— SAMPLE AUDIT

Local & AI Search Visibility Audit

Example Personal Injury Firm · compared with Competitor A

Market: a mid-size US metro

Practice: Personal injury & wrongful death

Searches: local search and leading AI results

Sample audit. Fictional example of the format. The firm, competitor and market are fictional. Every number, grade and result on this page is illustrative and describes no real business.

1 Executive summary

Where you stand today, graded area by area against Competitor A and current local and AI search ranking research.



ILLUSTRATIVE

Overall visibility: C–

Example Personal Injury Firm has a strong reputation that searchers and AI tools mostly can't see. The firm is well rated and wins the cases people search for, but Competitor A is recommended far more often because its profile, reviews and pages give Google and AI tools more to work with.

AI search visibility	D	Named in 1 of 13 AI recommendation answers; Competitor A in 10.
Local Search & Business Profile	C–	Top 3 in 5 of 16 service-and-town checks; profile about 55% complete.

Reviews & reputation	D+	Strong rating, but slow review flow and few owner replies.
Website & content	C	Good foundation; key case types and city content missing.
Technical & mobile	C+	HTTPS in place; mobile load speed fails Core Web Vitals.
Citations & authority	C–	Inconsistent listings; thin local links and best-of presence.
Conversion	B–	Clear offer; mobile call button and long form cost leads.

A Leading B Solid C Gaps D Losing ground F Not visible

BIGGEST GAP

Nearly invisible in leading AI results. When people ask AI assistants who to call, the firm is almost never named.

BIGGEST RISK

Review flow has slowed to a trickle while Competitor A adds new reviews every week, and that gap compounds monthly.

BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY

The firm already wins premises, slip-and-fall and dog bite cases but has no pages for them. That demand currently goes to competitors.

2 AI search visibility

We asked the questions real clients ask, three times each, from inside the market, then recorded who was recommended and which sources the answer relied on.

BUYER PROMPT	AI SOURCE A	AI SOURCE B	AI SOURCE C
“Best personal injury lawyer near me”	Competitor A Competitor B	Competitor A Competitor C	Competitor A Competitor B

BUYER PROMPT	AI SOURCE A	AI SOURCE B	AI SOURCE C
“Who should I call after a car accident in [city]?”	Competitor A Competitor C	Competitor B Competitor A	*No AI result shown*
“Slip and fall lawyer [city]”	Competitor D Competitor A	Competitor D	Competitor A
“Top-rated injury law firm with free consultation”	Competitor A You (4th of 5)	Competitor A Competitor B	Competitor A Competitor C
“Dog bite attorney near me”	Competitor D	Competitor C Competitor D	*No AI result shown*
“Is [Example Firm] a good law firm?”	Described accurately	Outdated phone number	Described accurately

ILLUSTRATIVE Each cell shows the most consistent result across three runs. Across the 13 recommendation answers, Example Personal Injury Firm was named once; Competitor A was named 10 times.

Why the AI tools pick Competitor A

It's on the lists AI reads.
Answers leaned on local “best lawyers” roundups and legal directories. Competitor A appears on four of the six we found; you appear on one.

Its pages answer the question.
Leading AI results most often cite a firm's own service and city pages. Competitor A has a page for every case type in the prompts; you have pages for half of them.

Its facts agree everywhere.
Name, address, phone and practice areas match across its site and listings. Yours conflict in places, which makes AI tools less confident and led one to repeat an old phone number.

Reviews describe the work.
Competitor A's reviews often name the case type, so tools can match it to the question. Yours mostly say “great service.”

ⓘ Leading AI results change from run to run and by location, so we track the same prompts every month and report trends, not single snapshots.

3 Local Search & Business Profile

The three map results under a local search are still where most local legal searches end. We checked your local search rank for your main services in the towns you serve, and how complete your business profile is. These are service-and-town searches, not a paid location-grid or heatmap.

Service-and-town local search checks

Each row is one service phrase searched in one town. The number is the local search position for that check. Figures are illustrative.

SEARCH	TOWN	YOU	COMPETITOR A
Personal injury lawyer	[city]	3	1
Personal injury lawyer	[north town]	8	2
Personal injury lawyer	[south town]	9	3
Personal injury lawyer	[west town]	11	4
Car accident lawyer	[city]	2	1
Car accident lawyer	[north town]	6	2
Car accident lawyer	[south town]	8	3

SEARCH	TOWN	YOU	COMPETITOR A
Car accident lawyer	[west town]	10	5
Slip and fall lawyer	[city]	3	1
Slip and fall lawyer	[north town]	3	2
Slip and fall lawyer	[south town]	7	3
Slip and fall lawyer	[west town]	12	4
Dog bite attorney	[city]	3	2
Dog bite attorney	[north town]	4	3
Dog bite attorney	[south town]	9	3
Dog bite attorney	[west town]	13	6

ILLUSTRATIVE You rank in the top 3 in 5 of 16 service-and-town checks, mostly in [city]. Competitor A is top 3 in 12 of 16 checks, across more of the towns we checked.

Business Profile completeness

ELEMENT	YOU	COMPETITOR A	STATUS
Primary category	Correct	Correct	Good
Additional categories	1 of the relevant ones	4	Gap
Services listed	3	16	Gap
Business description	Generic, no case types	Specific and local	Improve
Photos	11, mostly stock	140+, team and office	Gap
Posts / updates	Last one 8 months ago	Weekly	Gap

ELEMENT	YOU	COMPETITOR A	STATUS
Questions & answers on the profile	Profile can't answer common questions	Answers most	Improve
Hours & holiday hours	Standard hours, no holiday hours	Complete	Improve
Attributes (languages, accessibility, consultations)	2 set	7 set	Improve
Map pin & address	Accurate	Accurate	Good

ⓘ **A shortcut we don't recommend:** adding keywords to the business name on Google. It can lift rankings briefly but breaks Google's guidelines and risks suspension. Two firms in this market appear to be doing it. Your fixes stay inside the rules.

4 Reviews & reputation

Rating matters, but so do review count, how recent the reviews are, owner replies, and whether reviews mention the work you do.

GOOGLE REVIEWS	YOU	COMPETITOR A
Total reviews	38	412
Average rating	**4.8**	4.9
New reviews, last 90 days	**2**	27
Most recent review	**4 months ago**	3 days ago
Owner response rate	**16%**	94%
Reviews naming a case type (“car accident”, “slip and fall”...)	**3**	118

GOOGLE REVIEWS	YOU	COMPETITOR A
Profiles on legal review sites	1 active	3 active

ILLUSTRATIVE



New Google reviews, last 90 days (illustrative)

Why it matters

Your rating is excellent, so quality isn't the problem. Volume and recency are. Search engines and AI tools treat a steady flow of recent, detailed reviews as proof a firm is active and trusted. At the current pace, the gap with Competitor A widens by about 25 reviews a quarter. Any fix must follow Google's review policies and your state bar's rules: no incentives, no filtering who gets asked.

5 Website

Your site is the source AI tools cite most often and the place searchers decide whether to call. We checked content, structure, speed, trust signals and conversion.

AREA	WHAT WE FOUND	STATUS
City landing page	Address, hours and a list. No local detail, FAQs or local case results.	Gap
Service pages	Car, truck, motorcycle and wrongful death covered. Premises liability, slip-and-fall and dog bite missing.	Gap
Nearby-area coverage	Three suburbs you serve are never mentioned.	Improve
Structured data (schema)	Basic markup only. Practice areas, attorneys and FAQs aren't described for search engines.	Improve
Core Web Vitals (mobile)	Largest content loads in 4.1s (target ≤ 2.5s). Responsiveness 310ms (target ≤ 200ms). Layout stable.	Fails

AREA	WHAT WE FOUND	STATUS
Mobile experience	Readable, but the phone number isn't tappable in the header.	Improve
Name, address, phone (NAP)	Footer shows an old phone number; suite format differs from Google.	Conflict
Attorney bios (experience & trust)	Short bios. No bar admissions, years in practice, or associations.	Improve
Case results	Strong results, but missing the disclaimer most state bars require.	Risk
Contact form	9 required fields; no after-hours option.	Improve
HTTPS & security	Secure by default.	Good

ILLUSTRATIVE Speed targets are Google's published Core Web Vitals thresholds.

6 Citations & authority

Directories, legal platforms, local links and press tell Google and AI tools that a firm is real, established and respected locally. Experts now rate them as one of the biggest drivers of AI recommendations.

SIGNAL	YOU	COMPETITOR A
Core directories with consistent details	**11 of 20 (5 outdated, 4 missing)**	19 of 20
Major legal directories, claimed and complete	**2 of 5**	5 of 5
Peer recognition listings	**Top tier on one**	Listed on two, not top tier
Local “best lawyers” roundups	**1 of 6**	4 of 6

SIGNAL	YOU	COMPETITOR A
Local links (sponsorships, chamber, community)	3	27
Local press mentions, last 12 months	0	5

ILLUSTRATIVE

The good news: your peer recognition is a genuine credential that most competitors can't claim. Right now nothing connects it to your Google profile or site, so search engines and AI tools don't factor it in.

7 Competitor A, side by side

Why Competitor A gets the call, and where you already beat them.

	YOU	COMPETITOR A	EDGE
Overall visibility grade	C−	B+	A
Leading AI results naming the firm	1 of 13	10 of 13	A
Local search top-3 coverage	5 of 16 checks	12 of 16	A
Google rating	4.8	4.9	Even
Review flow (90 days)	2	27	A
Case-type service pages	4	11	A
City page depth	About 150 words	About 1,800 words + FAQ	A
Mobile speed	Fails	Passes	A
Peer recognition	Top tier	Listed	You
Trial experience shown on site	Detailed case results	General claims	You

	YOU	COMPETITOR A	EDGE
Years in practice	More	Fewer	You

ILLUSTRATIVE

The takeaway: Competitor A isn't the better firm on paper. It's the easier firm for Google and AI tools to understand and trust. Most of that gap is fixable within a quarter.

8 30/60/90-day fix plan

Every fix ranked by expected impact against effort, with who owns it and roughly how long it takes.

DAYS 1–30 **Fix the foundation**

FIX	IMPACT	EFFORT	OWNER	EST. TIME
Make name, address and phone match everywhere Included in every client plan.	High	Low	Northline + you	3–4 hrs
Complete the Business Profile (categories, services, attributes, photos) The how-to is included in every client plan.	High	Low	You, guided by Northline	3 hrs
Launch a steady, compliant review request process Detailed steps are included in every client plan.	High	Medium	Your intake team	2 hrs setup, then ongoing
Add the case results disclaimer Implementation steps are included in every client plan.	Risk fix	Low	Your web team	30 min

DAYS 31–60 Build the content AI and Google cite

FIX	IMPACT	EFFORT	OWNER	EST. TIME
Publish premises liability, slip-and-fall and dog bite pages Page briefs are included in every client plan.	High	Medium	Your web team, brief from Northline	6–9 hrs
Rebuild the city page into a full local resource Detailed steps are included in every client plan.	High	Medium	Your web team, brief from Northline	4–6 hrs
Fix mobile speed to pass Core Web Vitals The how-to is included in every client plan.	Medium	Medium	Your web developer	4–8 hrs
Strengthen attorney bios and structured data Ready-to-use copy is included in every client plan.	Medium	Low	Your web team	3 hrs

DAYS 61–90 Earn local authority

FIX	IMPACT	EFFORT	OWNER	EST. TIME
Claim and complete the major legal directories Included in every client plan.	High	Low	You, list from Northline	3 hrs
Pursue inclusion in local best-of roundups Implementation notes are included in every client plan.	High	Medium	Northline research, you approve	2 hrs/month

FIX	IMPACT	EFFORT	OWNER	EST. TIME
Build local links through community involvement The how-to is included in every client plan.	Medium	High	You	Ongoing
Add the suburbs you serve to site content Ready-to-use copy is included in every client plan.	Medium	Medium	Your web team	4 hrs

Step-by-step instructions and ready-to-use copy are included in every client plan, along with a monthly check on progress.

9 Quick wins this week

1. **Correct the old phone number**

   Step-by-step instructions are included in every client plan.

2. **Make the header phone number tappable**

   The how-to for this item is included in every client plan.

3. **Reply to every unanswered Google review**

   Detailed steps are included in every client plan.

4. **Add holiday hours**

   Implementation steps are included in every client plan.

5. **Upload ten real photos**

   Ready-to-use notes and the how-to are included in every client plan.

10 What Northline does every month, and your next step

- Re-run the leading AI result checks, service-and-town local search checks and competitor checks
- Update this scorecard so you can see what moved
- Full implementation steps and briefs for every fix
- A short Monday briefing with the top two actions
- Works alongside your current web team or agency

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How we audit

Grades weigh the factor groups that local search experts rate most important for local search, organic and AI visibility in the **Whitespark 2026 Local Search Ranking Factors** (https://whitespark.ca/local-search-ranking-factors/) survey, measured against your top competitor. Profile checks follow **Google Business Profile Guidelines** (https://support.google.com/business/answer/3038177), and speed checks use Google's **Core Web Vitals** (https://web.dev/articles/vitals) thresholds. Leading AI results come from repeated prompts on leading AI assistants, following a set source order so a blocked tool is replaced rather than left blank.

This is a sample. The firm, competitor, market, numbers and grades are fictional and illustrative. In a real audit, every finding is verified by live search and site checks on the date shown. Search and AI results change over time and vary by searcher and location. We commit to the work, not empty promises. Every recommendation is backed by live data, and you'll see exactly what changed each week.