

# Grow Your Home Care Agency Online

## A Step-by-Step Guide to Digital Marketing

Digital marketing and local search engine optimization (SEO) can be overwhelming, especially when the rules and algorithms always seem to change. The good news? To get started and see real results, you don't have to be an expert. You just need to focus on three things—online **reviews**, **maps**, and **ads** to increase your online leads.



This guide is provided by the Honor Care Network, a national partnership network of local home care agencies, to help agency owners learn, grow, and help more families find great care.

## Why reviews, maps, and ads?

These channels work together to enhance your agency's online presence and help new clients find you faster. And you can easily optimize each one or all three without spending a lot of time.

- 1 Customer Reviews** help your business float higher in search results and make your business more credible and appealing.
- 2 Search Maps** appear on the first page of all Google, Yelp, and Apple search results now and help potential customers find you.
- 3 Keyword Ads** can be highly targeted with an adjustable budget—and they appear right at the top of search results.



*Digital marketing works for you even when you're not working.*

**If you run a home care agency, you know that most agencies get new clients in three ways:**

- ✓ Word of mouth referrals from happy clients
- ✓ Referrals from partners at local hospitals and healthcare facilities like Skilled Nursing (SNF), Independent Living (IL), and Assisted Living (AL)
- ✓ Online searches for a caregiver or home care agency.

**Wondering about your website?**

We'll get to that later. Spoiler alert: Your agency's site is not nearly as important as it used to be in your overall digital marketing plan. You'll find more on site optimization and easy tweaks to make your site better on page 11.

## How search works

While there are dozens of search engines out there, we're focusing on Google since it controls nearly 80% of the current search market.

### New World Order

On the first page of any business search results, you'll see ads at the top, then map listings, and business listings below that. This top-to-bottom order doesn't change, even when your business search category or location does. This is Google's world—we just search in it!

This is the reality of online search today. The other reality—most people don't look beyond the first page of their search results. That means your goal is to get your business listed on page one of search results in your area, ideally showing up in a map listing (unpaid) or in a paid ad at the top.

### Know Your Keywords

Human behavior is pretty predictable. Millions of people searching for the same thing tend to use the same handful of words in their search queries. So it's important to know the top keywords in a search for your home care agency. To build a list, start by experimenting. Think **what** (type of care or service) and **where** (city, community, ZIP Code). Then pretend you're searching for an agency near you and see what results come up.

The screenshot shows a Google search for "home care agencies in san bernardino ca". The results are categorized into three sections:

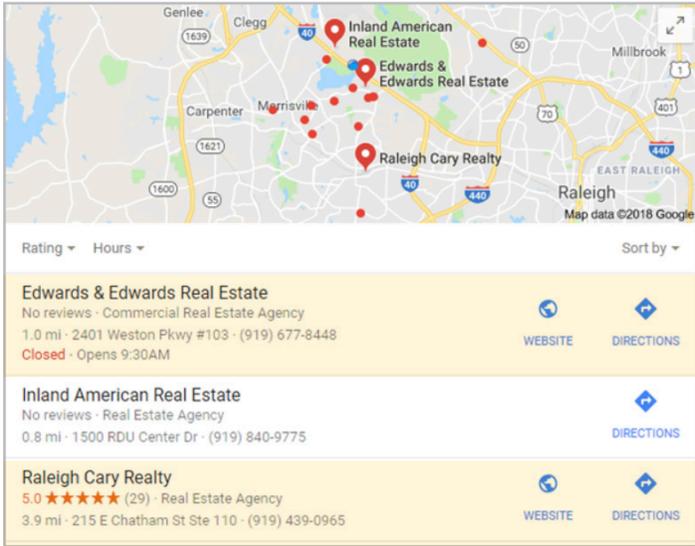
- PAID ADS:** Three sponsored listings are shown at the top. The first is "Home Care Agencies | In-Home Care Services" with a link to www.brightstarcare.com. The second is "The Best Home Care | An Award-Winning Care Provider" with a link to www.homecareassistance.com. The third is "In-Home Care San Bernardino | Affordable Caregiver Services" with a link to www.caringcompanionsathome.com.
- MAPS:** A map shows the location of several home care agencies in San Bernardino, including "ALL IN ONE HOME HEALTH AGENCY INC.", "Premier Healthcare Services", and "Nu-Era Home Health Agency Inc".
- LISTINGS:** Below the map, there are organic search results for "Home Care Assistance - Riverside Senior Care", "ALL IN ONE HOME HEALTH AGENCY INC.", "Nu-Era Home Health Agency Inc", and "Premier Healthcare Services". Each listing includes a star rating, address, phone number, and links to the website and directions.

### What's a keyword?

Keyword: a word or phrase most often typed in an online search. Home care keywords describe the service or the provider: **respite care, Alzheimer's care, senior companion, elder home care, in-home caregiver, best home care agency**, etc. and often are combined with a location cue like "near me," or "...in (community/neighborhood/city/ ZIP Code)."

## More credible = more clickable.

How do most people choose what search listing to click on? Let's take a look at a typical search map, the results from a search for "real estate agency near me."



If you're like most people, you'll click on business #3 first. Why?

1. Closed and has no reviews.
2. Has no reviews and no website.
3. Has 29 five-star reviews and a website.

**What makes this business more appealing—and more clickable? It has a better online reputation, based on four specific types of information:**

### ✓ Ratings

Five orange stars catch your eye. Customers have been so satisfied that they've written a review. (You don't even have to read them to get a snapshot of quality.)

### ✓ Website

A business with a website is simply more credible. And we can easily click on it to learn more and see what they're all about.

### ✓ Hours

They're open right now. Showing your hours of operation is important, especially in home care when people often need to speak with someone right away.

### ✓ Location

This business is 3.9 miles away—a little farther away than the others listed but still in the neighborhood.

## Step One: Get Online Reviews

Reviews are a huge part of your online reputation for two reasons.

First, Google and other search engines love reviews and ratings. They help your site's domain authority, which means a higher search ranking. Second, reviews stand out on a busy page and are usually the first thing a consumer looks for before clicking on a listing.

But waiting for reviews to happen naturally can take months or even years. So you'll want to be proactive and inspire positive reviews on the sites that really matter to your audience.

### Which review platforms matter most?

Customers review all kinds of businesses on lots of sites, like Yelp, Google, TripAdvisor, and even Better Business Bureau. Reviews also appear on sites specifically for elder care, like Care.com, SeniorAdvisor.com, or CarePathways.com. Search engines put a higher value on reviews on the most trusted, popular review platforms.

### How do you know which review sites matter most to potential clients in your community?

- ✓ Do a Google search.
- ✓ Type in some queries to generate results for home care agencies. (Like "home care near me" or "caregiver in Austin, Texas.")
- ✓ Notice which review sites pop up. Those are the ones to focus on first because your business is more likely to get new leads from these sites.

### How to get good reviews.

Of course, the first step to getting good reviews is delivering an amazing care experience. Once you've got that down, start asking your happy clients to review your agency. Yes, really. It's perfectly okay to invite clients to write a review.



### Ask your clients for reviews.

Train your ear (and your team) to listen for moments when a client expresses joy, gratitude, or even relief. Then ask them to write a review about their experience on a specific site. When a client is delighted with the care you provide, they may also be delighted to share their positive experiences—especially if they get to

name a favorite caregiver and describe what makes him or her special. Here's an example:

Never feel shy about asking. By reviewing a home care service, your client is helping other families who may be struggling to find high-quality care. It feels good to be helpful. And most people like endorsing local businesses that serve their community.

**Client:** "Hey, we just had an amazing experience with mom's caregiver, Diana. She was so patient with my mom. We can't thank you enough!"

**You:** "I'm so happy to hear that! You know you can thank Diana in a review. It would mean a lot to her, and we'd appreciate it too."

### Reviews Mean Business

According to Yelp, a one-star increase in a business's online rating leads, on average, to a 5 to 9% increase in revenue. One negative review can cost you 30 potential clients.

### Yikes. A negative review!

Don't panic. It happens. Someone has a bad experience or feels disappointed and leaves an unfavorable review. Here's how to deal with it tactfully and professionally:

#### ✓ Always respond to negative reviews.

Almost every review platform lets business owners respond to comments. If you get a bad review, don't get defensive. Do take a deep breath and respond calmly to the reviewer's comments—whether fair or not. Your tone tells potential clients a lot about your professionalism and approach to customer service. Keep it brief—and positive!

#### ✓ Don't try to resolve issues publicly.

You never want to get into a conflict with a client in a public forum. Right after you've responded professionally and politely on the review site, immediately contact the reviewer privately, ideally by phone so you can have a conversation. Ask what you can do to fix the problem, gather information about what happened, and really listen.

In the meantime, don't stop asking others for reviews. Search engines and review websites consider how recent reviews are. More recent positive reviews will boost your ranking. So make it easy for your customers to review your agency. You can even email them a link to the review site, if the site's policy permits that. Yelp does not, but others do.

## Step Two: Get On the Map

Google search results show where businesses are located in your area.

Test Google, Yelp, and Facebook Maps to make sure your agency shows up. And it should—they all list home care agencies on their maps. If yours doesn't show up, you may need to "claim your business" and verify your current info. To do this, go to [Google My Business](#), click on the Manage Now link, and follow the prompts to set up your Google business account.

### Optimize your listing.

Every map listing should have these nine pieces of key information, including photos that show the service you offer. Below is an example of a fully-optimized Google Maps listing. This is the gold standard you're aiming for.

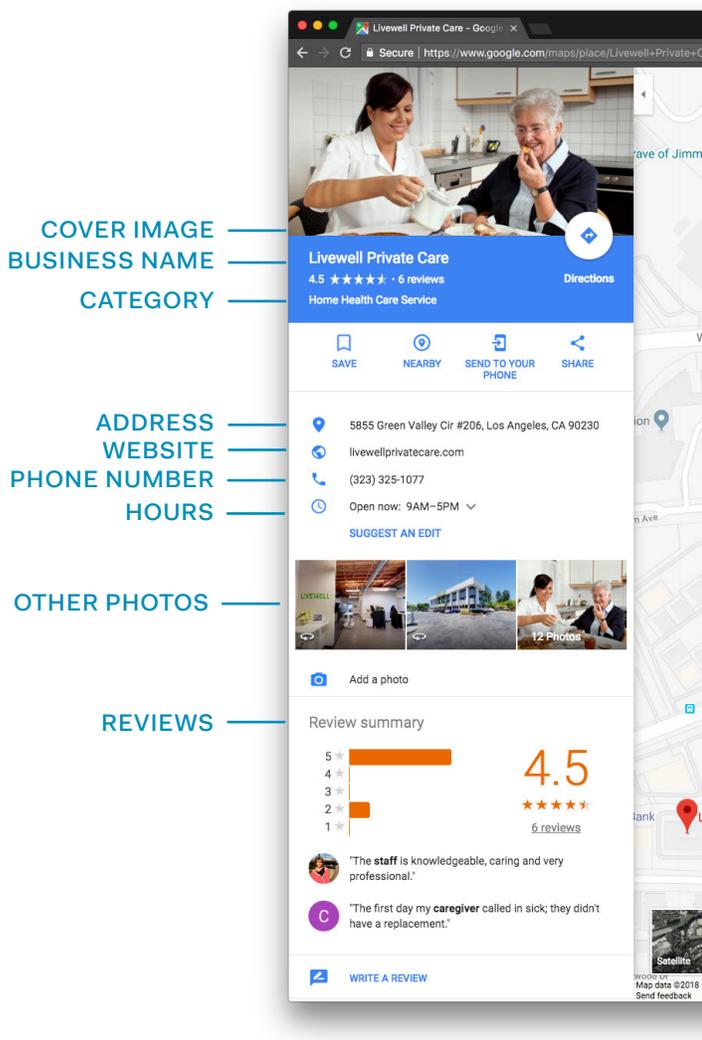
### Accuracy is important.

For SEO, it's crucial to update all of your business listings on every possible site—and be sure your business name and contact information are correct and exactly the same. Why? Search engines don't like inconsistencies, which make a business seem less credible or even shady.

### Get help—use a service.

You probably don't have time to log into multiple sites, upload images, and update your name, address, and phone number. This is one task that makes sense to outsource. Pick one of the dozens of services out there—like Moz, Yext, or White Spark—to take care of SEO for you. You type in your info once, they handle the rest.

These services also analyze your listing and score your optimization level. They'll show you how healthy your online presence is and which areas need improvement. Generally, if you've hit 80%, you're doing pretty well. If you're below that, you have some work to do.



## Step Three: Run Paid Ads

Ads are the third part of your digital marketing plan.

Before you spend on advertising, be sure your reviews are strong and your map listings are accurate and optimized. Then, focus on keyword search ads—the ones that show up on the top of the results page after a search query.

We recommend Google AdWords Express when starting to explore paid ads because the interface is so easy. We're using that platform to illustrate each step, but all search-based advertising platforms look similar.

### What's Ad Rank?

Ad rank: a value used to determine your ad position relative to other ads on the search engine results page (SERP). Ad rank is calculated using a variety of factors, including your bid amount, ad quality and relevance, plus context of the search.

Search-based ads will drive new clients to your website over time. It's up to you to figure out what monthly budget is right and what you can afford, which is generally a function of your

<input type="checkbox"/> Keyword	Clicks	Impressions	Avg. CPC
<input type="checkbox"/> caregiving near me	2.69	144.88	\$2.41
<input type="checkbox"/> hire a caregiver	17.83	408.29	\$2.27
<input type="checkbox"/> home care agency near me	21.53	658.53	\$2.37
<input type="checkbox"/> private caregivers for hire	521.97	12,248.59	\$2.34

### Choose keywords and phrases.

The chart above shows the number of views—or impressions—these keywords generate, how many people will click on the ad when they see it, and the average cost per click. So, pick keywords that you want to rank for.

Once you've chosen your keywords, figure out your cost per month. If your ad will get 10,000 impressions a month, and 500 people will click on it at \$2 for every click, then budget \$1,000 for that keyword.

average margin per customer (revenue minus caregiver wages). If 500 clicks will get you three new customers, will that cover your \$1,000 expense? It also helps to know your customer acquisition cost (CAC) to determine if ads are more or less efficient than other channels. Then play with the numbers and calculate the best budget for your return.

Estimated number of clicks	500
X cost per click	X \$2
<hr/> What it will cost you	<hr/> \$1,000.

### Create your ad

Tell customers what's unique about your business

**New ad version**

Headline 1  
**Best Home Care Agency Near You**

Headline 2  
**Get in touch today**

Description  
**All our caregivers have over 6 years experience. Call us today**

### Create your ad copy.

Write a great headline that, ideally, includes strong keywords for your business. Fill in your ad copy. Keep it clear and concise. Include a specific call to action (CTA).

### Edit where to show your ad

Think about where you want to reach your customers, and then pick that area to show your ad in.

**Near my business** | In specific cities, states, or countries

2151 Salvio Street #310, Concord, CA 94520, United States

### Choose your geographic area.

Next, you'll be prompted to choose the area where your ad will appear. You can select a standard radius around a certain business—maybe 10 or 20 miles—or type in specific cities, states, or ZIP Codes, which work well for home care agencies servicing specific areas.

### Set your budget

Set the amount you'd like to spend.

\$ **21.38** per day average  
 \$650.00 per month maximum

typical competitor budget range

**Estimated performance**

- 924 - 1547 views per month
- 98 - 164 clicks per month

This estimate is based on businesses with similar ad settings and budget.

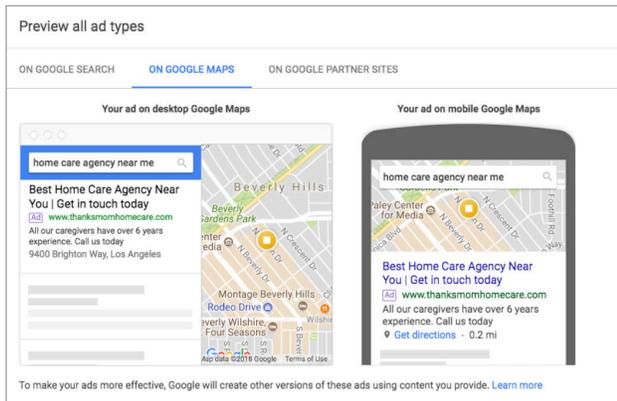
**How your budget works**

- What you pay for**  
Pay only when people click your ad or call your business.
- How much it costs**  
Costs vary for each click, but you won't spend more than your monthly budget.
- If you change your mind**  
Try running your ad, but no need to commit. Change your budget or cancel your ad at anytime.

### Set your budget.

Now it's time to set a budget. This takes some thought and you may want to play with the numbers until you find a budget that's comfortable and will deliver the results you're looking for. First, decide what you want to spend per day. Then, figure out what that will cost you each month. How many clicks and views can you anticipate from that expense?

Remember, this is a process that you can adjust as you go. You may not get it right from the get-go, so start on the conservative side and ramp up gradually as you see results.



## Confirm your ad setting.

Now, the fun part! After you've configured all of your settings, you'll see a preview of your ad. Take a careful look at your ad.

**Is your spelling correct?**

**Is your ad copy compelling?**

**Would you click on this ad?**

After you answer "yes" to all three, take the plunge and go live.

Update your settings and continue to optimize your ad. Give it three or four weeks before making any changes. If you're not getting the results you want, it's easy to go back and change any of your settings. Consider changing just one variable at a time—headline or body copy, not both—so you can track which change affected your results. Experiment and optimize as the weeks go on!

Log in often and be hyper targeted. You don't want to be wasting money on useless clicks 50 miles outside of your ad radius—far away from your service area.

## honor Care Network

Honor is building the first national home care network by partnering with top local agencies and other providers along the care continuum.

Our partners stay independent and in control of their brand and clients. Honor shares its large pool of caregivers, manages recruiting, scheduling, and payroll—and takes over other back office hassles so our partners can provide even better care to more clients.

When you join Honor, you don't get a vendor—you get a true partner. Interested in learning more? Give us a call at (855) 981-9033. We'd love to talk!

Congratulations! You've taken the first steps to drive new clients to your agency using digital marketing. Keep in mind that digital marketing doesn't replace your in-person sales efforts—it supplements them. And the best part? Digital marketing is working for you, even when you're not working!

### What about my website?

Today, every credible home care business needs a website. But it doesn't have to be fancy.

Your agency site should provide enough details about who you are and the services you offer to be credible and build trust. It should also include practical information like your service areas, process for vetting your caregivers, policy on long-term care insurance, and your contact info.

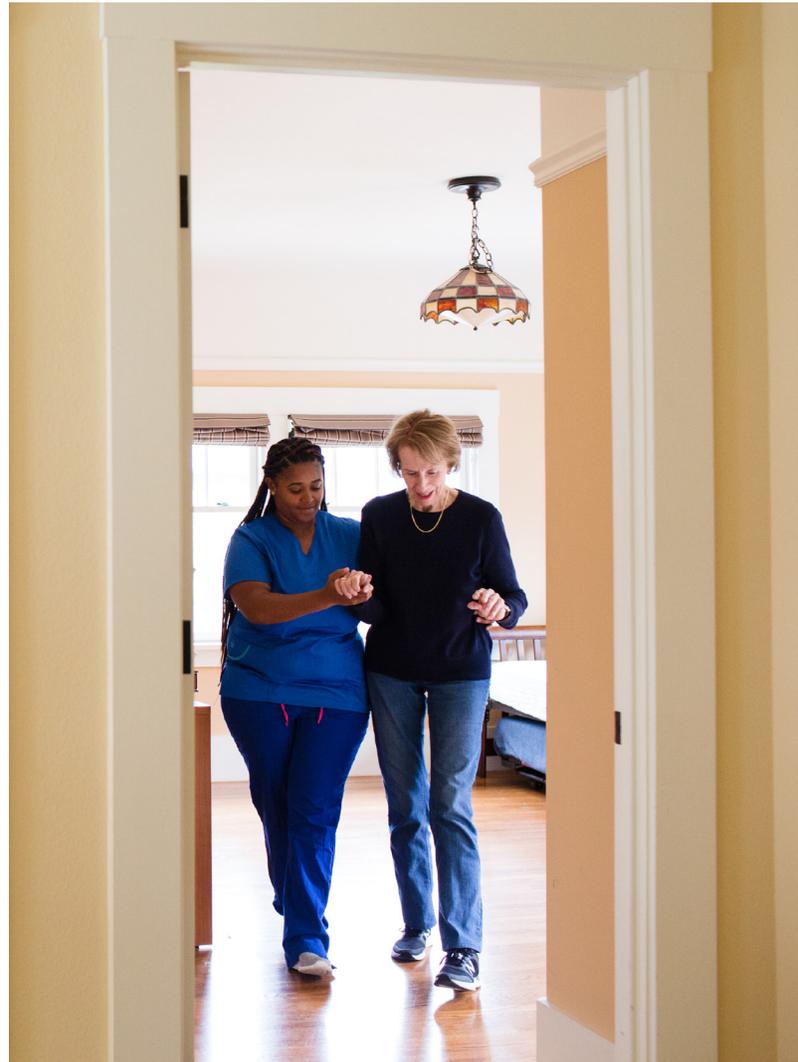
Websites are no longer a stand-alone marketing tool to acquire new customers, especially in our highly competitive market.

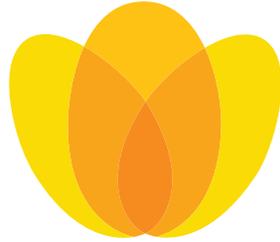
Think of your website as your online home base, the place where all of your other online marketing efforts—customer reviews, search map listings, keyword ads—drive people looking online for a home care agency or caregivers near you. And it's the place where word-of-mouth referrals and other potential customers are most likely to land when wanting to learn more about your agency and double-check that you're worth calling first.

After you've focused on building your agency's online reputation through reviews, map listings, and ads, take a look at your website and be sure you can check all of these boxes:

- ✓ **Mobile friendly**
- ✓ **Loads quickly**
- ✓ **Phone number in the header (top of every page)**
- ✓ **Full contact information in the footer (bottom of every page)**

When your website is optimized, it's ready for word-of-mouth referrals, new leads from referral partners, and people searching online for home care in your area. Now you're set to go—and grow!





Better care, together.

**honor** Care Network