FREE DIY PLAYBOOK

The On-Page SEO Playbook for Small Business Websites

Titles, headings, content and links: make every page clear to customers and to Google.

- Page-by-page checklist
- Title and description templates
- Service page blueprint

SmallBiz Marketing
Written by the SmallBiz Marketing team · smallbizmarketing.net
2026 edition

What on-page SEO covers

On-page SEO is everything on the page itself that helps it rank and convert: the title people see in Google, the headings, the words, the images and the links. It is the part of SEO you control completely, and it is usually the fastest to improve.

This playbook gives you templates and a checklist you can run on every important page of your site in an afternoon or two.

Chapter 1: Title tags

The title tag is the blue headline in Google results. It is one of the strongest on-page signals and the main thing that decides whether people click.

Title tag rules

- One unique title per page
- Main phrase near the start
- Under about 60 characters so it is not cut off
- Include your city for local pages, and your brand at the end

Templates

Page type	Template
Homepage	Main service in City, ST - Brand
Service page	Service in City, ST - Brand
Location page	Service in Town - Brand
Blog article	Question or benefit in plain words (Year if relevant)
About	About Brand - Owner name, trade, city

Chapter 2: Meta descriptions

The meta description is the short summary under the title in results. It does not directly change rankings, but a good one earns more clicks.

- Under about 155 characters
- Say what the page offers and who it is for
- Include a reason to choose you (experience, guarantee, speed)
- End with a soft call to action

> EXAMPLE
> "Licensed tile setter in Folsom. Shower, backsplash and floor tile installed right the first time. See recent projects and request an estimate."

Chapter 3: Headings and structure

- One H1 per page that says plainly what the page is about.
- H2s for the main sections, written the way people ask questions.
- Short paragraphs, bullet lists and tables make pages easy to scan on a phone.

Service page blueprint

1. H1: Service in City.
2. Opening: who you help, what you do, where, in two or three sentences.
3. Photos of real work.
4. What is included and how the process works.
5. What affects the price (ranges if you can share them).
6. Why choose us: experience, guarantees, licenses.
7. Reviews from customers who bought this service.
8. FAQ: four to six real questions.
9. Areas served and a link to related services.
10. Clear call to action and contact link.

Chapter 4: Content that ranks and converts

Helpful, people-first content

Google rewards content that shows real experience and answers the question well. For small businesses, your advantage is first-hand experience: you have done the work hundreds of times.

- Use your own photos and examples instead of stock images.
- Mention specifics: materials you use, steps you take, timelines.
- Answer the questions customers really ask, in plain words.
- Show who is behind the business and why they are qualified.

How long should a page be?

Long enough to fully answer the question and no longer. Many strong service pages are 500 to 1,200 words. Thin pages with two sentences rarely rank; padded pages do not help either.

Chapter 5: Images

- Use real photos of your work, team and location.
- Compress images before upload (most builders do this automatically).
- Name files descriptively: walk-in-shower-folsom.jpg, not IMG_4482.jpg.
- Write alt text that describes the image for someone who cannot see it.

> ALT TEXT EXAMPLE
> "Walk-in shower with large-format porcelain tile and a linear drain in a Folsom home."

Chapter 6: Internal links

Internal links help visitors find related pages and help Google understand which pages matter most.

- Link from your homepage to every main service.
- Link between related services ("tile repair" to "shower tile installation").
- Link every blog article to the service it supports, and back.
- Use descriptive link text ("our shower installation process"), not "click here".

Chapter 7: URLs

- Short, readable and descriptive: /tile-repair-folsom
- Use hyphens between words, lowercase letters
- Do not change existing URLs that already rank; if you must, add a 301 redirect

Chapter 8: Trust signals

- Reviews and testimonials near your calls to action
- Licenses, insurance, certifications and memberships
- A real About page with names and photos
- Consistent business name and contact details on every page
- Clear privacy policy and terms

On-page checklist (run on every key page)

- [ ] Unique title under about 60 characters with the main phrase
- [ ] Meta description under about 155 characters that earns the click
- [ ] One H1 that matches the page topic
- [ ] Opening paragraph confirms service and location
- [ ] Answers the top customer questions
- [ ] At least 3 real photos with descriptive alt text
- [ ] Links to related services and to the contact page
- [ ] Reviews or proof on the page
- [ ] Clear call to action above the fold and at the end
- [ ] Short, descriptive URL
- [ ] Reads well on a phone

Page audit tracker

Page	Title	H1	Content	Images	Links

FAQ

Should I write my own titles or let my website builder do it?

Write your own for every important page. Builders often default to the page name, which wastes the most valuable words.

How often should I update pages?

Review key pages every few months. Add new photos, reviews and answers as you get them.

Does adding more keywords help?

No. Cover the topic well and use the main phrase naturally in the important places.

Keep going

More free DIY playbooks from the SmallBiz Marketing team:

The Small Business SEO Playbook (start here)

The Keyword Research Playbook

The Technical SEO Checklist Playbook

The Content & Blogging Playbook

The Links & Citations Playbook

The SEO Tracking & Reporting Playbook

The SEO Budget & Hiring Playbook

All free DIY playbooks

Want it done for you?

The SmallBiz Marketing team builds fast, search-ready websites and sets up Google for small businesses. Get in touch through our contact page and tell us what you need.

Get in touch