

# Optimize Your Online Listings for AI - A Mini-Guide for Salons

As discussed in [Episode 64](#) of Marketing 100 on [The Salon Business Show](#).

AI search tools like ChatGPT rely heavily on the information available on major online directories to find and recommend local businesses. Keeping these listings accurate, detailed, and keyword-rich is crucial for getting discovered. This guide focuses on optimizing Google Business Profile (GBP) and Yelp – two primary sources for AI.

## Why Listings Matter for AI

Think of AI as a super-efficient research assistant. It scans platforms like GBP and Yelp to understand:

- **What you do:** Your services, specialties.
- **Who you serve:** Your target clientele (implied through keywords).
- **What makes you unique:** Your specific skills, atmosphere, amenities.
- **Your reputation:** Through reviews and responses.

Optimizing these listings feeds the AI the specific details it needs to match you with clients searching for *exactly* what you offer.

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## Google Business Profile (GBP) Optimization for AI

GBP is often a primary data source. Pay close attention to these sections:

1. **Core Information (NAP):**
  - **Action:** Ensure your **Name**, **Address**, and **Phone** number are **identical** across all online platforms (website, Yelp, social media, etc.). Consistency builds trust with AI algorithms.
2. **Categories:**
  - **Action:** Choose the *most specific* Primary Category possible (e.g., "Hair Salon," "Nail Salon," "Beauty Salon"). Add relevant Secondary Categories (e.g., "Hair Coloring Service," "Waxing Service"). Don't overdo it, but be accurate.
3. **Services:**
  - **Action:** This is critical! List **every specific service** you offer. Don't just say "Haircuts"; list "Precision Bob Haircut," "Men's Fade Haircut," "Curly Hair Dry Cut."

- **Add Descriptions:** For each service, write a brief description using keywords your ideal client would search for. *Example for Balayage:* "Expert balayage for natural, sun-kissed highlights. Specializing in lived-in color techniques and seamless blending for blondes and brunettes."
  - **Why it matters:** AI scans these service names and descriptions for specific keywords to match detailed user queries.
4. **Attributes:**
- **Action:** Go through the extensive list of attributes and check **everything** that applies. Think about specific client needs: "Online Booking," "Accepts Credit Cards," "Wheelchair Accessible Entrance," "Gender-Neutral Restrooms," "Free Wi-Fi," "Street Parking," "Good for Kids," etc.
  - **Why it matters:** AI uses attributes to filter results based on user requirements (like Marchelle needing "online booking").
5. **Business Description:**
- **Action:** Write a compelling, natural-sounding description (up to 750 characters). Weave in your main keywords, specialties (e.g., "master colorists," "natural texture experts," "meticulous nail art"), unique selling points (e.g., "relaxing atmosphere," "sustainable practices"), and location keywords.
  - *Example Snippet:* "...specializing in **vivid hair color** and **lived-in balayage**. Our expert stylists provide **personalized consultations** to achieve your perfect look. We offer **online booking** and easy parking..."
6. **Photos & Videos:**
- **Action:** Upload high-quality, varied photos regularly. Show *real* client results (different hair types/textures/styles, nail shapes/art), your salon's interior/exterior, and your team. Name files descriptively before uploading (e.g., **lived-in-blonde-balayage-salon-name.jpg**). Add captions where possible.
  - **Why it matters:** Visuals provide context, and AI is increasingly analyzing images. Showcasing variety counters assumptions (like only doing one type of curl).
7. **Reviews & Responses:**
- **Action:** Encourage clients to use specific keywords in reviews (see the **Client Review Booster Kit**). **Respond to ALL reviews**, thanking positive reviewers and naturally incorporating relevant keywords. Address negative reviews professionally.
  - **Why it matters:** AI analyzes review sentiment *and* keywords (in both reviews and your responses) to gauge reputation and service specifics.
8. **Questions & Answers (Q&A):**
- **Action:** Proactively add common questions *your ideal clients* might ask and provide detailed, keyword-rich answers.
  - *Example:*
    - Q: "Do you offer **gel manicures for natural nails**?"
    - A: "Yes, we specialize in **gel manicures for natural nails**, focusing on **meticulous cuticle work** and **perfect shaping** for long-lasting results. Book online today!"
  - **Why it matters:** This directly feeds the AI answers to specific queries.
9. **Google Posts:**

- **Action:** Regularly create Posts to highlight specific services ("Spotlight on Precision Bobs!"), promotions, new techniques, or blog updates. Use relevant keywords and compelling images/videos.
  - **Why it matters:** Posts signal activity and provide fresh, keyword-rich content for AI to index.
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## Yelp Optimization for AI

Yelp is another significant data source. Optimization is similar to GBP:

1. **NAP Consistency:** Ensure it matches GBP and your website exactly.
  2. **Categories:** Choose specific primary and secondary categories relevant to your services.
  3. **Services/Specialties Section:** Use the dedicated "Specialties" section to write a detailed, keyword-rich description of what you excel at. Mirror the detail from your GBP description and services list.
  4. **Amenities/Attributes:** Fill out the "More Business Info" section thoroughly. Check all applicable attributes (Wi-Fi, parking, booking options, accessibility, etc.).
  5. **"From the Business" Section:** Expand on your history, mission, and specialties. Use relevant keywords naturally.
  6. **Photos:** Upload high-quality, varied photos with descriptive captions. Show your work, space, and team.
  7. **Reviews & Responses:** Encourage detailed reviews. Respond to all reviews professionally, using keywords naturally where appropriate (especially in positive responses).
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## Key Takeaways & Consistency Checklist

- **Accuracy is King:** Ensure all information (NAP, hours, services) is correct everywhere.
- **Specificity Wins:** Use detailed keywords describing *exactly* what you do and who you serve. Think like your most discerning client.
- **Consistency is Crucial:** Information should match across your website, GBP, Yelp, social media, and any other directories.
- **Engage Regularly:** Update photos, create Posts, answer Q&As, and respond to reviews promptly. This signals to AI that your business is active and relevant.
- **Fill Everything Out:** Don't leave sections blank. More relevant information gives AI more context.

By treating your online listings as vital information hubs for both customers and AI, you significantly increase your chances of being discovered by the *right* clients.