

FREE GUIDE · 2026 EDITION

The 2026 SEO Checklist

60 checks to get found on Google, AI answers and everywhere your customers search. In plain English, for business owners and their teams.

60 checks

Score yourself

30-day plan

Search Everywhere

Found

Can Google reach you?

Understood

Is every page clear?

Trusted

Would Google recommend you?

Chosen

Does the visit buy?

Greenlearners Technologies

By Chukwuemeka Maduka, Founder · 143+ businesses grown in 15+ countries

October 2026

START HERE

How to use **this checklist**

Search engine optimization (SEO) is everything you do to make your website the most useful, most trusted answer to the questions your customers type into search engines. **This checklist turns that into 60 yes or no checks.** Work through it with your team, your developer or on your own.

Three rules

1. **Be honest.** Only tick a box if it is fully true today.
2. **Fix in order.** Found comes before understood, which comes before trusted. A beautiful page Google cannot reach earns nothing.
3. **Repeat every quarter.** Rankings move. Check again in three months and compare your score.

Your level

Count your ticks out of 60.

0 to 18

1 • Invisible

19 to 33

2 • Findable

34 to 45

3 • Competitive

46 to 54

4 • Dominant

55 to 60

5 • Everywhere

Why this still matters in 2026

Sept 2026

89.94%

Google's share of search worldwide (StatCounter). In Nigeria: 98.28%.

Feb 2026

190×

more website traffic from Google than from ChatGPT (Ahrefs, 76,000 sites).

2026

68%

of US Google searches end without a click (SparkToro). Buying searches still click.

2026

\$5.42

average cost of one Google Ads click (LocalIQ). With SEO, you never pay per click.

For us at Greenlearners Technologies, marketing is getting the right product or service to the right person, at the right time, through the right channel, with the right message. SEO is how the right person finds you at the right time.

PART 1 OF 5

Found

Technical SEO

Can Google reach and read your website?

In Nigeria, **75.22% of web traffic is on a phone** (StatCounter, September 2026). If your site struggles on a phone, it struggles with most of your customers.

- ☐ **01 Your website loads on https, with the padlock, on every page.**
Install an SSL certificate and send all http traffic to https.
- ☐ **02 There is only one version of your website.**
www and non-www, http and https should all land on one address.
- ☐ **03 Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools are both set up.**
Both are free. Bing's index also feeds several AI assistants.
- ☐ **04 Your XML sitemap is submitted to Google and Bing, once.**
Most WordPress SEO plugins create one and keep it updated for you.
- ☐ **05 Your important pages are indexed.**
Check the Pages report in Search Console, or search site:yourdomain.com.
- ☐ **06 Nothing important is blocked, and AI crawlers are not blocked.**
Check robots.txt and noindex settings. Blocking AI bots hides you from AI answers.
- ☐ **07 Key pages pass Core Web Vitals on mobile.**
In PageSpeed Insights: LCP under 2.5s, INP under 200ms, CLS under 0.1.
- ☐ **08 Images are compressed before upload and sized for the screen.**
Huge photos are the most common reason pages are slow.
- ☐ **09 Every button and form works on a small phone.**
Test your own site on your own phone, with one thumb.
- ☐ **10 There are no broken links or dead pages.**
Fix or redirect every page that shows an error.
- ☐ **11 Old addresses redirect to new ones after a redesign.**
Use 301 redirects so rankings move with the page.
- ☐ **12 Your main content is in the page itself, not only loaded by scripts.**
Open the page source. If the words are not there, crawlers may miss them.

Found: your ticks

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PART 2 OF 5

Understood

On-page SEO

Does every page say clearly what it is about?

Position one on Google gets **about 45 times the clicks** of position ten on searches without an AI answer (First Page Sage, 2026). Clear pages are how you climb.

- ☐ **13 Every page has one main topic and one main keyword.**
If a page tries to rank for everything, it ranks for nothing.
- ☐ **14 Every page has its own title, under about 60 characters.**
Put the main keyword near the front.
- ☐ **15 Every page has a meta description of about 155 characters.**
Write it like an advert: why should they click you?
- ☐ **16 There is one H1 heading per page that names the topic.**
Your theme may use the page title as the H1.
- ☐ **17 Subheadings read like a table of contents.**
Use lists for steps and tables for comparisons. People and AI both lift them.
- ☐ **18 Every section opens with a two or three sentence answer.**
Answer first, then explain. This is what AI answers quote.
- ☐ **19 Page addresses are short and readable.**
yoursite.com/dentist-ikeja, not yoursite.com/?p=372.
- ☐ **20 Each main service or product has its own page.**
One page per thing you sell, so each can rank.
- ☐ **21 Your homepage says what you do, for whom and where.**
On the first screen, before anyone scrolls.

PART 2 OF 5, CONTINUED

Understood

On-page SEO

- ☐ 22 **Images have descriptive file names and alt text.**
dentist-ikeja-reception.jpg, not IMG_4471.jpg.
- ☐ 23 **Related pages link to each other with clear words.**
"See our teeth whitening prices", not "click here".
- ☐ 24 **Key pages have structured data that passes Google's test.**
Check it in the Rich Results Test. FAQ markup must match the visible FAQ.
- ☐ 25 **No two pages compete for the same keyword.**
Merge or refocus pages that overlap.
- ☐ 26 **Writing is built for a phone reader.**
Short sentences, short paragraphs, plain words.

Understood: your ticks

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The title formula

Main keyword + the benefit | Brand

LAGOS Dentist in Ikeja Open Saturdays | ABC Dental Clinic**LONDON** Emergency Plumber Croydon | 60-Min Call-Out | ABC Plumbing**HOUSTON** Car Accident Lawyer Houston | Free Case Review | ABC Law

Keep it under about 60 characters.

The description formula

What you offer + where + proof or price + next step

LAGOS Need a dentist in Ikeja on a Saturday? Walk-ins 9am to 4pm, check-up and clean from ₦25,000. Book on WhatsApp in under a minute.**LONDON** Burst pipe or no hot water? Our plumbers reach you anywhere in Croydon within 60 minutes, 7 days a week. Fixed call-out from £79.**HOUSTON** Hurt in a car accident in Houston? Free case review, no fee unless we win, and we answer 24/7.

About 155 characters. ABC businesses are made-up examples.

Test yours free with the Google snippet previewer at greenlearnerstechnologies.com/search-engine-optimization

PART 3 OF 5

Trusted

Authority, reviews and local SEO

Would Google be comfortable recommending you?

97% of consumers read reviews for local businesses, and **68%** will only use one rated four stars or more (BrightLocal, 2026). Google says plainly: "trust is most important."

☐ 27 **Key pages show a named author or expert with real credentials.**

Anonymous content is hard for people and AI systems to trust.

☐ 28 **Your About page shows experience and proof.**

Years, people, results and qualifications.

☐ 29 **Every statistic and claim links to its source.**

If you cannot prove it, do not publish it.

☐ 30 **You publish something only you can: your own data or results.**

Case studies, dashboards, surveys and real customer quotes get cited.

☐ 31 **Your Google Business Profile is claimed, verified and complete.**

Category, hours, services, photos and booking link.

☐ 32 **Your name, address, phone and hours match everywhere online.**

Website, Google Business Profile, Facebook and directories, all the same.

☐ 33 **You have recent reviews averaging 4 stars or more.**

On Google, plus one more trusted platform such as Trustpilot or Yelp.

☐ 34 **Every review gets a reply, good or bad.**

Future customers read your replies too.

☐ 35 **Respected websites in your industry or country link to you.**

Partners, suppliers, associations and the press.

☐ 36 **You never buy links in bulk.**

Google's spam policies can wipe out your rankings.

☐ 37 **Your brand is mentioned across the web, even without a link.**

Press, podcasts, LinkedIn and helpful answers on Reddit and forums.

☐ 38 **There is a page for each city or area you serve.**

With real local detail: landmarks, directions, parking. Never copy and paste.

Trusted: your ticks

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PART 4 OF 5

Search Everywhere

AI answers, video, social and marketplaces

Are you found beyond the blue links?

45% of consumers now use AI tools for local recommendations, up from 6% (BrightLocal, 2026). Google still sends websites **about 190 times more traffic** than ChatGPT (Ahrefs, 2026). You need both.

- ☐ **39 Searching your brand name shows your website first.**
If it does not, start here.
- ☐ **40 Long pages open with a short key points summary.**
Three to five lines near the top that a busy reader, or an AI, can lift.
- ☐ **41 Your main service pages have a short FAQ.**
Use the real questions customers ask you.
- ☐ **42 Your details match everywhere AI tools look.**
Google, LinkedIn, Facebook and trusted directories.
- ☐ **43 You have asked ChatGPT and Gemini about your business.**
"Who is the best [service] in [city]?" Are you named?
- ☐ **44 YouTube videos have keyword titles, descriptions and chapters.**
YouTube is a search engine too.
- ☐ **45 TikTok and Instagram captions use the words people search.**
Say the keyword out loud in the video as well.
- ☐ **46 Marketplace listings are complete.**
Jumia, Jiji, Amazon or Etsy: full titles, photos and reviews.
- ☐ **47 Your FAQ questions match how people really ask.**
Use the exact wording from Google's People Also Ask and from customers.
- ☐ **48 Every channel links back to your website.**
Every road should end where the sale happens.

Search Everywhere: your ticks

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PART 5 OF 5

Chosen

Conversion and tracking

Does the visit turn into a customer?

The average Google Ads click costs **\$5.42** and the average lead **\$66.69** (LocaliQ, 2026). Every visitor SEO brings you is one you did not pay that for. Do not waste them.

☐ **49 Your phone number and WhatsApp are visible on every page.**

Top of the page on a phone, not hidden in the footer.

☐ **50 Every page has one clear next step.**

Call, book, buy or enquire. Pick one.

☐ **51 Forms ask only what you truly need.**

Every extra field loses people.

☐ **52 Prices or price ranges are shown where possible.**

"From ₦25,000" beats "contact us for pricing".

☐ **53 Proof sits right next to every call to action.**

A review, a number or a logo beside the button.

☐ **54 Google Analytics 4 is installed.**

Free, and it pairs with Search Console.

☐ **55 Calls, WhatsApp clicks and form sends are tracked.**

Set them up as key events in Analytics.

☐ **56 You know which pages bring enquiries.**

Double down on those first.

☐ **57 Every new page gets links from two or three older pages.**

The most underused step after publishing.

☐ **58 You publish or refresh one useful page every month.**

Update dates, prices, numbers and screenshots on your top pages.

☐ **59 You check Search Console monthly, and new pages after 30 days.**

Look for drops, and for searches you nearly rank for.

☐ **60 You have one business number for SEO.**

Enquiries or sales from search, reported every month.

Chosen: your ticks**/ 12**

YOUR NEXT 30 DAYS

The 30-day **SEO** action plan

Do not try to fix all 60 at once. **Four weeks, four themes, sixteen tasks.** Most businesses see the first changes in Search Console within weeks. Google itself says some changes take effect in a few hours and others could take several months.

WEEK 1**Foundations**

- ☐ Set up Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools, and submit your sitemap
- ☐ Make sure every page loads on https and AI crawlers are not blocked
- ☐ Run PageSpeed Insights on your homepage and fix the biggest issue
- ☐ Fix or redirect every broken page

WEEK 2**Pages**

- ☐ Rewrite the titles and meta descriptions of your top 5 pages
- ☐ Open every section of those pages with a direct answer
- ☐ Make sure every main service has its own page
- ☐ Rewrite your homepage first screen: what, who, where

WEEK 3**Trust**

- ☐ Complete your Google Business Profile, with fresh photos
- ☐ Ask 10 happy customers for a review
- ☐ Reply to every review you already have
- ☐ Add a named author with credentials to your key pages

WEEK 4**Everywhere
and
tracking**

- ☐ Search your brand name and ask ChatGPT about your business
- ☐ Add a short FAQ to your main service pages
- ☐ Track calls, WhatsApp clicks and forms in Google Analytics 4
- ☐ Plan one useful page to publish every month

Your total score**/ 60 · Date:**

YOUR NEXT STEP

Want us to run this checklist **for you?**

Send us your website on WhatsApp. We will look at it the way Google does and send you the fixes that matter most, ranked by money. The audit is free, and you keep it whatever you decide.

Done for you

A free SEO audit from Greenlearners Technologies, then a plan built around one business number: enquiries or sales from search.

Get my free SEO audit

Learn it yourself

Search Engine Optimization For Beginners. Free, 12 weeks, AI search included, with a certificate anyone can verify.

Start the free course

Read the full masterclass, with the data, the free SEO value calculator and the health check, at greenlearnerstechnologies.com/search-engine-optimization

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