



SEO FOR MOVING COMPANIES

How movers actually rank.

A practical field guide to what compounds, what wastes money, and what most agencies will not tell you, because the answer is uncomfortable for both of you.

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FIELD GUIDE

2026 Edition

WHAT'S INSIDE

Seven parts and an appendix.

No fluff, no funnel, no hidden ask. Seven concrete parts on what builds rankings for a moving company in the post-I/O 2026 era, plus a one-week diagnostic you can run on your own business before talking to any agency.

01	The shape of mover SEO	P. 04
	Two jobs running at once, and the AI and agentic overlay sitting on top.	
02	Google Business Profile, your local pack engine	P. 06
	Categories, photos, posts, reviews, Q&A, and the audit you can run today.	
03	Your website, the foundation	P. 12
	Service-area pages, service pages, E-E-A-T for movers, and what to skip.	
04	Business listings and backlinks	P. 19
	Quality over volume, NAP consistency, and the off-page receipts standard.	
05	Content that compounds	P. 23
	Intent first, the AI Overview shift, cadence, and topic selection.	
06	AI search and the agentic shift	P. 27
	What I/O 2026 actually changed: descriptive queries, calling agents, the relocation dashboard.	
07	Timelines, receipts, and what good looks like	P. 30
	The 60-day reality, useful reporting, and what to ask any agency.	
08	How we work at By The Mile Digital	P. 34
	One mover per metro, month-to-month, receipts on every dollar.	
A	Appendix: the one-week diagnostic	P. 36
	Seven days, six concrete checks, and a decision at the end.	

WHO THIS IS FOR

For owners who have been around the block.

You run a moving company. You have heard of SEO. Maybe you have worked with an agency, maybe you have a guy, maybe you have done it yourself. The needle has not moved the way you were told it would.

This guide is the inside view. How rankings actually get built for moving companies in 2026, what compounds, what wastes money, and what most agencies will not tell you because the answer is uncomfortable for both of you.

It is not a sales pitch. The last section explains how we work at By The Mile Digital and how to talk to us if you want to. The rest is yours to use, hand to your current agency, or read once and put down.

What this isn't

This is not a beginner guide. If you have never logged into Google Business Profile, this will move too fast. Read it anyway and bookmark the parts that matter.

This is not a checklist. SEO checklists are how movers end up with 200 spammy directory listings and a website that ranks for nothing. The work is not a list of items. It is a stack of compounding signals, with foundations underneath them, and order matters.

This is not theory. Every section comes from work we have shipped for moving companies in the US market. The examples and numbers are real even when company names are not.

ONE FAVOR BEFORE YOU READ ON

Open a tab to your own website and another to your Google Business Profile. Some sections of this guide will make more sense if you can audit your own business in real time as you read. The diagnostic in the appendix walks you through exactly that, but the parts before it will land harder if you have your own examples on screen.

PART 01

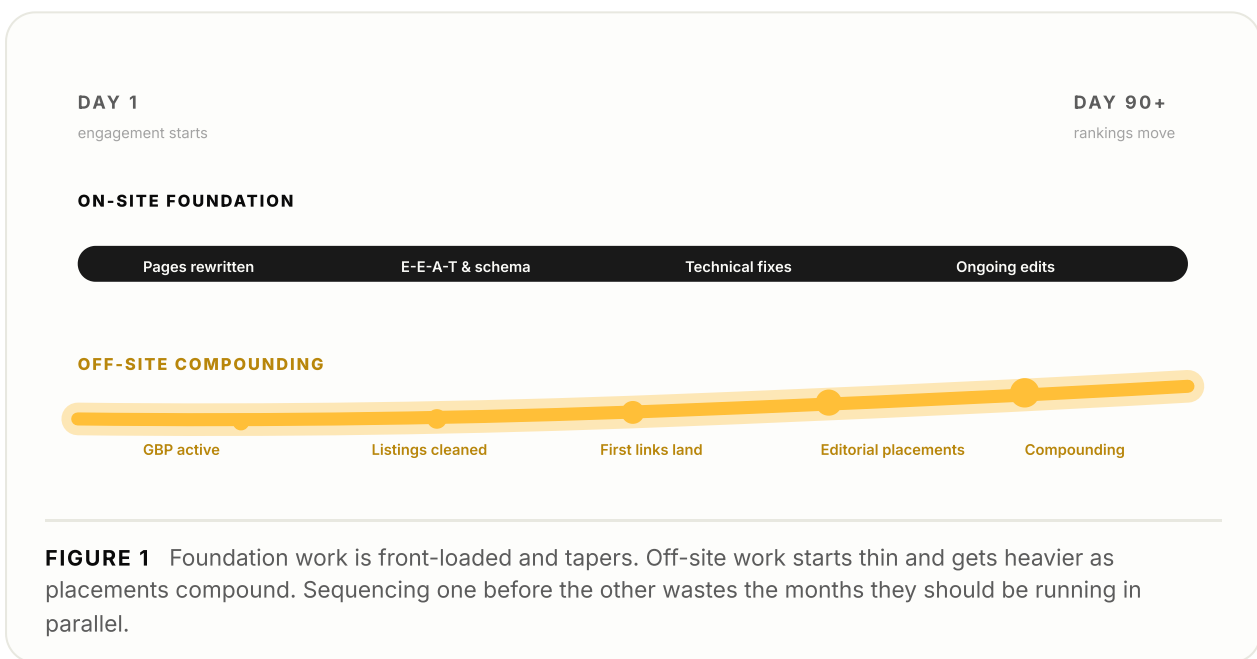
01 The shape of mover SEO.

SEO for moving companies is two jobs running at once. Both start day one of the engagement, or the work does not stack.

The first job is your website. Pages that load fast, say specific things about specific cities, and prove to Google that the people behind the business know what they are doing. We call this the foundation.

The second job is everything that happens off your site. Your Google Business Profile. The directories that list your business. The mentions and links from other websites that point at you. We call this the compounding layer because it builds on itself, slowly, month after month.

Most agencies sell one or the other. The cheap ones sell directory submissions and call it SEO. The expensive ones rewrite your homepage and call it strategy. Neither alone moves the needle.



There is a third reality on top of these two. **AI search, and the agentic shift sitting on top of it.** Google's AI Overviews already appear on a meaningful share of moving-related queries, and at **I/O 2026** Google extended AI search from an overview above the blue links into something closer to an assistant that recommends businesses and contacts them on the customer's behalf. The rules for ranking inside these surfaces are different from traditional blue-link results. Ignore this layer and a year from now you will be invisible on half the searches that matter. Part 6 covers it in detail.

That is the whole game. Foundation. Compounding layer. AI and the agentic overlay on top. Everything else in this guide is the specifics underneath those three.

Why most mover SEO fails

We have audited dozens of moving company websites over the past few years. The failure patterns are almost always the same.

Templated location pages. A page for every city the mover services, all of them identical except for a swapped city name in the H1 and a swapped ZIP code in the schema. Google has been filtering these out of results for years. They do not rank, they dilute your domain, and they sometimes get the whole site labeled as low-quality.

Generic homepage copy. "We are a family-owned moving company committed to quality service." This says nothing. It does not differentiate. It does not signal expertise. It does not give Google anything to rank for. The site that says *"we move four-bedroom homes from Cobb County to Buckhead with bonded crews and full-replacement valuation"* beats it on every relevant query.

Ignored Google Business Profile. GBP is the single largest local-pack lever, and most movers treat it as a one-time setup. No weekly posts. Photos from 2019. Service categories that do not match what the mover actually offers. Reviews piling up with no responses. The local pack is where the calls come from, and an inactive GBP is leaving them on the table.

Spray-and-pray business listings. Three hundred listings on directories nobody uses. None of them on the directories that actually matter for movers. The signal is noise, and Google reads it as such.

Backlink schemes that look like backlink schemes. Guest posts on unrelated sites, link networks, paid placements on hijacked domains. Google's spam detection got good at this around 2021. The risk is now larger than the upside.

Blog posts written for keywords nobody searches. "Top 10 Tips for Moving in Summer." Zero search volume, no commercial intent, no topical depth. The blog burns hours and dollars and produces nothing.

The patterns are not exotic. They are what happens when work is done by the page or by the keyword instead of by the system.

3 of 4

Mover sites we audit have templated location pages as their top traffic block

42%

Of GBPs we audit have not posted in over six months

\$0

Return we have seen on bulk directory submission packages in three years of audits

THE TAKEAWAY FROM PART 1

If your current SEO work focuses on one of the layers and ignores the others, you are paying for half the engine. The next five parts walk through each layer in detail. **Read them in order.** The order is how the work actually stacks.

PART 02

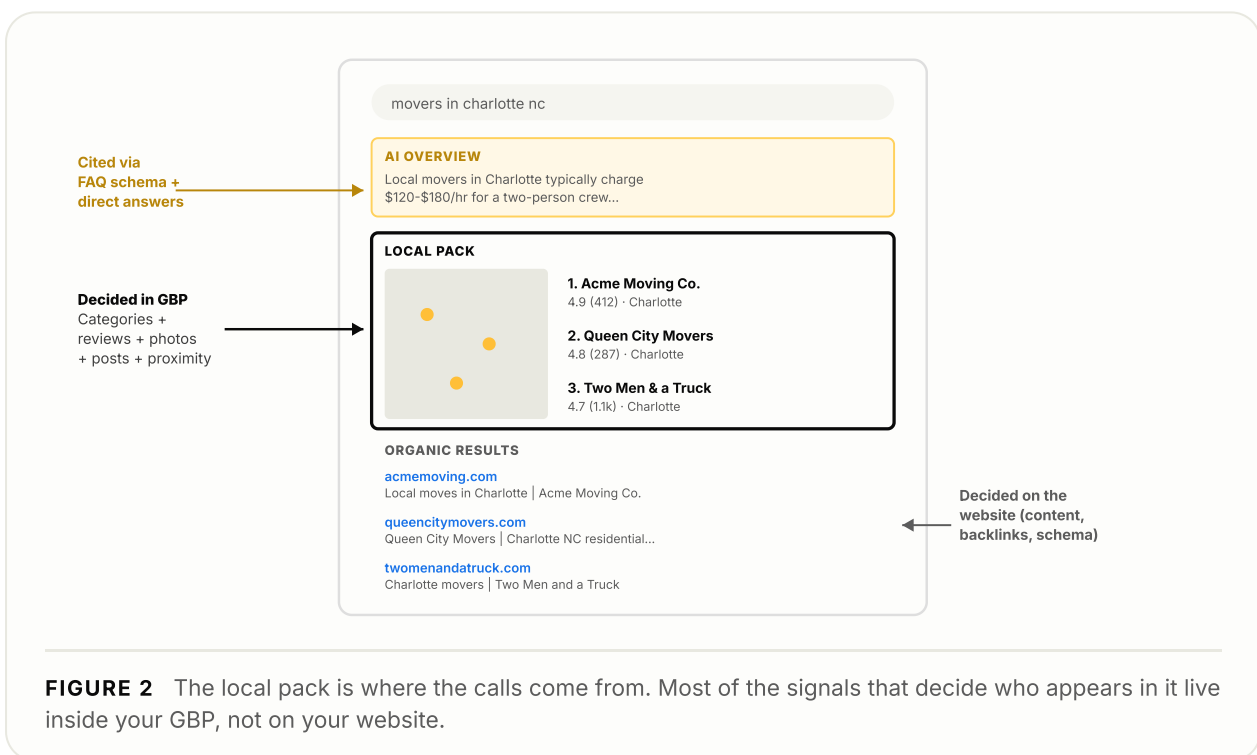
02 Google Business Profile, your local pack engine.

If you do nothing else from this guide, fix your Google Business Profile. For a local-service business like moving, GBP is the largest single lever you have.

The local pack (the three businesses Google shows on the map at the top of local queries) drives more direct calls than the organic blue links beneath it. And the local pack is decided largely inside GBP, not on your website.

Since **I/O 2026** the profile has taken on a second job. When Google's AI Mode builds a shortlist of movers to hand to a customer, or to call on the customer's behalf, that shortlist gets assembled largely from GBP signals. A complete profile is now the cost of entry to local-pack rankings *and* to AI shortlists. **Part 6 covers the agentic shift in full.** This part is the field manual for fixing what feeds both of them.

This is also the easiest part to fix. The fixes are concrete, the work is mostly free, and the results show up within weeks rather than months.



A PROFILE THAT EARNS THE LOCAL PACK

What a strong mover GBP actually looks like.

Below is the composition we audit toward. Five levers (categories, photos, posts, reviews, Q&A) plus the structural choices (service-area model, accurate hours, real services). Each one is a signal Google weighs when deciding the local pack.

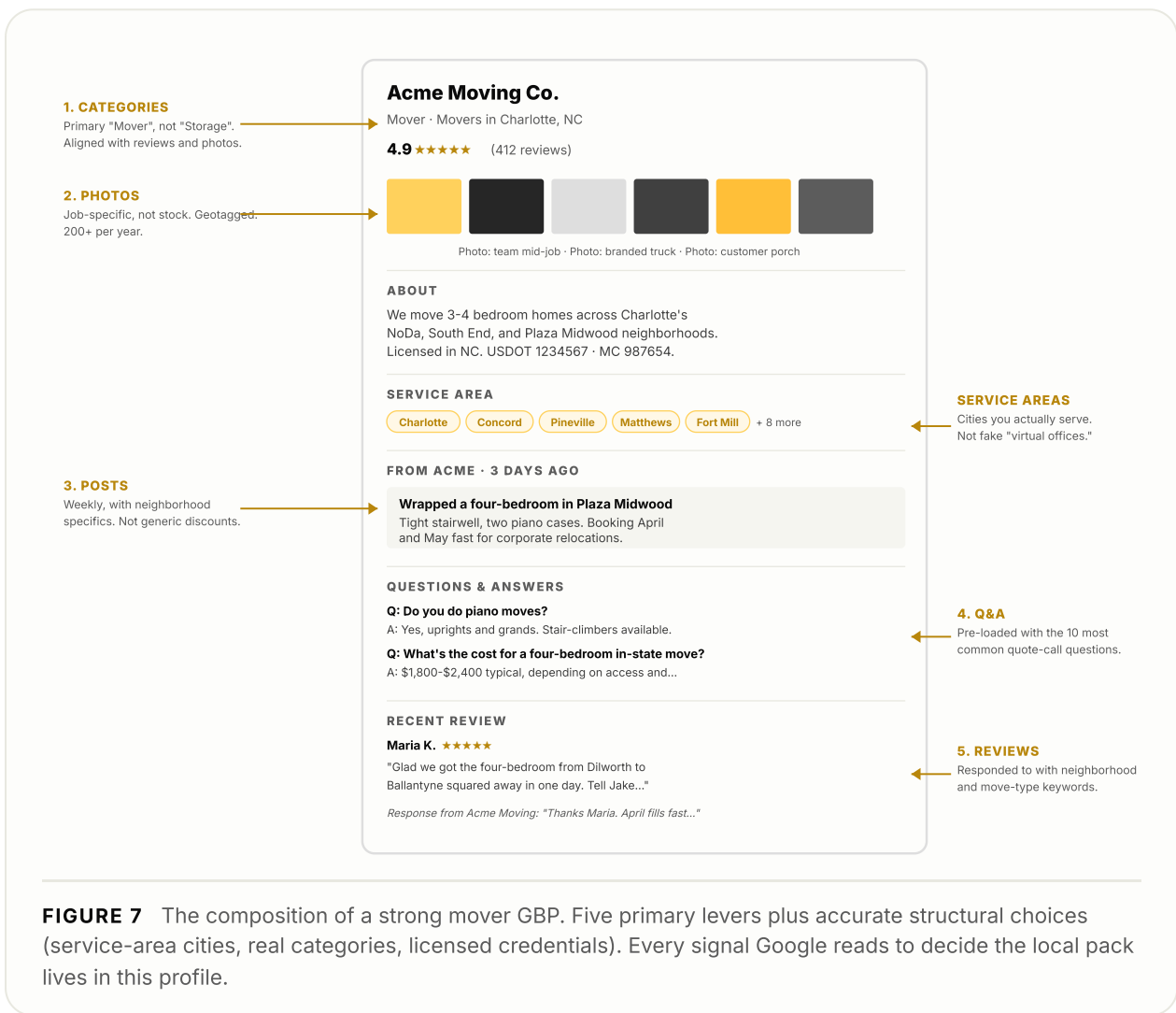


FIGURE 7 The composition of a strong mover GBP. Five primary levers plus accurate structural choices (service-area cities, real categories, licensed credentials). Every signal Google reads to decide the local pack lives in this profile.

Categories that actually rank you

Primary category and secondary categories are the first signal Google reads from your GBP. Get them wrong and the rest of the profile fights uphill.

For most movers, the primary should be **Mover** or **Moving company**. Not "Storage facility" because you also offer storage. Not "Transportation service" because you also do interstate. Primary is your money category. Secondary categories should add the legitimate adjacent services you actually offer: storage, packing, interstate, junk removal, piano moving, and so on.

Common mistake: stuffing secondary categories with services you list on the website but barely deliver. Google can tell from your reviews and your photos which services are real. Misaligned categories suppress rankings rather than helping them.

Service areas vs. branch addresses

If you have one physical office and you serve a 50-mile radius, you use the service area model. You list the cities you serve, your address stays hidden on the public profile, and you compete in the local pack for each of those service-area cities.

If you have multiple physical offices, each one needs its own GBP, each one with a real staffed address and its own primary city. **Do not create fake "virtual offices" to game the local pack.** Google catches this through review-pattern analysis and Streetview verification, and the suspension when it lands kills your business overnight.

Pick one model, run it cleanly, and the local pack will respect it.

Photos that actually move rankings

Stock photos do nothing. Photos of empty trucks do nothing. Photos of your team mid-job, in branded uniforms, at real customer addresses, are the photos Google associates with your business.

Volume matters but specificity matters more. Twenty good photos of real moves beat two hundred stock photos of generic moving boxes. Re-upload photos quarterly. Geotag them in the EXIF data if you can. Caption them with the type of move and the neighborhood when you upload through the GBP app.

A pattern we see work: one photo per job, taken by the lead mover, uploaded that week. Over a year that is 200+ pieces of fresh, geotagged, job-specific imagery on the profile. The visibility lift is real.

Weekly posts and the cadence question

GBP Posts appear directly on your profile when a searcher pulls it up. They expire after seven days. They cost nothing to make. Almost no movers post consistently.

Once-a-week cadence is the floor. Topics that work:

- A move you just completed, with neighborhood specifics and a photo
- A seasonal reminder (snowbird season in Florida, fall move-out in college towns)
- A team milestone (new truck, new license, new service area)
- A short answer to a common quote-call question

× GENERIC GBP POST

"Spring is here! Time to plan your move. Call us today for a free quote!"

Stock photo. No specifics. Reads as automated. Adds nothing to the profile that Google or a customer will weigh.

✓ REAL GBP POST

"Wrapped a three-bedroom move from Plaza Midwood to Fort Mill on Saturday. Tight stairwell on the South End end of the job, two piano cases handled with stair-climbers. Booking April and May fast for the corporate relocation window."

Neighborhoods, move size, equipment, season. A real business made it.

Reviews, the most underused lever

Reviews are the largest single ranking factor inside the local pack, the largest trust signal for the searcher, and the cheapest marketing asset you can build.

The ask matters more than any other reviews "strategy." If you do not ask, you do not get reviews. The right moment to ask is the day the move is paid, while the customer's relief is highest. A text message with a direct GBP link converts better than an email with a logo and a paragraph of preamble.

Respond to every review, including the five-stars. **Especially the five-stars.** The response is read by future customers and read by Google. A response that mentions the neighborhood and the type of move adds keywords to the profile organically. A response that just says "Thank you for choosing us" wastes a free signal.

Negative reviews are an opportunity, not a wound. A measured, factual, non-defensive response to a one-star review converts more new customers than any five-star ever did. The future customer is reading to see how you handle conflict.

EXAMPLE: A REVIEW RESPONSE THAT EARNS RANKINGS

"Thanks for the kind words, Maria. Glad we got the four-bedroom from Dilworth to Ballantyne squared away in one day. Tell Jake we appreciated the parking heads-up on the cul-de-sac side; that saved us an hour. Anyone reading this who's moving into Ballantyne in the spring, give us a shout early; April fills fast."

Name, two neighborhoods, move size, and a forward-looking note about seasonality. Three keywords landed organically. Future customers reading it see a real business.

Q&A, the section everyone forgets

The Questions & Answers section of GBP is searchable, indexed, and visible above the reviews block. Most movers leave it empty. A few competitors leave it filled with negative questions from frustrated customers, with no answers.

Pre-load it. Use your own GBP account to ask the ten most common questions you get on the quote call. Then answer them. "Do you do piano moves?" "What's the cost for a four-bedroom in-state move?" "Are you licensed for interstate?" Each Q&A is a chance to surface a long-tail query you would otherwise lose to a competitor.

The GBP audit, in one paragraph

Open your profile on a phone, in an incognito tab, searching from a location inside your service area. Look at it the way a customer does. Do the categories match what you sell? Are the photos recent and specific? Is there a post from this week? Do the recent reviews have responses? Is the Q&A section filled? If any of those five answers is no, that is your week's work.

THE TAKEAWAY FROM PART 2

GBP is the cheapest, highest-leverage SEO work a moving company can do. The fixes are free, the cadence is one hour a week, and the results show up before the website work has finished compounding. **Start here.**

PART 03

03 Your website, the foundation.

The website is where the foundation gets built. If the foundation is not right, no amount of compounding work moves the needle.

Most mover websites fail in predictable ways. The fixes are not exotic. They are specific, they are concrete, and once they are done they stay done.

Service-area pages, the unique-content rule

A service-area page is a page on your site dedicated to a specific city or neighborhood you serve. Done right, these pages rank for "movers in [city]" and feed quote requests directly. Done wrong, they get filtered, dilute the rest of the site, and waste the budget that built them.

The rule is simple: **every service-area page must say specific things about that specific place.** Not "we serve Charlotte" with a sidebar of stock copy. The page that ranks talks about Charlotte's neighborhoods (NoDa, South End, Plaza Midwood), the move types common in those neighborhoods (third-floor walkups in South End, oversized estate moves in Myers Park), the parking realities (residential permits in the historic district), the seasonal patterns (April through July is peak for corporate relocations).

× TEMPLATED LOCATION PAGE

"Acme Moving is proud to serve Charlotte, NC and the surrounding areas. As your trusted local moving company, we offer professional residential and commercial moving services. Call today for a free quote!"

Swap "Charlotte" for any city name and the page still works. Templated. Gets filtered. Dilutes the rest of the site.

✓ REAL SERVICE-AREA PAGE

"We move three- and four-bedroom homes across Charlotte's South End, NoDa, and Plaza Midwood, plus the larger estate moves in Myers Park and Eastover. April through July is our peak corporate-relocation window. South End walkups need our two-person stair team and a curbside permit; we pull both ahead of the move date."

Neighborhoods. Move size. Crew structure. Seasonal pattern. Operational specifics. The page that ranks.

A useful test: read your Charlotte page out loud, replace "Charlotte" with "Raleigh," and ask whether the page still makes sense. If it does, the page is templated. Templated pages do not rank.

Volume of these pages matters less than depth. **Five strong service-area pages outrank fifty templated ones.** Start with the cities that drive the most quote calls, build those pages out properly, and expand from there.

Since **I/O 2026** these pages have a second job. The new search box is built for descriptive queries, *"find a licensed mover for a four-bedroom move from Charlotte to Nashville under \$5,000 with piano experience,"* and Google now checks each requirement against your page. The matchable facts (licensing, route, sizes you move, specialty items, price structure) are no longer just trust signals. They are the literal criteria a query is now graded against. **Part 6 unpacks the shift.**

Service pages, scope and specificity

Service pages cover what you do: local moves, interstate, packing, storage, piano, commercial, junk removal. Each one should answer a specific buyer's questions at a specific moment in the decision.

The mistake here is the same as service-area pages: generic copy that could be on any mover's site. The fix is also the same: specifics. What does your interstate move actually include? What is the standard four-bedroom local price range in your market? What does your packing service look like the morning of the move?

The page that says *"we offer professional packing services"* loses to the page that says *"our two-person packing crew arrives the day before the move at 9 AM, brings boxes, paper, and bubble wrap rated for fragile items, and packs a four-bedroom home in seven to nine hours including dish-pack, wardrobe boxes for the closets, and a labeled inventory of high-value items."* The specifics signal expertise. They also rank.

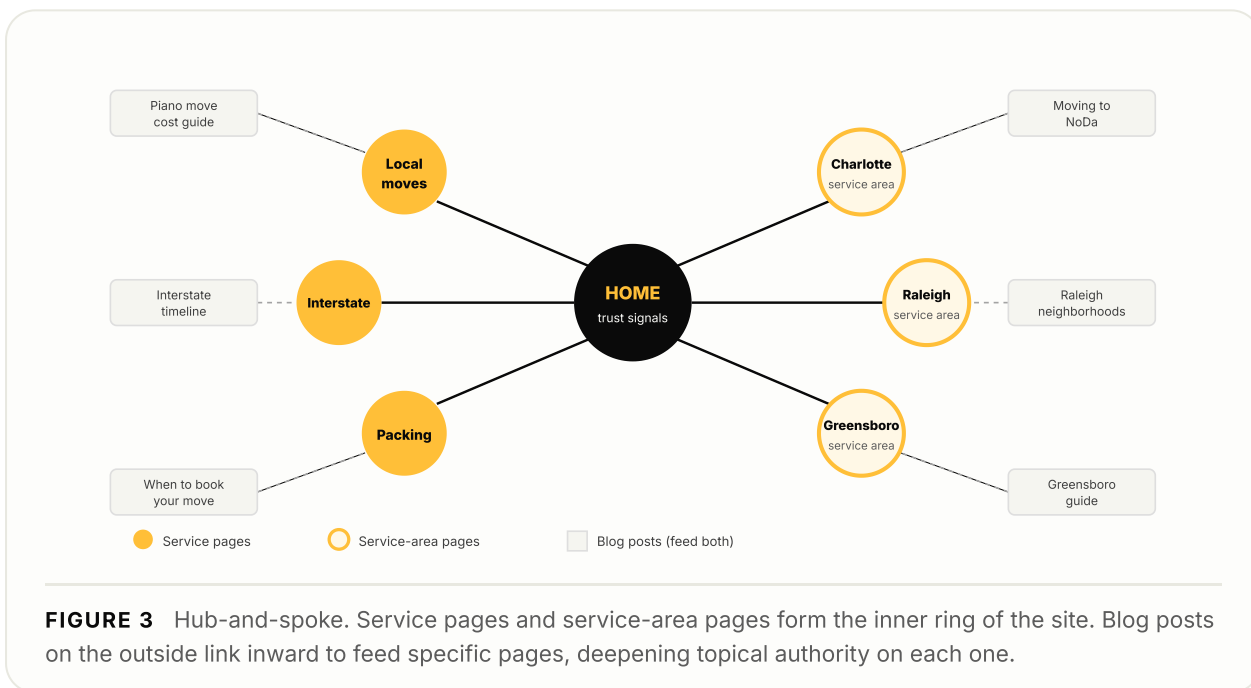


FIGURE 3 Hub-and-spoke. Service pages and service-area pages form the inner ring of the site. Blog posts on the outside link inward to feed specific pages, deepening topical authority on each one.

Homepage trust signals

The homepage has a different job. It does not need to rank for service queries (your service pages do that). It needs to convert the visitor who landed there from a brand search, a GBP click, or a referral.

The trust signals movers specifically need on the homepage:

- **Visible USDOT and MC numbers**, with the actual numbers, not "fully licensed"
- **A real address** (not just a service area) where you have a physical office
- **A phone number that connects to a person**, prominent in the header
- **Real photos** of your team and trucks, not stock
- **Review snippets** with actual names and dates, ideally pulled live from GBP
- **A clear quote form** that asks for the right information without becoming a 30-field nightmare

Each of these signals does double duty. They build buyer trust at the moment of arrival, and they feed Google's signals about who you are and whether you should rank.

WHAT STRONG TRUST SIGNALS LOOK LIKE

A mover homepage that signals real expertise.

The visitor lands. They read the page top-down and decide in 8 seconds whether you are a real, licensed, capable mover or a templated stand-up. Every annotation below is a signal Google reads too.

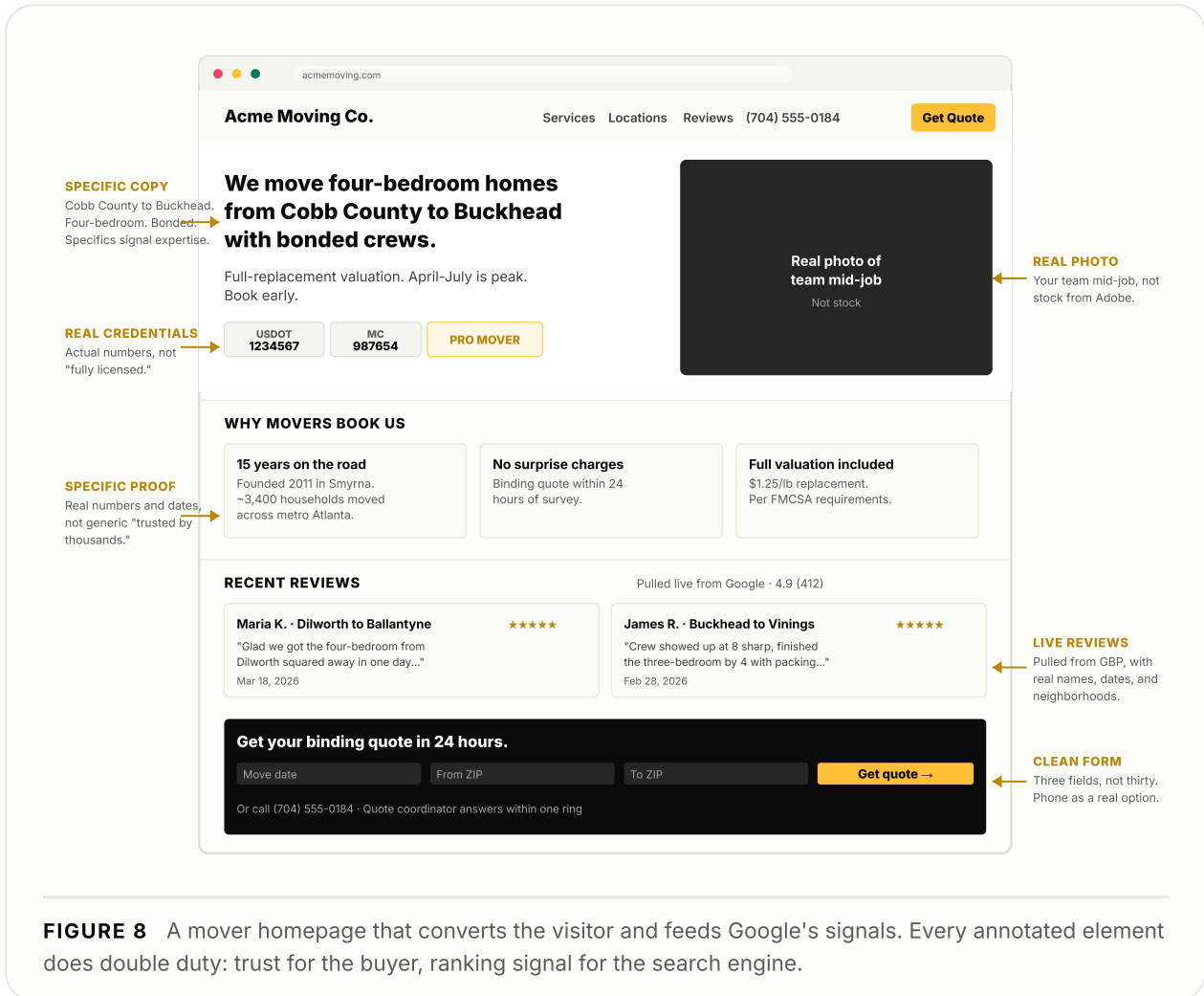


FIGURE 8 A mover homepage that converts the visitor and feeds Google's signals. Every annotated element does double duty: trust for the buyer, ranking signal for the search engine.

E-E-A-T for movers

E-E-A-T (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness) is Google's framework for assessing whether a site should rank for queries that involve someone's money or wellbeing. Moving services fall squarely inside the category. Multi-thousand-dollar transactions, customer belongings, safety, regulatory compliance. Every signal matters.

For a moving company, real E-E-A-T looks like:

- Real licensing language. Your USDOT, MC, state-level licenses, ProMover certification where you have it, with the actual numbers and renewal dates visible.
- Real team bios. Names, years in the industry, certifications, photographs. Not "John, Move Coordinator." Not stock headshots.
- Real customer stories. With the customer's first name and last initial, neighborhood, type of move, and an actual quote about the experience. With the customer's permission.
- Real photos. Of your trucks at real customer addresses. Of your team mid-job. Of the equipment you actually use.
- Real regulatory citations. Linking to FMCSA when discussing interstate, citing your state's relevant transportation authority for local. Real authority, not vague claims.

Generic content fails E-E-A-T. Expert content wins it. **The line between the two is whether a reader could tell you wrote it as opposed to anyone else in the industry.**

Technical foundation, the parts that matter

Most technical SEO for movers comes down to a small list of things that matter and a long list of things that do not.

Things that matter

- **Site speed.** Pages load in under three seconds on a mobile connection. Anything slower bleeds conversions and rankings both.
- **Mobile usability.** More than half of moving searches are mobile. The site needs to be readable, tappable, and form-fillable on a phone.
- **Schema markup.** LocalBusiness schema on the homepage, MovingCompany or relevant Service schema on service pages, Review schema where reviews appear. Done correctly, this fuels rich results and feeds AI Overviews.
- **Internal linking.** Service-area pages link to relevant service pages and back. Blog posts link to relevant service pages. The hub-and-spoke structure tells Google what the site is about.
- **HTTPS, clean redirects, no broken links.** The baseline hygiene.

Things that do not matter for movers

And that most audits over-index on:

- **DOM size warnings.** Modern browsers handle large DOMs fine. The complaint is theoretical.
- **ads.txt presence.** Irrelevant unless you run a publisher business.
- **Whether Google Analytics is installed in a particular way.** The detection tools miss server-side and GTM installs. Detection is unreliable, and the recommendation that follows is usually wrong.
- **Composite "SEO scores"** from third-party scanners. The number aggregates noise. The decisions sit underneath it, in the specific findings.

A technical audit that flags DOM size and ads.txt and misses the templated location pages is an audit that is keeping the agency busy and the client paying.

THE TAKEAWAY FROM PART 3

Five strong service-area pages, real E-E-A-T signals across the homepage, and the technical baseline above. That is the website foundation a moving company needs. **Everything beyond that is polish, and polish rarely changes rankings.**

PART 04

04 Business listings and backlinks.

The compounding layer is what you build off your site. Mentions, links, listings, and the network of signals that tell Google your business is a real business that the rest of the web takes seriously.

This is the layer that breaks down most often into work that wastes money. The fixes are not complicated, but they require discipline about what counts and what does not.

Business listings, quality not volume

A business listing is a record of your business on another website: name, address, phone number, ideally also category and description. Listings on the right directories build trust signals that feed the local pack. Listings on the wrong directories build nothing or actively harm.

For movers, the directories that matter are a short list. The major aggregators (Google, Bing, Apple Maps, Yelp). The mover-specific authorities (Moving.com, MovingHelp, AMSA member directory if you qualify, state-level moving associations). The local Chamber of Commerce in the cities you actually have a presence in. The Better Business Bureau if you have a clean record. Industry-adjacent sites where your customer base actually browses (Angi, Thumbtack, HomeAdvisor for the lead-gen play).

What does not count: 200 generic business directories that exist only to harvest data and sell premium placements. Most movers have these, courtesy of an early agency engagement, and they do nothing for rankings. Some of them actively hurt, because Google reads spammy directory networks as a negative signal.

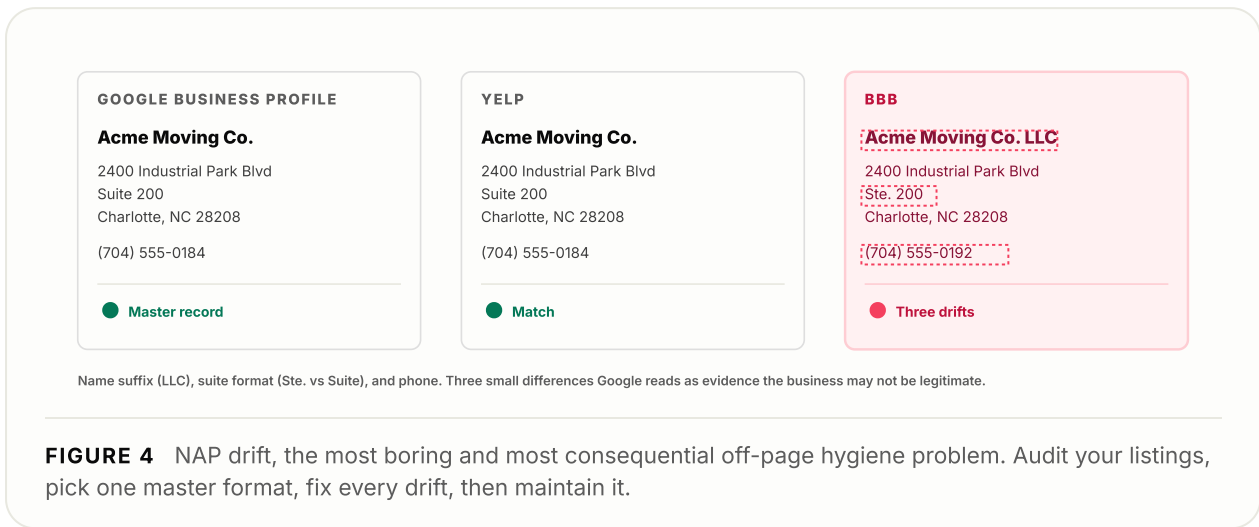
The right approach is a clean audit of where you are listed today, removal of the spam listings, and consistent placement on the directories that actually move the needle in your market. **Volume is the wrong metric. Consistency and relevance are the right ones.**

NAP consistency, the boring fundamental

NAP is Name, Address, Phone. Across every place your business appears online, the NAP needs to match exactly. Same business name, same address format, same phone number, no variations.

This sounds trivial. It is not. Most movers have phone numbers from three different eras, an address that varies between "Suite 200" and "Ste. 200" and "#200," and a business name that is "ABC Moving" on the website and "ABC Moving Company LLC" on the BBB. Google reads inconsistencies as evidence the business might not be legitimate. The downward pull on rankings is real and measurable.

Fix it once, properly. Then maintain it.



Editorial backlinks, what actually counts

A backlink is a link from another website to yours. Editorial backlinks (real links from real publications, with real editorial decisions behind them) are the most valuable ranking signal available outside your own site.

The catch: real editorial backlinks are hard to earn. Easy backlinks are almost never the real ones.

✓ WHAT COUNTS

Local newspaper coverage of a move you did for a local nonprofit or notable event.

Industry publication features (mover trade press, AMSA newsletter, regional moving association websites).

Adjacent-industry coverage (a real estate blog covering "best movers in [city]," a relocation guide site).

Charity or community sponsorships where the partner organization links your business.

× WHAT TO REFUSE

Paid guest posts on unrelated sites.

Link exchanges with other movers ("I'll link you if you link me").

Cheap link placements on networks where someone places a link for \$50.

Sponsored content sections of major sites that are clearly marked as ads (Google discounts these heavily).

A good month's link-building work for a mover might land three to five real placements. An agency claiming forty links a month is selling you the kind that does not count, with risk attached.

Off-page transparency

Off-page work is the area where agencies hide the most. The work happens on other websites, the client cannot see it directly, and the invoices arrive without proof.

The standard you should hold any agency to: **every link, every listing, every placement comes with the live URL, the publication, the publication date, and the cost.** If your monthly off-page budget is \$1,500, you should be able to see exactly where every dollar of it went, with screenshots and links.

WHAT AN OFF-PAGE RECEIPTS ROW LOOKS LIKE

DATE	PUBLICATION	URL	TYPE	COST
Mar 04	Charlotte Observer	charlotteobserver.com/...	Editorial mention	\$0
Mar 11	Carolina Real Estate Blog	carolinare.com/best-movers	Roundup link	\$220
Mar 18	Local Habitat for Humanity	habitatcharlotte.org/partners	Sponsor link	\$500
Mar 25	AMSA Member Directory	amsa-mover.com/members/...	Listing (annual)	\$380
Mar 28	NoDa Neighborhood Guide	nodanc.com/local-services	Editorial mention	\$0

Five placements. Real publications. Three free (earned via outreach), two paid sponsorships with the cost visible. Every entry has a live URL the client can click and verify. **This is the standard.**

If your current agency cannot or will not provide this, you have a problem. **Off-page transparency is the single best test of whether you are working with a real agency or a reseller.**

PART 05

05 Content that compounds.

Blog posts, guides, FAQs, neighborhood pages. The long tail of pages that build topical depth and feed the rest of the system.

Done right, content compounds the way the off-page layer does. Each new piece reinforces the others. The site gets deeper, faster, and harder to outrank. Done wrong, content is a money pit that produces nothing for years.

Intent first, not keyword first

The old way: pick a keyword with search volume, write a post targeting that keyword, hope it ranks. This approach largely stopped working in 2022 and is actively counterproductive in 2026.

The new way: pick a topic where the searcher's intent is clear and your business can credibly answer it, then look at what currently ranks for the queries inside that topic, then write the piece that better serves the intent.

✓ TOPICS THAT WORK

- "How much does a four-bedroom move from Buckhead to Vinings cost in 2026"
- "When to book your interstate move from Atlanta to Charlotte"
- "Moving to NoDa: the neighborhood guide from a Charlotte mover"
- "Piano moves: what an upright costs locally vs. interstate"
- "USDOT vs. state license: what to ask any mover before you book"

× TOPICS THAT DO NOT

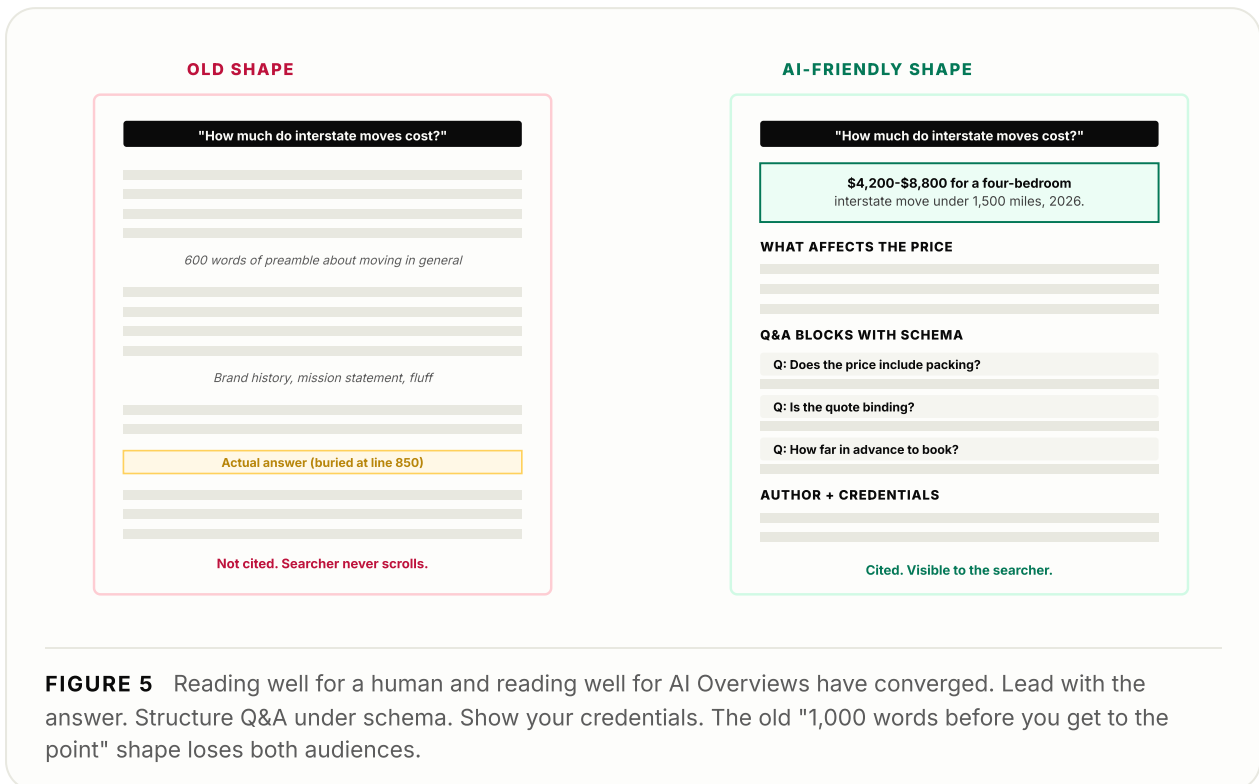
- "Top 10 moving tips": zero commercial intent, infinite competition
- "Tips for summer moves": generic season content, no local specificity
- "History of professional moving": no commercial intent at all
- "Best moving boxes to buy": affiliate-tier content, not your buyer journey
- "Why moving is stressful": no answer, no intent, no rank

The test: **does the topic align with money your customer is about to spend?** If yes, write it well. If no, skip it.

The AI Overview shift

Through 2025 and into 2026, Google has been rolling out AI Overviews on more queries, including a meaningful share of mover-related ones. An AI Overview is a generated answer that appears above the traditional blue links, often citing two to six sources.

For movers, the implication is significant. Queries like *"what does an interstate move cost"* or *"how much do I tip movers"* now show an AI answer before any blue link. If your content is the cited source, you get the visibility. If it is not, the searcher might never scroll down to where your site sits.



The content that gets cited in AI Overviews has specific characteristics:

- Direct factual answers near the top of the page (the AI extracts these literally)
- Concrete numbers, ranges, and data points
- Q&A structure for common queries, with the answer immediately under the question
- FAQ schema where appropriate
- Clear authorship and credentials on the page

This is the content-side of a bigger shift that Part 6 covers in full. AI Overviews, agentic calling, and the new descriptive search box all draw on the same kind of writing. Sites optimized only for the old SERP are losing visibility on the queries where AI now answers. The fix is straightforward, but it requires understanding the shift and rewriting accordingly.

WHAT "CITED IN AI OVERVIEW" LOOKS LIKE

A real mover query, the AI answer, and the sources Google cited.

Here is what a searcher sees when they ask Google "how much do interstate movers cost" in 2026. The AI Overview occupies the top half of the screen. The four cited sources sit beneath it. The traditional blue links are below the fold.

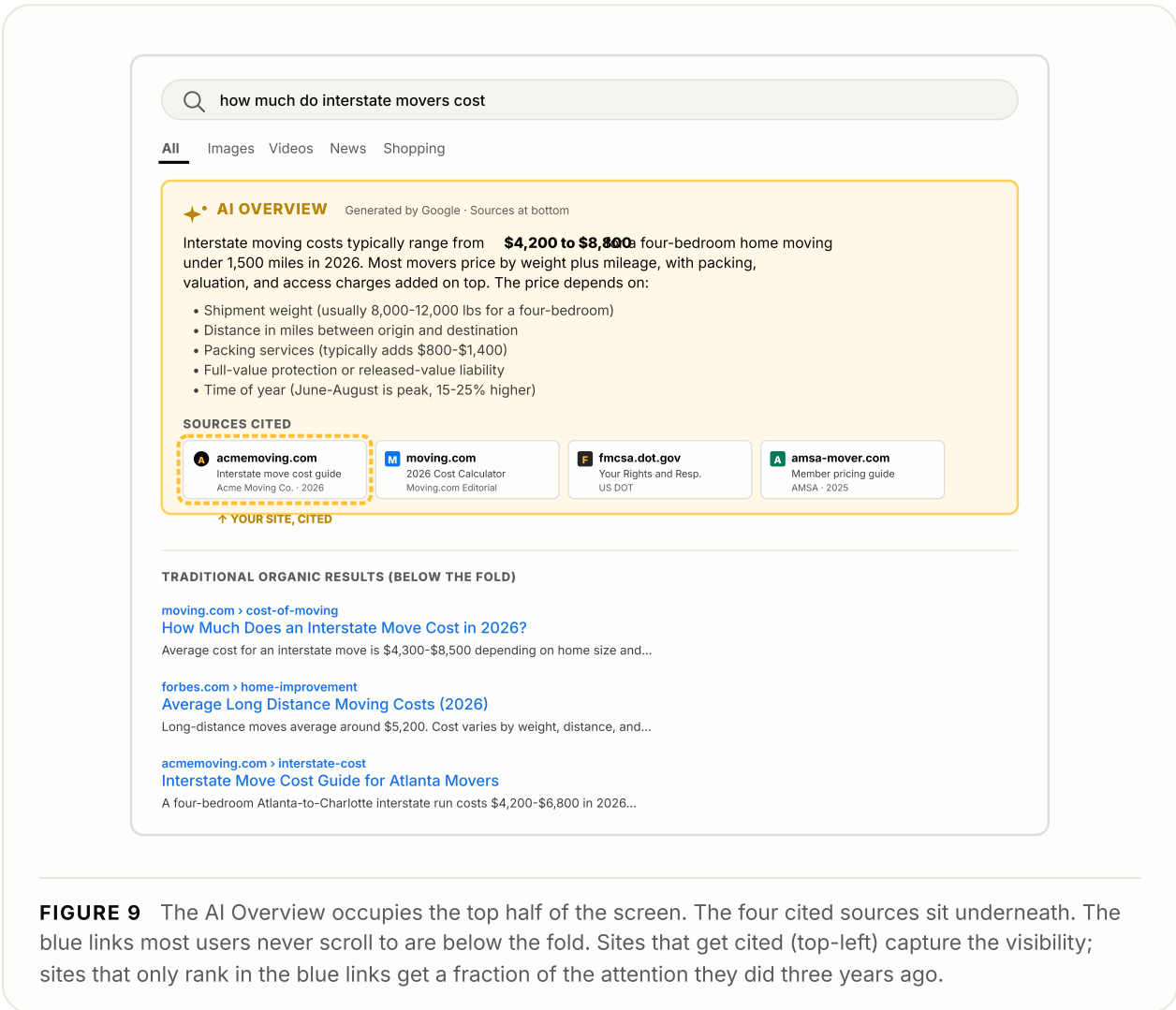


FIGURE 9 The AI Overview occupies the top half of the screen. The four cited sources sit underneath. The blue links most users never scroll to are below the fold. Sites that get cited (top-left) capture the visibility; sites that only rank in the blue links get a fraction of the attention they did three years ago.

Cadence and topical depth

A weekly blog post on the wrong topics produces nothing. A monthly post on the right topics, written with depth, produces compounding returns.

The realistic cadence for a moving company is one to two pieces of content per week. Each piece deep enough to be the best result on its query. Each piece linked from relevant service pages and service-area pages. Each piece carrying its own internal links to deepen the rest of the site.

Over a year, that is 50 to 100 pieces of content. Done well, the site goes from thin to deep. Done poorly, it becomes the same templated blog that every mover has, contributing nothing.

The leverage point is topic selection. Spend the time choosing the right topics. The writing is the easy part.

~70%

Of mover queries we track now show an AI Overview as of late 2025

1-2

Pieces per week, sustained for a year, is the realistic content cadence that compounds

90 days

Typical lag between publishing a deep piece and seeing it rank for its primary query

THE TAKEAWAY FROM PART 5

Content is not a volume play. It is a topic-selection play with an execution standard underneath it. Pick the topics that align with money your customer is spending. Write them in the shape AI extracts. Link them into the rest of the site. **Skip everything else.**

PART 06

06 AI search and the agentic shift.

In May 2026, Google held its I/O conference and shipped the biggest set of Search changes in over two decades. For movers, three of those changes land directly on the business.

AI Mode became the global default, running on a new model and already serving over a billion monthly users. The search box itself was rebuilt for the first time in 25 years, designed for long descriptive questions instead of two-word keyword strings. And Google began rolling out agents that contact local businesses on a customer's behalf, plus mini-app dashboards for big life projects, with **relocations** named explicitly as one of the launch examples.

For most local-service categories, the announcement is academic. For moving companies, the three sections below are the ones that matter.

Descriptive queries and matchable facts

The old search game rewarded keyword phrases. A page titled "Atlanta Movers" matched the query "atlanta movers" and earned a blue link. The customer did the rest from there. The new search box is built for a different kind of query. Six requirements in one sentence. The page that wins is the one Google can match against each of them, not the one that simply repeats the phrase "Atlanta movers" in the H1.

THE OLD QUERY (KEYWORDS)

"atlanta movers"

Two or three words. You optimized a city page for the exact phrase, earned a blue link, and the customer did the rest. **Phrase matching.** The page just had to say the words back.

THE NEW QUERY (A DESCRIPTION)

"find a licensed mover for a 3-bedroom move from Atlanta to Nashville next month, under \$4,000, who can move a piano"

Google checks each requirement against your page: licensed, route, size, price, piano. **Fact matching.** The page has to actually contain the answers.

This is why the matchable facts on your service-area and service pages now matter more than the keywords in them: the specific cities you serve and the routes you work most often, the sizes of move you actually handle, your USDOT and MC numbers in plain text on the page, the specialty items you move (pianos, gun safes, pool tables, antiques), and how your pricing actually works. **Generic copy answers none of these. Specific copy answers all of them.**

The agentic shortlist and the phone line

Google's agentic booking feature, which had already handled tasks like restaurant reservations, expanded at I/O 2026 to local services. The launch categories are home repair, beauty, and pet care, rolling out in the United States in summer 2026. **Moving is not in that first list, but the shape of the feature** (local, quote-driven, phone-heavy, the kind of task customers want handled for them) **makes it the obvious next category.**

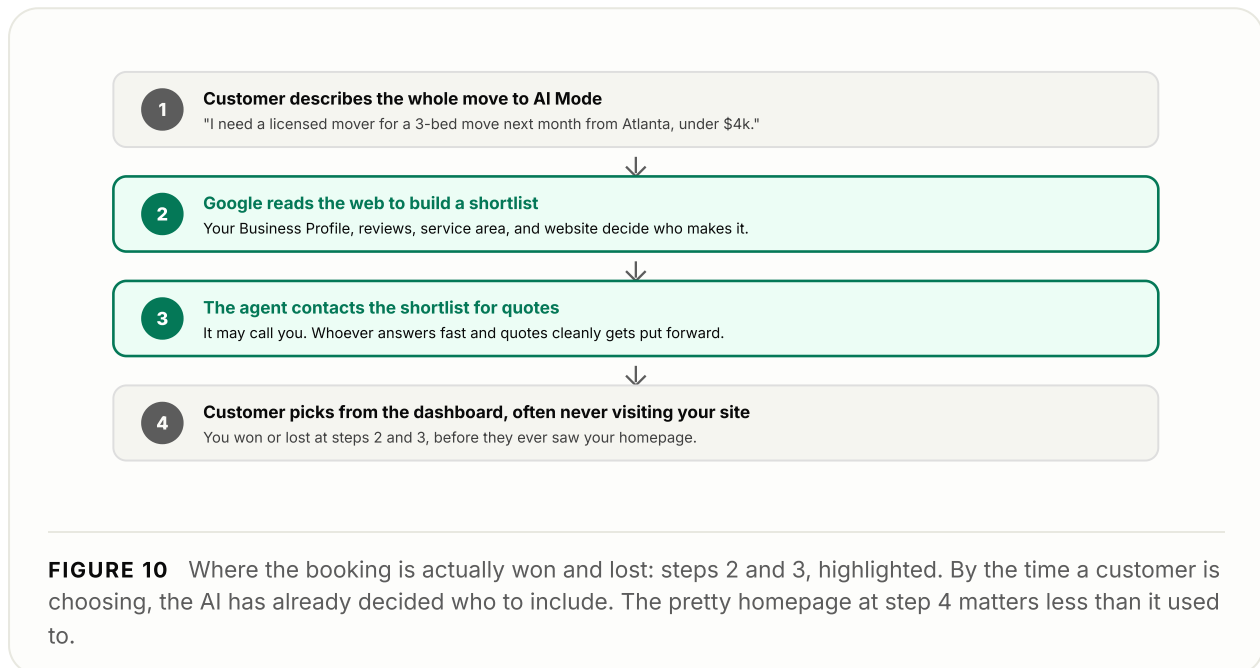


FIGURE 10 Where the booking is actually won and lost: steps 2 and 3, highlighted. By the time a customer is choosing, the AI has already decided who to include. The pretty homepage at step 4 matters less than it used to.

The phone has to be answered by a competent human, fast. If an agent calls and gets voicemail, a phone tree, or a confused dispatcher who cannot quote, you drop out of the shortlist in real time. Movers who route quote calls to an answering service are at a structural disadvantage now.

Quoting has to be consistent. An AI calling on a customer's behalf asks the same questions a customer asks: bedrooms, distance, date, stairs, specialty items. The mover with a clean number and a clear methodology looks bookable. The mover who says *"it depends, someone will call you back"* looks like a risk the agent will route around.

The relocation dashboard

Among the agentic features Google demonstrated at I/O 2026 were mini-app dashboards generated inside Search for big multi-step projects. **The two named examples were wedding planning and relocations.** A relocation, by definition, includes a moving step. Timeline, checklist, utility transfers, address changes, and a step that says *"book your movers."* That step gets populated with companies Google trusts to recommend. You either get pulled in as a suggested vendor, or your competitor does. The deciding signals are the same ones the shortlist uses, exposed in a new surface.

What this does not change

Every Google announcement is followed within a week by agencies selling "AI Mode optimization packages." Here is what genuinely did not change.

- **The foundation is still SEO.** Every agentic feature pulls answers from the same search index that ranks regular results. If you do not rank, you cannot be cited, called for, or added to a dashboard.
- **Local still means local.** A customer in Charlotte still needs a Charlotte mover. GBP, reviews, and service-area pages are still the core. AI made local more important, not less.
- **There is no special file or schema.** No llms.txt, no proprietary AI markup, no special feed. Google said so in writing two weeks before I/O 2026.
- **Trust is still earned the slow way.** Real reviews, real licensing, real first-hand content. An AI staking its credibility on a recommendation leans hard on trust signals.

What to do this month

1 Audit your GBP first

It is the gatekeeper for shortlists, calling agents, and the relocation dashboard. Part 2 is the field manual.

2 Put your real facts on the page

Service area, move sizes, licensing, specialty items, pricing logic. Descriptive searches match on facts, not slogans.

3 Make your licensing visible

USDOT and MC numbers on the site and the profile. Agents filter for licensed movers; unverifiable is the easy drop.

4 Fix how the phone gets answered

A competent human, fast, with a consistent way to quote. Calling agents drop voicemail and confusion from the shortlist in real time.

5 Rewrite city pages as answers, not keyword targets

If you can swap the city name and the page still works, it is too generic. Add real neighborhoods, routes, and local detail.

6 Publish one piece of first-hand content

A real cost from a real move, with the route and the date. Primary-source detail an AI will quote and a rival cannot copy.

PART 07

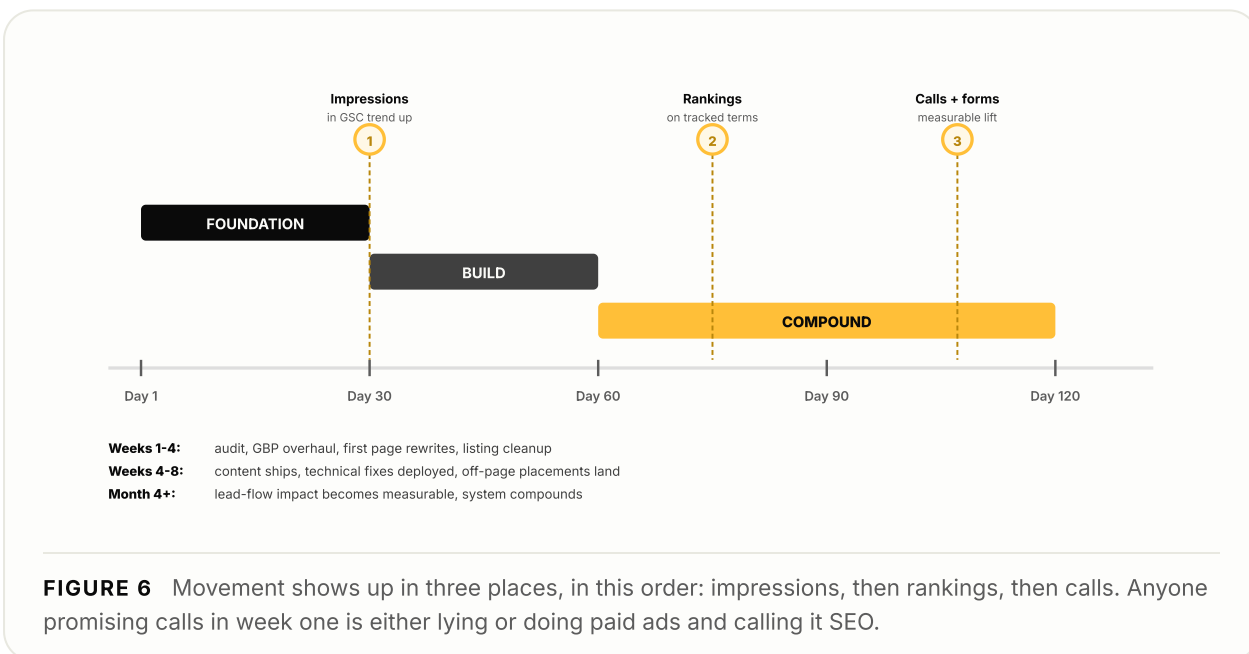
07 Timelines, receipts, and what good looks like.

SEO has a timeline problem. The work starts now. The results show up later. Agencies that do not explain this lose clients in month three, before the work has had time to compound.

The agencies that do explain it clearly are the ones worth working with. The expectations below are the ones every mover should hold any SEO engagement to.

The 60-day reality

The first 60 days of an engagement are foundation work. Page rewrites, GBP setup, technical fixes, listing audit and cleanup, content planning. **None of this produces leads directly.** What it produces is a site and a profile ready to rank when the rest of the signals catch up.

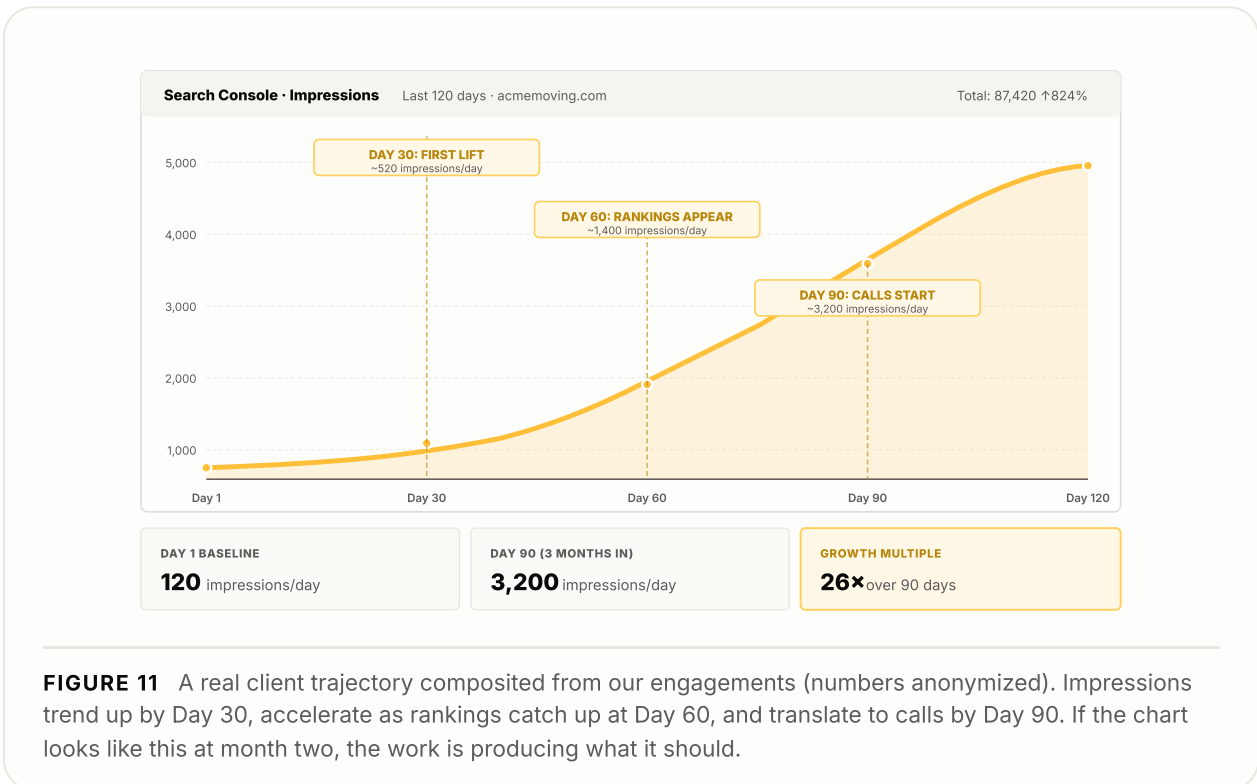


If an agency promises calls in week one, they are either lying or doing paid ads and calling it SEO. The work simply does not produce that timeline.

WHAT THE DATA ACTUALLY SHOWS

Search Console impressions over the first 120 days.

This is the chart that tells you the work is taking hold. Impressions trend up before rankings move and well before calls come in. If month two looks like the line below, the work is on track even when the phone has not started ringing.



Reporting that matters

Reports that print traffic charts without context are useless. Reports that connect the work done to the results seen are the ones worth paying for.

✓ A USEFUL REPORT CONTAINS

Quote calls and form fills, month-over-month trend

GBP impressions, calls, direction requests, website clicks

Organic traffic by landing page (which pages pull weight)

Ranking movement on the keywords that matter, not 500 vanity terms

Local pack visibility for your top service-area queries

A list of work shipped this month, with receipts for off-page spend

× A USEFUL REPORT DOES NOT CONTAIN

Pages of generic "industry trend" filler

Vanity charts that show the agency's work in the best light without context

Aggregated metrics with no breakdown

Composite "SEO health scores" that hide what is actually going on

Promises about next month with no accounting of last month

If the report does not tell you what changed, what got better, what got worse, and why, **find a different agency.**

What to ask any agency

If you are evaluating an agency, including us, the questions that separate real shops from resellers:

- 1 Show me the last three off-page deliverable reports for a current client**
With the client's name redacted. You want to see exactly which links, where, when, and at what cost.

- 2 How many other moving companies do you work with in my metro?**
If the answer is more than zero, you are in a conflict. Your rankings and theirs are zero-sum.

- 3 What is the contract length and the cancellation policy?**
Long contracts with clawback clauses protect agencies that do not deliver. Month-to-month with no clawback is the trust signal.

- 4 What is the timeline for first measurable results, and what does "results" mean in your reporting?**
Vague answers are vague results. Calls in month four is the realistic answer.

- 5 What is the first thing you would change on my GBP if you were starting today?**
Real agencies have an answer in 30 seconds. Resellers stall.

- 6 Who does the actual work? In-house or outsourced?**
Outsourced is not necessarily bad, but you should know who is touching your business.

The right agency answers these directly. The wrong agency hedges.

PART 08

08 How we work at By The Mile Digital.

This is the section where we tell you about us. If you have read this far you have most of what you would need to grade any agency. Here is how we measure up against the standard.

One mover per metro

Once your moving company signs with us, we do not take another mover in your metro. The standard market definition is your local pack service area plus the cities you actively bid in.

The reason is conflict. If we have two movers in Atlanta, every ranking gain for one is a loss for the other. We end up serving neither well. **Exclusivity is how we keep our work focused and our incentives aligned with yours.**

Month-to-month, no contract, no clawback

You can cancel with 15 days' notice. No clawback on work already delivered. The pages we wrote stay yours, the listings we built stay yours, the GBP we cleaned up stays yours.

This forces us to keep earning your business every month. It is the cleanest possible setup for both sides, and it is rare in this industry for a reason. Long contracts and clawback clauses protect agencies that do not deliver. **We are betting on ourselves.**

Receipts on every dollar

Every off-page placement comes with the live URL, the publication, the date, and what we paid. Your monthly report has the receipts attached. If we spent \$1,500 on off-page in a given month, you see exactly where each dollar went.

This is the standard, not a feature. Off-page is the area where agencies hide the most. Transparency here is the cheapest possible way to build trust, and we extend it to every client.

What an engagement looks like

A typical mover SEO engagement with us:

- 1 Month 1 · Foundation**
Site audit, GBP audit, content gap analysis, the first wave of page rewrites, GBP cleanup, listing audit. Off-page work starts placing in the back half of the month.
- 2 Months 2 to 3 · Build**
The remaining page rewrites, the first wave of new content (one to two pieces per week), continued off-page placement, technical fixes deployed, schema added.
- 3 Month 4 onward · Compound**
The system runs. Weekly content, monthly off-page placements, GBP posts, review pipeline running, monthly reports with receipts. The site gets deeper, faster, and harder to outrank.

Engagement size scales to your market. A mover doing \$500k a year in one metro is a different scope than a multi-location mover doing \$5M across three states. **We size the engagement to the opportunity, not to a price-list tier.**

HOW TO TALK TO US

The first conversation is a 30-minute call. No slides, no pitch deck.

We look at your site and your GBP live during the call and tell you what we see. You decide whether to keep the conversation going.

There is no funnel after that. **No mandatory follow-up sequence, no automated nurture, no pressure.** If you want a written audit and proposal, we send one. If not, you keep the call notes and use them however you like.

Dan Maksimovic

By The Mile Digital

bythemiledigital.com
dan@bythemiledigital.com

(762) 667-7183

APPENDIX

The one-week diagnostic.

Seven days, six concrete checks, and a decision at the end. Run this on your own business before talking to any agency, including us.

DAY 1

GBP audit

Open your profile on a phone in incognito mode from inside your service area. Are the categories right? Photos recent and specific? Post from this week? Reviews responded to? Q&A section filled? Score yourself out of five. Anything below four is a meaningful gap.

DAY 2

Service-area page audit

Open three of your service-area pages in different tabs. Read each one. Could you swap the city name and the page still makes sense? If yes for any of them, those pages are templated and not ranking on their own merit.

DAY 3

Technical baseline

Run your homepage through Google's PageSpeed Insights on mobile. Score above 70 on mobile is acceptable, above 85 is good, below 50 is a problem. Note the issues but do not act on them yet; many of them are theoretical.

DAY 4

Off-page sanity check

Search your business name on Google with the city. Are the top 10 results all things you control (site, GBP, social, real directories)? Anything you do not recognize is worth a closer look. Then search for your top competitors and look at where they appear that you do not.

DAY 5

Content audit

List the last six pieces of content posted to your blog (or note if you do not have a blog). For each, ask: does this answer a question a paying customer would ask? If three or more of the six are generic moving tips, the blog is not pulling weight.

DAY 6

Reporting audit

Pull your most recent agency report or your own analytics. Can you tell, from the report, what changed this month vs. last and why? If the report is page after page of charts with no narrative, the work is hidden from you.

DAY 7

Decide

You now have six concrete data points about where your SEO stands. The biggest gap is your next month's priority. Whether that work is done in-house, by your current agency, or by us, is your call to make.



By The Mile Digital

Rankings that compound, **receipts** **every month.**

BY THE MILE DIGITAL · SEO FOR MOVING COMPANIES

Dan Maksimovic

bythemiledigital.com

dan@bythemiledigital.com

(762) 667-7183