informational	"why do lights flicker"	Medium
Navigational	"ALC Consulting"	Low effort

Check the competition realistically: if page one is wall-to-wall national brands, that term is a long game. If similarly-sized local businesses rank, you have a genuine shot.

On-Page SEO: Title Tags

The single highest-leverage on-page element. Lead with your primary keyword, keep it under 60 characters, and make it a reason to click — not a keyword dump.

- ✗ Home | Welcome to Our Website | Company Name
- ✓ **Blocked Drain Repairs Caloundra | Same-Day Service — ALC Plumbing**

The Rest of the On-Page Basics

Meta descriptions

Not a ranking factor, but drives click-through. Write 140–155 characters like ad copy for a free ad slot.

URL structure

Short, readable, hyphenated. Avoid changing URLs once published; redirect if you must.

Header structure

One H1 per page. Use H2s and H3s to make the page scannable for both Google and real visitors.

Alt text & internal links

Describe images plainly. Link related pages with descriptive anchor text, not "click here".

Technical SEO & Site Health

If Google's crawlers hit friction, nothing else in this guide matters. Technical SEO makes sure your site can be found, crawled, and indexed.

Site speed

Run pages through PageSpeed Insights. Compress images, avoid auto-play video, remove unused plugins.

Sitemap & robots.txt

Submit your sitemap in Search Console. Check robots.txt isn't blocking pages you want found.

Mobile-friendliness

Google indexes the mobile site first. Test readability and thumb-friendly buttons on your own phone.

HTTPS & duplicate content

Keep a valid padlock, fix broken links, and use canonical tags where the same content lives at two URLs.

Content Strategy

Rankings reward the site that answers a search best — not the one repeating a keyword the most. Build content around real intent.

Build topical authority

Group content into pillar + cluster pages so Google sees genuine authority, not a single lucky page.

Write for E-E-A-T

Experience, Expertise, Authority, Trust. Real bylines and photos increasingly decide AI citation too.

Match intent

Transactional pages need pricing and a booking form up front. Informational pages need to be useful first.

Sustainable rhythm

One genuinely useful page a week beats four rushed ones a month. Refresh old content first.

Local SEO & Google Business Profile

If you serve a local area, this is often the highest-return chapter in this guide. It relies on your Google Business Profile and consistent local citations.

Claim & complete your GBP

Fill every field: categories, hours, service areas, description. Incomplete profiles miss the Local 3-Pack.

Keep NAP consistent

Name, Address, and Phone should match character-for-character everywhere online.

Reviews, on purpose

Send a direct review link after every job. Reply to every review, good or bad.

Local content & photos

Name suburbs served naturally in copy. Upload fresh photos to GBP regularly.

Link Building

Other sites linking to yours is still one of Google's strongest trust signals. For small businesses, the realistic path is local and relationship-based.

Local & industry directories

Get listed with your industry association and local chamber of commerce. Skip low-quality directories.

Digital PR

Be the easy-to-quote source for local news and industry blogs to earn links you couldn't ask for directly.

Partnerships & suppliers

Trade partners and complementary local businesses will often link if asked.

What to avoid

Never buy bulk links or use link exchange networks — the penalty outlasts the shortcut.

Measuring Results

Vanity metrics feel good and mean nothing. Track what connects to revenue.

Metric	Where to find it	Why it matters
Organic clicks & impressions	Search Console	Raw visibility trend
Average position	Search Console	Are keywords moving up
Conversions (calls, forms)	Google Analytics	The number that pays the bills
Local pack rankings	Manual search / GBP insights	Local visibility for "near me"

SEO Tools Checklist

Search Console Free — indexing & queries	Google Analytics Free — traffic & conversions	Business Profile Free — local listing & reviews	Keyword Planner Free — volume & ideas
PageSpeed Insights Free — speed & web vitals	Rich Results Test Free — schema validation	Screaming Frog Free to 500 URLs — site crawl	AnswerThePublic Free tier — question keywords

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- 01 Keyword stuffing**
Repeating a keyword unnaturally reads badly and can trigger spam signals.
- 02 Ignoring mobile**
Google indexes the mobile site first — a desktop-only mindset costs rankings.
- 03 Chasing rankings, not conversions**
Every page needs a next step, not just a position.
- 04 Inconsistent business info**
Mismatched NAP across the web quietly damages local trust.

Common Mistakes, Continued

- 05 Buying links or link farms**
Manipulative link schemes risk a manual penalty that can take months to recover from.
- 06 Expecting overnight results**
Meaningful movement typically takes 60–90+ days.
- 07 Never checking the data**
Without Search Console and Analytics, you're optimising blind. Check monthly, minimum.

Your 30-Day Action Plan

Week 1	Keyword research shortlist · claim & complete Google Business Profile · connect Search Console + Analytics
Week 2	Fix title tags & meta descriptions on top 10 pages · run PageSpeed Insights · check mobile experience
Week 3	Publish one pillar content page · request reviews from 5 recent customers · submit sitemap
Week 4	Get listed in 3 local/industry directories · review Search Console data · plan next month's content

Want a Second Pair of Eyes on Your Strategy?

ALC Consulting offers free SEO audits and hands-on training for business owners who'd rather learn the process than hand it off entirely. No lock-in contracts, no vanity metrics — just a direct, honest look at what's working and what isn't.

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