Before you sign a Google Business Profile package

A checklist to read any pitch against.

What a provider can do, what stays with you, and what nobody can promise.

What a provider can do

- Keep your name, category, hours and services right
- Add attributes, such as Wi-Fi or parking
- Write posts and upload your photos
- Reply to reviews, with your clear approval
- Watch for changes other people suggest, and check them with you
- Report how many people saw the profile and acted on it

What stays with you

- The owner seat on the profile
- Google's check that your business is real, which happens at your shop
- Photos of your real shop
- Asking real customers for reviews
- Answering the phone

Check the access

- You are the owner
- The provider is a manager you invite
- Each person signs in with their own Google Account
- Nobody needs your password

Check the way out

- Google's policy gives you sole control back within 7 business days of your notice
- Ask how you give notice, and to whom

Walk away if you hear

- A guaranteed top spot on Google Maps
- A claim to work for Google, with no @google.com email to prove it
- A threat that your listing will disappear unless you sign
- The free listing sold as a paid product
- Your profile held back until you pay

Reviews: the hard line

- No written, bought or rewarded reviews, not even a free coffee for five stars
- Google removes them
- In Singapore, businesses caught buying fake reviews have had to post a public apology for six months

Get it in writing

- An official agreement listing the services and their costs
- A written note that the profile itself is free
- Reports that keep Google's figures apart from other sites

Questions to ask before you sign

- Which parts happen at my shop, and who does them?
- Will I stay the owner?
- How do I leave, and how fast do I get control back?
- What will you change without asking me first?