Acutis
MARKETING

Understanding SEO

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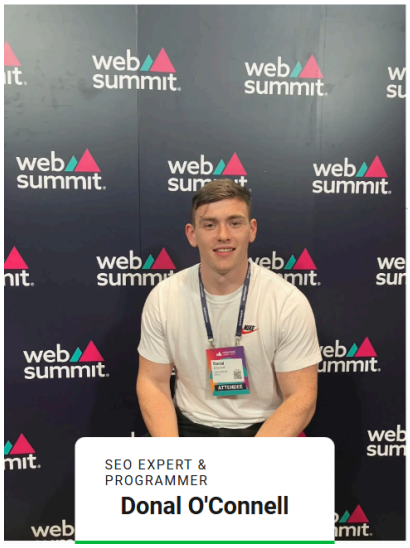


Lead generation and SEO expert based in Cork specialising in *high ticket* local services.

What is SEO?

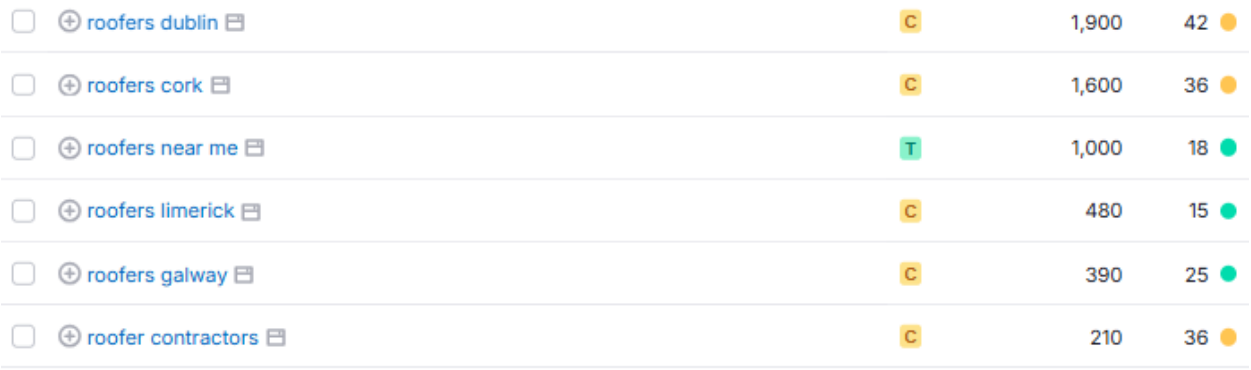
SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is about improving your website's position in search results for **specific keywords**. The goal is to move your site higher up the rankings so more people can find it when searching for the products or services you offer.

This is done by optimizing your website, creating high-quality content, and building trust with search engines through high quality backlinks and good user experience.

A keyword is a Google search term. Examples of keywords would be '*Solicitors Limerick*', '*Solar panel companies Dublin*', '*Gutter Repairs Galway*', '*Wedding photographer Cork*'.

Good Keywords vs Bad Keywords

Good Keywords



roofers dublin	C	1,900	42
roofers cork	C	1,600	36
roofers near me	T	1,000	18
roofers limerick	C	480	15
roofers galway	C	390	25
roofer contractors	C	210	36

The image above shows a list of keywords along with their monthly search volumes. **'Roofers Dublin'** receives just under **2,000 searches per month**, while **'Roofers Cork'** has around **1,600 searches per month**. These keywords are highly valuable because they attract **hundreds of leads** every month from people actively searching for roofing services in their specific cities.

Ranking at the top for these keywords can be extremely lucrative for a roofing business. With such high search volumes, securing a top spot in search results could lead to **tens of thousands of euros** in new projects every month. This is because people searching for these terms are likely ready to hire roofing companies in their area, making these keywords highly competitive but also potentially very profitable.

Bad Keywords

Keyword	Intent	Volume
flat roof repair companies near me	n/a	20
flat roof repair companies	n/a	10

The above keywords are examples of terrible keywords to target in an SEO campaign.

Take the keyword 'Flat roof repair companies'. This keyword has minimal search volume, which means that very few people are actively looking for it. Even if a business ranks #1 for this term, it is unlikely to see a significant increase in website traffic. The return on investment (ROI) for ranking for such a low-traffic keyword is extremely limited.

Another issue with this keyword is that it's **not location-specific**. When people search for terms like **'Flat roof repair companies'**, they could be from anywhere in Ireland (or even internationally), which makes it **hard to convert those visitors into actual customers** for a local business

SEO requires time and resources, and if the keyword isn't driving much traffic, the business may struggle to gain the visibility needed to generate leads. This means a roofing company targeting this keyword could spend considerable time and money on SEO efforts with little to no return.

Example Keyword

'Roofers Dublin' is an extremely valuable keyword for any roofing business covering Dublin, as it is **searched nearly 2,000 times per month**. This high search volume indicates that many people in Dublin are actively seeking

roofing services online, whether for repairs, installations, or other roofing-related needs. Due to its popularity, the keyword is considered **highly competitive** because many roofing businesses are also trying to rank for it.

Why is it highly competitive?
The competition arises because this keyword is not just frequently searched but also associated with high-value services. People searching for 'roofers Dublin' are likely to need immediate help with significant investments like roof repairs or new roof installations. The businesses targeting this keyword are vying to capture these leads, making it difficult to rank at the top of search engine results pages (SERPs).

What does an SEO Company do every month?

Starting A Campaign

When starting an SEO campaign, an SEO professional will conduct keyword research to select the most effective keywords for the campaign. In some cities, it may be possible to identify low-competition, high-volume keywords, but this is uncommon. The SEO professional should provide a keyword research document at the start of the campaign or inform you of

the specific keywords being targeted. This should include details such as the keywords' monthly search volumes and competition levels.

The SEO professional will also optimize your website to resolve technical issues that might be negatively impacting your search engine rankings. While I won't delve too deeply into this aspect, it typically involves tasks like improving website speed and refining the HTML structure to enhance overall site performance.

Monthly Tasks

The SEO professional may need to build new pages on your website regularly, especially if the campaign targets multiple towns or cities. These new pages are designed with content focused on a specific keyword or group of keywords to enhance local search visibility. Additionally, the SEO might create blog content that has the potential to attract customers. For example, a blog we successfully created in the past, titled **"How Much Does a Private Investigator Cost in Ireland?"**, generated around **35 leads per year**. While blogs may not convert as effectively as other keyword-targeted pages, they can still drive traffic and serve as easy wins for bringing visitors to your site.

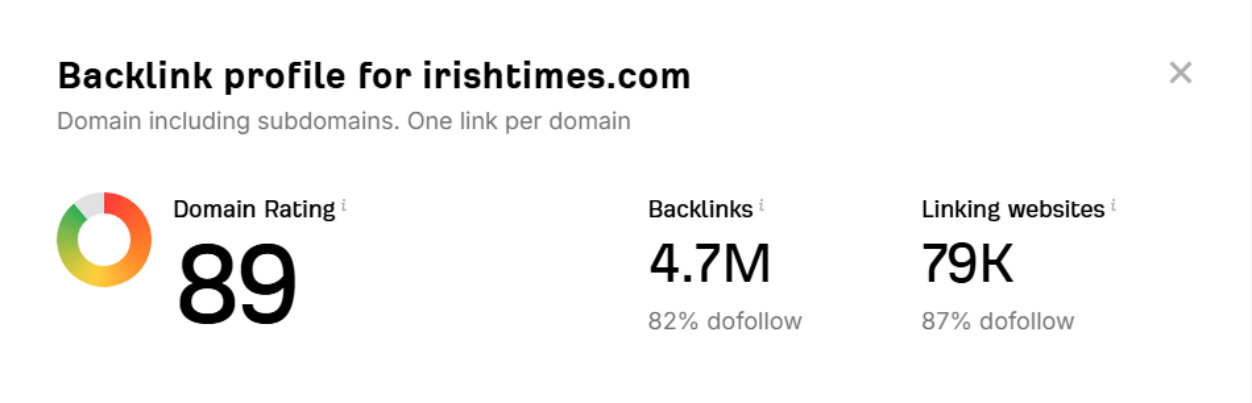
The SEO professional may also optimize existing content on your website. This includes tasks like modifying headers, improving on-page content, and ensuring the correct keywords are targeted across all pages. Tools like SEO plugins for WordPress assist with these tasks, but it's important to note that these plugins don't directly help your site rank on Google—they are simply tools to help you make the necessary changes to target your identified keywords.

While these efforts—building new pages, creating blog content, and optimizing existing pages—are crucial, they are often not enough to achieve high rankings in competitive areas. In cities like Dublin, Limerick, or Cork, there are often **10 or more websites** already optimized and targeting the same high-value keywords. So, how do you rank above those competitors?

The answer lies in **backlinks**. Backlinks—links from other websites pointing to your own—are a critical factor in SEO. They signal to search engines that your website is trustworthy and authoritative, helping you to outrank competitors who may already have well-optimized websites.

Backlinks are by far the most important aspect of an SEO company's job. If your SEO company is not actively building and securing backlinks for your website, you are likely being scammed. Backlinks are a critical ranking factor because they signal to search engines that your website is trustworthy and authoritative.

In many cases, less optimized websites outrank faster, fully optimized websites because they have significantly more high-quality backlinks from authoritative domains. These backlinks effectively act as "votes of confidence" for your site, boosting its credibility in search engine algorithms and helping it achieve higher rankings. Without a strong focus on backlinks, even the best on-page SEO work may fail to deliver the desired results in competitive markets.

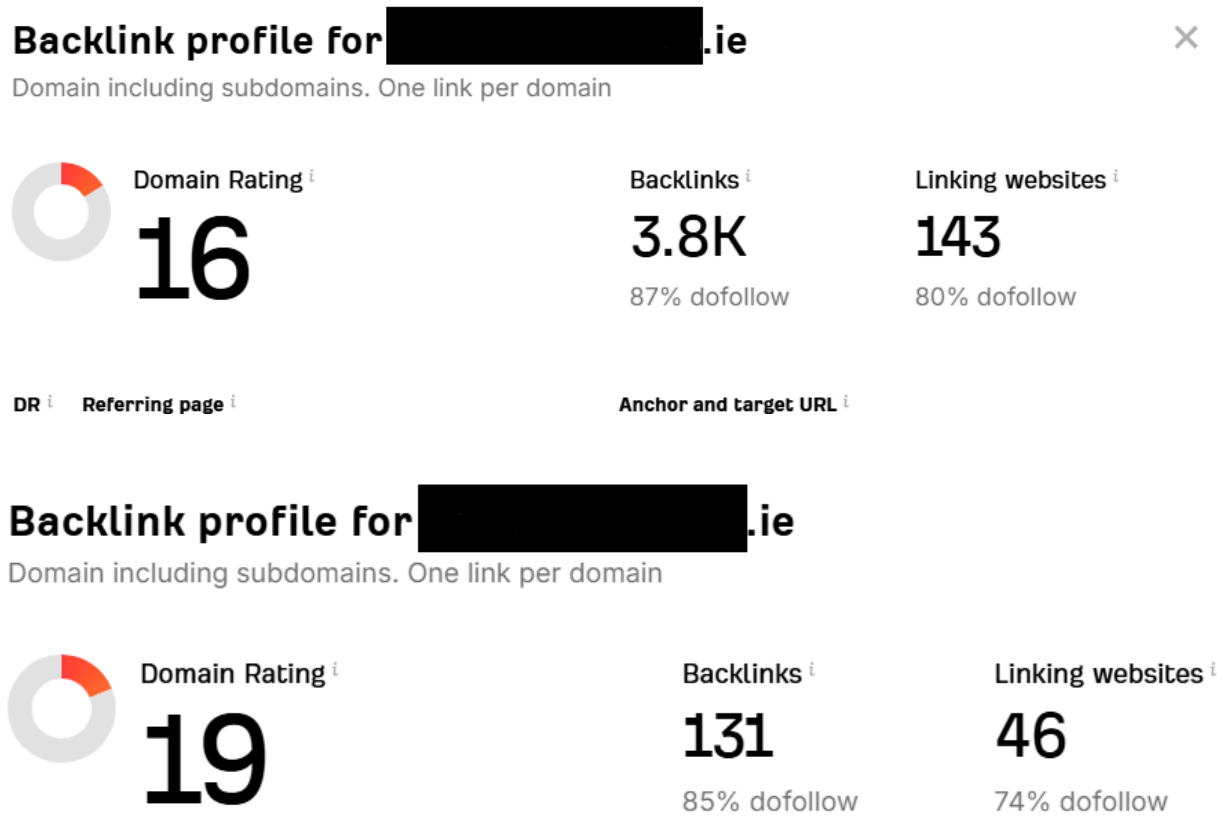


The **Irish Times** is an excellent example of a high-authority website. Google's algorithm recognizes it as one of the most trusted and authoritative websites in Ireland. If the Irish Times links to your website, it sends a strong signal to Google that your site is high-quality and credible within your niche.

That said, earning backlinks from extremely authoritative websites like **The Irish Times** or **The New York Times** is notoriously difficult. However, SEO professionals have strategies to source backlinks from other high-authority websites with **Domain Ratings (DR) between 10-40**, which can also significantly boost your site's rankings.

For example, we own several high-quality websites that we use to provide backlinks to our clients. While we can't disclose the domain names for privacy and security reasons, these sites are carefully maintained to ensure they are safe and effective for SEO purposes. Websites that openly sell backlinks risk being penalized by Google, so we take every precaution to protect both our websites and our clients' SEO campaigns.

By leveraging backlinks from these authoritative sources, we help our clients improve their rankings and establish their websites as trusted resources in their industries.



We use the tool **Ahrefs Backlink Checker** to evaluate the authority score of websites. This tool allows you to check your own authority score and verify whether your SEO provider is sourcing high-quality backlinks for your website. However, it's important to note that this tool provides an estimation and can be spoofed. While it's a useful resource, Google's algorithm is far more sophisticated and considers additional factors beyond what Ahrefs measures.

For Irish businesses, it's especially important that backlinks come from other **Irish (.ie)** websites and are provided within a **relevant context**. Backlinks from unrelated or geographically irrelevant sites—such as those based in **Russia, China, or India**—make little sense for a local Irish business and can even harm the site's credibility in search engine algorithms.

For example, if you own a roofing company in Dublin, receiving backlinks from an Irish construction or home improvement blog would be far more valuable than links from unrelated international websites. The relevance and geographical alignment of your backlinks are critical to ensuring they contribute positively to your site's ranking.

Backlinks should be added gradually over time to maintain a natural growth pattern. If your website has never received backlinks and suddenly acquires 10 or more in a single week, it can raise a **red flag for Google**. This sudden spike appears unnatural and may trigger scrutiny, potentially leading to penalties for manipulative link-building practices.

To avoid this, its important to carefully manage the pace at which backlinks are built. Typically, we add around **3 to 10 backlinks per month**, depending on factors such as your website's current **domain authority**, existing **backlink profile**, and the level of **competition** in your niche. This approach ensures a steady, organic growth pattern that aligns with Google's guidelines and supports long-term improvements in search rankings.

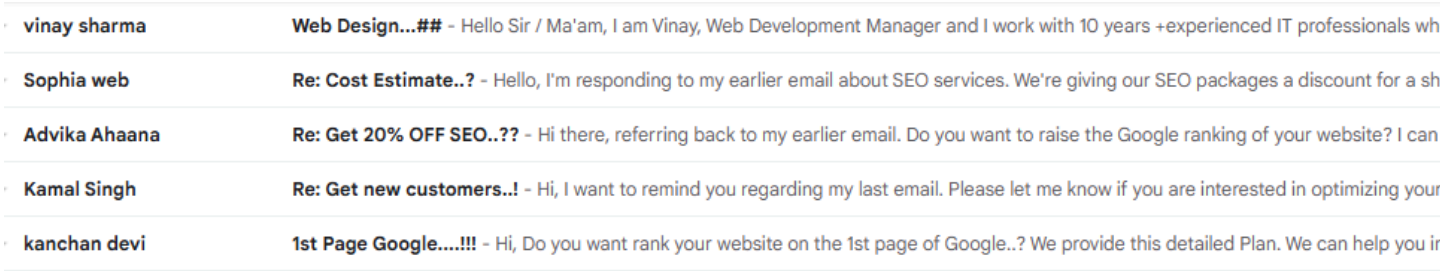
Bad Backlinks & SEO Scams

Purchasing a link from a domain solely because it has a high authority score can harm your website if the domain hasn't been properly audited. If a website links to spammy content, such as **casino or adult material**, and also links to your website, it could trigger a penalty from Google. This is because Google views such associations as a sign of poor-quality or manipulative link-building practices.

Additionally, if a website is used to sell **thousands of backlinks**, it often develops a high **spam score**, which can negatively impact the rankings of all sites linked from it. Many **scammers**, particularly from regions like India, will send unsolicited emails offering "deals" such as **1,000 backlinks for $1**

or other offers that seem too good to be true. These scammers create spammy websites that fake authority scores to deceive business owners into purchasing junk backlinks.

The reality is that **one high-quality backlink** from a relevant, authoritative website will do far more to improve your rankings than **millions of low-quality or spammy links**. Junk backlinks not only fail to boost rankings but can also damage your site's reputation, leading to penalties that are difficult and costly to recover from. Always prioritize quality over quantity when it comes to backlinks, and work with experienced SEO professionals who know how to properly audit websites for safety and relevance.

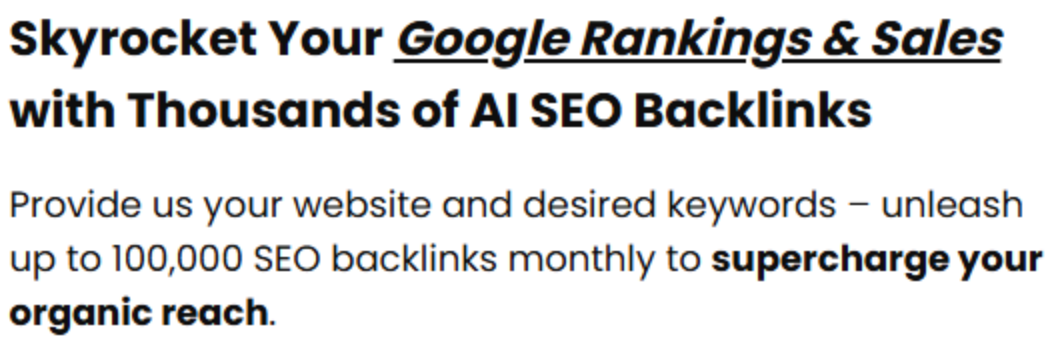


The image above illustrates an example of the many **scam emails** I receive weekly. These scammers often include "Re:" in the subject line to create the illusion of an ongoing conversation, attempting to trick business owners into believing they've previously been in contact. They mass send these emails at rates of millions per week to website owners all over the world.

These scammers prey on people's lack of understanding about how SEO works. Their offers, often promising thousands of backlinks or guaranteed

rankings for a low price, are designed to sound too good to be true—because they are.

If you use these services, the **best-case scenario** is that you'll lose your money without seeing any improvement in your rankings. The **worst-case scenario** is far more damaging: your website could incur penalties from Google, resulting in a dramatic drop in rankings or even complete **delisting from search results**.



Above is a service offering 100,000 DA70 backlinks per month for less than $20. This is an obvious red flag and a dangerous scam. High-authority backlinks from domains with a DA70+ score are incredibly valuable because they are typically from well-established, trusted websites. Securing even a single legitimate backlink from such sites requires significant effort, time, and expertise. The claim of providing 100,000 of these links in a month for such a low price is completely unrealistic.

Most often, these services rely on spammy websites with artificially inflated Domain Authority scores. These scores can be manipulated using tactics like link farming or automated tools, creating the illusion of high authority while offering no real value. In reality, the backlinks

provided are likely from irrelevant, low-quality, or even toxic sites that can harm your website's rankings. Additionally, such links often violate Google's guidelines, putting your website at risk of penalties or complete removal from search results. Rather than boosting your rankings, this kind of scam will waste your money and potentially damage your website's reputation and visibility. For successful SEO, quality always outweighs quantity, and services offering unrealistic backlink numbers at such low costs should be avoided at all costs

Tracking your progress - What reports you should be receiving.

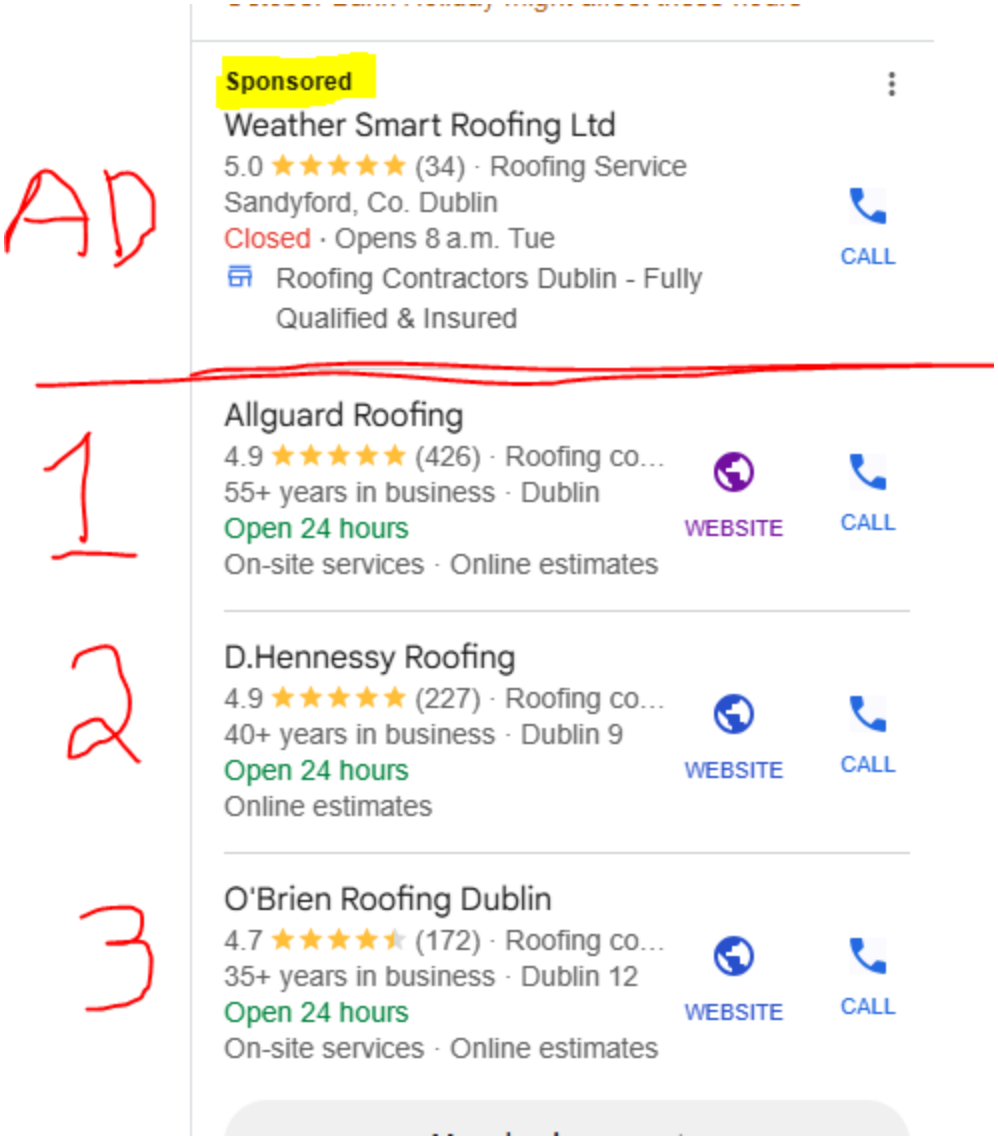
You should be receiving reports every month detailing new backlinks acquired and changes to the website such as additional content/blogs or new pages.

Change	High	Low	Keywords
↑ 106	9	21	4
↑ 106	5	14	6
↑ 58	13	21	7
↑ 17	18	26	2
↑ 13	6	36	6

You should also receive updates on changes in your website's position in the search engine results for the various keywords you are targeting

Local SEO (Map Pack)

Local SEO refers to the practice of optimizing your business's online presence to attract customers from local searches. The **Map Pack** (also called the "Local Pack" or "3-Pack") is that prominent box that appears in Google search results showing a map with three local business listings pinned on it.



What the Map Pack Looks Like

When someone searches for "roofer near me" or "driveway installer in Dublin," Google displays a map with three businesses highlighted, along with their:

- Business name
- Star ratings and review count
- Address
- Phone number
- Hours of operation
- Brief description

This appears above the regular organic search results, making it incredibly valuable real estate.

Why Local SEO/Map Pack Matters

Visibility: The Map Pack appears at the top of search results, often above traditional website listings. If you're in the Map Pack, you're one of the first things potential customers see.

Intent: People searching locally often have high purchase intent. Someone searching "plumber near me" likely needs a plumber *right now*.

Trust: The Map Pack includes reviews and ratings, which build immediate credibility. A 4.8-star rating with 200 reviews tells customers more than your website alone can.

Search dominance: Over 60% of searches for local services call companies from the map pack.

How It's Different From Your Website

This is a crucial distinction many business owners miss:

Your Google Business Profile ≠ Your Website

- **Separate platform**: Your Map Pack listing comes from your Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business), not your website. You can rank in the Map Pack even with a terrible website, or no website at all.
- **Different ranking factors**: While your website ranks based on content quality, backlinks, and traditional SEO, your Map Pack ranking depends on:
    - Proximity to the searcher
    - Relevance (how well your profile matches the search)
    - Prominence (reviews, citations, and overall reputation)
- **Different optimization**: Your website needs blog posts, keywords, and technical SEO. Your Google Business Profile needs accurate NAP (Name, Address, Phone), categories, photos, posts, and regular review management.
- **Different content**: Your website is your full story. Your Google Business Profile is more like a business card on steroids—quick facts, photos, and social proof.

The Relationship Between Both

While they're different, they work together. Your website URL appears in your Google Business Profile, and having a strong website with consistent information reinforces your local SEO. But many businesses make the mistake of focusing only on their website while neglecting their Google Business Profile, essentially leaving money on the table.

Think of it this way: your website is your home, but the Map Pack is your storefront on the busiest street in town.

If you have any more questions about this topic, you can always reach out to us at Acutis.ie