

Google for Business!



How to Turn Your Free, “Google My Business” Listing into a Prime Source of New Customers Today

Tim Dodd

Disclaimer

This book has been written for information purposes only. Every effort has been made to ensure this book is as complete and accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes in typography or content. Also, this book provides information only up to the publishing date. Therefore, this book should be used as a guide - not as the ultimate source.

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Tim Dodd - 3d Consulting Services
www.3dConsultingServices.com
help@3dconsultingservices.com

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3d Consulting Services

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Introduction

Google My Business results have become a big part of the online presence of brick and mortar businesses. If someone searches for “electrician near me” or “electrician + LOCATION,” they do not want to explore websites. They want to find an electrician.

Google understands this and has started showing real businesses at the top of their search results.

Our complete guide to Google My Business will show you how to master the platform and get the best results for your business in 2020 and beyond. We will show you how to create your Google My Business account, list your business, optimize your listing, and more.

This step-by-step guide will help you understand Google My Business inside and out so that you can improve your Google Map rankings, communicate with customers, control your online presence, and generate more leads.

What Is Google My Business?

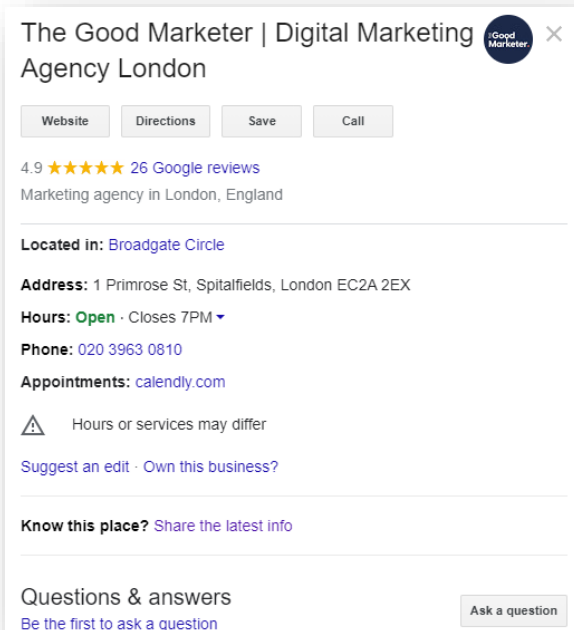
Google My Business (GMB) is a **free tool** which allows business owners manage how their business appears on Google Search and Google Maps.


When prospective customers or clients perform a Google search, they will see a map and a list of three local listings which are typically nearby and relevant to their query. This is called the Local 3 Pack and is the Google My Business profile of each business. You can see how much

information your customers can attain about your business almost immediately. They have the option to choose your business or 2 others. They also have enough information to make a purchasing decision.

The main information a business owner can showcase includes the business name, category, address, hours, phone, website, appointments, reviews, photos, videos, questions and answers, products, services, business description. Other industries such as hotels and restaurants may have additional options.

Below is a Knowledge Panel which relays all the information you can provide in your GMB profile. The more the profile is filled out, the more information the Knowledge Panel will show.



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4.9 ★★★★★ 26 Google reviews
Marketing agency in London, England


Located in: [Broadgate Circle](#)

Address: 1 Primrose St, Spitalfields, London EC2A 2EX

Hours: **Open** · Closes 7PM ▾

Phone: 020 3963 0810


Appointments: [calendly.com](#)

 Hours or services may differ





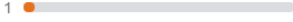
[Suggest an edit](#) · [Own this business?](#)


Know this place? [Share the latest info](#)


Questions & answers
[Be the first to ask a question](#) [Ask a question](#)


 Send to your phone [Send](#)

Review summary ? [Write a review](#)


5  **4.9**
4 
3 
2 
1  ★★★★★
26 reviews

 "Great **service** and attention to detail."


 "The Good Marketer are a fantastic **company** to work with."

 "Have **no problems** recommending Tom and the team."





Google reviews

 Elle Henley
★★★★★ 2 days ago
Positive: Professionalism, Quality, Value





We've been working with The Good Marketer for the best part of this year, and we've been really impressed with the team. Their ability to communicate is great, and Tom and Hannah are especially knowledgeable and helpful. They are flexible with business needs and always understanding, and we'd have no problem in recommending them!

 Like

Profiles

 [LinkedIn](#)  [Facebook](#)  [Instagram](#)  [Twitter](#)

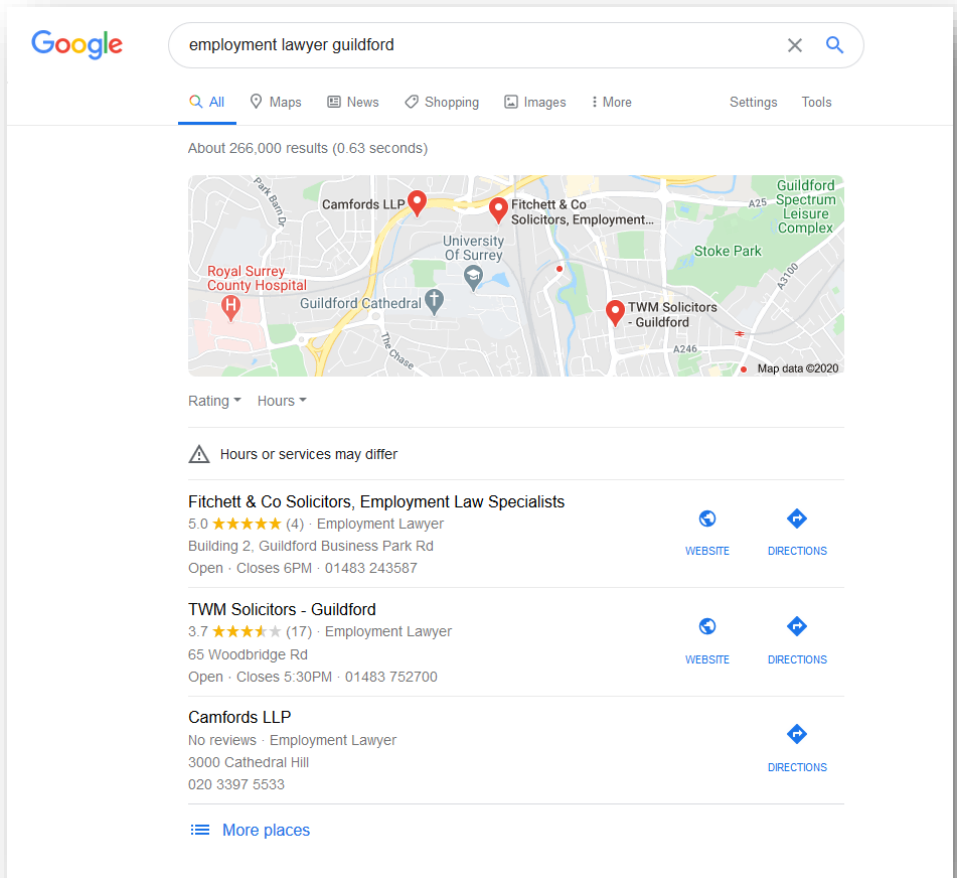
People also search for [View 15+ more](#)

 Level Marketing agency	 Don't Panic London Advertising agency	 Small Axe Communic... Non-profit organisation	 Angel Marketing consultant
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Web results

www.thegoodmarketer.co.uk
[Digital Marketing Agency London | The Good Marketer London](#)
We're a **Digital Marketing Agency** in London which helps Small to Medium Businesses to grow, develop & succeed. Get **in touch** to grow your business.

This is the Google Local 3 Pack. Most of this information is being pulled from the Google My Business listing as well. Ranking in the Local 3 Pack will provide a huge boost in recognition, reputation and sales.



The screenshot shows a Google search interface for 'employment lawyer guildford'. The search bar at the top contains the text 'employment lawyer guildford' with a search icon to the right. Below the search bar are navigation tabs for 'All', 'Maps', 'News', 'Shopping', 'Images', and 'More'. The 'All' tab is selected. Below the navigation tabs, it says 'About 266,000 results (0.63 seconds)'. A map is displayed, showing several locations in Guildford, Surrey, marked with red location pins. The locations are: Camfords LLP, Fitchett & Co Solicitors, Employment..., TWM Solicitors - Guildford, Royal Surrey County Hospital, Guildford Cathedral, University Of Surrey, and Stoke Park. Below the map, there are filters for 'Rating' and 'Hours'. A warning icon and text state 'Hours or services may differ'. The local 3 pack consists of three entries:

- Fitchett & Co Solicitors, Employment Law Specialists**
5.0 ★★★★★ (4) · Employment Lawyer
Building 2, Guildford Business Park Rd
Open · Closes 6PM · 01483 243587
WEBSITE DIRECTIONS
- TWM Solicitors - Guildford**
3.7 ★★★★★ (17) · Employment Lawyer
65 Woodbridge Rd
Open · Closes 5:30PM · 01483 752700
WEBSITE DIRECTIONS
- Camfords LLP**
No reviews · Employment Lawyer
3000 Cathedral Hill
020 3397 5533
DIRECTIONS

At the bottom of the 3 pack, there is a link: [More places](#)

Google My Business Listings Top Local Search Results

A local search phrase includes keywords like “near me,” or a specific location like a city, district, or address. For local searches, Google no longer gives websites the prime real estate. Right beneath the ads, at the top, you do not see the top SERPs. You see the top local business listings. And that is a big deal.

Local searches have become a qualified step in the buyer’s journey. Most of the time, consumers that look for more product information on their phone end with a local Google search.

A whopping 82% of smartphone shoppers make a “near me” or local search before deciding on a business. You do not want to miss out on more than 8 out of 10 potential customers. Together with Google Ads for local businesses, this helps you cash in on local searches. And that is not the only benefit.

Knowledge Panel for Branded Searches

With a Google My Business listing, a “knowledge panel” for your business will show up on the right side of the search results for branded or relevant searches.

You can see the same summary of your business available on Google Maps. Your address, average rating, business hours, directions, and some general business information.

If competitors are running ads against your business name, the knowledge panel can be a great way to grab the attention of potential

customers instantly. The panel helps draw their attention away from Google ads directly below the search bar, to your business.

Features of Google My Business

What does Google My Business offer business owners? Here is a few of the most popular features:

Insights: Google's dashboard provides key investigates customer activity and interaction, allowing businesses to learn what is working—and what is not—on their listing. In addition, it can help them understand their community better as they target new customers. How did searchers find your business? Where did they come from? How are your photos performing? Google My Business insights highlight the answers to these questions and helps businesses optimize and improve over time.

Posts: Easily post custom updates and offers on your local listing, inviting customers to make return visits and engage further with your business. Updates can be made anytime from your phone, tablet, or computer for on-the-go maintenance. Not sure what to post about? Try a few ideas we know customers will love, like limited-time offers, contest promotions, and partnership announcements.

Bookings: Allow customers to schedule an appointment or book services directly from your listing with a simple click. Integrated scheduling partners help you easily organize, track, and manage your bookings in one place.

Review Management: Did you know? 91% of consumers read online reviews, and 84% of people trust reviews as much as they do a personal recommendation from friends. Online, reviews are *everything*. Engage customers in two-way communications when you receive and respond to reviews.

Q&A: Respond to customers' direct questions about your business and pin frequently asked inquiries for easy viewing.

Photos: Strong visuals are crucial for good first impressions—and they are key to a more highly-clicked business listing. Google My Business allows you to upload your best photos and videos to entice customers to visit you.

Accuracy across the Web: Google is Google. It powers so much of the internet, and many third-party sites use Google for their info. Meaning, the info you post on your Google My Business listing helps disseminate consistent, accurate information about your business across the web.

Research shows that 60% of consumers have searched for a business at least six times in the last year. So if your business ticks these initial boxes, Google My Business could help you become a more accurately represented, visible, and visited business. Ready to set up your GMB listing? Let's walk through the process step-by-step. Read on to learn how to create, verify, and optimize your Google My Business listing.

Why You Need a Google My Business Listing

Thanks to today's technology, it is now faster and easier to promote your product or service. According to Search Engine Watch, 50% of the people who use mobile phones for local searches end up visiting a store. Considering almost everyone uses a smartphone nowadays, can you imagine the potential sales you can get just through organic search and Google My Business?

Creating, verifying, and properly optimizing your Google My Business account is an invaluable opportunity, which is why you should utilize this feature to its fullest extent.

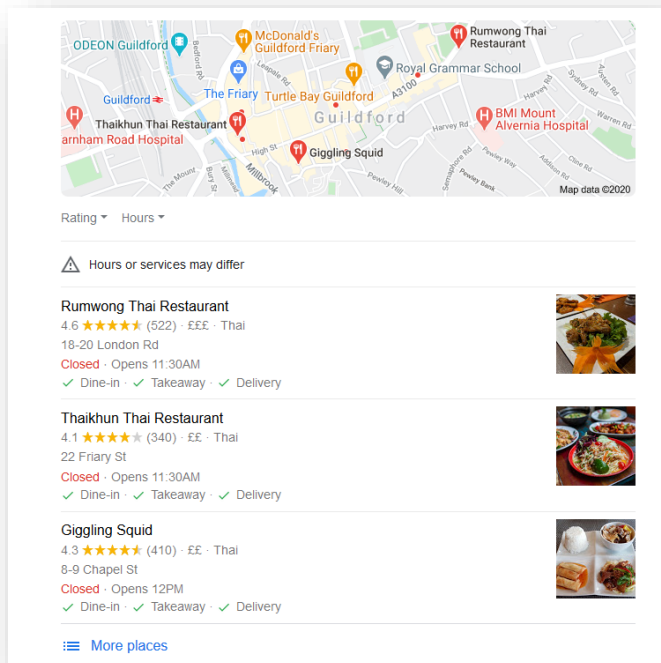
What else can GMB give you? Here some of the other benefits of Google My Business.

1. GMB Allows You to Appear in Maps and Local Pack Listings

Notice the highly visible map and the list of business names that appear right on top of the page whenever you search for places on Google? That is called the Local Pack, and there are two reasons why you should pay attention to it.

a) It is Highly Visible

The Local Pack takes up huge real estate on page one of Google search results, and it's the first thing any Google user will see after they type in their query.



b) It Enables Users to See the Information They Need briefly

The Local Pack is a Search Engine Results Page (SERP) which displays the places related to your search. It also includes a bunch of other relevant information that any potential customer might want access to — where it's located on the map, the business's contact number in case potential customers have other questions or want to make a quick reservation, store hours, and even the establishment's star rating. It's a convenient feature for both the business and customers.

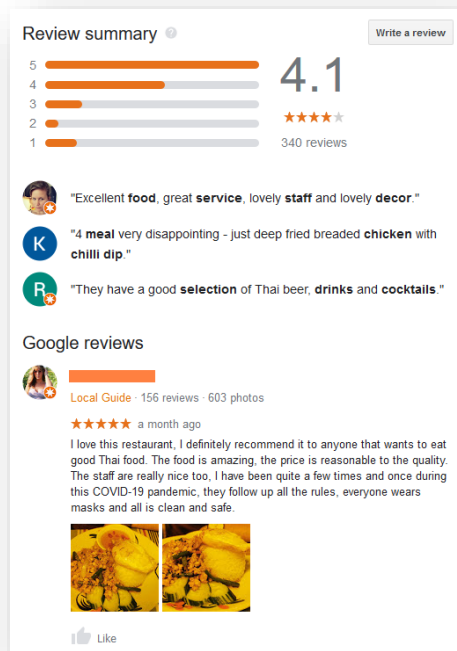
According to Moz, GMB is the biggest determining factor of local pack rankings. So, if you are aiming to connect to your target audience — in this case, the people who are within your service area

— verifying, updating, and optimizing your online information on Google My Business can help.

2. GMB Allows People to Leave Reviews of Your Business

One must never underestimate the power of customer reviews, especially when it comes to search rankings. Another study by Moz shows that online reviews are thought to make up 10% of how search engines rank results.

Thus, if you want your business to be visible in the search results, using GMB to make it easy for your customers to leave positive feedback about your business is a must.



Reviews Improve Local SEO

Many rely on reviews when making decisions about their purchases. In fact, as much as 93% of customers might be influenced by online reviews. In other words, almost *all* of them.

It is because these little blocks of text are testimonies of actual consumers who weren't paid by the company to promote their product or service. Thus, people feel that they are more credible, and so, many believe what they say.

More and more people are checking out customer reviews before choosing a local business. Since people love reading reviews, search engines use them to rank search results. If you can properly utilize this GMB feature, it can have a huge impact on your business.

Reviews Increase Sales

Positive reviews matter. They not only improve your search engine ranking but also serve as free and reliable ads for your products or services. For instance, customers are more confident to try out a product with many positive reviews as opposed to one with a lot of criticisms.

It is important to gain positive reviews but remember that even the best businesses get negative reviews. If this happens to you, handle them in a professional matter. Do not take these criticisms personally. Instead, use them to improve your product or service. Negative reviews, when used properly, can provide useful information to help your business improve.

Reviews Show What Customers Think About Your Business

Reviews provide business owners with a glimpse of how customers see your brand. They allow you to view how consumers are taking your products or services, what strategies you ought to keep, what things you must change, or the areas you should improve on.

Whether they are good or bad, reviews can help you understand what your clients think. View them logically and take them into consideration.

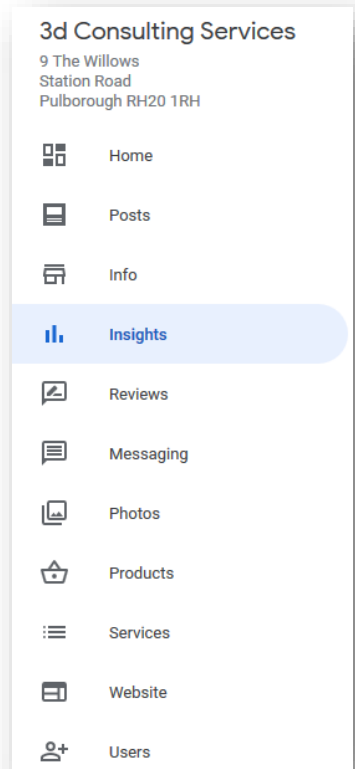
3. GMB Provides Insights That Give You Helpful Information

GMB is a helpful tool for your business. It not only promotes your product or service; it also helps you understand the market. How is this possible?

Google My Business comes with powerful features that provide insights on important areas to assist you with creating strategies & making decisions. This tool enables you to access statistics and insights that can help determine where your audience is coming from.

Views

GMB can show you the number of views that your business profile, photos, and posts are getting. This is especially



important to verify the effectiveness of your campaigns — whether they are working well and getting the attention you want or aren't doing anything.

Search Queries

GMB provides a report where you can learn and understand how consumers find your business. It shows how people are searching — specifically what keywords they input — to find your listing.

Knowing what keywords are relevant to your online presence can help you significantly boost traffic. For example, you can dominate relevant long-tail keywords to seriously increase clicks to your webpages. GMB can provide this information.

Engagement

GMB can show you just how your audience is interacting with your posts. It enables you to see what posts they share and what types of comments they leave. This way, you will have an idea of the types of material that work well for your business.

Audience

GMB has a section where you can find a summary of the profile of people following you. You will be able to check out the age groups, gender, and even the countries they're from. These are all helpful when you are building a campaign.

Clicks on Website Link

GMB can also show you the number of clicks on your website link.

Quantifying the information and knowing these statistics can help you create sound strategies. If you want to improve your audience engagement, website traffic, and boost company sales, you should take some time to study the numbers.

4. It is Free and Easy to Use

No matter how helpful a product is, its potential will not be maximized if it is overly costly, impractical, and difficult to use. Fortunately, that is not the case when it comes to Google My Business.

This efficient tool is free and easy to use, so even start-ups can utilize it to promote their business. Creating and verifying your profile can be done in a matter of hours. In fact, there are tools that can get you instantly verified. Once that is done, you are ready to rock page one of Google. Plus, it has great tools to help you analyse performance so you can find ways to improve your business's ranking.

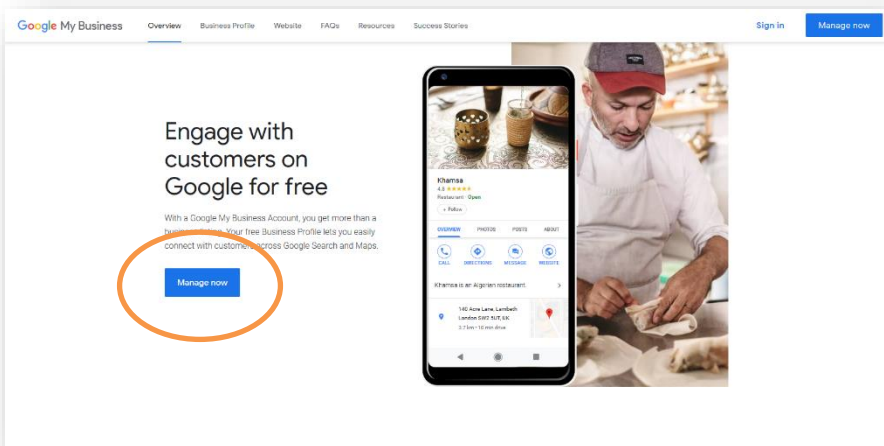
Google My Business makes it easy for start-ups and local businesses to promote their products and services online by increasing visibility and improving their chances of showing up in search results. It can help potential customers to quickly find and contact you. It is a free tool that you can make use of to improve your online presence, connect with your customers, and increase your business's revenue.

How To Create Your Google My Business Listing

If you have not already created a business listing on Google My Business, it is way past time you created one. Below, we quickly outline all the necessary steps to creating your first listing.

Step #1: Log in to Your Google Account

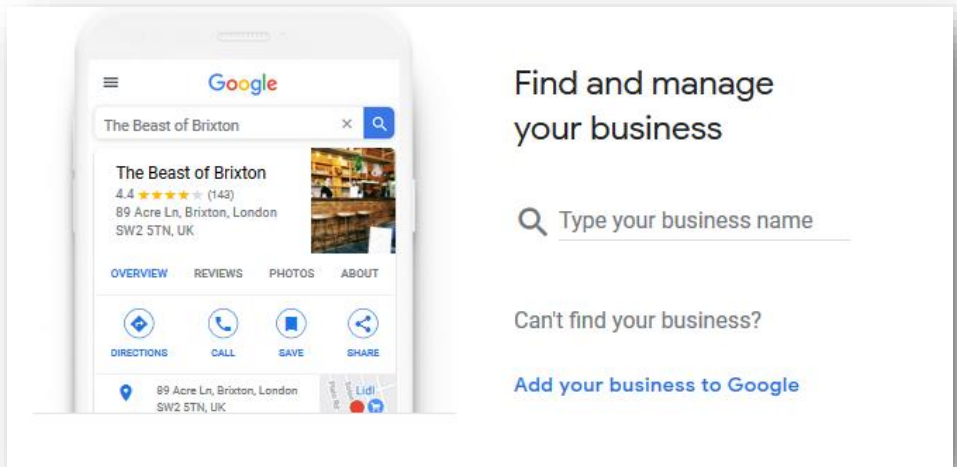
- The first thing you need to do is visit google.com/business and click the “Manage Now” button.



- Next, you’ll be prompted to log in to an existing Google account. Enter the email and username you use for Gmail, Google Docs, Google Analytics, or any other Google product.
- If you are a member of the minority that doesn’t already have a Google account, you need [to create one](#).

- Once logged in, Google will automatically start the process of creating your first listing.

Step #2: Find Your Google Maps Listing if It Exists

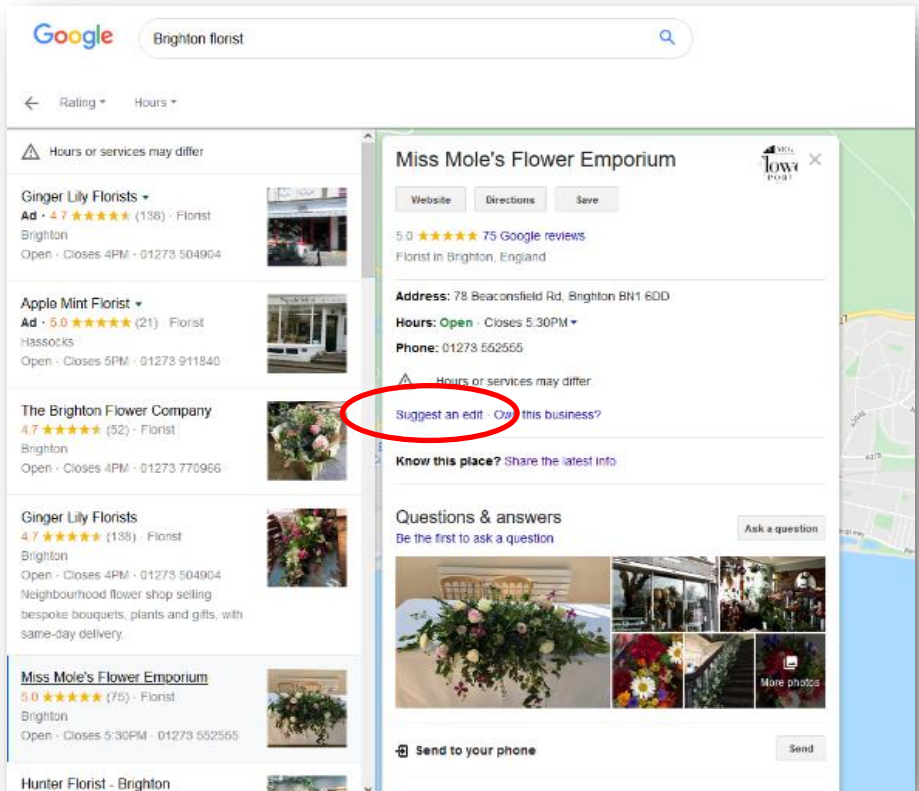


Even if you, the business owner or manager, haven't created an official business listing for Google, your customers may have created a profile for you. It is particularly common in typical consumer-facing brick-and-mortar businesses like restaurants, hair salons, shoe stores, etc.

- Type in your exact business name and location to check if your business already exists on Google Maps.
- If you find an existing listing, select it and move on.
- If there is no existing listing, click the “Add your business to Google” link at the bottom of the page.

Note: Do not Search on Google Maps

- If you are trying to claim ownership of your listing, do not perform the search from within Google Maps and click the “Suggest an edit” option.



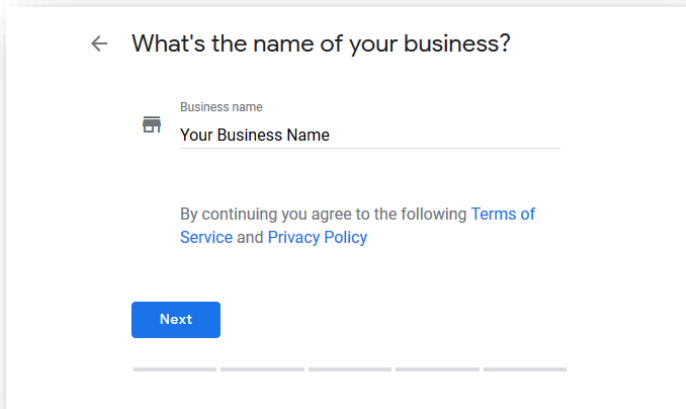
This function taps into Google Maps' system for user-generated content for new information about businesses.

You can suggest edits, and Google may implement the changes, but you will not have any ownership over your profile.

You will not be able to answer questions or messages or set specific cover images.

Step #3: Set Your Business Name

The next step is exceedingly simple. All you must do is type in the name of your business and click the “Next” button.

A screenshot of a web form titled "What's the name of your business?". The form has a back arrow on the left. Below the title, there is a "Business name" label and a text input field containing "Your Business Name". Below the input field, there is a line of text: "By continuing you agree to the following [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)". At the bottom of the form is a blue "Next" button. Below the button is a progress indicator consisting of four horizontal dashes, with the first one being filled.

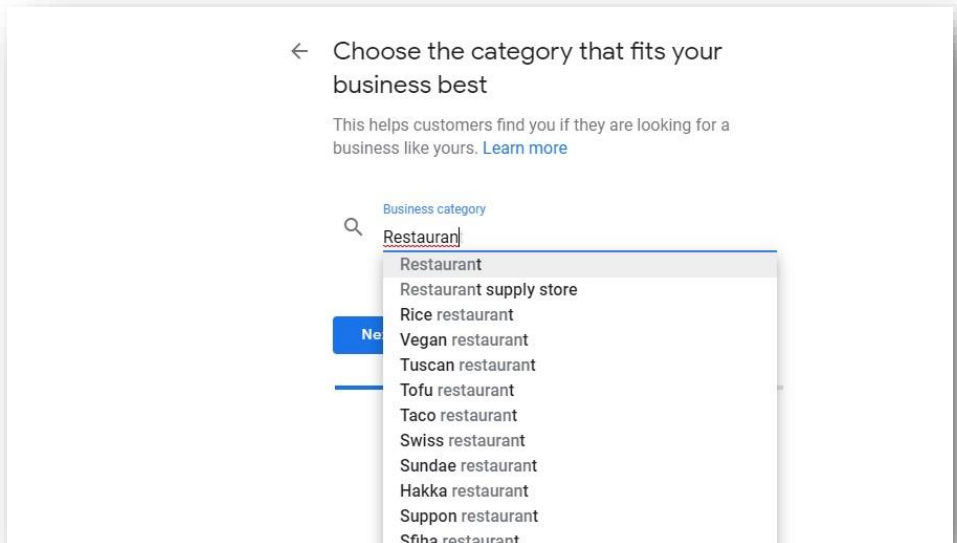
If you have a common business name, or if you are managing a chain store/restaurant, make sure you include the location in the name.

Enter your city, district, or street name as appropriate.

Step #4: Choose Your Business Category

Once you have set the name for your business, Google wants to know how to categorise it.

- Focus on getting it right from the start, as it will help searchers find your business. Type something into the “Business category” field and you’ll prompt a drop-down menu of related options.

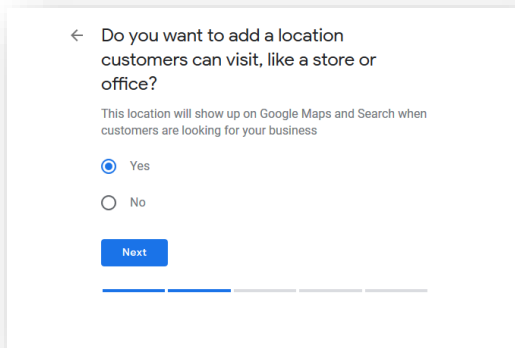


- Make sure you select a specific option that is relevant to your ideal customers.
- For example, if you manage a restaurant, you probably don’t want to select just “Restaurant, unless you’re in a small town.
- Choose an option that reflects your cuisine or theme of your restaurant, for example, “Japanese restaurant” or “Art cafe.”
- Once you have settled on the right option, click the “Next” button to proceed.

Step #5: Add Your Business Location

If you have a physical location for your business, other than a home office, you need to add the address of your business.

- First, select “Yes” and click the “Next” button when prompted if you want to register a location.



← Do you want to add a location customers can visit, like a store or office?

This location will show up on Google Maps and Search when customers are looking for your business

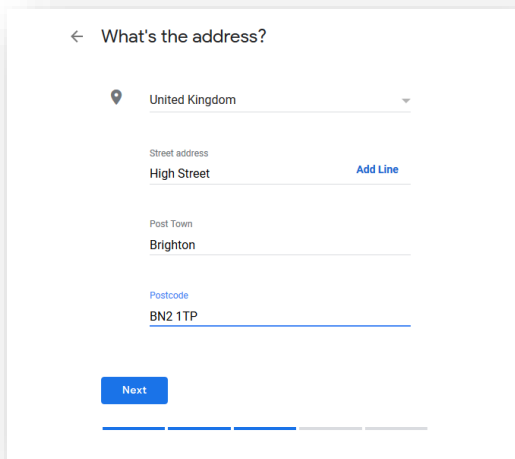
Yes

No

[Next](#)

A progress bar at the bottom shows the first step is completed.

- Then, type in your registered street address, including street numbers, building names, and floor/room number.



← What's the address?

Street address [Add Line](#)

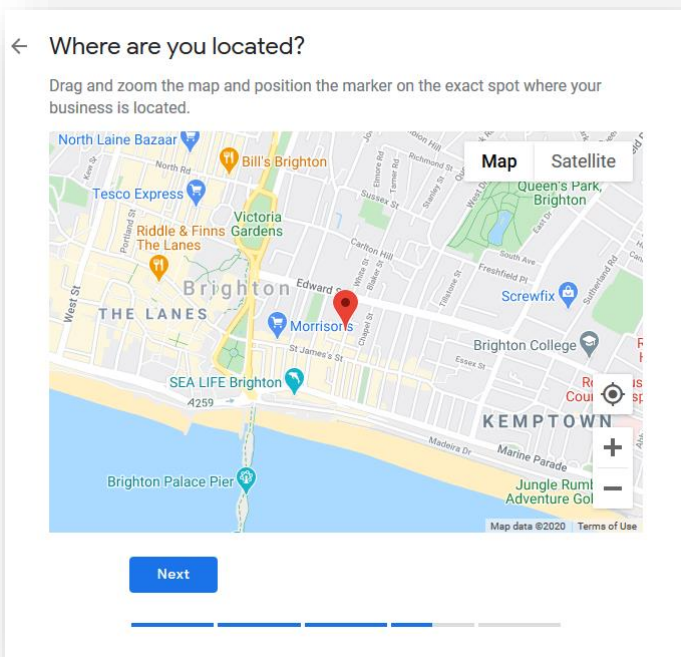
Post Town

Postcode

[Next](#)

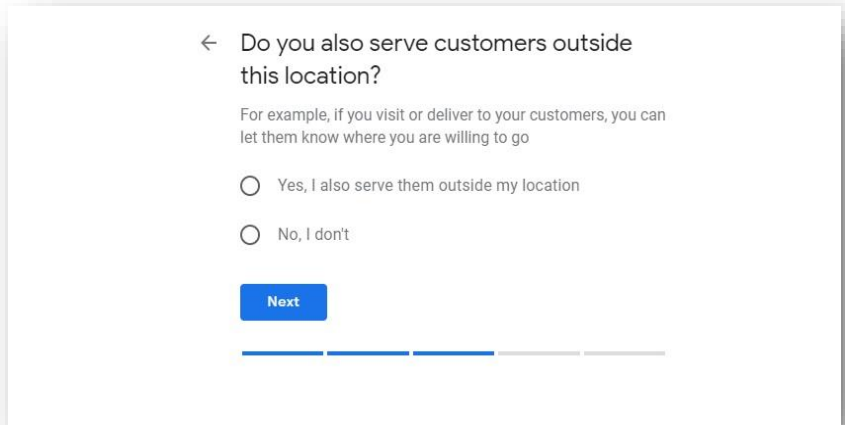
A progress bar at the bottom shows the first step is completed.

- Proceed with the “Next” button.
- Google may show you a list of potential businesses that might be your listing. Select yours, if displayed. Click “Next” to move on.
- Finally, Google will want to confirm your location by dropping a pin on the map.
- If the original pin Google suggests is correct, click “Next” to confirm the location of your business and move on.



Step #6 (Optional): Set Your Delivery/Service Area

If you offer delivery or have a set service area for your business, you can choose to register this as well.



← Do you also serve customers outside this location?

For example, if you visit or deliver to your customers, you can let them know where you are willing to go

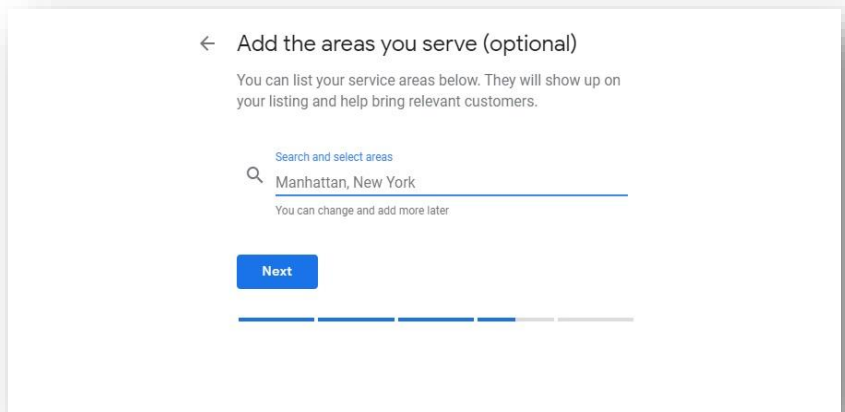
Yes, I also serve them outside my location

No, I don't

[Next](#)

A progress bar at the bottom shows the first step is completed with a blue line, while the remaining steps are shown as grey lines.

- First, select the “Yes, I also serve them outside my location” option, and click the “Next” button.
- From here, you can search and select larger areas in your city that your business serves.



← Add the areas you serve (optional)

You can list your service areas below. They will show up on your listing and help bring relevant customers.

[Search and select areas](#)

🔍

You can change and add more later

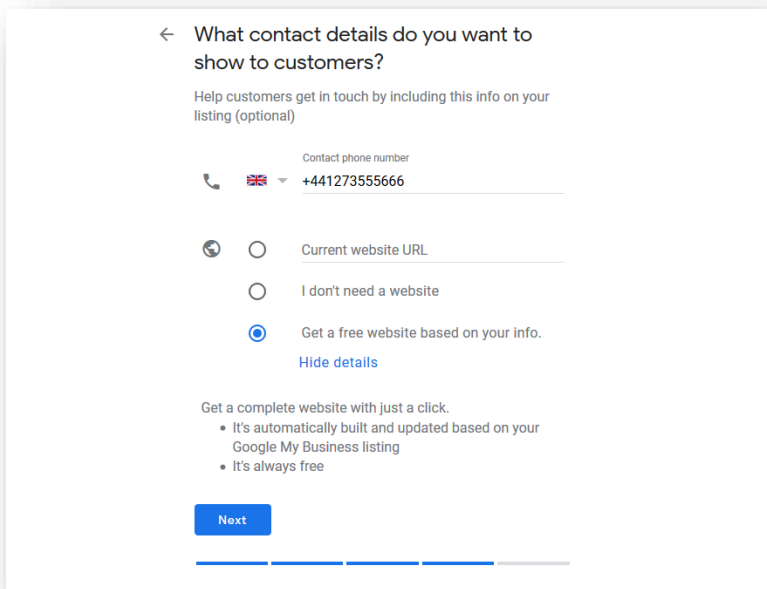
[Next](#)

A progress bar at the bottom shows the first step is completed with a blue line, while the remaining steps are shown as grey lines.

- Once you have selected the main areas, click the “Next” button to save and move on.
- You can also edit or add more areas after you have already created your listing.

Step #7: Set Your Contact Details

The next step is to register your contact details.



← What contact details do you want to show to customers?

Help customers get in touch by including this info on your listing (optional)

Contact phone number
+441273555666

Current website URL
 I don't need a website
 Get a free website based on your info.
[Hide details](#)

Get a complete website with just a click.

- It's automatically built and updated based on your Google My Business listing
- It's always free

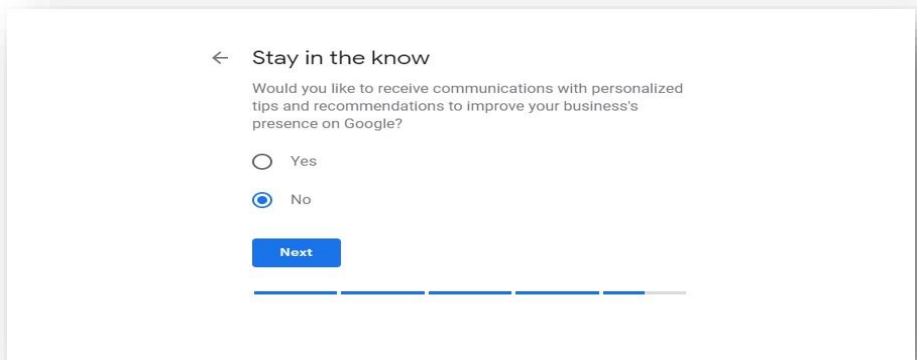
Next

A progress bar at the bottom shows five steps, with the first step being the active one.

- Set your business phone number and website URL and click the “next button” to move on to the next step.

Step #8: Toggle Email Notifications

The last step before you can take your listing live is to toggle whether you want to receive tips, recommendations, and notifications about your business profile by email. If you are a consumer business with a lot of clients that leave reviews or ask questions, having email notifications turned on can help you be prompt with responses.

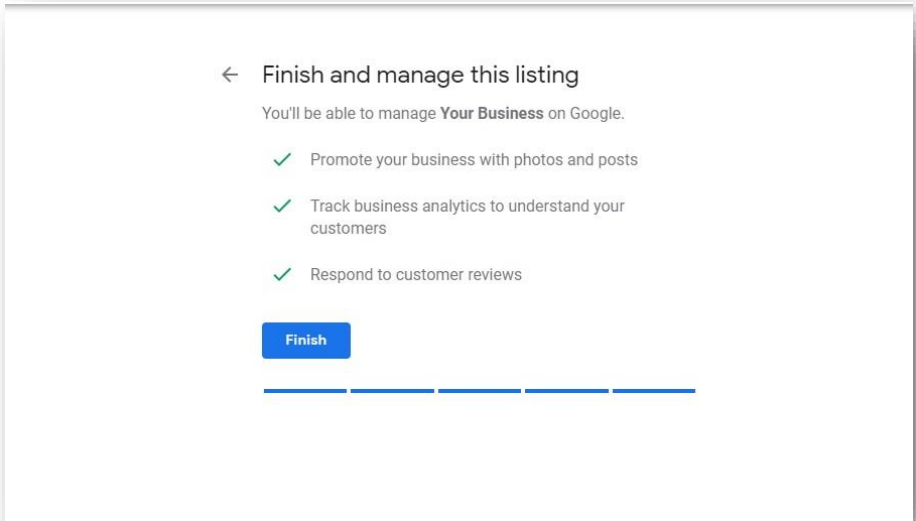


The screenshot shows a mobile interface for a Google Business Profile. At the top left is a back arrow and the text 'Stay in the know'. Below this is the question: 'Would you like to receive communications with personalized tips and recommendations to improve your business's presence on Google?'. There are two radio button options: 'Yes' (which is unselected) and 'No' (which is selected with a blue dot). Below the options is a blue 'Next' button. At the bottom, there is a progress indicator consisting of five blue segments followed by a grey segment.

- If all you want is to create and optimize your business profile, and you're not an inbox follower, select "No" and continue.

Step #9: Finalize Your Listing

You have reached the final step.



Clicking “Finish” will save your business profile and data, but you’re not officially in control of the listing yet.

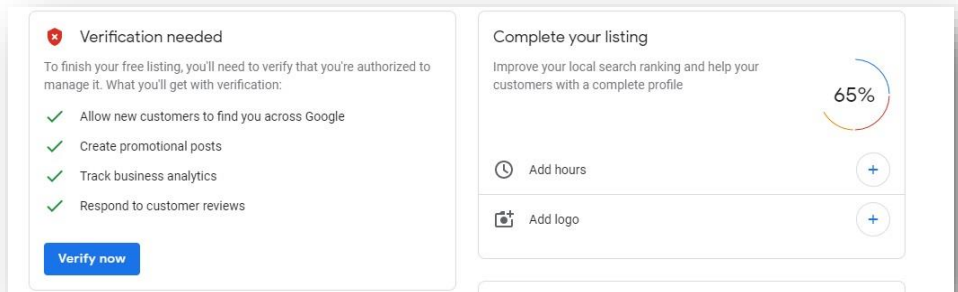
But before you get full control over your Google listing, and can interact with your customers through answering reviews, questions, and messages, you need to verify that you are the owner of the business that you created the profile for.

How to Verify Your Google My Business Listing

After you have created your listing, you need to convince Google that you are the actual business owner. The standard option is to validate your business by receiving a confirmation code in a snail mail letter to your business address.

Verify Via Postcard

- Log in to your Google My Business dashboard.
- Make sure you select the right Google User when logging in.
- If you have just created your listing, you should still see a prompt like this at the top of the page:



For most businesses worldwide, a postcard is the only way to verify your business.

- Type in the contact name, your name or the business owner's, and click "Mail" to proceed.

Choose a way to verify

In order to fully manage and represent this business on Google, you'll need to confirm that it's yours.

Select how you'd like to get a verification code. [Learn more](#)



Postcard by mail

Have a postcard with your code mailed to this address

May take up to 19 days to arrive

Joe Smith

Mail

Some Business

2448 Maple Street, Wisconsin, WI 12345



More options



After requesting the letter with the verification information, your listing status will still look the same, and it will say “Verification needed” until you have received the postcard and entered the code.

Once you have received the postcard, follow the instructions and enter the code on the card to verify your account.

Verify by Email or Phone

- Select businesses may be able to verify their business by phone or email instead. If your business is eligible, you may select either option from the “more options” section.
- Confirm that your email or phone number is correct, and then select the verify option.
- Enter the verification code you receive to verify your Google My Business listing.

Optimizing Your Google My Business Listing

Any business today needs targeted visibility on Google. Most businesses know that this requires optimizing their website and Google Ads, but what most do not know is that there is a third entity that also needs optimizing: their Google business listing. Officially known as your Business Profile, this powerful listing is a dynamic snapshot of your business that highlights your best features and enables potential customers to quickly find, learn about and engage with you—all from the Search Engine Results Pages (SERP).

And the best part? It's completely free.

What does an optimized Google Business Profile look like?

Before we get into the strategies, let us make sure we are on the same page about what an optimized Business Profile looks like and why you need one. To help you visualize what you are striving for and why, let us look at a mockup of an incomplete Google Business Profile versus a complete and optimized one.

Here, Foxglove Floristry's Google Business Profile is a short, unattractive box, but Ginger Lily Florists Business Profile is complete and would show even more when you scroll down. This diagram does not encompass all the features of an optimized Google Business Profile, but it does give you an idea of how much more attractive and engaging an optimized profile is.

Foxglove Floristry



Save

Phone:

[Suggest an edit](#) · [Own this business?](#)

Add missing information

[Add business hours](#)

[Add website](#)

Know this place? [Share the latest info](#)

Questions & answers

[Be the first to ask a question](#)

Ask a question

Send to your phone

Send

Review summary

[Be the first to review](#)

Write a review

Vs.

Ginger Lily Florists



Website Directions Save

4.7 ★★★★★ 138 Google reviews

Florist in Brighton, England

Neighbourhood flower shop selling bespoke bouquets, plants and gifts, with same-day delivery.

Address: 93 Preston Drive, Brighton BN1 6LD

Hours: Closed · Opens 9AM Fri ▾

Products and Services: [gingerlilyflorists.co.uk](#)

Phone: 01273 504904

Hours or services may differ

[Suggest an edit](#) · [Own this business?](#)

Know this place? [Share the latest info](#)

Questions & answers

Q: do you have any anemones

Ask a question

(No answers)

See all questions (1)



Review summary

Write a review



"Excellent **service** - beautiful flowers delivered on time for a **funeral**"



"The **owner** refused to give the deposit back, stating 'a late **cancellation**'."



"Gorgeous flowers, artistic **arrangements** and a great delivery **service**."

Google reviews



8 reviews · 2 photos

★★★★★ a week ago

Ginger Lily Florists created the most beautiful table arrangements, hair pieces, button hole flowers and bouquet for our wedding! They were very attentive and responsive in their emails and clearly very knowledgeable! They created my dream bouquet and I'm so glad I chose them to do our flowers! I would HIGHLY recommend Ginger Lily Florists!



Like

Response from the owner a week ago

Oh Olivia! Thank you so much xx it was our absolute pleasure xx

How to optimize your Google Business Profile

Now that you see that optimizing your Google Business Profile is the key to getting found in local search, standing out above competitors, and winning customers online, it's time to get to work on doing just that. Here are 13 ways you can turn your Google Business Profile into a 24/7 marketing and lead generation tool for your local business.

1. Create a Google My Business account

First and foremost, it is important to note here that a Google Business Profile is a separate entity from a Google My Business account. The latter is used to gain access to and optimize the former which means that to make the optimizations laid out in this guide, you need to have a Google My Business account and then tell Google to connect it with your Google Business Profile.

- To create an account, head to [Google.com/business](https://www.google.com/business) and sign in with the regular Google/Gmail account you use for your business (as opposed to your personal Gmail, if you have one).

2. Complete every section

The completeness of your Google Business Profile not only helps Google to rank you higher in local search results, but it also increases the number of actions customers take when they find your profile. There is a lot of information to provide, so here are some guidelines for prioritizing.

These aspects of your profile should be completed right away:

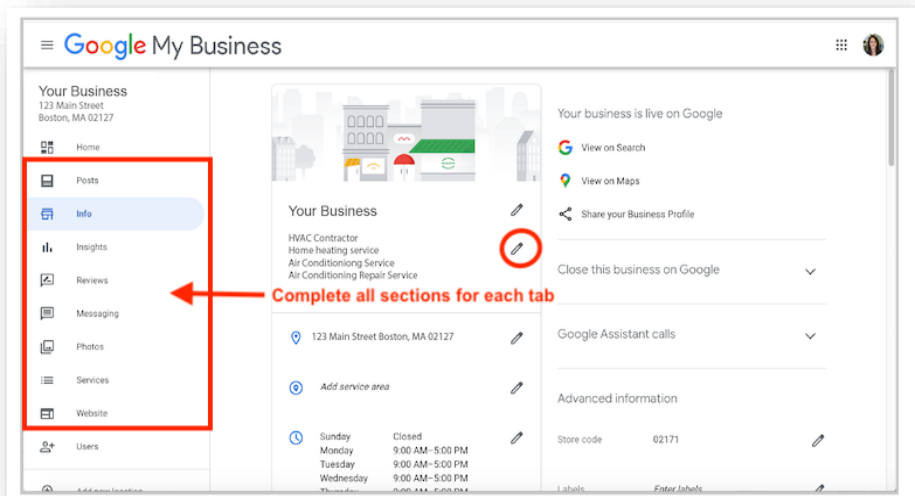
- Name
- Address
- Phone
- Website
- Hours

These sections take a bit more time and thought:

- Category and Attributes
- Products and services
- From the business
- Questions and answers (Owner-generated queries)

These sections are ongoing:

- Posts
- Reviews
- Questions and answers (Consumer-generated)



3. Be meticulous with contact information

Here are the steps for optimizing the contact information in your Google Business Profile:

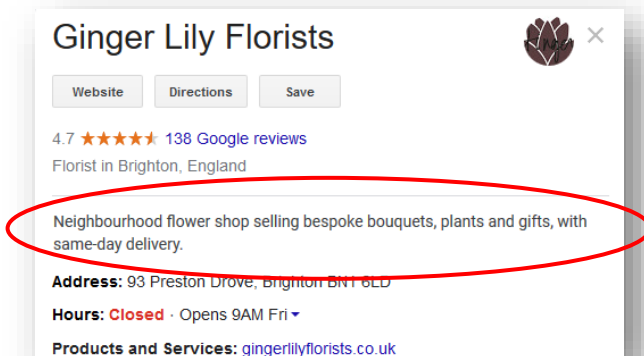
1. **Make sure your business name is identical to the one you use on your store signage.** i.e. exactly as it appears in the real world. If you add your location name (unless it's in your brand name) or keywords, Google considers it as spam and could penalize you.
2. **Make sure that both your business name and address exactly match your other listings across the web.** This means using “st” vs “street” or “co” vs “company” consistently. Google's algorithm takes these things into account when assessing your credibility.
3. **Indicate both your regular and holiday hours.** This encourages customers to visit you and avoids the potential of a negative review left by someone who took the trip out to your store only to find it was closed.
4. **Check Google's categorization of your business.** The first thing to note is that the brief description that appears just below your business name in your Business Profile is not actually in your control. This is the editorial summary that Google writes to ensure consistency across the platform.

This description is not in your control. But the good news is that Google does a fairly good job at coming up with descriptions.



However, the description you do have control over is the **“from the business”** section in your Google My Business account dashboard. This section appears lower in your profile, often under the reviews section.

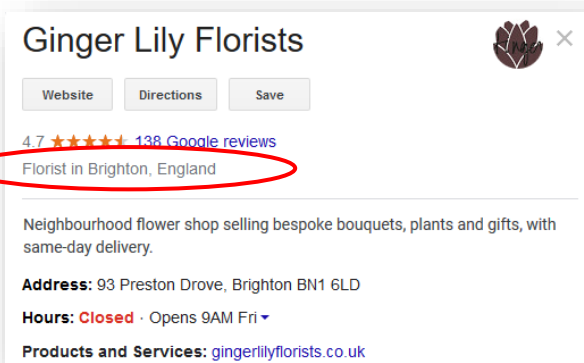
To optimize the “from the business” section of your Google Business Profile:



- Use all 750 characters, with your key information in the first 250.
- Repurpose content from your mission statement or "About Us" page.

- Use keywords your audience uses to find businesses like yours.
- Do not repeat information already visible in the other sections of your profile. Use this space to talk about what customers like most about your business and what sets you apart from others.
- Do not include links or HTML.

5. Choose a category



Your category appears in the top portion of your Business Profile.

Google offers a set number of categories, so it is important to choose the right ones. Here's how to optimize your Google Business Profile using categories:

- **Be specific.** If you are a nail salon, choose "Nail Salon" and not just "Salon." If you are a restaurant, choose "Egyptian Restaurant," "American Restaurant," etc., rather than simply "Restaurant." A drop-down list of categories will appear once you start typing, but you can also see a full list of GMB categories

[here](#) to ensure you find the most specific one for your business (there are over 4,000 categories so it's worth the look).

- **Choose secondary categories.** Many businesses fall into multiple categories. Set your primary category to your chief offering (for example, “Grocery Store”) and then choose additional categories that apply, such as “Grocery Delivery Service” or “Gourmet Grocery Store.”
- **Do not overdo it.** You want Google to connect you with consumers who need your service, so choose only categories that match your offering. For example, if you are an appliance repair business, select “Appliance Repair” only, not “Appliance Parts Supplier.” Technically you do supply service parts, but this is not a standalone offering of your business. (Pro tip: Do not confuse categories with products or attributes, which are separate sections.)

Also, keep in mind that Google might ask you to verify your business if you edit your category list or add multiple. This is just to ensure accuracy across their platform.

6. Select applicable attributes

As we just mentioned, once you choose a category, Google will give you a list of attributes you can check off to further describe your business. Attributes are special features that potential customers seek out, like “gift shop on-site” or “free Wi-Fi.”



Attributes are not specific to the Google My Business platform (review sites like Yelp have them, too). But Google’s attributes get granular, like “good for working on laptop” or “popular for travelers”.

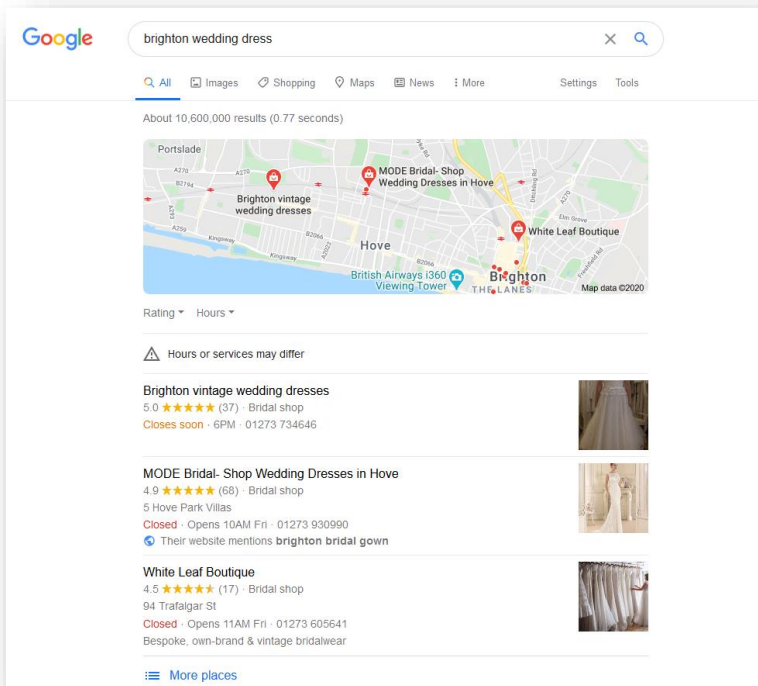
7. Add photos

According to Google, customers are 42% more likely to request driving directions to a business if its Business Profile has photos, and 35% more likely to click through to its website. Furthermore, a BrightLocal study showed that businesses with more than 100 photos get 520% more calls, 2,717% more direction requests, and 1,065% more website clicks than the average business.

This doesn’t mean you should go crazy and add a hundred images to your profile at once. Follow these tips to use photos to optimize your Google Business Profile:

- Add at least one new photo every seven days.
- For your thumbnail photo, upload your logo.

- For your cover photo, use something that best represents your brand—but don't fuss over this because Google will display different feature photos depending on the search query.
- For other general photos, refer to Google's photo guidelines for specifications, but be sure to include happy customers, interior and exterior views, and team photos.
- No stock photos, and no photos with special effects or branding. Google wants to represent your business as it is in the real world.
- Focus on quality images that have clear depictions (to align with image-enriched results).

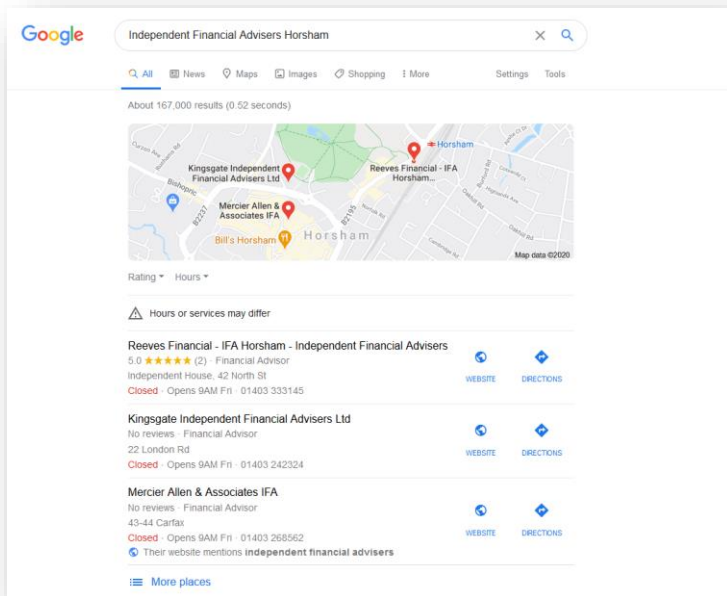


Google will pull a specific photo from a Business Profile and display it directly in local results if it matches the keyword searched.

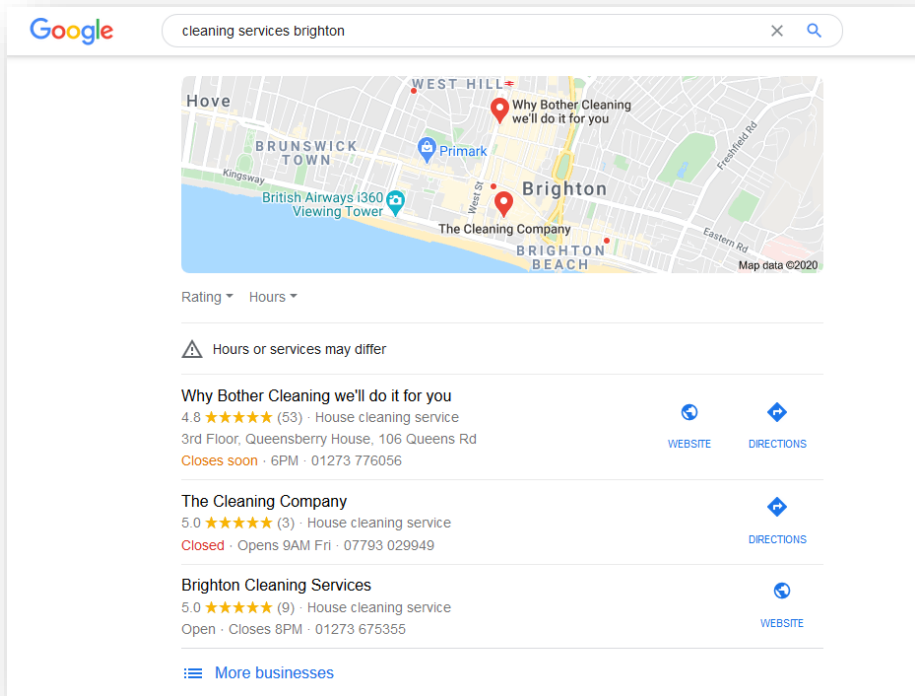
- Geo-tag your photos to further indicate to Google your prominence in your area.
- Add videos, too!
- Use [Google's Street View](#) to add a 360° photo to your profile.

8. Get Google reviews

If you were to get a list of businesses in search results like the one below, which one would you be most likely to choose? One with several attractive 5 star reviews or one with no reviews at all?



Google knows that reviews are the #1 influence on consumer buying, so this is a key ranking factor in their algorithm. You'll also see for yourself the impact of reviews on ranking. For most searches performed on Google, the first three local results that appear (in what is known as the "Local 3-Pack") are the ones with multiple reviews and solid star ratings:



In addition, Google may also display a Business Profile in search results if it has reviews that contain those keywords. Google will embolden keywords in your reviews to further validate relevancy.

To optimize your Google Business Profile with reviews, follow these tips:

- Start with your long-time, loyal customers to get momentum.
- Make it as easy as possible for customers by creating a [review shortcut link](#) or using a free shortcut link generator.
- Ask! 62% of customers will write a review if asked.
Do so via email, text, social media, and in-person conversations.
- Remind customers that reviews are not just for your benefit;

they help people who have the same pain points as them to find a solution and make informed decisions.

- Have a “Reviews” page on your website with a CTA to leave one.
- Respond to reviews. This feedback incentivizes additional customers to leave theirs, reveals a lot about your business to prospects, and improves your local SEO.

Be careful not to incentivize reviews with discounts, gifts, or cash, though—that is not allowed.

9. Post to your Google Business Profile

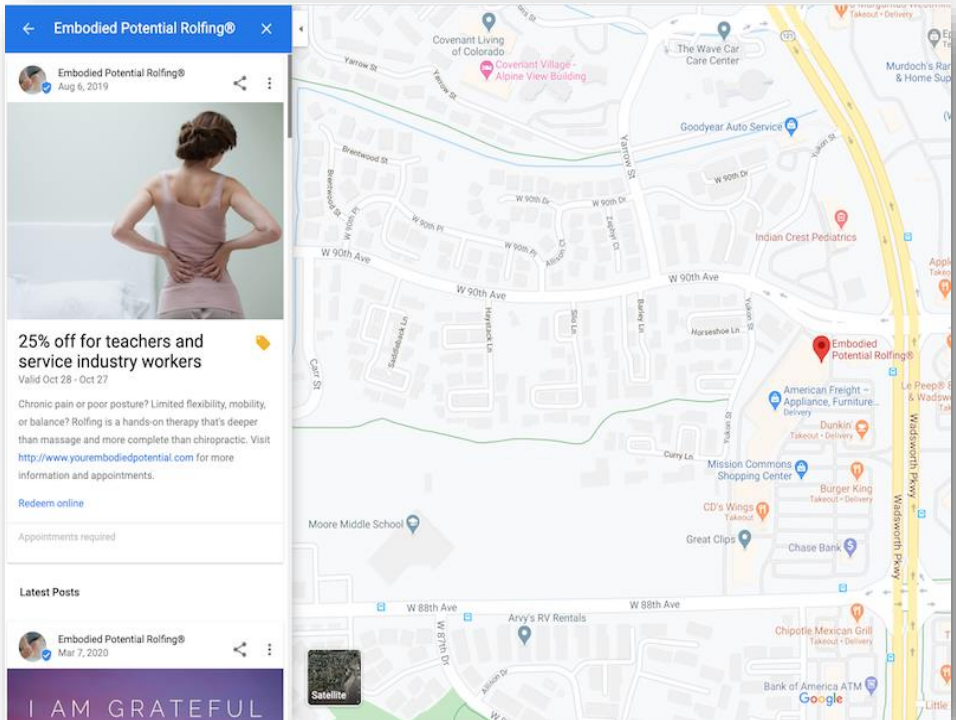
Just like with other social media platforms, you can post to your Google Business Profile about announcements, offers, events, and products.

Posts are created in your Google My Business dashboard and show up on the “Updates” section toward the bottom of your Business Profile.

However, they become more prominent based on the search query.

Here’s how posts help you to optimize your Google Business Profile:

- Posts increase the number of actions taken by consumers who find your profile.
- Posting regularly sends positive ranking signals to Google in the same way that adding photos does.
- Consumers have higher intent on search engines versus other posting platforms (i.e., Facebook and Instagram, where they are leisurely scrolling), so they are more likely to engage with your Google posts.
- Consumers can follow your Business Profile and get notified of new posts and updates.



Your Google My Business posts will even appear on Maps—it's free advertising for your local business!

Some tips for optimizing your Google Business Profile with posts:

- Post regularly. Not just to send signals to Google, but also because certain post types expire every seven days.
- Use event and offer posts for marketing campaigns that have a timeline. You can choose a date range and the posts will stay live for the duration of that timeline.
- Include links and CTAs in every post.
- As of writing this post, there is currently a COVID-19 post type,

which we'd encourage you to use to effectively communicate with your audience during the pandemic.

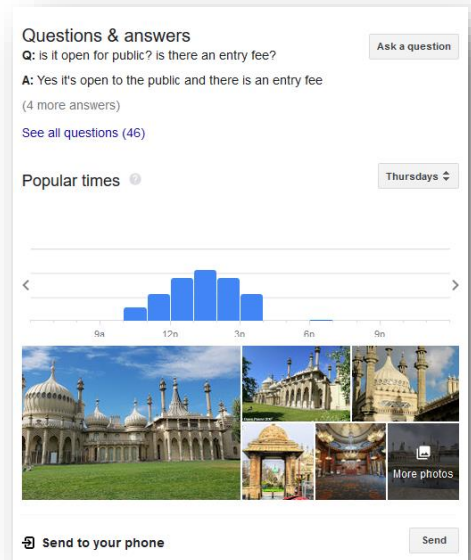
10. Ask and answer questions

Have you noticed on Amazon that in addition to the product description and customer reviews, there is a section for questions and answers?

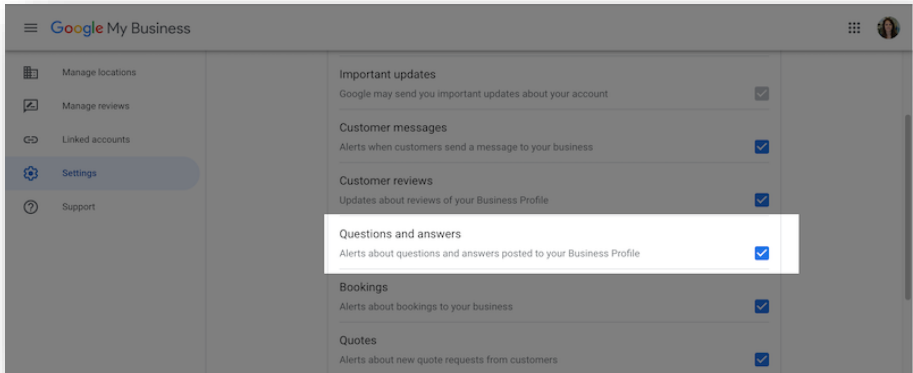
Google offers the same feature in Google Business Profiles.

Answers to these questions may be the impetus for a customer deciding to choose your business. However, this section is particularly important to optimize because not only can anyone ask a question on a business's Google profile but also **anyone can answer**. This can lead to inaccurate information on your profile, or even worse, something like the Q&A on this pizza restaurant's profile:

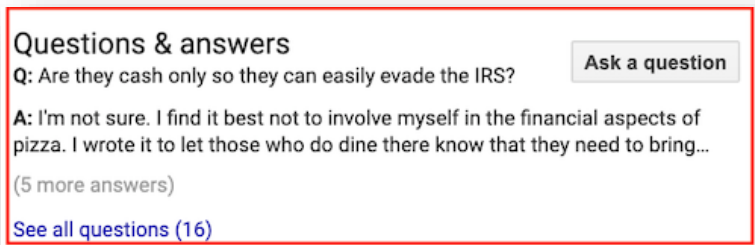
You cannot turn off the Q&A feature of your Business Profile, but there are ways to optimize it:



- **Set up alerts** so you can stay on top of questions and answers posted to your profile.



- **Seed your own Q&A section.** Make a list of the most frequently asked questions your business gets. Then ask, answer & promote your answer on your own profile. This does not go against Google's terms and conditions. In fact, Google encourages it.



- **Keep keywords in mind.** Questions and answers that contain keywords can help improve your Business Profile's ranking for that keyword. So, keep your keyword strategy in mind when seeding your Q&A section, but use them loosely and organically, and do not keyword stuff.

By monitoring and seeding your Q&A section, you can ensure accurate

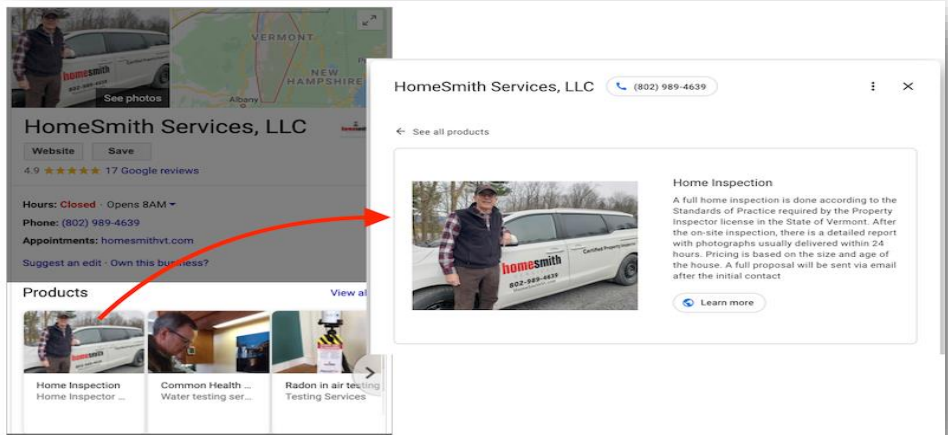
information, highlight your best features, and lower common barriers to entry.

Note: Google has temporarily suppressed the Q&A section of most Business Profiles right now in response to COVID-19, so you may not see this option on your GMB profile for a while.

11. Add products and services

Adding products and services is especially helpful if your offerings are not made clear in your business name. Populating this section also adds content to your profile that helps it to rank for other relevant searches.

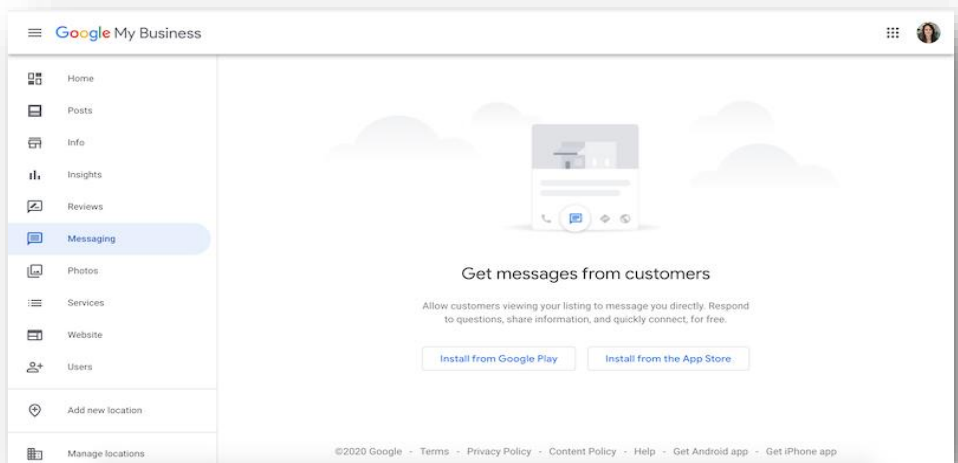
When adding products and services, include the name, description, and price (if applicable). The full description will show up once a searcher clicks on the product. Also, Google may link to your products from your category section.



12. Set up messaging

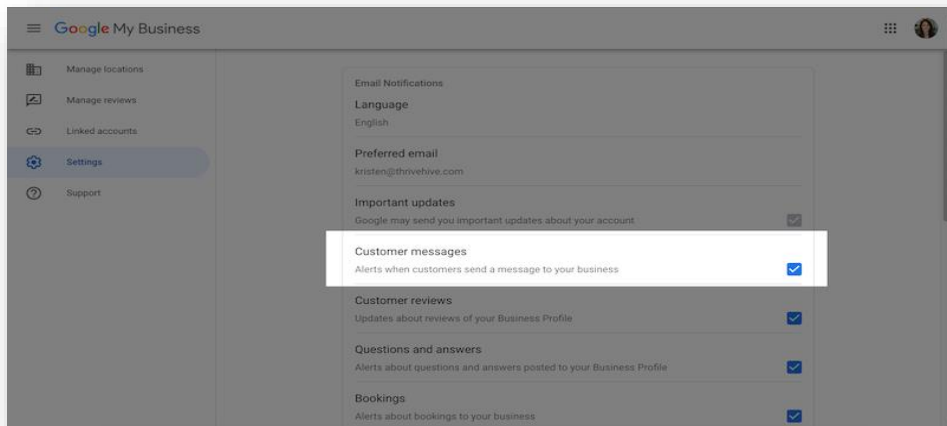
This feature gives searchers the option to send a text message to your phone directly from your Google Business Profile. With 82% of smart phone shoppers (92% for millennials) using their device for local search, this is a great opportunity for customers to get in touch with you.

To enable messaging, select the “Messaging” tab in your Google My Business dashboard, and you have the option to install this via Google Play or the Apple App Store.



Two notes on Google My Business messaging:

- You do not need to worry about displaying your personal phone number, as Google’s app uses a different number.
- Be sure to set up alerts for messages in your Google My Business dashboard. Head to settings and check “Customer messages.”



13. Maintain your Business Profile with a solid GMB strategy

As you can see, a Google Business Profile is not a one-and-done marketing task. It's a local marketing tool that requires ongoing action in order to maximize your benefits. This includes:

- Updating information, even minor changes like a suite number.
- Publishing posts and uploading photos each week.
- Keeping a steady stream of reviews coming in.
- Monitoring and responding to reviews.
- Staying on top of new features so you can ensure you're using your profile to its fullest potential.

Just like any Google SEO strategy, your Google My Business strategy should centre on providing as much quality information about your business as possible —your website, review site profiles, and even your social media accounts. So, focus on using your Google My Business dashboard to represent your business accurately and thoroughly, and then make sure to maintain it, and you'll reap great benefits.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Maintaining your online reputation is a cornerstone of digital marketing. While creating and optimizing a Google My Business listing might seem like a challenge to busy business owners, the payoff is worth it.

A professional cover photo, essential business information, and positive customer reviews will help promote your business to a new local audience.

As long as your local business meets [Google's guidelines](#), your Google My Business profile can help give your company FREE exposure on Google's search engine. Not only can potential customers quickly see your business' name, address and phone number, but they can also see photos of your business, read online reviews, find a description about your company, complete a transaction (like book an appointment) and see other information that grabs a searcher's attention — all without them even visiting your website. That is powerful stuff!

Follow our step-by-step Google My Business guide, and you can still take your business to new heights this year.

Appendix

Google My Business Posts

Think of GMB Posts in a similar fashion to posts on Facebook.

Google offers another avenue to provide potential customers with info about your business. Keep things active on Google and maintain an omni-channel approach to marketing.

Where Do Google My Business Posts Appear?

These posts appear in the posts tab for users on mobile and on Google My Business Websites. According to Google, posts may also appear on Maps, Search, and the Overview tab for listings based on various signals.

What Can Google My Business Posts Contain?

Google My Business Posts can contain text, photos, and videos.

Types of Posts

Right now, there are 4 types of posts:

- **What's New Posts:** These are posts containing general info you want to provide to the public.
- **Event Posts:** If you are planning on hosting an event, you can use this post to promote that. These are great for venues and restaurants, but Universities can take advantage of this feature as well. These types of post require:
 - Title
 - Start/End Dates/Times

You can also add a photo/video to posts like this, CTAs, and other information.

- Offer Posts: If you are offering any type of promo deal you can use this type of post to let people know.
- Product Posts: You can use these to really highlight a specific product your business sells. For example, a clothing store may highlight a line of shoes they carry.

Google My Business Photo Guidelines

- Format: JPG or PNG
- Size: Between 10 KB and 5 MB
- Minimum Resolution: 720px × 720px
- Quality: Use high-quality images. They should be in focus and well-lit and have no significant alterations or excessive use of filters. In other words, the image should represent reality.

It is especially important to add a profile photo to your listing.

Customers who see a nice profile photo are a lot more likely to click on your listing than another one that does not include a photo.

Ensure that your photos are optimized for SEO by naming them appropriately.

Do not upload images with generic file names (or file names like IMG2018_05_21). Instead, think of a proper name like (boxing-up-pizzas-for-hungry-customers.jpg).

What Types of Photos Can I Add to Google My Business?

- Cover Photos
- Profile Photos
- Other Photos

Other people can add photos to your listing as well. Do not just upload random photos of your business. Make sure they are high-quality photos with good lighting and relevant. Your photos should portray what your business does.

Also use photos that perform well in both square and landscape mode because your images will be formatted as rectangles on phones and squares on desktops. So, make sure the primary focal point of your photo is near the middle.

Profile Photo Size



250 x 250 pixels (minimum 120 x 120; maximum 5200 x 5300)

Cover Photos

Choose your cover photo carefully as it will be the primary image that appears whenever your business is viewed in the search results.

Get a professional cover photo that will appeal to your ideal customers and as always, make sure that it accurately represents your business.

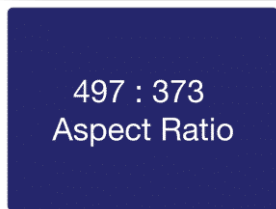
A new photo module has also been added to listings. Photos uploaded by the business will show up instantly in this module.

Cover Photo Size



1080 x 608 pixels (minimum 480 x 270; maximum 2120 x 1192)

Shared Images Size



497 x 373 pixels (minimum width 497; maximum 2048 x 2048)

Logos

If you have your logo set it will begin being displayed in the listing as well (like the way your favicon is being displayed next to your website listings on mobile searches). You can set your logo by going to your GMB Dashboard and clicking on Photos in the left-hand menu.

If you do not already have one set, go ahead and so. You can click the pencil icon next to your logo if you want to modify one you have already set in the past.

Google My Business Video Guidelines

Video content performs very well online and is growing rapidly. Do not just add random videos. Ensure your videos are not shaky and are not shot in portrait mode.

Google My Business Video Requirements

Video posted on your listing must be:

- 30 seconds or shorter
- 100 MB or smaller
- 720p resolution or higher

Google My Business Review Guidelines

You want your customers to leave online reviews. You can encourage customers to leave reviews by simply asking them and by also responding to reviews that customers to leave you. Make sure you are following the rules though. Do not forget to get reviews across other

major online platforms as well.

When customers see that you engage with the people who post on your listing it makes them much more likely to say something as well.

- If a review is positive, thank the customer.
- If they are negative, be kind and attempt to make things right if you can.

 **Don't get into a war with someone if they leave you a bad review.**

How Can I Remove Negative Reviews from My Listing?

You cannot remove customer reviews from your listing just because it is negative. However, Google does allow you to dispute fake reviews.

Note that there is no guarantee that it will be removed just because you dispute it though.

How Do I Turn Off Reviews for My Google Listing?

There is no way to turn off your reviews on Google. If you do not like the reviews people leave your best bet is to respond kindly to those reviews and attempt to resolve the issue.

Activate Your Booking Button

Having a booking button on your GMB listing can be a powerful addition to your ability to generate leads. Businesses in supported regions that have integrated with one of Google's [supported booking/reservation partners](#) will be eligible to active this enhanced GMB feature.

How to mark a business or location as temporarily closed

If you need to close seasonally or temporarily, mark your business as temporarily closed. Doing this ensures customers are up to date without affecting your local search ranking.

- Sign in to [Google My Business](#).
- Click **Info** in the left menu.
- Look for the **Close this business on Google** section on the right.
- Click **Mark as temporarily closed**.

To set special hours for holidays or other circumstances, click **Info** in the left menu, then [Special Hours](#).

About The Author:



Do you ever wish there was an easier way to attract clients?

If you're thinking "Yes, I do!" you're certainly not alone. Many professional service providers feel exactly the same way as you because their expertise is in providing the service that they're qualified to provide, rather than in the selling of it.

And just imagine for a second how much easier it would be, how much happier you'd feel and how much more you could be earning if suddenly you discovered the secret to having a crowd of clients wanting to engage you, rather than you having to go out searching for them.

If our paths haven't crossed before, let me introduce myself. I'm Tim Dodd, a former chartered accountant and specialist business workflow consultant. In simple terms, I help clients put in place processes that attract potential new business automatically.

If you're an entrepreneurial business owner or professional service provider, who would like to automate their lead generation, prospect follow-up and business relationship building processes in order to spend more chargeable time working with your best clients, doing what you enjoy doing most, then I'm certain that I can help you to achieve that goal.

If you like the idea but aren't convinced I'd be able to help your particular business, make an appointment to speak with me today and find out why I'm so confident that I can.

Just head over to www.3dconsultingservices.com/call and select a time that's convenient for you. There's no charge, and when we talk I promise to provide you with at least one strategy you could implement immediately which would transform how you won new clients in the future!

I truly look forward to speaking with you.

These Days Traffic Generation Isn't A Problem. Convincing Browsers To Buy Is The Challenge! Yet, A Few Little Tweaks To Your Website Can Soon Fix That When You Know What To Change...



Readers Who Implement These
Strategies Truly Appreciate The
Difference It Makes To Their Sales!

Every self-respecting business owner would like more paying customers. It doesn't matter what you sell, the end goal of being in business is to keep finding people who want and, more importantly, are in a position to buy the product or service you offer.

So if you have a website and want to learn how you can easily set yourself apart from other suppliers in your marketplace, take a proper look at this easy to follow guide right now. Then start by completing the first exercise and very soon you'll see it yield truly excellent returns on a tiny investment!

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