

The Index-in-48-Hours Playbook

Publish → crawled → indexed → tracked. The exact sequence that stops good pages from sitting invisible for six weeks. By Benjamin Hübner · imdominator.com

You found a winnable keyword. You built the page. And then nothing happens for six weeks — because Google never crawled it. This is the quietest way to waste good SEO work, and it happens constantly on small and new sites where crawl budget is thin and nobody is linking to you.

A page that is not indexed cannot rank. Not "ranks badly" — **cannot rank at all**. This playbook is the sequence I run on every new page, in order, the day it goes live.

The three states, and why they are different

State	What it means	Can it rank?
Crawled	Googlebot fetched the URL.	No
Indexed	Google stored it and considers it eligible for results.	Yes
Ranking	It appears in the top 100 for at least one query.	It is already

Most people check rankings. You should be checking **indexing** first. Type **site:yourdomain.com/your-slug** into Google. If nothing comes back, ranking is not your problem yet.

Phase 1 — Before you hit publish (5 minutes)

Indexing speed is decided mostly here, not after. Google finds new pages by following links from pages it already crawls. A page with no link pointing at it is an orphan, and orphans wait.

1. **Give it a crawl path.** Open an existing page on your site that already ranks or gets traffic, and add a contextual link to the new URL from inside a paragraph. Not the footer, not a "related posts" widget — inside the body text, with anchor text that describes the destination. One good link from a crawled page beats ten from a sidebar.
2. **Check the slug is final.** Changing a URL after indexing means starting over and adds a redirect. Lock it now.
3. **Confirm it is indexable.** No noindex meta tag, no noindex header, not disallowed in robots.txt, canonical tag pointing at itself. Most "why won't Google index this" cases end here.
4. **Confirm it is in your sitemap.** If your CMS generates one, load /sitemap.xml and search for the slug. If your sitemap is manual, add it.
5. **Set the publish date properly.** A backdated post can get deprioritised as stale before it ever gets a look.

ACTION STEP (DO THIS NOW)

Do the internal link first, before publishing. It is the single highest-leverage step in this entire document and it takes 60 seconds.

Phase 2 — The first hour after publishing

1. **Google Search Console → URL Inspection.** Paste the full URL. Hit *Test live URL* — this confirms Google can actually fetch and render it right now. Then hit **Request Indexing**. This is the fastest lever you have and it is free. Limit is roughly 10-12 a day, so spend them on pages that matter.
2. **Read what the inspection tells you.** If it says "URL is not on Google" that is expected for a new page. If it says the page is blocked, redirects, or has a canonical pointing elsewhere, stop and fix that — requesting indexing will not override it.
3. **Resubmit your sitemap.** GSC → Sitemaps → re-enter the sitemap URL and submit. Cheap, takes 10 seconds.
4. **Bing Webmaster Tools → URL submission.** Bing indexes far faster than Google and it feeds ChatGPT's web results and Copilot. If you use IndexNow (a WordPress plugin or a single API call), it pings Bing, Yandex and others automatically the moment you publish. Worth setting up once.

INDEXNOW — ONE-LINE SUBMISSION (OPTIONAL, SET UP ONCE)

```
curl -X POST "https://api.indexnow.org/indexnow" -H "Content-Type: application/json" -d '{"host":"yourdomain.com","key":"YOUR-KEY","keyLocation":"https://yourdomain.com/YOUR-KEY.txt","urlList":["https://yourdomain.com/your-new-page"]}'
```

Phase 3 — The first 48 hours: three external touches

You are not building backlinks here. You are creating crawl signals — public URLs that a crawler already visits daily, now pointing at your new page. Three is enough.

Touch	What to do	Why it works
1. A social post	Post the link somewhere crawlable with a real sentence about what is on the page. Not just the URL.	Crawled constantly. Cheap discovery signal.
2. A genuine answer	Find one Reddit thread, forum post or Quora question where the page is a real answer. Answer properly in your own words, link once as a source.	High-crawl domains, and it can send real traffic. Do not drop naked links — that gets removed and can get you banned.
3. Your own list or profile	Newsletter mention, or a link from a profile page you control on a domain that already gets crawled.	Adds a second discovery path independent of your site.

NOTE

Do not buy links, do not spam comments, do not use "indexing services" that promise instant results. None of it is needed for a page that is properly linked and submitted, and some of it is actively harmful.

Phase 4 — The check schedule

When	Check	If it fails
48 hours	site:yourdomain.com/your-slug returns the page	Re-inspect in GSC and read the coverage reason. Go to the diagnosis table below.
Day 7	GSC Performance shows impressions for the page	Indexed but invisible usually means relevance, not indexing. Re-run SERP Gap AI on the live page's keyword — check your own four spots this time.
Day 14	The page appears somewhere in the top 100 for the target keyword	Add two internal links from other relevant pages. Check whether another page of yours is competing for the same query.
Day 30	Position is improving, not flat	Pull GSC queries for this page. If it is picking up queries you did not target, that is a second page waiting to be built.

Diagnosis: what GSC is actually telling you

Status in GSC	Plain English	The fix
Discovered – currently not indexed	Google knows the URL exists but has not bothered to crawl it. Almost always a crawl-priority problem on a low-authority site.	More internal links from crawled pages. Request indexing. Reduce thin pages elsewhere on the site competing for crawl budget.
Crawled – currently not indexed	Google looked and decided it was not worth storing. This is a quality or duplication judgement.	The page is too thin, too similar to something else, or adds nothing new. Add real information gain, then request indexing again.
Duplicate, Google chose a different canonical	Google thinks another page — often yours — already covers this.	Differentiate the four relevance spots hard, or merge the two pages and redirect.
Excluded by noindex tag	You told it not to index.	Check your SEO plugin, the page settings, and any category-level defaults.
Soft 404	The page looks empty or error-like to Google.	Usually a JS-rendered page with no server HTML, or a page that is mostly navigation. Check the rendered HTML in the live test.
Page with redirect	The URL you submitted redirects.	Submit the destination URL instead, and fix your internal links to point at it directly.

The log — five columns, that is all

Keep one sheet for every page you publish. It takes 20 seconds per row and it turns SEO from a feeling into a system. This is also what the **30-Day Winnable Sprint Tracker** in this bonus stack does for you automatically.

URL	Target keyword	SERP Gap verdict	Published	Indexed on
/example-slug	example keyword	WINNABLE	2026-08-02	2026-08-03

ACTION STEP (DO THIS NOW)

Set a repeating reminder for day 7 and day 30 on every page you publish. Almost nobody does the day-30 check, and it is where you find the queries that hand you your next winnable page for free — see the **GSC Keyword & Content Gap Guide** in this stack.

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