

Getting found locally

Google Business Profile, reviews, and local search. The single highest-return thing most independent shops can fix, and the one most often left alone.

The short version

Most independent hi-fi shops are invisible to the people most likely to buy from them: somebody within half an hour's drive who has just decided to spend real money and has started looking. That person does not begin with a brand's dealer locator. They type something into Google with a place name attached.

Everything below is free, none of it requires an agency, and the whole lot can be done in a fortnight of evenings. It is the highest-return work available to most specialist shops, and it is the work most often left alone.

IF YOU DO ONE THING

Claim and finish your Google Business Profile. It is free, it takes about an hour, and it is the single biggest factor in whether you appear when somebody nearby searches. An unclaimed or half-finished profile is the most common fault in the trade.

1. Claim and finish your Google Business Profile

It is free, it takes an hour, and it decides whether you appear in local results at all. A profile that has been claimed but never finished performs almost as badly as one that was never claimed.

What to fill in

- **Opening hours** — including the ones you actually keep, and every bank holiday. Nothing loses a customer faster than a wasted journey.
- **Photographs of the actual demonstration rooms.** Not stock images, not the logo, not a product shot from the manufacturer. People want to see the room they would be sitting in.
- **The brands you carry**, named. People search for a brand and a place far more often than they search for a category.
- **A description written for a person** rather than for a search engine. Say what you do, how long you have done it, and what makes a visit worth the drive.
- **Services** — demonstrations, installation, part-exchange, repairs, delivery. Each one is something somebody is searching for.

Then go back twice a year and check it. Hours drift, staff change, and a profile nobody has touched since it was set up starts quietly telling people the wrong thing.

2. Ask for reviews, properly and regularly

Not a card by the till. A short message a few days after installation, when the customer is still delighted with what they have just heard, containing a direct link that takes one tap.

Ten recent, specific reviews beat fifty old ones. Recency counts, and so does detail: “they spent two hours letting me compare three amplifiers and did not push the dearest one” does more work than five stars and no words.

Reply to all of them. This is the part shops skip, and it is the part that matters most — because the reply is not read by the reviewer, who has moved on. It is read by the next customer, who is deciding whether to trust you. A calm, specific reply to a critical review is worth more than any number of thank-yous.

3. Name the towns you actually serve

If people travel to you from three counties, say so in plain words on your website. Shops routinely name only the street they are on, then wonder why nobody a county away ever finds them.

This is not about stuffing place names into a page. It is about answering a question the customer is actually asking: *is this shop near enough to be worth the journey?* Write it as you would say it — that customers come from across the region, and roughly how long the drive is from the larger towns.

4. List the brands you demonstrate, by name

People search for a brand and a place far more often than for a category. A page that says which brands you stock — and, more usefully, which you have set up and ready to hear — catches searches that a general page never will.

The distinction between *stocked* and *demonstrable* is worth making explicit. Somebody driving an hour to hear a particular loudspeaker wants to know it will be plugged in when they arrive. Saying so is both useful and rare.

A NOTE ON MANUFACTURER COPY

Do not build these pages by pasting the manufacturer's description. Forty dealers doing the same thing produces forty identical pages, none of which ranks and all of which read like a brochure. **Guide 05** covers what to write instead.

5. Check what you already rank for

Google Search Console is free and shows exactly which searches brought people to your site. Most retailers have never opened it.

It usually reveals two things at once. You rank for things you had never thought about — a brand you barely mention, a town you have never named — which tells you what to write more about. And you are missing things you assumed you owned, which tells you where the work is.

Half an hour in there beats a month of guessing. **Guide 02** covers the four screens worth looking at, in both Search Console and Analytics.

Doing it in a fortnight

An order that works, an evening at a time:

- 01 Claim the Google Business Profile and fill in every field.
- 02 Photograph the demonstration rooms properly and upload them. Guide 04 covers how.
- 03 Write the brands page, saying which are set up and ready to hear.
- 04 Add the towns you serve to the about or contact page, in plain words.
- 05 Set up Search Console and leave it collecting.
- 06 Start asking every happy customer for a review, and reply to each one.
- 07 A fortnight later, open Search Console and see what changed.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Six months on: a finished profile with photographs, a steady handful of recent reviews with replies under them, brand pages in your own words, and Search Console showing searches you can recognise. That is not a marketing campaign. It is housekeeping, and almost nobody in the trade has done it.

ALSO IN THIS SERIES

02 Knowing what your website is actually doing — the four screens in Analytics and Search Console that repay the time.

04 Photographing your shop and your stock on a phone — the pictures this guide asks you to upload.

05 Writing about a product in your own words — what to put on the brand pages once people are finding them.

All seven guides are free to read, member or not, at [the Clarity guides page](#).

Clarity Alliance — the British hi-fi industry trade association. The guides are free because nobody joins a trade association for a PDF. They are the argument, not the product. Membership is sold on the card rates, the standard, the conference and Bira.