

The plain English glossary

60 terms you will hear when getting a website, a CRM, an AI assistant or automation built. What each one is, why it matters to your business, and what it looks like in practice.

Free from 761 Ventures, Delray Beach, Florida. The live version with search is at 761ventures.com/glossary.

Getting found

Search engine optimization (SEO)
Local SEO
Generative engine optimization (GEO)
Answer engine optimization (AEO)
Google Business Profile (GBP)
Schema markup
Sitemap
Backlink
Keyword and search intent
AI Overview
Crawler

Websites

Core Web Vitals and page speed
Mobile first
Landing page
Call to action (CTA)
Conversion rate
Domain and DNS
SSL certificate (SSL)
Hosting
Content management system (CMS)
Redirect (301)
Accessibility

Leads and CRM

Customer relationship management (CRM)
Lead
Pipeline
Lead scoring and qualification
Intake form
Speed to lead
Follow up sequence
Lead source
Automation rule
Lifetime value (LTV)

AI at work

AI assistant
AI agent
Large language model (LLM)
Prompt and system prompt
Retrieval augmented generation (RAG)
Hallucination
Context window and tokens
Model Context Protocol (MCP)
Guardrails
Vibe coding

Software and apps

Application programming interface (API)

Webhook
Database
Multi tenant
Native app vs web app
Authentication
Environment variable
Deployment
Open source
Integration

Measuring
Analytics
Google Analytics 4 (GA4)
Google Search Console
Heatmap and session recordings
Dashboard
Key performance indicator (KPI)
Attribution
Uptime

Getting found

Search engine optimization **SEO**

The work of making your website show up when people search Google for what you sell. It covers how the site is built, what the pages say, and who links to you.

WHY IT MATTERS

Most new customers start with a search. If your site is not on the first page for the things you do in the places you serve, those people call someone else. SEO is how you get in front of them without paying for every click.

IN PRACTICE

A painting company in Boca Raton has one page for interior painting and one for exterior painting, each written for that service, so Google has a clear page to show for each search.

Local SEO

Showing up in searches that have a place attached, like "landscaper near me" or "cabinets West Palm Beach". It leans on your Google Business Profile, your reviews and location pages on your site.

WHY IT MATTERS

For a service business, the customer is almost always nearby. The map and the three listings under it sit above the regular results on a phone. If you are not in that map pack, you are a long scroll away from the call.

IN PRACTICE

A landscaper in West Palm Beach keeps hours, photos and reviews current on Google Business Profile and has a page on the site for each town it serves.

Generative engine optimization **GEO**

Making your business show up in answers written by AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini and Claude. Instead of ranking a link, the goal is to be the business the AI names and describes correctly.

WHY IT MATTERS

More people now ask an AI for a recommendation instead of scrolling results. Those tools pull from pages that state facts plainly: who you are, where you work, what you do and for whom. If your site is vague, the AI skips you or gets you wrong.

IN PRACTICE

A custom home builder in Delray Beach has a clear about page, service pages that say exactly what it builds and where, and FAQ answers written as direct statements an AI can quote.

Answer engine optimization **AEO**

Writing your pages so they answer the exact questions people ask, so search engines and AI tools can lift the answer straight from your site.

WHY IT MATTERS

Google and the AI tools increasingly show an answer, not a list of links. The business that gives the clearest answer gets quoted. For you, that means fewer clicks lost to competitors and more people arriving already convinced.

IN PRACTICE

A retirement advisor in Lake Worth adds a question and answer section to each service page, with each answer starting in the first sentence instead of three paragraphs in.

Google Business Profile **GBP**

Your free listing on Google that shows your hours, address, phone, photos, reviews and posts in search and on Google Maps. It used to be called Google My Business.

WHY IT MATTERS

For a local business, this listing often gets more views than the website. It is where people read your reviews, tap to call and ask for directions. A thin or outdated profile costs you calls every week.

IN PRACTICE

A cabinetry shop in South Florida posts photos of finished kitchens, replies to every review within a business day, and keeps holiday hours accurate so nobody drives to a closed showroom.

Schema markup

Extra code on a page, invisible to visitors, that labels what the content is: a business, a service, an FAQ, a review, an event. Also called structured data.

WHY IT MATTERS

Search engines and AI tools read labels faster than they read prose. Schema tells them your hours, service area and offerings without guessing, and it can earn richer listings like star ratings or FAQ dropdowns in results.

IN PRACTICE

A hotel in Naples marks up its address, check-in times and amenities, so Google shows them directly in the listing and an AI assistant quotes them correctly.

Sitemap

A file on your website (usually sitemap.xml) that lists every page you want search engines to know about, with the date each one last changed.

WHY IT MATTERS

Search engines find pages by following links, and they miss some. A sitemap hands them the full list so new service pages and blog posts get found and indexed sooner. It also helps you spot pages you forgot you had.

IN PRACTICE

When a law firm publishes a new practice area page, it lands in the sitemap automatically and Google Search Console is told, so Google learns about it right away instead of whenever a crawler happens to find it.

Backlink

A link from someone else's website to yours. Search engines treat each one as a vote that your site is worth showing.

WHY IT MATTERS

Links from trusted, relevant sites (a local news outlet, a trade association, a supplier) raise your standing in search. Links from spammy directories do nothing or hurt. A handful of real ones beat hundreds of junk ones.

IN PRACTICE

A builder in Delray Beach gets listed on the local home builders association site and is mentioned in a regional magazine feature. Both link back to the builder's website.

Keyword and search intent

A keyword is the phrase someone types or says into a search. Search intent is what they actually want when they type it: to learn, to compare, to buy, or to find a place nearby.

WHY IT MATTERS

The same words can mean different things. "Kitchen cabinets" might be someone browsing ideas or someone ready to order. Matching your page to the intent behind the phrase is what turns a visit into a call instead of a bounce.

IN PRACTICE

A cabinetry shop writes one page for "custom kitchen cabinets near me" (ready to buy) and a blog post for "how much do custom cabinets cost" (still researching), instead of one page trying to do both.

AI Overview

The AI-written summary Google shows at the top of many search results, above the usual links. It pulls from a few websites and cites them.

WHY IT MATTERS

When an AI Overview appears, many people read it and never scroll. If your site is one of the sources, you get the credit and the click. If it is not, a competitor does. Clear, factual pages are what get cited.

IN PRACTICE

Someone searches "how often should a house be repainted in Florida". The overview cites a painting company's blog post that answers in the first sentence, and the company's name appears right at the top.

Crawler

A program that search engines and AI companies run to read websites page by page, following links as it goes. Also called a bot or spider. A robots.txt file on your site tells crawlers what they may and may not read.

WHY IT MATTERS

If a crawler cannot reach a page, that page does not exist as far as Google is concerned. Broken links, blocked folders and slow pages all limit what gets read. Letting the right crawlers in, and keeping the bad ones out, is basic upkeep.

IN PRACTICE

If a hotel's booking pages get blocked in robots.txt during a redesign, bookings from search quietly drop until someone notices. One line in that file fixes it.

Websites

Core Web Vitals and page speed

Google's three measurements of how a page feels to use: how fast the main content shows up, how quickly it reacts to a tap, and whether things jump around while loading.

WHY IT MATTERS

Slow or jumpy pages lose visitors before they read a word, and Google uses these scores as part of ranking. Page speed is the big one. Oversized images, heavy plugins and cheap hosting are the usual causes.

IN PRACTICE

A landscaper's site loads slowly on a phone because every photo is full size. Resizing the images and moving to better hosting brings the scores into the green.

Mobile first

Designing the website for a phone screen first, then adapting it for tablets and desktops, instead of the other way around.

WHY IT MATTERS

For most local businesses, most visitors arrive on a phone, and Google ranks sites based on the mobile version. A site that looks fine on a laptop but needs pinching and zooming on a phone is losing the people most likely to call.

IN PRACTICE

A painting company's site puts a tap-to-call button and a short quote form at the top of the phone layout, with the long portfolio gallery further down.

Landing page

A single page built for one purpose and one audience, usually where an ad, email or search result sends people. It has one message and one thing to do next.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your home page has to serve everyone. A landing page serves one person with one problem, so it converts better. It is also easier to measure: one page, one traffic source, one result.

IN PRACTICE

A shuttle operator runs a page just for hotel general managers, with the hotel use case, a short video and a form. Hotel ads and emails point there, not to the home page.

Call to action **CTA**

The thing you ask a visitor to do next: call, book, get a quote, start a project. Usually a button or a short form. "Above the fold" means it is visible before anyone scrolls.

WHY IT MATTERS

People do what the page asks, and nothing else. A page with no clear next step, or five competing ones, produces visits and no leads. One obvious action, repeated as the page goes on, is what turns readers into contacts.

IN PRACTICE

A financial advisor's pages all end with the same button: "Book a 20 minute call". It is also at the top of every page and in the menu on phones.

Conversion rate

The share of visitors who do the thing you wanted: fill out the form, call, book. One hundred visitors and three forms is a three percent conversion rate.

WHY IT MATTERS

Traffic is vanity until it converts. Doubling your conversion rate has the same effect as doubling your traffic, and it is usually cheaper. It also tells you whether a page problem is attention (nobody comes) or persuasion (they come and leave).

IN PRACTICE

A cabinetry site gets steady traffic but few quote requests. Shortening the form from twelve fields to four and adding a phone number at the top gets tested, and the result is measured in Google Analytics.

Domain and DNS

Your domain is your web address (yourcompany.com). DNS is the set of records that tells the internet where that address points: which server hosts the site, where email goes.

WHY IT MATTERS

The domain is the one piece of your online presence you must own outright, in your name, with your login. Lose control of it and you lose the site, the email and years of search history. A DNS mistake can take a site or email offline instantly.

IN PRACTICE

A common mess: the old web agency registered the domain under its own account, and when the relationship ends the owner has to fight for it. The fix is to hold the registrar login yourself and share access.

SSL certificate SSL

The certificate that puts the padlock and "https" in front of your web address. It encrypts what passes between the visitor and your site.

WHY IT MATTERS

Browsers mark sites without it as "Not secure", which stops people cold on a quote form. Google also favors secure sites. Modern hosting includes it free and renews it automatically, so there is no reason to go without.

IN PRACTICE

A law firm's contact form shows a security warning on phones because the certificate lapsed. Hosting that renews it automatically removes the problem for good.

Hosting

The service that keeps your website's files on a server connected to the internet so people can load it. Modern hosting also handles speed, security and backups.

WHY IT MATTERS

Cheap shared hosting is the hidden cause of many slow, flaky sites. Good hosting serves pages from locations near the visitor, renews certificates and stays up. For a small business it is one of the smallest line items in the whole stack.

IN PRACTICE

A landscaper's site moves from a shared cPanel account to Vercel. Pages load from a server near the visitor, the certificate renews itself, and a bad update can be rolled back in a click.

Content management system CMS

The tool you log into to change words, photos and pages on your site without touching code. WordPress is the best known. Many modern sites use a lighter one or a simple admin screen built for the owner.

WHY IT MATTERS

You should be able to fix a price or add a project photo yourself at nine at night. A CMS that fits your business makes that easy. One that does not (too many plugins, too many menus) means you stop updating and the site goes stale.

IN PRACTICE

A painting company's site has an admin page with exactly three things: add a project, edit a service, post a blog. Nothing else to break.

Redirect (301)

An instruction that sends anyone visiting an old web address to the new one automatically. A 301 is the permanent kind, and it carries the old page's search standing over to the new page.

WHY IT MATTERS

Every time you rename a page or rebuild a site, old addresses live on in Google, bookmarks and other sites' links. Without redirects, those visitors hit a dead page and your rankings reset. A redirect map is the cheapest insurance in a redesign.

IN PRACTICE

A hotel's old /rooms.html page becomes /accommodations. A 301 sends the old link, and the search ranking it earned, straight to the new page.

Accessibility

Building the site so people with disabilities can use it: readable text contrast, labels a screen reader can speak, keyboard navigation, captions on video. The standard is called WCAG.

WHY IT MATTERS

It is the right thing and it widens your audience, including older customers. Accessible sites also tend to rank better, because the same clean structure helps crawlers. And it reduces exposure to the lawsuits some businesses have faced over sites nobody could use.

IN PRACTICE

A retirement advisor's site uses larger default text, high contrast buttons and a visible label on every form field, which the firm's mostly retired clients appreciate on a phone.

Leads and CRM

Customer relationship management CRM

The one place where every lead, customer, call, email and note lives, so anyone on your team can see where a deal stands. It replaces the spreadsheet, the sticky notes and your memory.

WHY IT MATTERS

Leads fall through cracks when they live in five inboxes. A CRM makes sure every inquiry gets a follow up, shows you which sources bring real work, and holds the history when an employee leaves. The data is yours, not the sales rep's.

IN PRACTICE

A builder's website form, phone calls and referrals all land in one CRM. Each lead has a stage, an owner and a next step, and the owner sees the whole pipeline on one screen each morning.

Lead

A person who has shown interest in what you sell and left a way to reach them: a form, a call, a booked meeting, a message. Not yet a customer.

WHY IT MATTERS

Everything upstream (SEO, ads, the website) exists to make leads, and everything downstream (follow up, quoting, closing) exists to turn them into revenue. Counting leads by source and by outcome is how you learn what is worth paying for.

IN PRACTICE

A homeowner fills out the quote form on a painting company's site. That is a lead. It gets a record in the CRM with the source "website form" and a timestamp.

Pipeline

The stages a lead moves through on the way to becoming a customer, laid out left to right: new, contacted, quoted, won or lost. Each stage holds the deals currently sitting in it.

WHY IT MATTERS

A pipeline shows you where deals stall. If twenty leads are stuck at "quoted", the problem is the quote or the follow up, not marketing. It also gives you a rough forecast: deals in late stages are likely to close soon.

IN PRACTICE

A cabinetry shop's pipeline runs New, Measured, Quoted, Deposit, Installed. The owner checks the Quoted column every Friday and calls anyone sitting there more than a week.

Lead scoring and qualification

Ranking leads by how likely they are to become good customers, using what they told you and what they did. A qualified lead is one that passes your bar: right service, right area, right budget, ready soon.

WHY IT MATTERS

Not every inquiry deserves the same effort. Scoring lets your best people spend time on the leads most likely to close, and routes the rest to a lighter follow up. It also stops you chasing jobs you would not want anyway.

IN PRACTICE

A builder's intake form asks for location, project type and timeline. Leads inside the service area with a start date under six months get a call the same day. Others get an email and a check in later.

Intake form

The form on your site (or sent by link) that collects what you need to know about a new inquiry before the first call: contact details, what they want, where, when.

WHY IT MATTERS

A good intake form saves a phone call of back and forth and lets you qualify before you spend time. Too many fields and people quit. The right few fields, in a form that works on a phone, is the sweet spot.

IN PRACTICE

A landscaper's form asks four things: name, phone, address, and what they want done. Everything else gets covered on the call. Submissions create a CRM record and a text to the owner.

Speed to lead

How long it takes you to respond after someone reaches out. Measured in minutes, not days.

WHY IT MATTERS

The first business to respond often wins the job, because the person is still in the moment and has not called the next name yet. The first touch can be automated so it is instant, then a real person follows.

IN PRACTICE

When a quote request comes in, a painting company's system texts the homeowner within a minute to confirm it arrived and offers two times for a call. The estimator follows up personally within the hour.

Follow up sequence

A planned series of messages (email, text, call reminders) that goes out automatically after a lead comes in or a quote is sent, spaced over days or weeks.

WHY IT MATTERS

Many jobs are won on the third or fourth touch, and most businesses stop after one. A sequence keeps you in front of the person without anyone having to remember. It stops the moment they reply or book.

IN PRACTICE

A cabinetry shop sends a quote, then an automatic email three days later with photos of similar kitchens, then a text a week after that asking if they have questions. Replies land in the CRM.

Lead source

Where a lead came from: Google search, Google Business Profile, a referral, an ad, a sign on a truck, a specific landing page.

WHY IT MATTERS

Without the source, you cannot know what to spend more on and what to cut. Tracking it means tagging forms and phone numbers so each inquiry carries its origin into the CRM. Ask customers too, since referrals often go unrecorded.

IN PRACTICE

A builder sees that most leads come from the Business Profile and fewer from paid ads, but the ad leads close more often. Both facts come from the CRM, not a hunch.

Automation rule

An "if this, then that" instruction in your software: when a form is submitted, create a lead and text the owner; when a deal is marked won, send the welcome email.

WHY IT MATTERS

Automation does the boring, forgettable steps the same way every time. It is how a three person company responds like a thirty person one. Start with the handoffs that currently rely on someone remembering.

IN PRACTICE

In a landscaper's CRM, a lead that sits in "New" for more than a day with no activity triggers a reminder to the owner and a short apology text to the customer.

Lifetime value LTV

The total revenue a customer brings over the whole relationship, not just the first job. Repeat work, maintenance plans and referrals count.

WHY IT MATTERS

Knowing lifetime value tells you how much you can afford to spend to win a customer. A landscaper on a monthly plan is worth far more than one mow. It also shows which kinds of customers to go after and which to let competitors have.

IN PRACTICE

A painting company notices customers who book interior work often come back for exterior within a couple of years. It follows up on that schedule and spends more to win the first job than that job alone would justify.

AI at work

AI assistant

A chat tool powered by a large language model that answers questions, drafts text and helps with tasks in plain conversation. Claude and ChatGPT are examples. A business can put one on its website or inside its own tools.

WHY IT MATTERS

An assistant set up with your business facts can answer the same twenty questions your front desk answers all day, around the clock, and hand off a lead when someone is ready. Internally, it drafts emails, summarizes calls and pulls reports.

IN PRACTICE

A shuttle company's website assistant answers "do you run on weekends" and "what does it cost for a hotel", collects contact details, and drops the conversation into the CRM for the sales team.

AI agent

An AI that does not just answer but takes steps: looks things up, fills in forms, sends messages, updates records, and works toward a goal across several actions with limited supervision.

WHY IT MATTERS

An assistant helps you work. An agent does the work. That is the difference between "draft a follow up" and "follow up with every quoted lead who has gone quiet, and tell me who replied". The guardrails you give it matter as much as its skill.

IN PRACTICE

A sales agent for a builder checks the CRM each morning, drafts follow ups for stale leads, sends the approved ones, logs the activity, and books calls on the calendar when someone says yes.

Large language model LLM

The underlying AI model that reads and writes text, trained on a very large amount of writing. It is the engine inside assistants and agents. Claude, GPT and Gemini are large language models.

WHY IT MATTERS

You will not build one, but you will choose one, through the tools you buy or have built. Models differ in cost, speed, how much they can read at once and how carefully they follow instructions. The right one depends on the job.

IN PRACTICE

A law firm's intake assistant uses a fast model for quick first replies and a more careful one for summarizing long documents, because the tradeoffs are different for each task.

Prompt and system prompt

A prompt is what you type to an AI. A system prompt is the standing instruction set behind the scenes that tells an assistant who it is, what it knows, what tone to use and what not to do, before any user says a word.

WHY IT MATTERS

Most "the AI got it wrong" problems are prompt problems. A well written system prompt is the difference between a generic chatbot and one that sounds like your front desk and knows your policies. It is your business rules in plain English.

IN PRACTICE

A hotel's assistant has a system prompt that includes check-in times, the pet policy, the parking situation and an instruction to never quote rates, only link to the booking page.

Retrieval augmented generation **RAG**

A way of giving an AI your own documents to work from. Before it answers, it looks up the relevant pages from your files and reads them, so answers come from your information rather than general memory.

WHY IT MATTERS

Out of the box, an AI knows nothing about your prices, your policies or your projects. RAG fixes that without retraining the model, which is slow and expensive. Update the documents and the assistant is current. It also cuts down on made up answers.

IN PRACTICE

A cabinetry shop loads its warranty terms, finish options and lead times into the assistant. When a customer asks about a finish, the answer comes from the real spec sheet, with the source shown.

Hallucination

When an AI states something false with full confidence: a price you do not charge, a service you do not offer, a policy that does not exist.

WHY IT MATTERS

An assistant that invents answers on your website is a liability. The fixes are known: give it your real documents, tell it to say "I do not know" and hand off to a person, and keep it out of topics where being wrong is costly. Test it with hard questions before it goes live.

IN PRACTICE

A shuttle company's assistant is told never to state pricing or availability. When asked, it collects the details and books a call with a person instead of guessing.

Context window and tokens

The context window is how much an AI can read and keep in mind at once in one conversation. It is measured in tokens, chunks of text roughly three quarters of a word long. Usage is often billed by the token.

WHY IT MATTERS

A bigger window means the assistant can read a long contract or a whole conversation without forgetting the start. It also means a higher cost per answer. For most business uses the limit is not a problem, but it explains why some tools "forget" and why usage bills vary.

IN PRACTICE

A law firm's document summarizer handles a long lease in one pass because the model's context window fits it. A smaller model would need the file split into pieces.

Model Context Protocol MCP

An open standard for connecting an AI to the tools and data a business already uses: a CRM, a calendar, a database, a scheduling app. Think of it as a universal plug between the AI and your systems.

WHY IT MATTERS

Without a connection, an assistant can only talk. With MCP, it can look up a customer, check a schedule or create a record, using the same rules and permissions your staff have. It is how an AI goes from answering questions to doing work.

IN PRACTICE

An operations assistant connects over MCP to a shuttle company's scheduling and HR tools. A manager asks "who is driving Saturday" and gets the real roster, not a guess.

Guardrails

The limits you put on an AI: topics it will not discuss, actions it needs approval for, data it cannot see, and a hand off to a person when it is unsure.

WHY IT MATTERS

An AI without limits will eventually say or do something you would not. Guardrails let it work on your behalf while keeping the risky decisions human. Approval steps for anything that sends, spends or deletes are the usual starting point.

IN PRACTICE

A builder's sales agent drafts follow up emails but cannot send one until someone approves it in a queue. After a few weeks of clean drafts, routine ones go out automatically and only unusual ones wait.

Vibe coding

Building software by describing what you want to an AI in plain English and letting it write the code, then testing and adjusting by conversation rather than by hand.

WHY IT MATTERS

It has made small, custom tools affordable for businesses that could never justify a developer. The catch: a tool that works in a demo is not the same as one that is secure, backed up and maintainable. Who reviews the code, and who owns it, still matters.

IN PRACTICE

A landscaper describes a crew scheduling tool: jobs on a calendar, drag to reassign, text the crew in the morning. A working first version exists the same week, built with Claude Code, then gets hardened before the crews rely on it.

Software and apps

Application programming interface API

The way one piece of software talks to another. Your CRM has an API so your website form can create a lead in it; your payment processor has one so your app can charge a card.

WHY IT MATTERS

When a vendor says "we have an API", it means your other tools can connect to it and you are not locked into their screens. When they do not, you are typing data twice. Ask about the API before you buy anything you will rely on.

IN PRACTICE

A shuttle company's ride dashboard pulls trips from the ride system's API every few minutes and shows ridership to the university client without anyone exporting a spreadsheet.

Webhook

An automatic message one system sends to another the instant something happens: "a form was just submitted", "a payment just cleared". The opposite of checking every few minutes.

WHY IT MATTERS

Webhooks are what make "instantly" possible: the lead text to your phone the second a form lands, the CRM record created before you finish reading the email. They are cheap, reliable and the backbone of most small business automation.

IN PRACTICE

When a payment comes through Stripe for a cabinetry deposit, a webhook tells the CRM to move the deal to "Deposit received" and sends the customer a scheduling link.

Database

Where your software stores its information in an organized way: customers, jobs, invoices, messages. The spreadsheet behind the app, but built to hold a lot and never lose a row.

WHY IT MATTERS

The database is the asset. Screens and apps can be rebuilt; years of customer history cannot. You should know where yours lives, that it is backed up, and that you can export it. Our builds use Supabase, and the client holds the keys.

IN PRACTICE

A builder's CRM, website forms and project photos all write to one database. When the builder wants a new report, it is a query against data already there, not a new system.

Multi tenant

One piece of software serving many separate customers, each seeing only its own data, the way one apartment building houses many tenants behind their own locked doors.

WHY IT MATTERS

If you are building software to sell to others, or run a franchise system, multi tenant design means one codebase, one set of updates, and clean separation between customers. Getting it right early is far cheaper than retrofitting it.

IN PRACTICE

A shuttle operator's rider software runs one system for a university, a hotel and a planned community. Each client logs in and sees only its own routes, riders and reports.

Native app vs web app

A native app is installed from the App Store or Google Play and built for that phone. A web app runs in the browser at a web address. A progressive web app (PWA) is a web app that can be added to the home screen and feel installed.

WHY IT MATTERS

Native apps cost more to build and maintain (two platforms, store reviews) but can use the phone fully: notifications, camera, GPS in the background. For most business tools a web app or PWA does the job and updates instantly for everyone. Choose by what the app must do.

IN PRACTICE

A shuttle company's rider app is native, because riders expect it in the store and need push alerts. Its driver inspection tool is a web app, because drivers just open a link, snap photos and submit.

Authentication

How software confirms who is logging in: password, email link, text code, Google sign in. Authorization is the related step of deciding what that person is allowed to see and do.

WHY IT MATTERS

Weak login is the most common way a small business gets breached. Modern tools make strong login easy: passwordless links, two factor codes, single sign on. Role based permissions mean a driver sees the driver screen and the owner sees everything.

IN PRACTICE

A landscaper's CRM lets crews sign in with a text code to their phone, no passwords to forget. Only the owner and office manager can see pricing and payroll.

Environment variable

A setting stored outside the code, like a password, an API key or a database address. The code reads it at startup, so secrets never sit in the source files and the same app can run in test and live modes with different settings.

WHY IT MATTERS

You will hear this term when a developer asks for "the Stripe key" or when something breaks after a move. Keys kept this way can be rotated without touching code and are not exposed if the code is shared. Ask where yours are kept and who has access.

IN PRACTICE

A painting company's site uses one Twilio key for texting in the test version and a different one in production. Swapping is a settings change in Vercel, not a code change.

Deployment

Pushing a new version of a website or app live. Modern setups do this automatically when code changes are approved, with a preview version to check first and a one click way to roll back.

WHY IT MATTERS

How updates ship decides how often you can improve things safely. Manual uploads mean fear of breaking the site. Automated deployment with previews means small changes go out often, get checked, and get undone fast if needed.

IN PRACTICE

A change to a builder's services page creates a preview link. The owner looks at it on a phone, approves, and it is live about a minute later. If something looks off, the previous version is one click away.

Open source

Software whose code is public and free to use, change and build on. Much of the modern web runs on it: WordPress, Node.js, React, PostgreSQL.

WHY IT MATTERS

Open source means no license fee, no single vendor who can shut you off, and many people checking for problems. It also means someone has to maintain and update it. Your tools are probably built on it even if you never hear the term.

IN PRACTICE

A financial advisor's website is plain HTML and open source JavaScript hosted on Vercel. There is no platform fee and no vendor to lose, and any developer can pick it up.

Integration

Connecting two tools so they share data without someone copying it: the form into the CRM, the CRM into the calendar, the calendar into the text reminder.

WHY IT MATTERS

Most wasted office hours are retyping. Each integration removes one of those jobs and one place for a mistake. Some are built in, some use a connector like Zapier, some are custom. The question to ask every vendor is "what does this connect to".

IN PRACTICE

A painting company's Calendly bookings create a CRM contact, a Google Calendar event and a text reminder to the estimator, with nobody entering anything twice.

Measuring

Analytics

Measuring what people do on your website and in your tools: how many came, from where, what they looked at, and whether they did what you wanted.

WHY IT MATTERS

Without analytics you are guessing about what works. With it you know which pages lead to calls, which sources are worth paying for, and where visitors give up. The key is tracking the actions that matter (calls, forms, bookings), not just page views.

IN PRACTICE

A builder tracks three things: form submissions, tap to call clicks and brochure downloads. Each month the owner sees how many of each came from search, from the Business Profile and from referrals.

Google Analytics 4 GA4

Google's free tool for measuring website traffic and behavior. It replaced the older Universal Analytics and is built around events (what people did) rather than page views alone.

WHY IT MATTERS

It tells you where visitors come from and what they do, and it connects to Google Ads and Search Console. It is powerful and confusing out of the box. The useful version has a few conversion events set up and a simple report built on top.

IN PRACTICE

A landscaper's GA4 is set up to count quote form submissions and phone taps as conversions. A monthly dashboard shows those two numbers by source, and nothing else.

Google Search Console

Google's free tool that shows how your site performs in search: which searches showed your pages, how often people clicked, and any problems Google found while crawling.

WHY IT MATTERS

This is the only place to see the actual words people searched before finding you. It also warns you about broken pages, mobile problems and indexing issues before they cost you traffic. Every site should have it connected.

IN PRACTICE

A cabinetry shop sees it is showing up for "kitchen remodel" but getting few clicks, so it rewrites the page title to match what people are actually looking for.

Heatmap and session recordings

A heatmap colors your page by where people click, tap and scroll. Session recordings replay anonymous visits so you can watch where someone got stuck. Microsoft Clarity does both for free.

WHY IT MATTERS

Analytics tells you that people left. A heatmap shows you why: the button nobody sees, the form field everyone abandons, the section nobody scrolls to. Ten minutes of recordings often explains a month of numbers.

IN PRACTICE

Recordings on a painting company's site show phone visitors tapping a photo gallery that is not a link. Making the photos open a project page fixes the dead end.

Dashboard

One screen that shows the handful of numbers you care about, updated automatically from the systems that hold them. No logging into five tools, no spreadsheet exports.

WHY IT MATTERS

A dashboard turns data into a habit. When the owner can glance at leads, bookings and revenue every morning, problems show up in days instead of at quarter end. For clients, a shared dashboard replaces the monthly report and builds trust.

IN PRACTICE

A campus shuttle program has a live dashboard showing rides today, wait times and busiest stops. The university client checks it any time instead of waiting for a report.

Key performance indicator KPI

A number you have decided matters enough to watch regularly, because it tells you whether the business is moving the right way: leads per week, close rate, average job size, response time.

WHY IT MATTERS

Everything can be measured. Only a few things should be watched. Picking three to five KPIs and tracking them the same way each month is how you notice a slide early and know whether a change helped.

IN PRACTICE

A landscaper watches four numbers: new leads, quotes sent, quotes won, and average monthly contract value. Each appears on one dashboard with last month next to it.

Attribution

Working out which marketing effort gets credit for a lead or sale. Simple attribution credits the last click; fuller models share credit across the ad, the search and the referral that all played a part.

WHY IT MATTERS

Without attribution you cut the thing that was quietly working. Perfect attribution is impossible (people see your truck, then search your name), so aim for good enough: tag your links, use tracking phone numbers, and ask people how they heard about you.

IN PRACTICE

A builder's CRM records that a customer first visited from a Google search, came back from a Business Profile link, and finally booked from a follow up email. Each step is visible in the record.

Uptime

The share of time your website or app is actually working and reachable. Monitoring tools check every minute or so and alert you when it is down.

WHY IT MATTERS

A site that is down at 8 pm on Sunday loses the weekend leads and you never know it happened. Good hosting keeps uptime high, and a monitor tells you the moment something breaks, so you hear it from the monitor and not from a customer.

IN PRACTICE

A hotel's booking page is checked every minute. When the payment provider has an outage, the owner gets a text within minutes and puts a notice on the page before guests hit an error.

761 Ventures builds websites built to be found, CRMs and lead systems, custom software, mobile apps, AI assistants, dashboards and automation for operating businesses. Start a project at 761ventures.com/intake.