
Business Reviews & Credibility Checklist

A practical checkup for the public signals that help customers find, understand, and trust your business

THE CLEAR CREDIBILITY CHECK

The CLEAR Credibility Check is a NINZ organizing framework.

C**CONSISTENT FACTS**

L**LEGIBLE OFFER**

E**EVIDENCE WITH CONTEXT**

A**ACCESSIBLE NEXT STEPS**

R**RESPONSIVE REVIEW HANDLING**

PRACTICAL | PRINTABLE | EDUCATIONAL

Review candidate. Not for publication.

HOW TO USE

See the business as a customer does

Complete this review from public pages, not from an owner dashboard. Mark each item CLEAR, NEEDS ATTENTION, or NOT APPLICABLE.

CUSTOMER / PUBLIC-VIEW SETUP

- 01** Search for the business name plus its city or service area.
- 02** Open the official website and the two most relevant public profiles.
- 03** Review the first results without using an owner dashboard.
- 04** Check desktop and mobile.
- 05** Test the primary phone number.
- 06** Test the primary email, contact form, or booking link.
- 07** Write down the first three conflicts or unanswered questions.
- 08** Note profiles that appear abandoned, duplicated, or outside the owner's control.

THE CLEAR FRAMEWORK

C

Consistent facts

L

Legible offer

E

Evidence with context

A

Accessible next steps

R

Responsive review handling

THIS FRAMEWORK IS NOT

A score, certification, ranking model, prediction model, or legal compliance determination.

GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

If the Google Business Profile itself needs a detailed field-by-field review, use the NINZ Google Business Profile Checklist.

RESPONSE OPTIONS

☐

CLEAR

☐

NEEDS ATTENTION

☐

NOT APPLICABLE

THE CLEAR CREDIBILITY CHECK | C



Consistent Facts

Frame consistency as customer clarity. Do not treat it as a ranking guarantee.

CHECKLIST ITEM	CLEAR	NEEDS ATTENTION	NOT APPLICABLE
The public business name matches the name customers see in real life.	☐	☐	☐
The website and active profiles use the same core business name.	☐	☐	☐
The primary phone number is current and reaches the business.	☐	☐	☐
The primary email address or contact form is current and monitored.	☐	☐	☐
The address or service area is accurate and appropriate to display.	☐	☐	☐
Regular hours and special hours agree across customer-facing locations.	☐	☐	☐
Website, booking, menu, store, and social links reach the correct destination.	☐	☐	☐
The business description is materially consistent across active profiles.	☐	☐	☐
Closed locations are identified for correction.	☐	☐	☐
Duplicate or outdated profiles are identified for correction.	☐	☐	☐
The legal entity name and customer-facing brand are clarified where needed.	☐	☐	☐

THE CLEAR CREDIBILITY CHECK | L



Legible Offer

A first-time visitor should be able to understand the offer and the next step without guesswork.

CHECKLIST ITEM	CLEAR	NEEDS ATTENTION	NOT APPLICABLE
A first-time visitor can tell what the business offers.	☐	☐	☐
The intended customer is reasonably clear.	☐	☐	☐
The location or service area is easy to identify.	☐	☐	☐
Products and services are current and described in plain language.	☐	☐	☐
Important exclusions or limitations are visible before a customer commits.	☐	☐	☐
The pricing, quote, or estimate process is understandable.	☐	☐	☐
Appointment, reservation, or consultation expectations are clear.	☐	☐	☐
Photos accurately represent the current business, work, products, or experience.	☐	☐	☐
Unsupported 'best,' 'number one,' 'guaranteed,' or similar claims are avoided.	☐	☐	☐
The next step is obvious without requiring the customer to hunt for it.	☐	☐	☐

THE CLEAR CREDIBILITY CHECK | E



Evidence With Context

Use authentic, current support for claims. Add dates or context when proof could otherwise mislead.

CHECKLIST ITEM	CLEAR	NEEDS ATTENTION	NOT APPLICABLE
Public reviews appear connected to genuine customer experiences.	☐	☐	☐
The business does not buy, write, trade, or manufacture reviews.	☐	☐	☐
Staff, family, contractors, and competitors are not used to create Google reviews.	☐	☐	☐
Republished testimonials preserve the customer's meaning.	☐	☐	☐
The source of each featured testimonial can be documented.	☐	☐	☐
Material relationships are disclosed where appropriate.	☐	☐	☐
Unusually strong result claims are supported and given appropriate context.	☐	☐	☐
Licenses, certifications, awards, and memberships are current and accurate.	☐	☐	☐
Seals and affiliation marks are used appropriately.	☐	☐	☐
Work samples and before-and-after content are genuine and correctly labeled.	☐	☐	☐
Dates or context are supplied when older proof could mislead.	☐	☐	☐
Objective claims can be substantiated.	☐	☐	☐

THE CLEAR CREDIBILITY CHECK | A



Accessible Next Steps

Check that customers can reach the business, understand the process, and find the policies that apply.

CHECKLIST ITEM	CLEAR	NEEDS ATTENTION	NOT APPLICABLE
Phone, email, forms, and booking links work on mobile.	☐	☐	☐
The contact method and availability are understandable.	☐	☐	☐
Any promised response time is realistic and current.	☐	☐	☐
The path from inquiry to purchase, booking, or service is understandable.	☐	☐	☐
Pricing, estimate, deposit, or payment expectations are explained where appropriate.	☐	☐	☐
Applicable cancellation, refund, return, rescheduling, shipping, or delivery information is findable.	☐	☐	☐
Customer-facing policies agree with what staff communicate.	☐	☐	☐
Customers have a clear way to raise a service concern.	☐	☐	☐
Forms do not request sensitive information through inappropriate public channels.	☐	☐	☐
A customer can tell what happens after an inquiry or booking.	☐	☐	☐

This checklist identifies information to review. It does not draft or determine the legal sufficiency of policies.

THE CLEAR CREDIBILITY CHECK | R



Responsive Review Handling

Review responses should be useful and professional. Not every review requires a response.

CHECKLIST ITEM	CLEAR	NEEDS ATTENTION	NOT APPLICABLE
A responsible person monitors the primary review platforms.	☐	☐	☐
Recent reviews are checked for questions, patterns, and operational concerns.	☐	☐	☐
Responses are professional, concise, and specific.	☐	☐	☐
Customer privacy is protected in public responses.	☐	☐	☐
Responses avoid personal attacks and arguments.	☐	☐	☐
Negative feedback is acknowledged appropriately.	☐	☐	☐
Complex matters are moved to an appropriate private channel.	☐	☐	☐
Implemented corrective changes are mentioned only when true.	☐	☐	☐
Recurring concerns reach the person who can fix the underlying issue.	☐	☐	☐
Reviews are reported only for possible policy violations.	☐	☐	☐
Relevant evidence is retained when a report is made.	☐	☐	☐
No threats, pressure, or incentives are used to remove criticism.	☐	☐	☐

REVIEW INTEGRITY GUARDRAILS

Protect the integrity of the review process

Use a neutral, consistent request. Let genuine customers decide whether to review, what rating to give, and what to say.

DO

- Ask customers who actually used or experienced the business.
- Use a neutral request for an honest review.
- Make the same public-review opportunity available regardless of expected sentiment.
- Let customers choose their rating and wording.
- Check each platform's current rules.
- Use Google's official review link or QR code for Google review requests.
- Keep private feedback and public-review opportunities separately available.
- Disclose material relationships when applicable.
- Understand outside review or reputation vendors' methods.

DO NOT

- Offer money, discounts, gifts, free services, or contest entries for Google reviews.
- Buy reviews or use AI to invent customer experiences.
- Ask only customers expected to be happy.
- Route unhappy customers only to private feedback.
- Require a star rating or wording.
- Pressure customers to review while still on premises.
- Use staff review quotas designed to manufacture volume.
- Ask employees, relatives, contractors, or competitors for Google reviews.
- Offer benefits for changing or removing a review.
- Report a review solely because it is negative.
- Let a vendor operate without understanding its methods.
- Present a company-controlled rating source as independent.

TWO FINAL CHECKS**GOOGLE REQUESTS**

No incentives. Use the official review link and neutral language.

OUTSIDE VENDORS

Understand how reviews are requested, collected, reported, and displayed.

PRIORITY ACTION PLAN

Turn the review into one clear next move

Choose gaps that could confuse a customer, block a next step, or create a review-integrity concern.

MY TOP CREDIBILITY GAPS

GAP	WHERE A CUSTOMER SEES IT	WHAT COULD BE UNCLEAR	NEEDED CORRECTION
1			
2			
3			

MY IMPROVEMENT ORDER

FIX FIRST

Wrong contact information, incorrect hours, broken customer paths, misleading claims, or questionable review practices.

FIX NEXT

Conflicting descriptions, missing customer-facing policies, outdated credentials, or recurring review concerns.

MAINTAIN

Photos, minor copy improvements, inactive-profile review, and routine review checks.

ONE ACTION THIS WEEK

By I will on

and I will verify the change by

OWNER

COMPLETION DATE

PUBLIC LOCATION CHECKED

FOLLOW-UP DATE

SOURCES + EDUCATIONAL DISCLAIMER

Primary guidance reviewed

Concise source list for the material review and testimonial guardrails in this checklist.

GOOGLE**01 Maps prohibited and restricted content**

<https://support.google.com/contributionpolicy/answer/7400114?hl=en>

02 Incentivized or biased reviews

<https://support.google.com/contributionpolicy/answer/16597558?hl=en>

03 Tips to get more reviews

<https://support.google.com/business/answer/3474122?hl=en>

04 Google review link and QR code

<https://support.google.com/business/answer/16816815?hl=en>

05 Manage customer reviews

<https://support.google.com/business/answer/3474050?hl=en>

06 Report inappropriate reviews

<https://support.google.com/business/answer/4596773?hl=en>

07 Business Profile representation guidelines

<https://support.google.com/business/answer/3038177?hl=en>

08 Local ranking guidance

<https://support.google.com/business/answer/7091?hl=en>

FTC / eCFR**01 Consumer Reviews and Testimonials Rule Q&A**

<https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/consumer-reviews-testimonials-rule-questions-answers>

02 16 CFR Part 465

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-16/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-465>

03 16 CFR Part 255

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-16/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-255>

04 Soliciting and paying for online reviews

<https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/soliciting-paying-online-reviews-guide-marketers>

05 FTC Endorsement Guides Q&A

<https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/ftcs-endorsement-guides-what-people-are-asking>

06 Consumer Review Fairness Act guidance

<https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/consumer-review-fairness-act-what-businesses-need-know>

EDUCATIONAL DISCLAIMER

This checklist is for general educational purposes only. It does not provide legal, regulatory, SEO, or platform-compliance advice, and it does not guarantee reviews, rankings, visibility, customer trust, or sales. Laws and platform policies change, and requirements vary by business, location, and industry. Review current official guidance and consult a qualified professional when your situation calls for legal, regulatory, or industry-specific advice.

Last reviewed: August 28, 2026.

Sources were checked against current Google and Federal Trade Commission guidance on this date. Recheck platform policies and applicable law before publishing or using review-request practices.