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My Business 2.0

TRAINING GUIDE

Discover how to master
Google My Business and leverage
it to grow your Online Business Brand.

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Introduction

Google My Business (GMB) is a tour de force when it comes to business visibility and localized SEO. Many SEO strategies and digital marketing efforts start with GMB because it drastically improves a business' chance of getting noticed.

From a business perspective, Google My Business is a free and easy-to-use tool that helps local people find your business on Google Search and Google Maps. You can provide potential customers with key information, such as your address, phone number and even your latest offer, allowing for an instant interaction. With majority of searches now performed on mobile devices, you want to ensure that your information is readily available!

In today's digital marketing and advertising economy, Google is the number one platform through which your prospects and new customers will gather information about your services.

Google research also shows that businesses with detailed and complete online business listings are twice as likely to be considered reputable and reliable by consumers.

2018 was a big year for Google My Business, and if the predictions are true, Google My Business (GMB) will be even more important in this year as well as coming years. Keep reading to learn how to beat out the competition online.

This is your one-stop shop for all information related to Google My Business.

We've compiled this guide for one reason: To help all business owners, big or small, leverage this service to help grow their business.

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Chapter 1

Getting Started with GMB listings

What is Google My Business

Google My Business (GMB) is a free tool created by Google to help business owners manage how they appear in Google search results and on Google Maps.

Is Google My Business Important?

Yes it is. Why?

Because whether you like it or not, your business can and likely will get listed on Google. Anyone can enter your business name and register it with Google. They can even supply information such as business hours, where you're located, and so on. You would rather be the person managing your listing rather than some random person.

How to Setup Google My Business:

- **Step 1: Visit Google My Business's Website**

Visit the following page: https://www.google.com/business/ or go to Google and type in "google my business." It will be the first result you see.

- **Step 2: Click the Green Button "Manage Now" button.**

If you're not already signed into Gmail, it will ask you to sign in. Be sure you are signed into the Gmail account you want to be associated with your business listing.

- **Step 3: Enter the Name of Your Business**

Once you get logged in, if you haven't set up a listing in the past, it is going to ask you to enter the name of your business. Go ahead and type it in. If someone has already listed you on Google (which isn't uncommon) then you should see your listing appear. If your business doesn't appear, click the result that has the text under your business name that says: Create a business with this name

Otherwise, if your business does pop up (like mine does below), go ahead and click on it.

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Then click next.

- **Step 4: Enter the Address of Your Business**

Brick & Mortar vs. Service Area Business (SAB)

- **Brick & Mortar**

Leave the "I deliver goods and services to my customers" checkbox blank if you have a brick and mortar business where your customers or clients come to do business with you.

- **Service Area Business**
- If you're a Service Area Business, click this checkbox.

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- You'll see another box appear giving you the option to hide your address.
- If you don't want your address displayed (for example, if you used your personal address as your business address), then go ahead and check this box.

What is a Service Area Business (SAB)?

- A business that goes to the customer or delivers things to the customer but doesn't primarily serve its customers at its business address (e.g., landscapers, plumbers, roofers).
- If you serve customers at your business address and deliver to them, then you can also register as a service area business (e.g., pizza shops, florists)

Examples of Brick & Mortar Businesses

- grocery stores
- gas stations
- doctor's offices
- mechanic's shops
- restaurants (that don't deliver)
- churches

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- lawyers

- accountants

Examples of Service Area Businesses (SABs)

- general contractors

- exterminators

- plumbers

- roofers

- electricians

- **Step 5a (For Brick & Mortar Businesses): Drag the Map Marker to Your Location**

If you're a brick and mortar business you'll need to set your business location on a map. You may have to drag the marker to the exact location on the map that your business exists. Simply place your marker where it should go on the map and then press the "Next" button again.
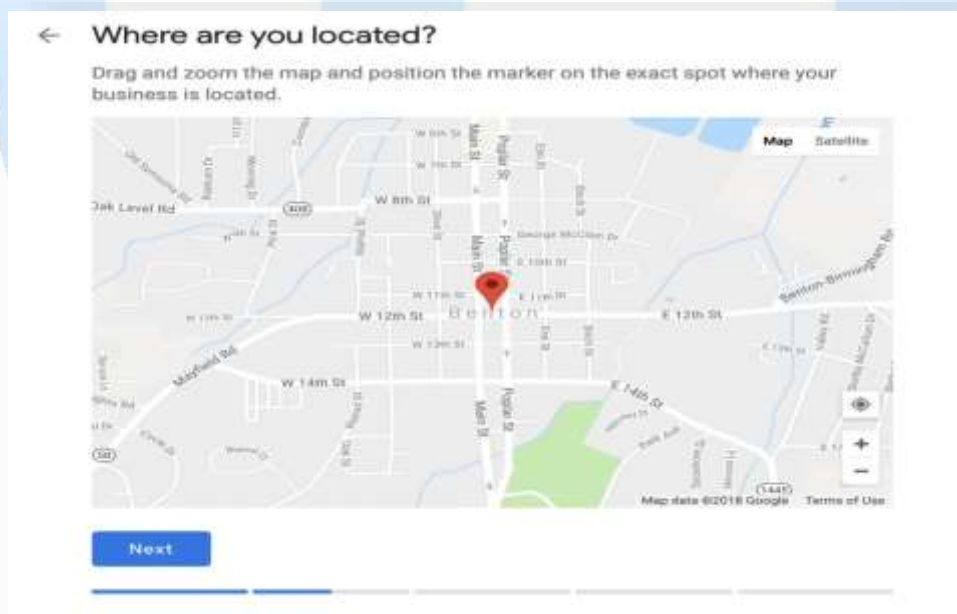
- **Step 5b (For Service Area Businesses): Set Your Service Area**

The next step is to let Google know what area you serve customers.

If Google is going to make you set your service area based on *specific areas* then you might as well do it now.

How Do I Set My Service Area?

You can set your service area based on the city, county, state, zip-code, country, and so on.

Note: You used to be able to set your service area as a radius around your business address but Google removed this feature in 2018. You'll need to update your service area using the city, county, state, zip, etc. now.

- **Step 6: Categorize Your Business**

This step is very important too, so don't rush through this. Take your time and do it right. When you set your "categories" in Google My Business you'll be able to set both primary and secondary categories.

Getting this step right is crucial if you want to show up in Google's results page when potential customers are searching for a product or service you offer.
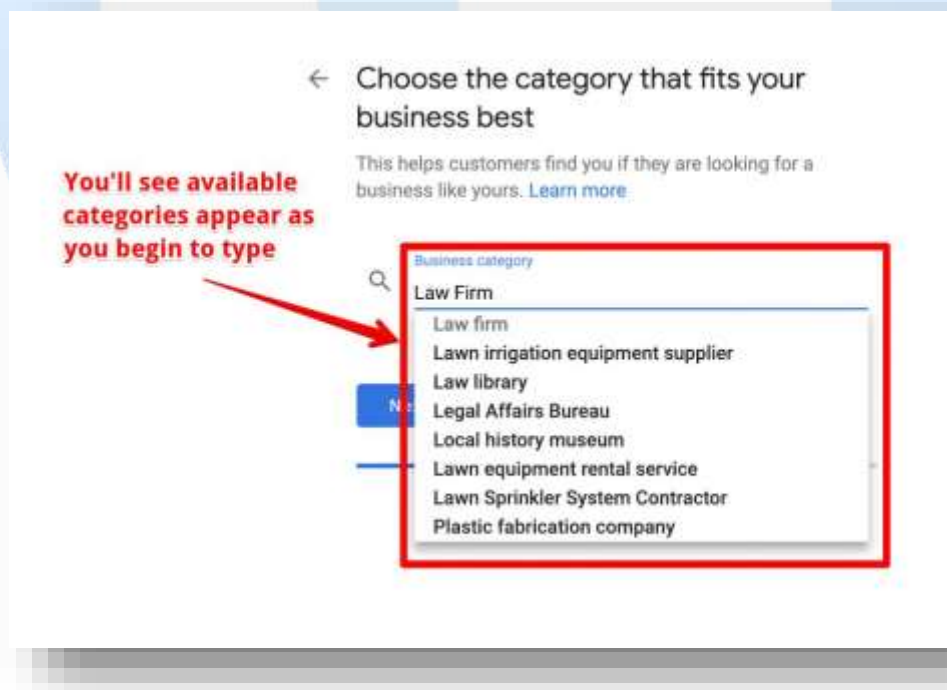
How to Choose the Best Google My Business Category

If you're unsure of what category is the right category, you can search for the type of business you run in Google and see what categories your competition selected.
If you see a trend them amongst all of them then you can probably assume that's the category you should choose.
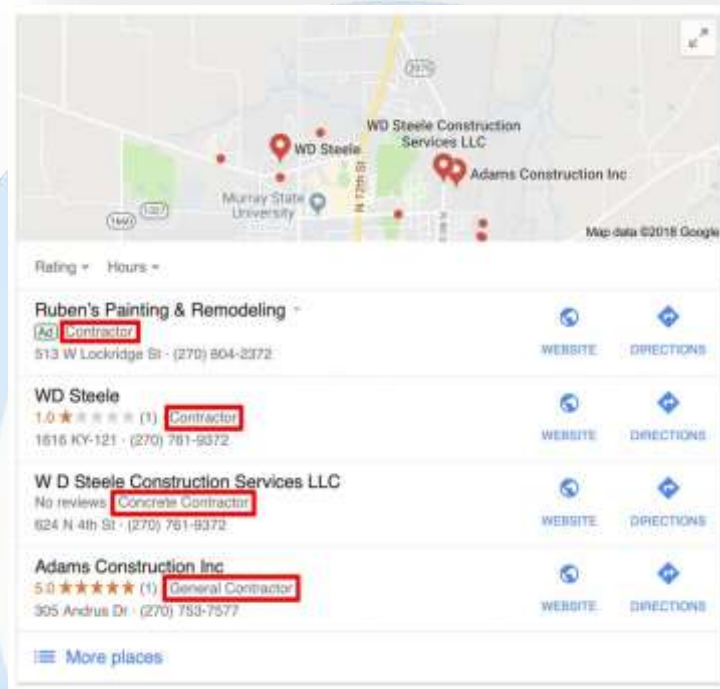
In the example above we can see that most construction businesses in the Murray area have themselves categorized as some type of contractor.

Feel free to be specific if you primarily provide one type of service.

- **Step 7: Set What Contact Details to Show Your Customers**
  - o Adding this information to your Google My Business listing is optional but It is highly recommended.
  - o Adding your website has the obvious benefit of potentially driving a customer to your site where you can more easily convert them to a lead.
  - o Listing your phone number gives customers a direct way to reach you.

Tip: You'll get a little bump in your local ranking from Google each time a visitor visits your website, gets directions, calls you, texts you, etc. from a local search.

Note: If you don't have a website you can select the "I don't need a website" option or the "Get a free website based on your info" option. If you want to learn more about getting a free website if you don't already have one, find out about Google My Business free websites.

Important:

- Be sure that everywhere you list your website on the web (in a Google My Business listing, Yelp, Yellow Pages, local Chambers of Commerce pages, and so on) that you use the exact same URL structure for your website.

- In other words, if your website is http://yourwebsitename.com don't list it anywhere as http://www.yourwebsitename.com. If you don't have www in front of your name, don't list it that way anywhere (and vice-versa).

- Also be sure that if you use the same "http" or "https" structure in front of your name on all listings depending on which one you have.

- Have an https website, which will require you to have what's known as a Secure Socket Layer (SSL) certificate installed.

- Once you've filled out that information, press the "Next" button once again!

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- **Step 8: Finish and Verify Your Business**

Don't get too excited. You're not done yet.

/
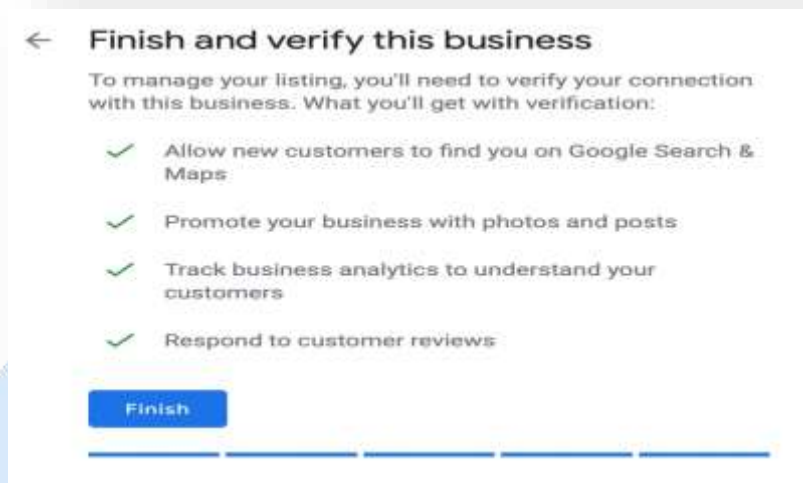
- **Step 9: Verify Your Business**

Next, you'll have to verify your business and that may take a couple of days.

Google may give you a different option to verify your business but for most business owners, you'll have to wait for a postcard to be mailed to you from Google.

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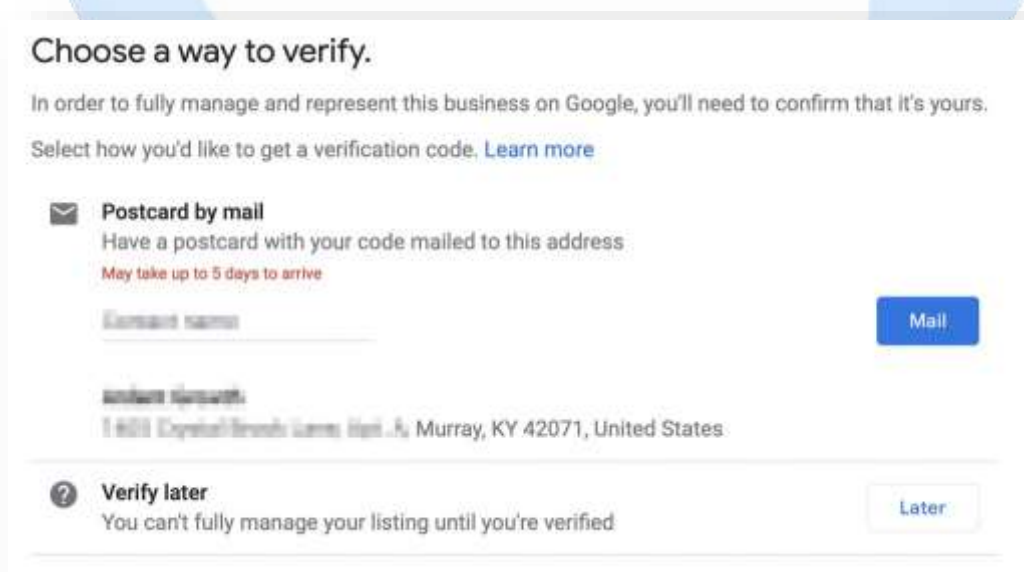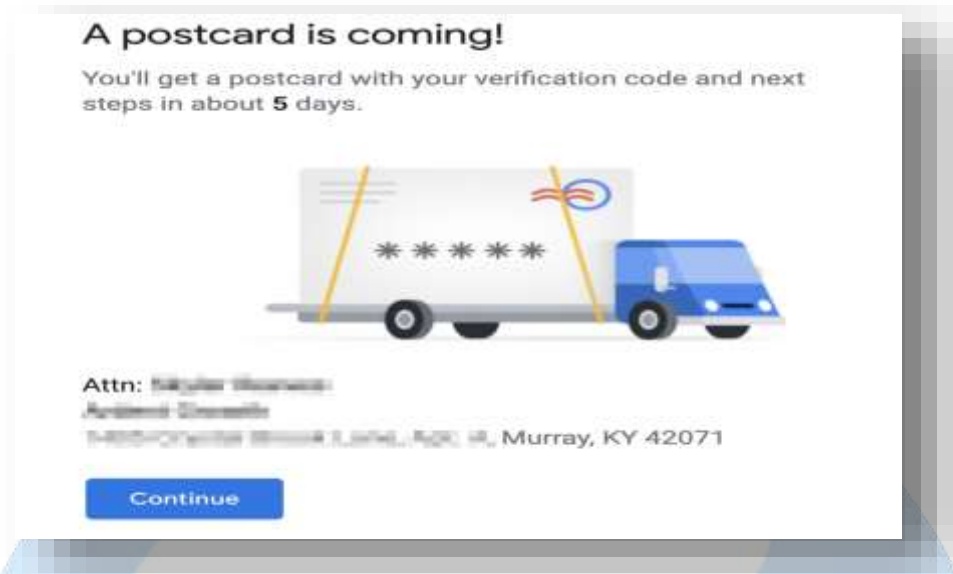
How to Verify Your Google My Business Listing

Depending on what kind of business listing you're attempting to create (or manage) you'll may have a few options available to verify your business:

- Verify by mail (postcard)

- Verify by phone

- Verify by email

- Instant verification

- Bulk verification

Once your postcard arrives you'll need to sign back into google.com/my business, click "Verify Location" from the menu or the "Verify Now" button if it's available, then enter the 5 digit code from your postcard.

Note: Google recommends that you do not edit your business name, address, or category, or request a new code while you're waiting for your verification postcard. Doing so can potentially become a nightmare for you to untangle (involving some phone calls with Google customer support).

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Features of Google My Business

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

Insights: Google's dashboard provides key looks into customer activity and interaction, allowing businesses to learn what's working—and what's 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 personal recommendations from friends. Online, reviews are everything. Engage customers in two-way communications as 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're key to a more well-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 business info you post on your Google My Business listing helps disseminate consistent and accurate info 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 checks 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

GMB Posts:

Think of GMB Posts in a similar fashion to posts on Facebook. GMB offers another avenue to provide potential customers with info about your business.

Where Do Google My Business Posts Appear?

GMB 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 Posts Contain on GMB?

Posts can contain text, photos, and videos.

Types of GMB 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're planning on being involved in an event in some fashion then you can use this post to promote that. 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're 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 particular line of shoes they carry.

Conclusion:

What's the point of a GMB listing if it doesn't lead to more business? Once you've got your business verified, you can visit your Google My Business dashboard and start updating info, uploading photos, and providing potential customers with useful information, like your business hours and attributes (e.g. free wifi, kid-friendly). The more information you supply, and the more you maintain the listing, the better.

Google My Business is an essential tool for local business owners. Within just a few minutes, you can have your listing verified and start showing up in searches from local customers trying to find a business like yours.

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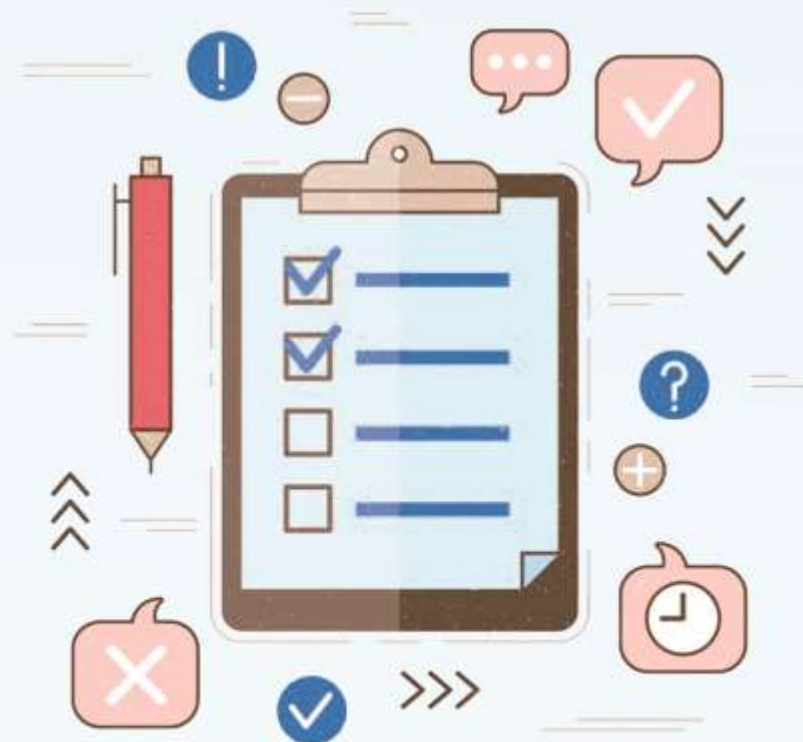
Chapter 2

The Importance of Business Listings

Your business is mentioned all over the internet. You probably didn't have anything to do with it. But having your business listed in as many business directories as possible is important for knowing how to rank a Google Maps listing in the organic and maps search results. It also helps with local SEO.

What's very important is having your business listed consistently in these directories.

1. Consistent NAP

Having your name, address and phone number listed the same everywhere will ensure Google knows your business and it's address. Any variation and Google will get confused. As smart as Google is, if it sees your business listed with different names, addresses and phone numbers, it will start thinking that each of those is a different business.

Here is a screenshot direct from their GMB support area which talks about establishing a strong and accurate presence on the web.

> ## Establish a strong, accurate presence on the web.
>
> - Google improves search results by aggregating information about your business from all over the web. Make sure information about your business on third-party sites is accurate, and try to contact the respective site directly to correct any inaccurate information.
> - Encourage customers to review your business by clicking **Write a review** on the local Google+ page.

This is an issue if you have changed your business name, address or phone number. This can also be an issue if you take over an existing business with the same address and phone number.

You're going to have to sort that out as it will hurt your Google Maps listing ranking.

How can you make sure you're business listings are consistent?

2. Google Yourself

It's tedious work, but simply Google your business name. Then you will see it shows in directories such as Yellow Pages, Manta, Yelp, Foursquare and others.

Double check the business info is correct and up to date. If it's not correct, chances are your business has moved, changed names or phone numbers. This is most likely hurting your rankings.

In this case, each directory will give you the option to update the information. Some take longer than others, so make notes to follow up in two weeks to see if the info was changed.

3. Take Ownership

While you're doing this checking, see if there is an option to claim, manage or take ownership of your listing. In many cases you will not have submitted your business to these directories. They would have just added it themselves.

4. Document

Taking ownership will save you work if you ever have to move or change phone numbers. Keep a spreadsheet with each listing and the user name and password to sign in. This way if you do change addresses, you can log in and do it yourself.

It's good to have all of your listings documented anyways. This is something we do for our clients, and then send them the information when we're finished. We believe they should have full control over all their listings.

Conclusion:

There you have it. Be consistent, take ownership and document your business' directory listings on the web. This way you can help your Google Maps listing and local SEO in the process.

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Chapter 3

Latest Google My Business Updates
You should Know

GMB can help you reach and attract new potential clients. People who do not have a particular company in mind search for types of products or services, looking for providers who show up at the top of the list.

Optimize your small business for this type of local search; customers will see what you offer before they look at your competitors. Only 44% of local businesses have claimed their Google My Business listing.

An updated GMB account is an integral part of your local search strategy. Google has recently released new features that benefit your opportunity for local SEO rankings.

1. APPOINTMENT URLS FUNCTION
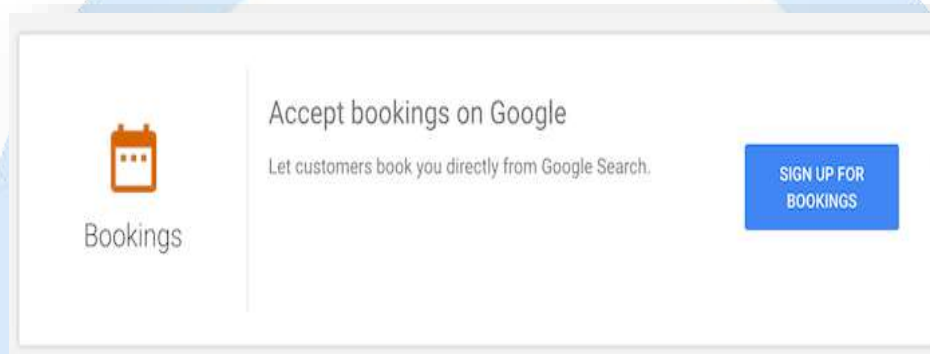
The expanded options for adding appointment URLs allows appointment-based or reservation businesses to include an opportunity to schedule an appointment. By clicking the appointment URL, customers can directly select an open time from their mobile device for convenience. This feature allows you to integrate your calendar and display open availability. It saves you time on the phone scheduling appointments. You can set up appointment URLs for:

- Booking an appointment
- Placing an order
- Reserving a table
- Searching for items
- Viewing a menu

A restaurant menu online helps your patrons plan their visit ahead of time and enjoy camaraderie during their meal instead of figuring out what they want to eat. After they

reserve their table, all they need to do is arrive at the allotted time. You improved their experience in such a way that keeps them coming back.

The breadth of options here make this a convenient feature for others as well. The list may include physicians, insurance agencies, computer repair shops, plumbing and electrical companies, and many more.

- **MENU EDITOR ADDED**

For a few months, only local restaurant businesses were permitted to add a "menu" on their Google My Business listing. Of course, on the outside, that initial decision surely seemed reasonable; however, the term "menu" is really more indicative of items in general, which could pertain to services rather than food items.

Fortunately, Google came to the same conclusion over the matter and expanded the Google My Business menu to include non-restaurant services. To utilize this function, you start by clicking the info tab inside of your Google My Business listing. Next, click on the Services (add or edit) button.
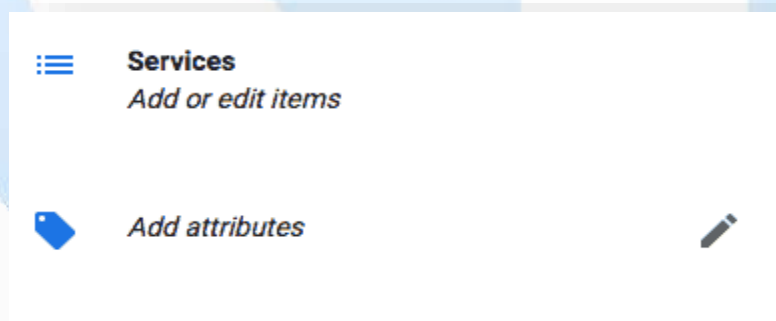
At this point, a Page will pop up that allows you to add the services you wish to add.

According to Google, the feature will be available to all businesses which aren't currently utilizing a third-party app inside their Google My Business listing.

 "Same as the food establishment menu editor, this feature will only be available if the listing is not currently connected to a third-party provider and for listings in English speaking locals. If your listing is currently displaying an incorrect menu, please see this help centre link for more information on how to correct or remove the link."

This new layer of versatility is certain to have some beneficial effects on a number of local businesses which otherwise wouldn't have been able to display their services-diversity to potential new customers.

- **DIRECT MESSAGING WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS**

Messaging within the Google My Business console allows for increased communication with your customers. When they have questions, they can message you directly from their device, and the message will come to you via Google Allo or your native messaging system.

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You can set up auto-replies or turn chat off anytime you are unavailable. It is connected to your mobile phone via the number you provide, making it easy for you to manage. It is a useful account enhancement. The messaging icon appears next to all of your other contact information and gives customers another way to contact you.

This GMB tool allows you to engage with your customers more often using their preferred method of communication. Many customers find instant messaging much more comfortable than talking on the phone. Now small businesses have simple, seamless chat implementation without any of the hassles or extra costs.

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- **GOOGLE QUESTION AND ANSWERS FOR LOCAL BUSINESS**

Business owners can now directly answer commonly asked questions from within their Google My Business dashboard. This new function enables you to keep in touch with your customers and learn from their frustrations. It saves you time responding to questions individually. You can post an answer to a question that people ask often.

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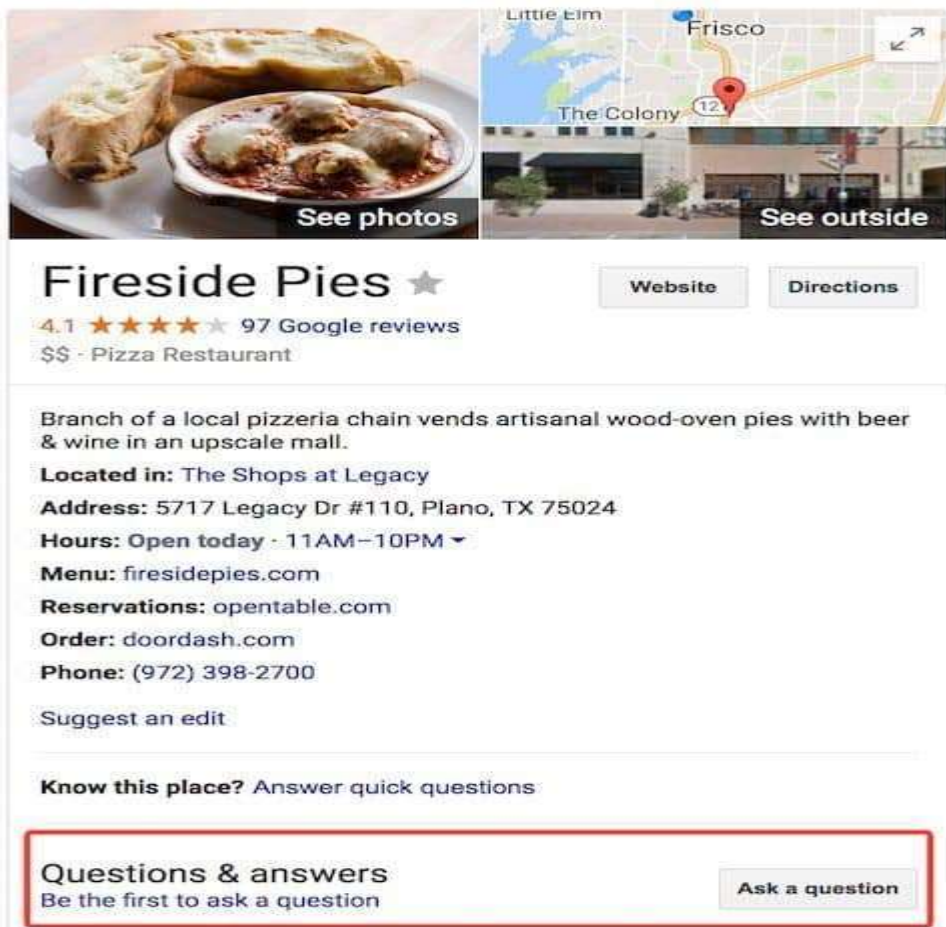
Any clients who view your Google Maps listing or your GMB listing can see these answers. Improve your response time by setting it up to receive push notifications. Anytime someone asks a new question; you get notified right away.

You and your visitors can thumbs up a question or answers from other people to indicate authenticity. If someone provides an answer on a forum that you like, give it a thumbs up. Verifying that you approve of the response helps earn your customer's trust.

People online often use forums to research local companies before using their service. This is an amenity that helps to educate your potential customer.

- **SMALL THANKS INITIATIVE**

Small Thanks with enables you to make your customers advocates for your business. Give them the tools they need to review your products and services easily for others to see.

Small thanks uses existing Google reviews to highlight your best reviews and automatically create posters. Print these posters for your business, send strategic customer emails and feature them on your website.

These posters are free, and you can create as many as you want. Encourage your patrons to review your business to generate more poster content. You can also export them for design campaigns or share them on social media. Use these on social media wisely. It tends to turn people off when a business only talks about themselves. However, they are a useful tool for local search marketing or internet promotional campaigns.

You can also display reminders throughout your store or online reminding customers to review their experience. Prompt them with a Small Thanks notecard containing the appropriate URL so they always know how they can post their experience.

- **GOOGLE WEBSITE BUILDER**

Google Website Builder is one of the free GMB tools added in 2018. Many small businesses struggle with keeping a website up-to-date. It enables you to build a website quickly.

For an additional charge, you can use a custom domain. These sites are mobile friendly and automatically update. You can manage them simply and post updated information on the site. This initiative provides an easy and intuitive way to build a website and manage it without a significant time commitment.
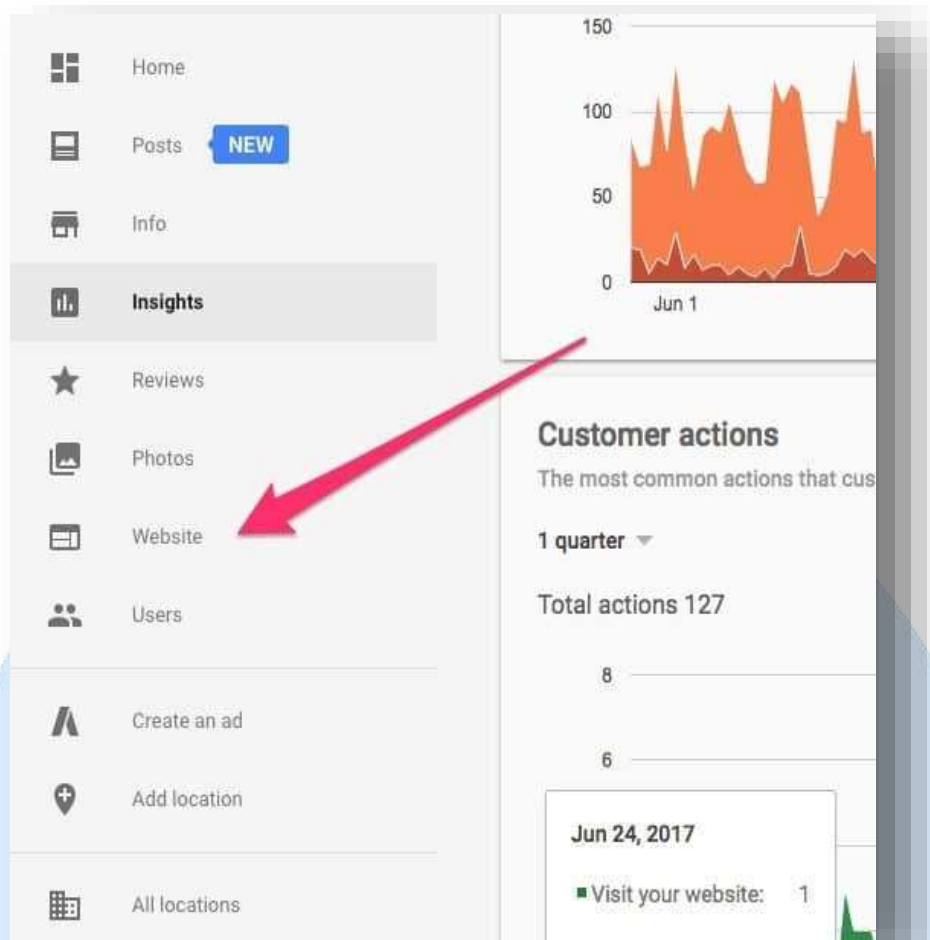
- **GOOGLE POSTS**

You can now enhance your GMB listing with Google Posts. This is a great way to stand out in crowded search listings. Google Posts allows you to write posts with images, text, event titles, and call to action buttons.

On mobile, this amplifies your optimization power because customers can sign up or buy directly from their phone. This gives businesses the ability to share daily specials and current promotions, promote events, showcase products, and connect with customers directly. It is like content marketing front and centre. Google Posts are more visually appealing than a regular listing and encourage increased interaction.

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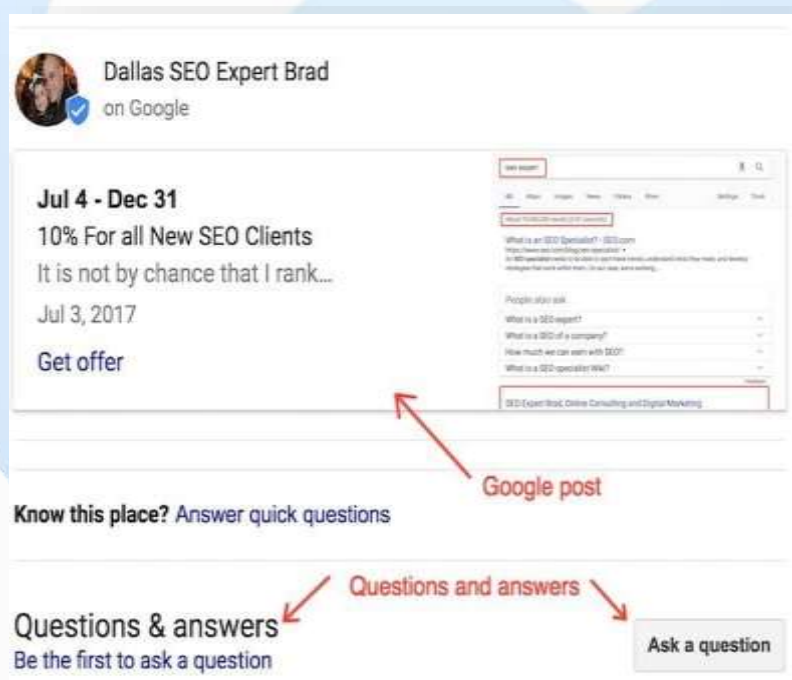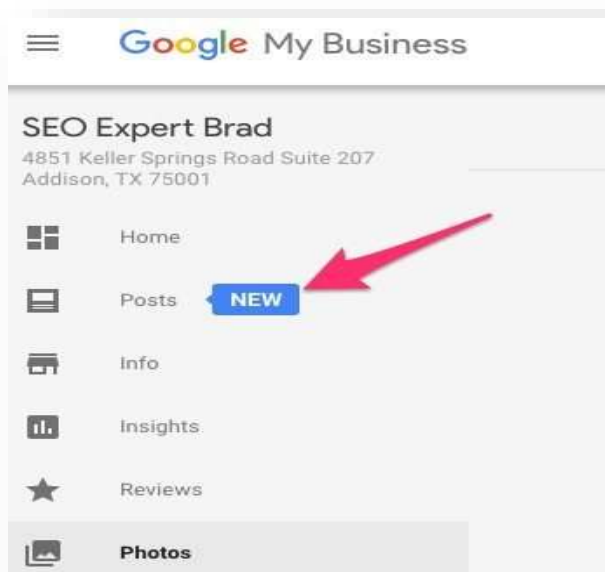
Complete and Updated GMB Accounts Are Critical to Local Ranking

The growth of mobile internet contributes to the importance of using local GMB offerings. A mobile google search uses geo-tracking to make searches location based. Using Google My Business account new features, you optimize your site for local customers.

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Consumers take their phones with them everywhere they go, searching for local businesses in areas that are unfamiliar to them. They need a trusted source for recommending services.

Implementing the latest features offered by Google assists your business to appear on the first page of search. It saves time, money, and helps drive new potential leads.

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Chapter 4

Improving Local SEO and your Company's GMB Page Rankings

You have probably heard a great deal about local SEO this year being among the most crucial aspects in regard to digital advertising.

What's Local SEO this year?

It's only a variant of your run-of-the-mill search engine optimization and is directed at making certain your company gets found online by individuals looking for it in the area. Local SEO is very important, particularly if you've got a company with a brick-and-mortar shop, or one which offers a service in a specific locality.

According to a study done by Forbes, 95 percent of smartphone users have utilized their apparatus to do local searches, from which 61 percent known as the company and 59 percent seen. And Search Engine Watch discovered that 70 percent of cellular users click to phone a company straight from Google search results with their cellular telephones. These amounts will tell you that prospects from location-based searches are a significant route for prospective clients, and these amounts will only keep growing.

Getting Your Company on Google's Local 3-Pack : What's this local 3-pack, you inquire?

However, as surfing tendencies evolved to become dominated by smartphones, Google decreased its 7-pack to add only 3 results, to get a much better user experience. As you may have guessed, it is known as the regional 3-pack now and here is why a place in this is indeed highly desired.

In accordance with the Moz research, 44 percent of men and women who conducted a local search clicked a regional 3-pack listing, although just 8 percent decided to load "more local results". This really goes to show that many individuals who search for local listings discover what they're looking for, in the regional 3-pack options supplied. Hence getting that place from the search results may induce a massive number of visitors and possible earnings your way, and local SEO will help take your company there.

How Can Local SEO Impact Your Organization?

If you have a small company, optimizing your business' local SEO could be extremely lucrative. Let us look at several benefits of local SEO:

- Local SEO helps prospective customers discover your small business. A good deal of local searches arises from non-locals that are looking for a company like yours and with local SEO done correctly, your company can catch that audience.

- Local SEO supplies prospective customers the information they need when they need it. Even if your company doesn't own a website, local SEO assists your company to stick out in local searches, also helps drive more visitors via internet leads.

- Local SEO helps induce people's choices in favour of your company. The more information they have about your company, the more trustworthy you're in your own eyes. This lays a solid foundation upon which you can construct a mutually beneficial customer connection.

What should you do?

You simply take out your mobile phone. Google "ice cream closes to me" and are fulfilled with a listing of places to find the nearest ice-cream stores in the region. Having the ability to rapidly discover the place of any company close to you is a massive advantage that's easy to take for granted.

Google My Business is a valuable tool for accessing your company before local clients that are looking for your services and products.

The 11 measures below are crucial for ensuring that your Google My Business page rankings above all the rest:

1. **Build your Google My Business Profile**

With local SEO and Google My Business, there is a Small twist. When you hunt "ice cream stores near me" you will see a huge map on top of your display as well as information on stores listed in the primary search results like the title, address, website, telephone number, and testimonials for every single small business.

What many don't see is that the information doesn't come in the a company's site… it comes out of their Google My Business profile site . If you do not have a webpage setup then you're missing out on a precious chance to get in front of consumers.

Hint Suggestion: make certain to verify your organization listing. It is the final step and a significant one to make certain you're the owner of your webpage in order that you (and nobody else) will make edits to a webpage later on.

2. **Assess for Copy Page Listings**

Creating replicate listings is against Google's terms of providers and can influence your ability to position in results. Type in your company name and address in this instrument and it'll let you know if there are duplicate listings on the internet.

3. **Insert Relevant Categories**

OK, now let us look at the installation of the true Google My Business profile site. Placing up your page with applicable categories is a vital step to improving your positions.

The more important categories you select, the better. However, be certain the categories you select are pertinent to your organization, it is against Google terms to add irrelevant categories.

Although this measure is critical, it is not extremely simple. It's possible to use this significant list to locate all the relevant categories for your industry. Another trick is to examine the groups other top-ranking regional companies have chosen in their own profiles and use exactly the very same ones.

4. **Create Sure Contact Information for Your Site Is Accurate & In Text Type**

Proceed to your site's contact page and affirm all your contact information is listed on the webpage. Google has in order to read and verify your contact information and they cannot do this if it is recorded as a picture.

To be able to guarantee they are just showing credible company information, Google contrasts the information listed on your site and the information in your Google My Business profile site. If your site and profile are not showing the specific information, they will think that it's inaccurate, which may damage your search positions. Ensure your site and profile are 100% constant.

5. **Make Sure Your Own NAP Information on the Internet Is Consistent**

Google additionally compares the contact information on your site to information recorded on other sites across the whole internet.

Your NAP must be the exact same on each and every page that lists your contact information. Largely we are referring to company direct directories, these are the kinds of sites most likely to exhibit your contact information publicly online.

Just type in your small business information and the instrument will immediately tell you if you have any difficulties.

6. **Check for Missing Indices**

A citation is the reference of your NAP on a different site. We noted that the importance of consistency throughout all your online citations. However, there is another measure.

It is possible your site is not being recorded on significant directories which could provide you more citations and may help increase your rankings in Google.

7. **Request Client Reviews**

Most companies struggle to acquire customer testimonials online. This is only because it requires effort on your clients' conclusion to write the inspection. The dilemma is that

testimonials are incredibly important to establishing credibility for your company, which Google enjoys.

Regrettably, there's absolutely no simple solution here. Whatever you can do is keep asking your clients for testimonials (using email, telephone calls, and on-site) and also make the procedure as simple as possible for every single client to write a review to you.

8. Curate High-Quality Articles and Content

When Google updates their algorithm that they always incorporate additional signals, for example, content in your own site.

If you consider it in Google's standpoint that makes a whole lot of sense. Google's objective will be to send searchers into the most applicable webpage for their own search. Websites with more information supply more value and therefore are probably a much better match for searcher's queries. Be certain that you review all your key webpage page sake certain they've at least 500 words of content that are applicable.

9. Build Relevant and Quality links

Links from other high quality, relevant sites are hugely significant to SEO and have become significant for Google's local rank algorithm. This implies that while using an optimized Google My Business profile site and applicable citations are significant, they are not the sole element.

This isn't necessarily simple to accomplish and requires a while. However, if you are publishing and promoting good content then other sites will need to connect to it. This could be time taking to create lasting effects which are going to be a massive help for your company.

10. Get Busy on Social Networking

There has been a great deal of disagreement about whether social networking marketing is among those signals Google uses to rank companies. Regardless of your

consent or not, there is no denying that social networking is a fantastic chance to produce more vulnerability and buzz about your company.

11. **Boost Your Site for Mobile**

Among the most significant causes of this is that the increased hunting for local results, that's the whole purpose of the article.

Individuals are looking for companies on the move. And at home, I do not always wish to wait and turn in my pc so that it gets considerably more suitable to hunt on my mobile phone.

But many companies still have not adapted. It's crucial to make a mobile-optimized so as to compete at the local search results.

Conclusion

Now you are aware of how local SEO with Google My Business profile will help your small business, you're able to better handle its online presence to build your customer base. Adding an SEO company for your marketing team won't just boost your regional SEO but also raise your natural search engine positions for your website and over the competition.

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Chapter 5

Tips To Improve Google Places
Page Ranking

So, how to improve your Google My Business rankings this year. Once you have optimized your Google My Business listing, it comes down to five things which you will find below:

#1 – Business Listings

Getting ranked high within Google My Business comes down to Google verifying that your business is real. It does this by determining how often your business name, address and phone number (NAP) is cited or listed on the internet. It's the exact same as how backlinks act for search engine optimization. The more you have, usually the better your search rankings will be.

The easiest way to get cited or listed is to submit your business to local and national business directories.

#2 – Consistent NAP

The way your business NAP (name, address and phone number) is listed in these directories, on your websites contact page and within the Google My Business listing must be consistent and up to date. Here's how to ensure your business NAP is consistent across the web. Google website crawlers will get confused should you have a different NAP listed on various business directories.

To make sure your NAP is consistent, do a search for your business. Click to see what every listing of it looks like. If the information is incorrect on a website, contact them and have it changed.

Here's example of a good NAP Score.
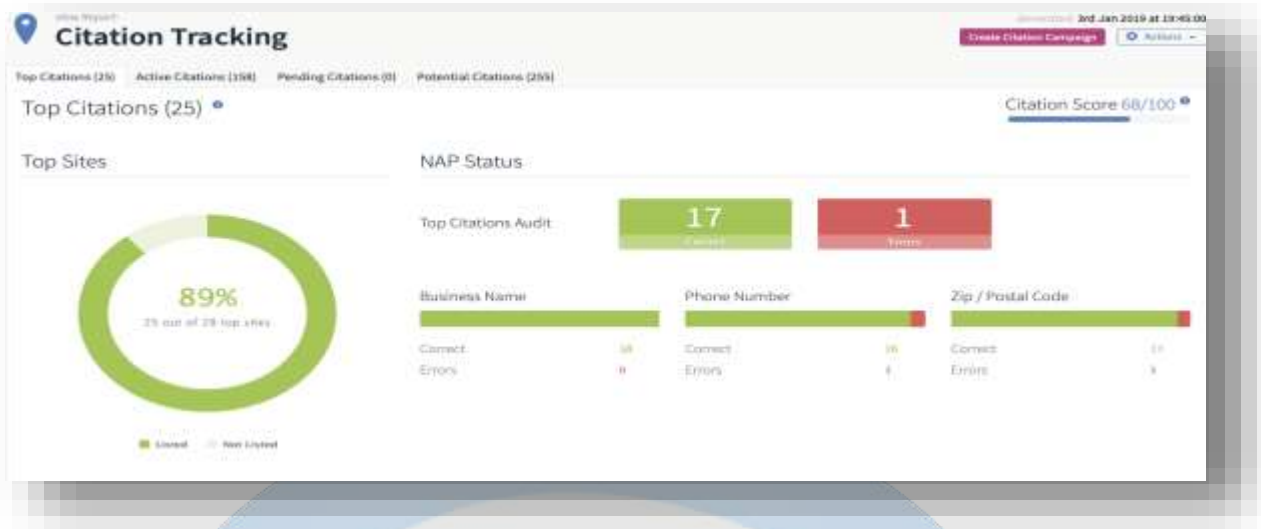
Here is a potential lead that has a very poor NAP score.
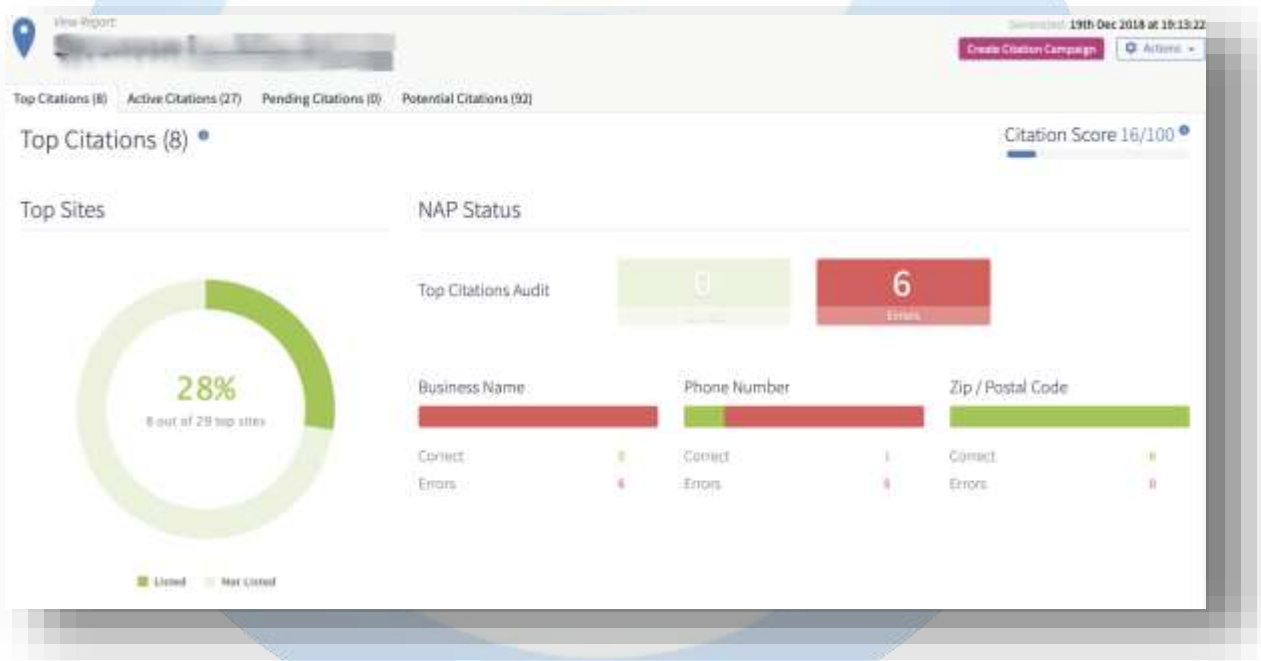
#3 – NAP On Website

You will also need to list your business name address and phone number on your website. It's good to have it in the footer or header of your website so it shows on every page. If you can do this, then go head as it's good for the user experience. Bonus points if you do so using the Schema markup.

#4 – Embedded Google Map

If you go to our contact page, you'll see an embedded Google map. It's good practice to have your businesses Google My Business listing embedded on your contact page. This way Google can be certain you are located at the address you have listed by confirming that with your Places listing.

Embedding is easy. Simply search your business name while in Google Maps. Once you have found it click on three lines beside your business name in the search bar on the top left. Then you can click on "Share or Embed Map".

Once that is selected, click the embed map option at the top of the pop up box. Then copy the iframe code and paste it into your contact page.
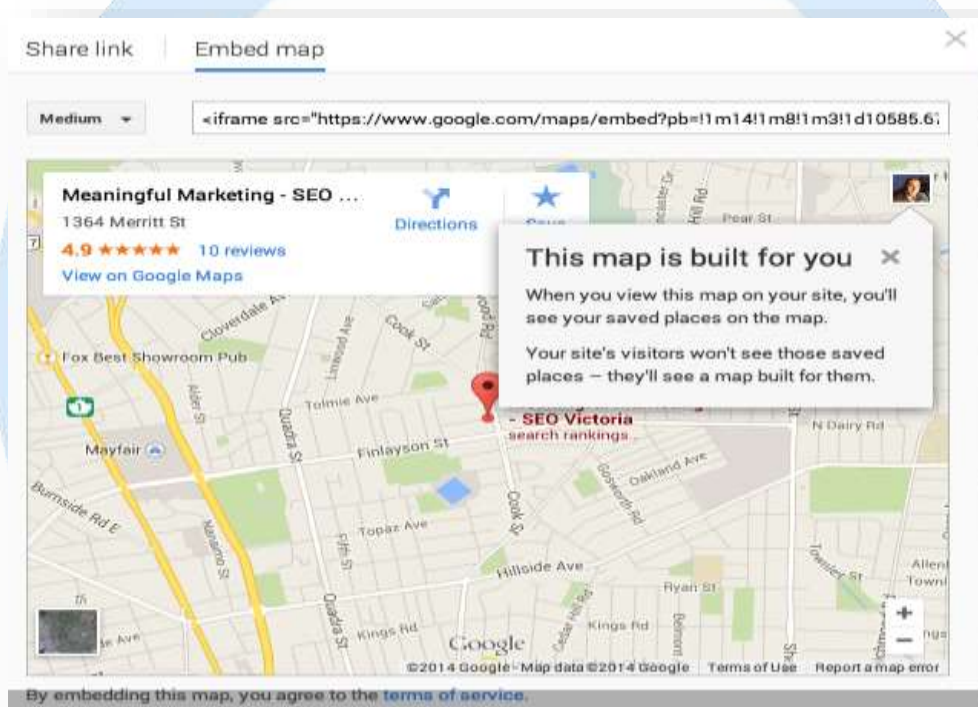
The last and most important factor to improving the ranking of your Google My Business listing is coming up next.

#5 – Reviews

You need to get everyone to review your page. Think about it. If Google sees a page with 20 or more reviews, won't it want to show that page in the mapped listings over a page that doesn't have any reviews?

This falls in line with Google's approach to search. Providing the searcher with the most relevant search result and business.

Evaluate Rankings

Once you have changed what is above and still notice your rankings are low, then you might need to have your business cited more. You can do this two ways.

Find out where those competitors who rank higher than you are cited. Do a search for their business and if they come up in a directory, find out if your business is listed there. If it's not, add it.

Much like SEO, Google uses business citations as a means to provide their searchers with the most relevant businesses within the Google Places rankings. Follow these practices and watch your rankings improve.

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Chapter 6

Things you might not know about Google My Business categories

Google My Business categories are often an overlooked tactic by many people that work in the Local Search space. According to Moz's Local Search Ranking Factors Survey, proper Google My Business category associations are the #3 search ranking factor for local packs. It has been one of the top ranking factors. Hence, find some things about Google My Business categories that people often aren't aware of.

1. Google constantly changes the names of categories.

For example, "Lincoln Mercury Dealer" got renamed to "Lincoln Dealer" in the fall of 2018 and "Natural Foods Store" got renamed to "Natural Goods Store" in December. It's important to know that Google can rename them so you're not thinking it's a new category that has been added.

2. Google constantly removes categories and adds new ones.

For example, in the first six months of 2018 in the U.S., Google added 34 categories and removed 36. One that they added was "Fitness Class" and one that they removed was "Dog Sitter."

3. New categories can give you a boost in ranking.

Google had just recently added a category for this business type so most of the competition didn't have the new category yet. By being one of the first to add the new category, he was able to move to the first page overnight.

4. Categories have different names in different countries.

For example, in Canada Google My Business calls the Real Estate Agent category "Estate Agents." This is likely because categories in Canada tend to be more similar to the way they are named in the UK.

5. The categories you see on Google might not be the way they appear in the Google My Business dashboard.

Every category has a GCID which does not change and a category name which varies based on the country. Sometimes Google displays the GCID in the search results which can be really confusing if you're trying to figure out why your competitor is showing a category that you don't "appear" to have as an option in the Google My Business

dashboard. In this example, Brodie Clark asked on Twitter why he couldn't find the Heating Contractor category to add to his client. This is because "Heating Contractor" is actually the GCID for the category that's named Central Heating Service in Australia.
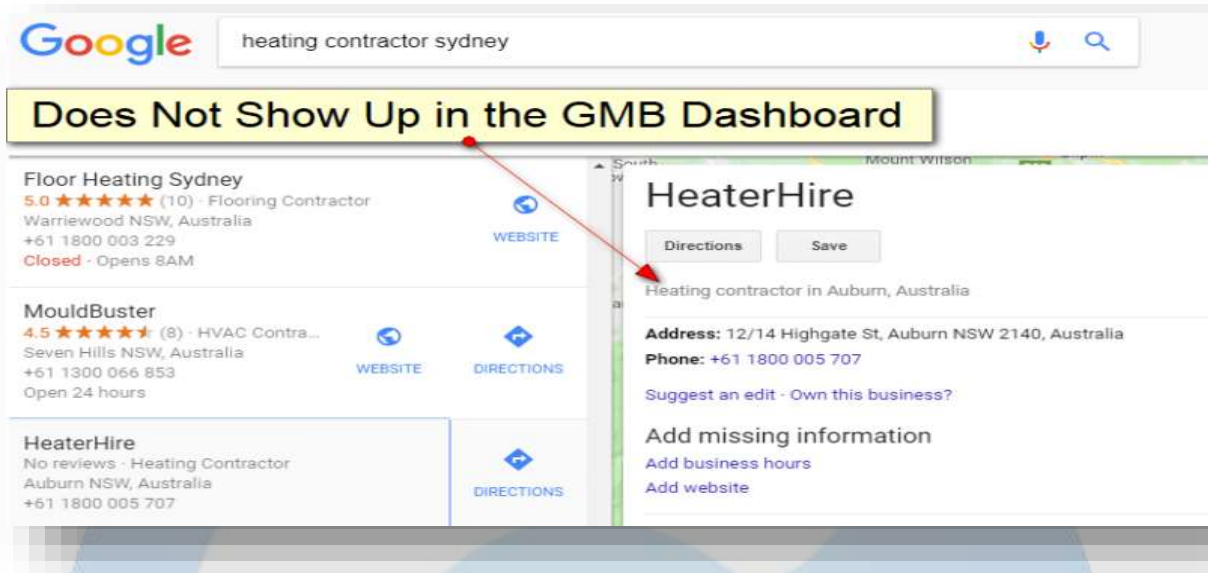
6. The concept of "category dilution" is not true according to our testing. This concept states that you could "weaken" your ranking for a category if you have more than one category on your Google My Business listing. Instead of putting all your ranking power in one category, it would theoretically be dispersed amongst all the ones you pick. We have found the opposite to be true. Adding more categories often results in an increase in ranking and clicks because you now show up for more related queries. For example, we added the category "Employment Attorney" to a law firm in Florida when we noticed that they take a lot of employment-related cases. This is what happened to his ranking 48 hours later for local rankings for the query [employment lawyer *cityname*].

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7. The primary category holds more ranking power.

A business should pick their primary category wisely because it holds more ranking weight than secondary categories. The primary category is the first category you select in the Google My Business dashboard.

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Chapter 7

Ultimate Google My Business Optimization Checklist

Google My Business (GMB) is the most important online listing for any local business. It drives the local business search results on Google search, maps, Google Assistant (voice search) and more.

Claiming and optimizing your Google My Business listing is critical for not only for getting new customers, but helping repeat customers do business with you again. However, Google My Business changes frequently and the best practices for a well-optimized listing are not always clear.

This checklist for Google My Business is a single point of reference and reflects the best practices recommended by the most well-respected local search experts in the world.

Claim / Create a Google My Business Listing

- Does Your Business Qualify for a Listing?*
- You must interact in-person with customers during stated business hours:
- At your place of business (storefront business).
- At your customer's location (service area business).

Exceptions:

- ATMs, video-rental kiosks, express mail drops and select other similar services.
- Seasonal businesses with permanent signage at location.

Ineligible businesses:

- eCommerce or online-only businesses.
- Rental or for-sale properties.
- Meetings at locations you don't own or represent.
- You must be currently open or opening within 90 days.*
- You must own or be an authorized representative of the business.

Does your business qualify?

- Yes – Search for Your Business on Google.
- No – You cannot create a GMB listing for your business.
- Search for Your Business on Google
- Go to https://www.google.com/

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- Enter the business name, city and state / province

- Example: rez church loveland co

- Also search for previous business names, phone numbers, or addresses.

- Look for a "knowledge panel" listing for the business.
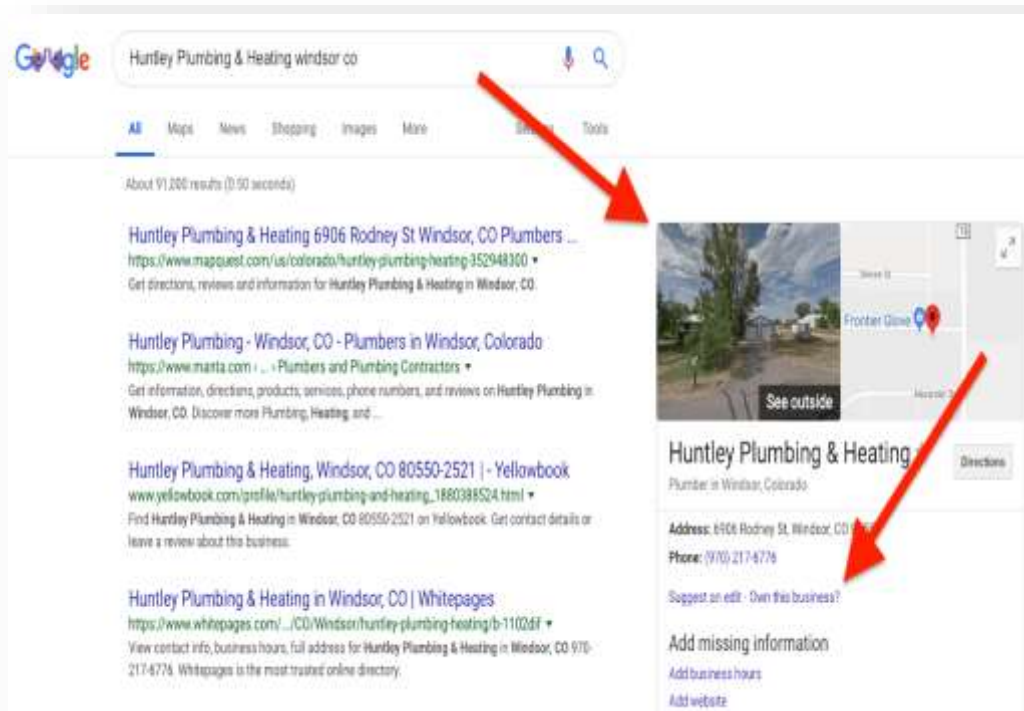
- If a business listing is found, see if it has an "Own this business?" link.

- If it does not have this link, then the listing is claimed.

- If the link is there, then the listing is unclaimed.

- Did you find your business on Google?

- Yes, and it's unclaimed – Claim your Google My Business Listing

- Yes, but it's already claimed – Request Ownership of a Listing

- No – Create a New Google My Business Listing

Create a New Google My Business Listing

- Go to https://www.google.com/business/

- Click the "Manage Now" button.

- Sign in with a valid Google account or create one if needed.

- Follow the instructions to create a new listing.

Claim a Google My Business Listing

- Sign in with a valid Google account or create one if needed.
- If you haven't already done so, search for the business on Google
- Click the "Own this business?" link (desktop) or "Claim this business" link (mobile)
- Follow the instructions to verify your information and claim the listing.

Request Ownership of a Listing

- Go to https://business.google.com/add and search for your business.
- If you're a storefront business:
- You'll see "This listing has already been claimed".
- Click "Request Access" and submit the form.
- If you're a service-area business or for bulk-verified accounts:
- Enter your business information and complete the verification process.
- Once verified, you'll see "Owner conflict"
- You can then click "Request access" and submit the form.
- The current owner will be emailed and you'll also get a confirmation email.
- Wait for the current owner to respond.
- This may take up to 7 days.
- You can check the status of your request in the GMB dashboard or use the link in your confirmation email.
- You'll be notified by email if approved or denied by the current owner.
- What was the result of the request?
- Approved – Optimize Your Google My Business Listing.
- Denied – Contact Google My Business Support and make an appeal.
- No response – Try to claim the listing again.

Verify Your Google My Business Listing

- Log in to Google My Business and go to your listing.
- Click "Verify Now" and you will be presented with your verification options.
- Select the option you prefer. You cannot choose which methods Google makes available.

Postcard

- You'll be sent a postcard within 14 days with a verification code.
- Do not make any changes to your listing during this time.
- Log back in to Google My Business and enter the verification code for your listing.
- You can request another postcard from your GMB listing if needed.

Phone

- Ensure that you can answer the phone number in your GMB listing.
- Log in to Google My Business and go to your listing.
- Choose phone from the list of verification options (if available).
- Google will call with a verification code.
- Enter the code into your listing.

Email

- Choose email from the list of verification options (if available)
- Google will send you an email.
- Click the "Verify" button in the email or enter the code in your GMB listing.

Google Search Console

- Verify your business website with Google Search Console.
- Use the same email address for Google Search Console and Google My Business.
- When you verify your Google My Business listing, Google will instantly verify it.

Video Chat

- Install the Google Hangouts app for iOS or Android.
- For storefront businesses, Google will want to see your workplace, business logo, equipment, public space, and possibly meet a couple customers.
- For service area businesses, Google will want to see your work vehicle, license plate, business logo on the vehicle, and tools of your trade in the vehicle.
- You then connect with a Google specialist via video call to verify your listing.

Google Trusted Verifier

- Work with special partner companies and bypasses the entire verification process. This is an invitation-only program and you cannot apply to be a Trusted Verifier.

- Google Trusted verifiers will use a private, Android-only, Trusted Verifier app to send verification documentation and location information about your business back to Google.

- Work with the Trusted Verifier to visit your location in person or …

- Send the Trusted Verifier original documents for the business: current utility bills, government tax documents, business incorporation / registration.

- Once verified, go to Optimize Your Google My Business Listing

Optimize Your Google My Business Listing

Basic Business Information

Business name

- Use the same business name as on your signs, business cards and legal documents.

- Do NOT spam your business name with cities, search terms, taglines or anything else. It is against Google's terms of service and could lead to listing problems or suspension in the future.

Business categories

- Make sure the primary category best represents your business. It is the only one that people see on your business listing.

- Take advantage of additional categories and add as many as apply to your business.

- Do NOT use categories if they do not directly apply to your business.

Business location

- Only enter a physical address if customers actually visit your place of business.

- Use a free tool like Smarty Streets to make sure your address is properly formatted.

- Put the physical street address in the first line and put suite numbers in the second line.

Service area

- Only enter this if you serve customers at their location (service area businesses). Some businesses serve customers both at their place of business and at their customer's location.
- Enter the cities, postal codes or regions that you service. Note that no matter how big a service area you set, it is still unlikely to appear in a search result greater than 20 miles away.

Business hours

- Enter regular hours of operation when customers can actually do business with you.
- Add special hours for holidays, special closures, or other times when your business is not open. See Update Special Business Hours for more information.
- If you are a seasonal business, remove all operating hours when closed, and re-enter them when you open again.

Phone Numbers and Call Tracking

- If you use a call tracking number for your Google My Business listing
- Use the call tracking number in the "Primary Phone" field.
- Add your primary, local phone number as an "Additional Phone".
- Add toll-free and secondary phone numbers as "Additional Phone" fields.
- If you do NOT use a call tracking number for your Google My Business listing
- Use your primary, local phone number in the "Primary Phone" field.
- Add toll-free and secondary phone numbers as "Additional Phone" fields.

Website and Appointment URLs*

- Properly format your URLs
- All URLs must be live at the time you enter them into Google My Business.
- Use https:// or http:// and include or omit the www as appropriate.
- Add Google Analytics UTM tracking codes to your URL. This helps you see in Google Analytics how many people came to your website from your GMB listing.

- Go the Google Campaign URL Builder.

- Copy and paste your website URL.

- Use google as the campaign source.

- Use local as the campaign medium.

- Use a location ID as the campaign name. If you only have one location, just use something like 1 as the campaign name. This helps differentiate traffic on your website for various locations.

- Use primary, appointment, menu, etc. as the content variable as appropriate.

Website URL

- For single location businesses, use the homepage of your website.

- For multi-location businesses, use the specific page for each location.

Appointment URL

- Use this to link to your contact page or an online appointment system.

- Certain types of businesses can instead use Reserve with Google to integrate specific booking systems into their Google My Business account.

Menu URL (Restaurants)

- Restaurants can also add a special URL to link to their menu.

- Must link to a page on your website. Links directly to PDFs are not supported.

- Instead of linking to the menu on your website, restaurants may want to directly add their menu to the GMB listing.

Booking and Ordering Service URLs

- Certain booking and ordering links may appear in your listing automatically. These are done through Google's partnerships with 3rd party providers and you cannot directly edit them in your GMB listing.

- To remove or fix these links, you must contact the specific 3rd party provider and make your request.

Services / Menu / Products

Services

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- Only available for certain types of service businesses (dentists, attorneys, insurance agents, hotels, marketing agencies, and others)

- Only shows up for end users in the Google Maps app right now.

- Create separate sections for the different categories of services you offer.

- Create a separate service for each specific service you offer.

- Enter the appropriate name and price of each service.

- Add a description of each service up to 1000 characters. Take advantage of this space to describe each service for customers using rich keywords.

Menu

- Only available for restaurant-type businesses.

- Only shows up for end users in the Google Maps app right now.

- Use this in addition to a link to your menu on your website.

- Create separate sections for each section of your menu.

- Create a separate menu items within each section.

- Enter the appropriate name and price of each menu item.

- Use the same description of your menu item as you do in your actual menu up to 1000 characters.

Products

- Only available for certain types of retail-oriented businesses.

- It may not be practical to include every product or product category that your business carries. Focus on just the most important products and categories.

- Create separate collections for each product category you'd like to feature.

- Enter the collection name.

- Add a collection description up to 1000 characters. Take advantage of this space to describe each collection / product category using rich keywords.

- Create individual products within each categories.

- Enter the product name and price (price ranges are not supported).

- Add a product description up to 1000 characters. We recommend using the same description that you would use in your product catalog.
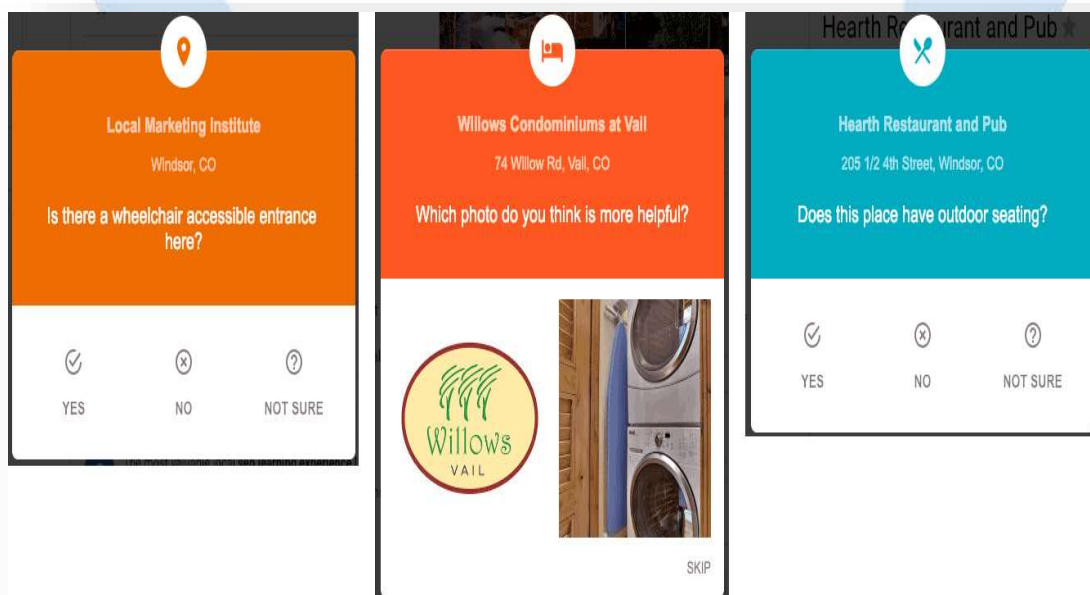
Business Attributes

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Business-Defined Attributes (Objective Attributes)

- These are attributes that you can explicitly set for your business. Attributes vary by business category and can include items like: Women Owned, Wheelchair Accessible, Restroom, Languages Spoken, Outdoor Seating, Happy Hour, etc.

- Go to your listing in Google My Business.

- Click "Info" and then click "Attributes".

- Select as many attributes as apply to your business. Do not spam these attributes as Google has been known to confirm these by asking Google users to submit subjective attributes (see below).

User-Defined Attributes (Subjective Attributes)

- Subjective attributes are crowd-sourced from people Google believes might know about your business. Google asks questions like "Is there a wheelchair accessible entrance here?" "Is the parking here free?" and even asks people which images they think are more helpful.

- You cannot control the subjective attributes Google asks about your business, nor the responses that people might give.

- Certain types of businesses can monitor subjective attributes by using the Insights tab in your Google My Business listing.

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Google My Business Subjective Attributes

Business Description*

- The business description is an open text area that you can use to tell potential customers more about your business. It appears in both desktop and mobile web search, but does not appear on the Google Maps app.
- Go to your listing in Google My Business.
- Click "Info" and then click "Description".
- You can write a description of up to 750 characters, however, only the first 244 characters display on your Google listing unless the visitor clicks "More".

Recommendations for business descriptions:

- Think about what you'd want your customers to know most about your business. Pretend they know nothing about you.
- Use the most important terms that potential customers might be looking for, but do not keyword stuff. It is not believed that Google uses the description field as a factor in search rankings. However, a well-written description could help convert someone looking at your listing into a customer.
- Don't use all-caps, emojis or other "gimmicky character use".
- Do not focus on promotions, prices or sales. Tell people about your business instead.
- Do not use any URLs.
- Advanced Information

Store Codes*

- A specific ID for each location used to help organize listings for multi-location businesses. This is required for bulk upload listings on Google My Business.
- Each store code must be unique, have no spaces or special characters, and a maximum of 64 characters.
- To add/edit store codes individually:
- Go to your listing in Google My Business.
- Click "Info" and then in the "Advanced information" section click "Store code".
- To add/edit store codes in bulk:

- Download your locations to a spreadsheet.

- Enter store codes into the spreadsheet, but do NOT change the address of any location.

- Re-upload the spreadsheet with new store codes.

Labels*

- Labels (tags) help multi-location businesses organize their listings. You can search for labels within the Google My Business dashboard and use them in Google Ads. For example, you might use geographic regions as labels, or use a store type like "Full Service" or "Limited Service".

- You can assign up to 10 labels per location. Each label can be 50 characters and can include spaces, but should not include special characters.

- To add/edit labels:

- Go to your listing in Google My Business.

- Click "Info" and then in the "Advanced information" section click "Labels".

- Add as many labels as you need for each listing.

Google Ads Local Extensions Phone*

- With Google Ads, you can have a "location extension" that allows you to show a different phone number than the one used in your normal Google My Business listing. This is particularly useful if you are using call tracking for Google Ads.

- If you leave this field blank, Google Ads location extensions will use the primary phone number in your Google My Business listing.

- Use a local phone number in order to show in local search results.

- You cannot use "pay" phone numbers like 1-900 numbers in the United States.

Photos

Photos, videos and virtual tours are an important part of your Google My Business listing. First, they represent your business to potential customers so you want to give them the best impression possible for your business.

According to Google's own data, "Businesses with photos receive 42% more requests for driving directions to their location from users on Google, and 35% more clicks through to their websites than businesses that don't have photos."

You also want to upload your own images so that your images have a better chance of displaying on your listing instead of images that Google users upload. Finally, photos, videos and virtual tours encourage engagement with your listing and engagement with your listing is a key ranking factor on Google.

General Notes

- Images you upload will not appear on your public listing until you verify your listing.
- Remember that images that appear on your listing are a combination of ones you upload and ones that the public uploads.
- If you have more than 10 locations, you can upload photos in bulk with a spreadsheet.
- All images should JPG / PNG format, no larger than 10MB and a minimum of 720×720 pixels.
- Use good photography. Remember that these images are the first impression that many people will have about your business. Don't go cheap!
- Avoid promotional or other non-natural text on your images.
- Do not use stock photography. Those may be flagged and removed.

Upload Photos to Your GMB Listing

Logo – Logos uploaded to GMB should be square. If your logo isn't square, use a tool like Photoshop and adjust the canvas size to make it square, preferably with a white background outside the borders of the logo itself.

Cover photo – This should be the primary photo that you'd prefer to represent your business.

Exterior / interior photos – If you have a physical location, upload at least three photos of the outside and inside of your business using different angles, different times of day, etc. so that people get a feel for the location.

Photos at work. Upload at least three photos showing you working with your customers and the various services you provide.

Team photos – Upload at least three photos showing the management team and employees. These don't have to be professional headshots and usually more candid shots work better. The goal is to give potential customers a feel for the people they'll be interacting with at your business.

Products / Food & Drink / Rooms – Depending on the type of business you have, there may be other photo categories available to you. The goal is to provide potential customers with a feel for the products, food & drink, common areas, or rooms that your business may offer.

How to Set Which Photo Shows First on Your GMB Listing

- Unfortunately you cannot actually set which photo appears as the primary photo in your Google My Business listing. Google's algorithms determine which photo will appear and the order of your other photos. But you can influence these algorithms.

- Upload the image that you want as your cover photo. Again, this doesn't guarantee that image will be selected by Google as the primary photo, but it does tell Google that is the image you'd prefer.

- Google looks at behavioral signals from its users to help determine which photos best represent your businesses. If you upload a compelling cover photo, people will interact with it more (views, etc.) which tells Google that it's an important photo.

- In addition, Google will ask actually ask people which photo best represents your business and factor that information into the order of your photos.

- How to Remove Photos from Your Listing

- To remove images that you have uploaded to your own listing:

- Log in to Google My Business and go to your listing.

- Click the "Photos" tab and find the image that you want to remove.

- Click on the image, then click the "trash" icon in the upper-right corner.

- You cannot remove images that others have uploaded about your business, however, you can flag them for potential removal. Google will only remove images

if they violate Google's Map User Contributed Content Policy. They won't remove an image just because you may not like it. To flag a user-contributed image:

- Log in to Google My Business and go to your listing.

- Click the "Photos" tab, the click the "By customer" top tab.

- Click on the image, then click the "flag" icon in the upper-right corner.

- Complete and submit the content violation form.

- There is no guarantee that Google will remove the image or notify you, so check back occasionally.

- If you cannot get the image removed by flagging it and believe it does violate Google's contributed content policy, you may need to escalate to Google My Business support.

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Chapter 8

Google My Business Tips For Car Dealers

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For your vehicle dealership, having an optimized Google My Business means that when a local customer is searching for your vehicles and services, your dealership becomes one for them to consider – it's an ideal way of becoming part of vehicle buying journeys' – at no cost to you!

To assist you with your Google My Business optimizations, we've put together a list of tips and commonly asked questions .

Accessing your Google My Business

Firstly, you need to create a Google My Business page for your dealership. Sometimes Google makes one for you, however in most cases you need to build one yourself. Creating a Google My Business listing is free and you can Get Started Here. If you do need assistance building one, we are more than happy to help!

If you are struggling to access your Google My Business, there are a few reasons as to why that might be:

a. The business listing may not be claimed

If this is the case, you will need to go through to process of building your Google My Business listing which is easy! You can follow the instructions Here.

b. Someone else has claimed the listing

If someone created the business on your behalf, you will need to request ownership of the Google My Business listing. There are steps involved with this one, you can follow them Here.

Why isn't my Google My Business appearing?

If you've built your Google My Business already, but it still isn't showing, you need to ensure that it has been verified. Google My Business allows people to find you on Google Maps, so they want to verify that the location you supplied is correct. They will do this by sending you a post card with a verification code that you need to enter to your account. They may also ring the phone number that has been supplied, so you'll need to ensure the reception team are prepared for the call. Once this has been completed, give it some time and your listing should appear.

Your Google My Business placement will vary in Google Search results, but ensuring you have the correct business information does help with your business ranking.

Fill in all of your Dealership's information

Google favors the most relevant Google My Business listings for a user's search results. Meaning that you can maximize how often customers are seeing your business in local search by ensuring all of your business information is supplied. Providing and continuously updating your business information on your Google My Business can help your dealership's local ranking, enhancing your presence on Google Search and Google Maps. This is free SEO, so why wouldn't you do it!

The information you should be providing includes:

- Your dealership's physical address
- Phone number
- Business hours
- Business category – Car dealer
- Short description about why customers should choose you
- Photos of your dealership

Speaking of photos, they are important because they make your dealership seem more real. Google recommends uploading accurate and appealing images to show your potential customers what your dealership has to offer.

If your information does change, for example you are now open till 9pm on a Thursday, please keep in mind that updated business information may take up to 3 days to appear. So, update early and often!

How can I remove customer reviews?

This is probably the most asked question, and it is the most difficult to answer. The truth is, there is no button that you can click to delete a customer's review. If you believe the review to be fake/spam, you can flag it will Google as "inappropriate", however at the end of the day, it's up to Google to decide whether or not the review violates their posting guidelines.

If you've had no luck with Google, what we recommend is that you reach out to the person who submitted the review and ask them to remove it. Otherwise, politely reply to the review so that other customers can see that you care about your customers.

Expert Tip – if you do get a bad review, the best way is to improve your overall star rating is to earn more positive reviews. Don't focus on trying to get reviews removed but instead urge your happy customers to leave new ones!

Tips to responding to reviews

Reviews from customers can provide valuable feedback for your dealership and replying to your reviews can help build your customers' trust. That's why responding to customer reviews is really important. You want your business to be viewed publicly as one that builds relationships with their customers and truly cares about their shopping experience.

You should be responding to all reviews, positive or not! We know it's hard to respond to someone who is publicly shaming you for something really small, however, reviews can be permanent on your Google My Business, so you need to show customers that you care enough to address unhappy customers. Google stresses that negative reviews may not always be a sign of bad business practice, a customer may have had mismatched expectations. Replying to these reviews can help to identify ways to improve the experience for your customers in the future.

With a little help from Google, below are a few tips to responding to reviews:

- **Be nice and don't get personal**

It's difficult to win arguments through messages, and you want to avoid looking unprofessional and burn bridges with the reviewer by lashing out and getting personal. This will also harm what potential new customers will think of your business. Our best advice is to keep it civil, keep your response readable and courteous.

- **Keep it short and sweet**

Customers are looking for short and genuine responses, don't overwhelm them with too long of a response. We also recommend that you avoid using the same response for all

reviews, as it can look lazy and "bot-like" when customers are scrolling through your reviews.

- **Be honest**

Investigate the reasons behind the review. If there was a mistake made on your end, be honest about it but don't take responsibility for things that weren't your fault. Give a short explanation about the situation. It may even be best to contact them personally about their review.

How else can I utilize Google My Business?

Google My Business offers you the ability to add posts on your listing, allowing you to advertise your dealership promotions for free! When a customer is right at the end of their buying journey and are tossing up whether or not to buy a car from you, they will want to know what your Dealership has to offer.

Using your Google My Business listing, you can create an eye-catching post with an image and a short description about your Dealership's latest offer or upcoming events. Utilizing these posts also makes it easier to drive potential customers through to your website, delivering high quality traffic and leads.

Currently in testing, Google My Business has launched "Products" which gives Dealerships the ability to showcase images of vehicles. Products allows you to build a stronger presence on mobile by showcasing your vehicles and driving customer interaction. By simply adding an image, description and price, your Google My Business becomes a stronger selling tool for your Dealership.

Finally, you can use Google Insight reports to learn how customers are finding your business listing, and what they are doing once they find it. It's important to have a strong understanding of how customers are interacting with your Google My Business, and these reports delve into search queries, phone calls, customer actions and more. You can learn more about Insight reports Here.

It's quite easy to set and forget your Google My Business, and this is something we want you to avoid. Your customers are always going to be searching for you, meaning your

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information needs to be up-to-date everywhere. And considering Google My Business is giving you free advertising opportunities, why wouldn't you keep it up-to-date?

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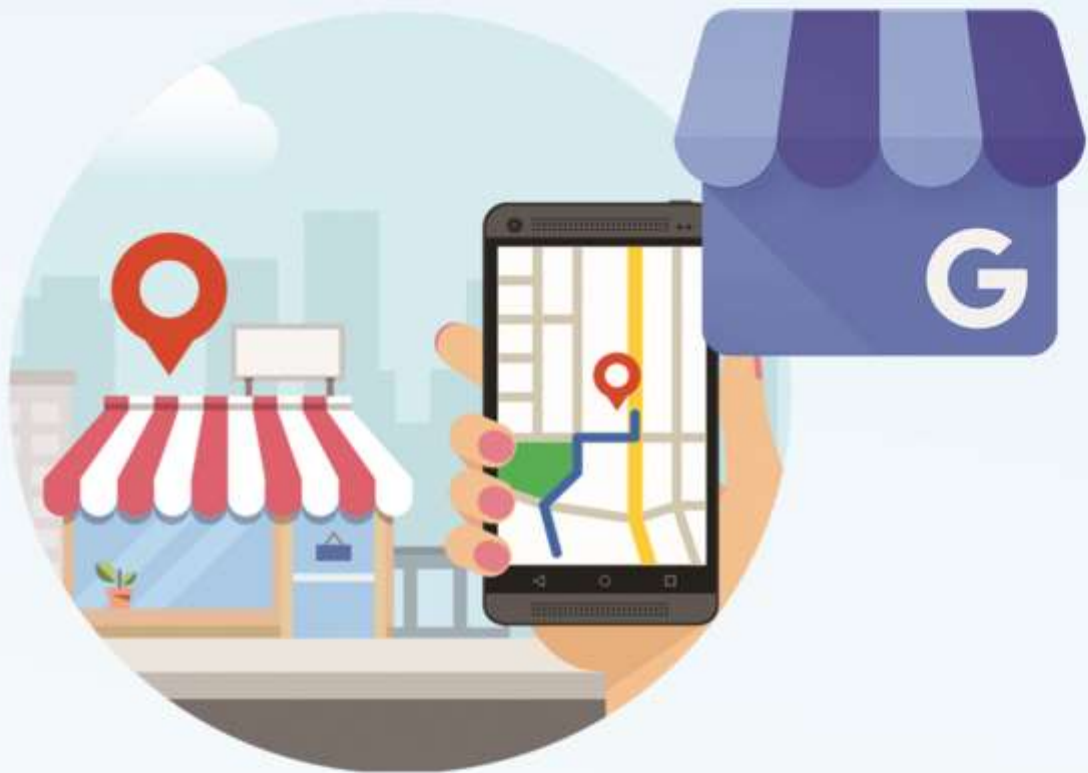
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Chapter 9

How Can Restaurants Use Google My Business For Menu Listing & Local Posts

Most restaurant owners make sure their tables are clean and their bars well-stocked. But when it comes to attracting customers, it's equally important to ensure your online presence sparkles. Today's consumer relies on Google search to decide where to eat or grab happy hour, and nearly 70% of these local searches are done on a mobile phone. If you're a restaurant or bar owner, that means it's critical that your online "front door" looks welcoming and appealing.

Luckily, Google offers some powerful tools local businesses can use to drive traffic. The new Google My Business menu listing and local posting features are two ways restaurants can attract more guests. Read on for an overview of these features, together with new tools Evergreen has released to help bars and restaurants take advantage without much effort.

Google My Business Menu Listing

When choosing a restaurant, hungry and thirsty people first want to know what food and drinks you offer and what they cost. If you have claimed your Google My Business page (and you really should), you can list your menu directly in your profile. That means people will see it immediately when they search for your business on a cell phone and will be that much more likely to stop by. It will even show up in Google Maps!
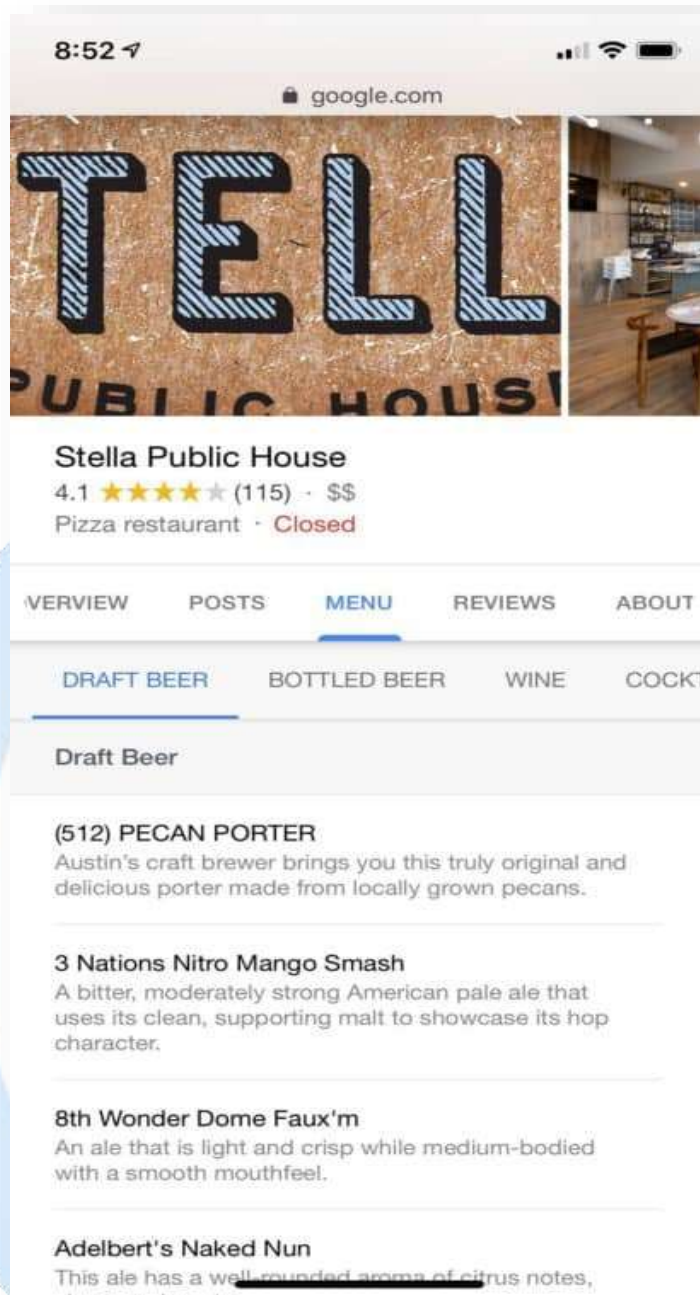
HOW TO LIST & UPDATE YOUR MENU ON GOOGLE

The first step is to add a menu button to your Google My Business page. You can then manually add menu items and specials, or you can use a platform like Evergreen to automatically update your menus whenever you add a food or drink item to the Evergreen dashboard.

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It's important that your restaurant's menus and specials are accurate and up-to-date, so you will have to remember to swap out a new beer or appetizer if you go the manual route. If you are an Evergreen customer, your Google menu will automatically update any time you add or remove an item in your dashboard. That way you know it's always up to date.

Setting up a Google menu within the Evergreen dashboard is easy; simply connect your Google account on the Social Settings page and you will see a button to "Create a Google Web Menu."

This takes you to a page where you can choose which of your menus you'd like to display. You can also choose what to include on the menu (e.g. cocktails, food, bottled vs on-tap beers) and how to order the items.

That's it! Now anyone searching for your bar or restaurant—or specific food and drinks like house-made Cinnamon Rolls or Pliny the Elder—will see your restaurant's menu.

Google My Business Posts

Google My Business posts may sound like yet another social media platform to keep track of. But these local posts are different in one very important way: everyone uses Google, only some people use Facebook or Instagram.

Google posts show up in Google Search whenever someone looks up your bar or restaurant. That means that Google My Business posts will be seen by anyone searching for you online, before they even click into your website. These posts show up at the bottom of your Google My Business profile, which appears on the right-hand side of the search page on a computer and at the very top of Google search results on a cell phone—before someone even gets to your website.
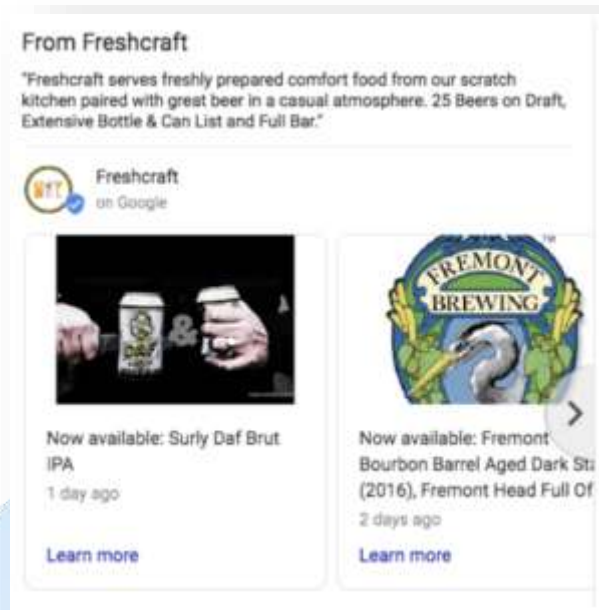
HOW TO POST TO GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

Just like your menu, you can manually add a post from your Google My Business account. You can also use any software which lets you post to Google. This makes it really easy to integrate Google posts into your routine since the composer also supports Facebook and Twitter.

Another key difference between manual Google posts and a software is that the software lets you schedule posts. By scheduling four posts at once, you'll be set for a full month without needing to log in and post every few days. Unlike social platforms like Facebook, Google My Business posts expire after seven days, so scheduling is a life-saver for bars or restaurants without a dedicated social media person

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Chapter 10

Common Google My Business Mistakes to avoid

Your Google My Business (GMB) listing and account are absolutely central to achieving success with local SEO. If you want customers to find you, especially new customers who aren't just searching for your business name, you need a fleshed out and properly optimized GMB account. Unfortunately, many businesses make important mistakes with their GMB account that need to be addressed. Let's talk about some common mistakes and how to fix them.

1. Not Verifying Your Business Listing

What's Wrong: Some businesses assume that Google will list their business whether or not they verify it, or believe that there is no reason for them to verify it if they are already showing up in local search results. In reality, failing to verify your business in GMB damages Google's confidence in your location and status as a legitimate business, and reduces the chances that you will show up in search results, meaning that even if you show up sometimes, you could show up in more results if you verified. Verifying your GMB account also allows you to modify your listing, correct inaccuracies, improve your branding, show off pictures of what you do, and more.

How To Fix: Most businesses verify by mail on a desktop PC as follows:

- Sign in to GMB
- Select your business and click Verify now
- Verify that your address is correct on the postcard request screen, update it if it isn't, and include an Optional contact name to make sure that the postcard goes to the person in charge of setting up your GMB account
- Click Send postcard
- You will receive your postcard within two weeks. Don't make any changes to your business name, address, category, or request another code during this time, or you will slow down the verification process.
- After getting your postcard, log in to GMB and select the location you are verifying
- Click the Verify now button
- Enter your 5-digit verification code into the Code field
- Click Submit

For other verification methods, or if you are verifying by mail with a mobile device, see Google's guidelines.

2. Using spammy techniques for your business name

What's Wrong: Some businesses attempt to game their SEO by using an inaccurate business name. They believe that including keywords in their business name will allow them to rank better in local search results. Instead, doing so is a violation of Google's guidelines and may get you penalized. Even if it doesn't, the discrepancy between your business name in GMB and your business name in other places that list your name, address, and phone number will reduce Google's confidence that it has the right location for your business, and will result in your being less likely to shop up near the top of the local results.

How To Fix: Use your business name as it is consistently used on your signs, logos, website, and any business listing that shows your name, address, and phone number.

3. Using your legal business name instead of your widely recognized name

What's Wrong: If your legal business name and the name used across all of your platforms are identical, there is no problem. However, if your logos, signs, and business listings list a popularized business name that is different from its legal name, this leads to discrepancies that will reduce Google's confidence in your business's location.

How To Fix: Make sure that your GMB business name is the same as the one listed on your website, business listings, and on your signs and branding, as opposed to your legal business name, if they are different.

4. Bad Business Description

What's Wrong: Businesses often enter a long-winded business description that doesn't sell users on the business quickly enough to positively impact their decision about whether or not to visit your location. Google only displays the 250 characters of the description, and users will be comparing you next to dozens of other businesses when they make a decision.

How To Fix: Use a business description that clarifies what your business is for and how it is different from competitors as quickly as possible. Prioritize the things that customers

tend to be most curious about, questions about your business that often come up in phone calls or walk-ins about what you can do for them.

5. No Reviews

What's Wrong: Reviews are the most important ranking factor for local search. If your business has no reviews, this dramatically hurts your chances of showing up in search local search results and in Google Maps listings. Even if you do, a lack of customer reviews harms consumer trust, and users will be less likely to choose your location over others without any information from other customers to guide them.

How To Fix: Start incorporating the process of asking for reviews into your business processes:

- Train your staff to ask after completing a job or interacting with a customer
- Ask through emails or when you send a bill
- Ask at the end of your phone calls
- Show customers how to leave a review

6. Solicited Or Fake Reviews

What's Wrong: Some businesses incentivize users to leave reviews by offering a discount or coupon, or more egregiously, outright paying others to leave reviews. Doing so violates Google's guidelines and could result in your listing being removed from local search results entirely. Google requires that reviews left by customers who have actually visited the location and that they don't receive compensation for leaving a review. Even customers who visited the location and bought your products or services fall under this category if they are given a coupon or discount for leaving a review.

How To Fix: Implement a clear and strict policy against rewarding customers for leaving reviews on GMB. If any incentives are in place to reward staff for encouraging customers to leave reviews, they must be very carefully chosen to avoid incentivizing staff in any way "bribe" customers.

7. Duplicate Listings

What's Wrong: If you add a GMB location that already been verified, your business will not show up in listings, and it will show up as a "Duplicate listing" in your GMB account.

How To Fix: You will need to remove the duplicate, making sure not to delete the verified listing:

- Sign in to GMB and go to Duplicate locations in your Account Summary
- Click the duplicate location
- Click Delete this listing
- To remove multiple listings from the Duplicate locations section, check the boxes next to each listing, click the three-dot menu icon, and click Remove
- If you don't have access to the verified listing, you will need to get access to it. See Google's instructions on gaining access of an already verified listing.
- If your duplicate listings are mistakenly listed at different addresses, or at the same address with different names, you will need to remove the incorrect listing. These will not be listed as duplicates in your account summary and will need to be identified manually. See this in-depth guide on dealing with these types of duplicates.

CONCLUSION

These seven mistakes plague businesses that are new to local SEO. The good news is that tackling these issues will put you ahead of a fair number of your competitors and put you on the map. Put this advice to use, and you should expect to see some gains in your GMB insights and in your store.

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Chapter 11

Analyzing and Measuring Google My Business Traffic Data

We all know that Google My Business is used to improve your company's local search presence and attracting new customers via reviews, photos, company information and much more. We can all agree these are very important, but how do you know if this is attracting more customers to your website?

Learn how to start tracking your company's Google My Business traffic data and see how much of an impact it has!

Why You Should Track Google My Business

There is no doubt that having a properly optimized Google My Business listing is the lifeblood of any local based company. Even though this is the case, 99.9999% of all Google My Business listing owners or managers do not track their traffic and data.

Tracking your company's Google My Business data is an often overlooked aspect of any Local SEO campaign. If you are a company who worries about leads and have a focus on converting site traffic, Google My Business is one of the best avenues for local lead generation.

How Do I Track Google My Business Traffic To My Site?

Tracking Google My Business traffic is actually very easy, and there are a couple of ways to do this. The first method is by create a custom UTM tracking code. The other way to track data is done within your GMB dashboard.

If you create the UTM code, this enables you to track data in both Google Analytics and Search Console. In my opinion, UTM code tracking is the best way to see any traffic coming to your site from your Google My Business listing. As long as you set everything up correctly, this is a very effective way to track data.

Tracking your listing within your GMB dashboard is also a great way to track traffic data. In my opinion though, unless you are ok with being handcuffed by very limited data, this the lesser of the 2 methods mentioned.   Even though this gives a limited amount of data, this is easier for small business owners to use.

No matter which method you use to track your Google My Business data, it is always important to see where your traffic is coming from, and how it as increased over time.

Using UTM Codes To Track Google My Business Traffic

When it comes to accurately tracking your Google My Business traffic, you need to set up UTM tracking codes. This is very easy to do and requires no prior knowledge of any sort of coding or programming whatsoever.

For those that do not know what a UTM tracking code is, they are simple codes that you attach to the end of a URL in order to track a source, medium, campaign name, campaign term, and campaign content. This enables Google Analytics to tell you where traffic is coming from as well as what campaign directed the traffic to your site.

In my opinion, having UTM url's in GMB listings is a must for any company that relies heavily on tracking every aspect of their marketing efforts, or for an SEO consultant who gives detailed reports to their clients.

Creating UTM Codes

To create a UTM code you can use the Google Developer Tools Campaign URL Builder and you will come to a screen as shown below. Fill out the appropriate sections similar to how you create all your Google My Business tracking URL's for you to copy if you so choose.

All you need to do is simply put in the right information into the appropriate fields.

- Website URL – Put the root URL or whatever page you are linking to in your listing.
- Campaign Source – use "local" as the source since Google My Business is part of my local SEO campaign.
- Campaign Medium -Use "organic" since GMB listings are from organic searches.
- Campaign Content – Use "gmb", but you can use or whatever you think is appropriate here .

Once you input these values into the appropriate fields, your new tracking URL will auto populate in the box at the bottom.

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After your new URL is created, you have the option to keep it as is or shorten it. If you decide to shorten it, then it will appear like below.

Note: If you have a company with multiple locations and have more than one Google My Business listing, you can put that data in the Campaign Name section. This will allow you to create as many different URL's as needed. For example, if you own a small chain of restaurants, you can use each location's city as the Campaign Name.

**Adding UTM Tracking URL To Google My Business Listing**

Once you're all set with creating your new UTM tracking URL, you need to add it to your listing. To do this, simply go to your account dashboard and select either info or edit. This will bring up a new screen with your company information.

Scroll down to find the existing URL and replace it with the new UTM tracking URL.

Once you add the new URL to your listing, you can refresh the page and it should be live.

Setting Up Tracking Within Google Analytics

Once your new URL is live on your listing, you need to now be able to track it in Google Analytics. The way to do this is by creating a new segment within your GA property. To create a new segment you simply click "Add New Segment".
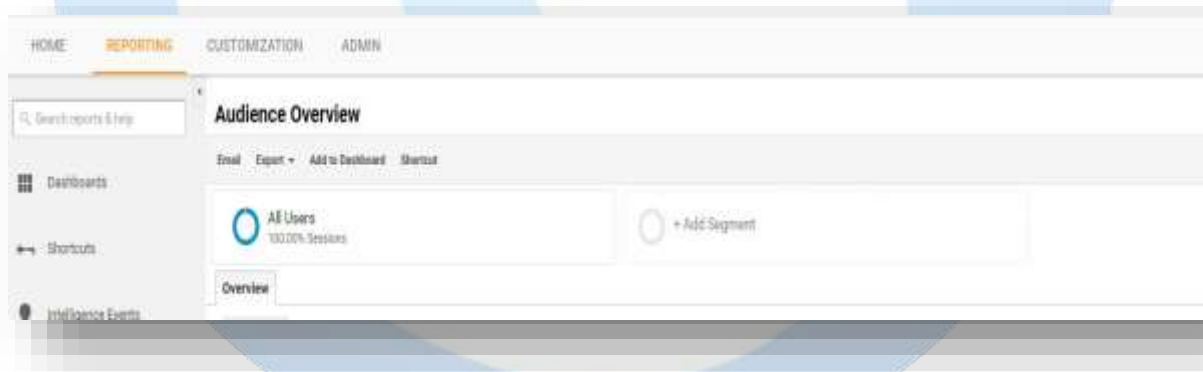
This will bring up a list of all existing default segments. Once this appears, select the red "+ New Segment" button. This will display the screen shown below.

Choose "Traffic Sources" on the left and this will display the correct info that needs to be filled out.

When filling out the fields, all you simply do is match the sections to the same as when you created the UTM tracking code.

After this is done, you can start tracking you Google My Business Traffic!

Seeing Google My Business Traffic In Google Analytics

Now that you have correctly setup your Google My Business tracking within Google Analytics, you need to be able to start seeing the traffic. There are a couple of ways you can do this. The first method is to look within Source / Medium. To get here, simply go to Acquisition > All Traffic > Source / Medium.

Once you get here, you will see a similar layout as shown below. Here you can see that local / organic, which is what we made our Google My Business UTM tracking URL source and medium set as displaying. This signifies that your listing is generating traffic.

Another way to see your Google My Business traffic within Google Analytics is to look at the campaigns. To see this, all you simply do is look under Acquisition again then Campaigns > All Campaigns. This will display the following screen.

Google My Business Data in Google Search Console

Being able to see Google My Business data in Google Search Console is a great way to see even more data. This to me is a great way to determine how many users come to the site from my listing, what keywords are used to find the listing, and how many impressions my listings get.

As you can tell from this screen grab, this GMB listing generates a great deal of traffic for this site filtered for Clicks, Impressions, and Click Through Rate (CTR). This data shows that this Google My Business listing has a very high Click Through Rate (5.44% over a 90 day span).

Google My Business Insights Tracking

Within Google My Business, there is its own unique analytics tracking called Insights. Some of these categories were updated in August 2016.

These metrics give details about the current performance of your listing such as:

- How customers are searching for your business
- Where they view your business on Google
- How they interact with the listing
- How often they look at driving directions
- The amount of phone calls
- The number of photos you have and how many times they have been viewed

These metrics are very easy to see and are found on the top of the Google My Business dashboard and titled "Insights". For the basic user, these are very useful in determining how well your listing is performing in search, and how often users interact with it.

How Customers Search For Your Business

Of the numerous insights metrics, the how customers search for your business is one of the most useful. This bit of data shows if your listing is coming up via searches for keywords related to what you do or if users search for your brand.
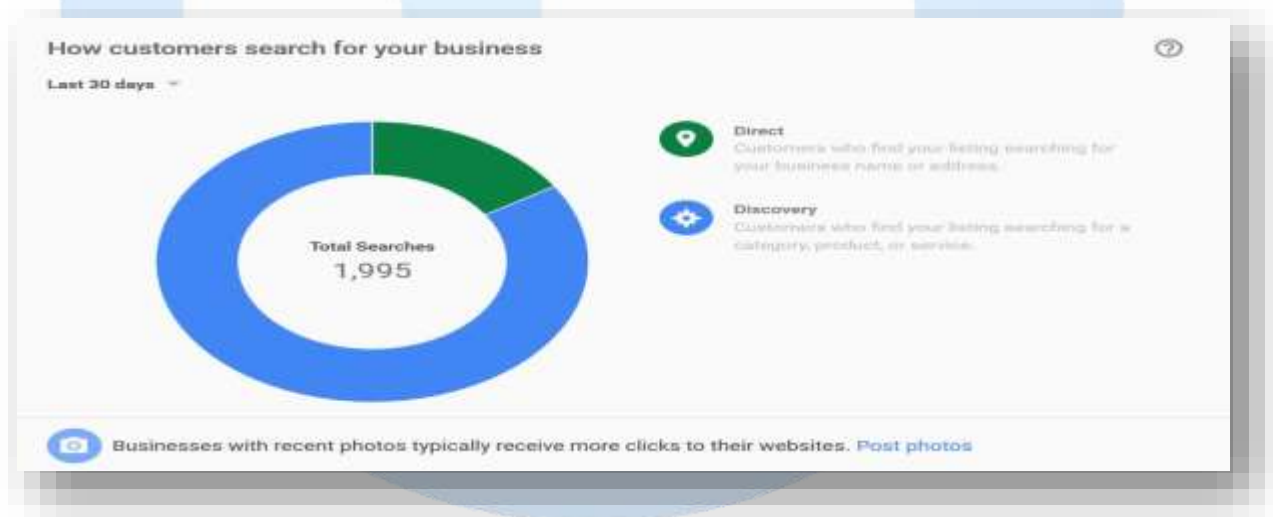
Google My Business has two ways of looking at traffic, and they are called Direct and Discovery. This data shows impressions rather than clicks

- Direct traffic is defined as "customers who find your listing searching for your business name or address". These listings often show up when users do a search and only your listing is the one displayed in the SERP. You can attribute Direct

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search data to other forms of marketing you are doing or have done, or even returning customers.
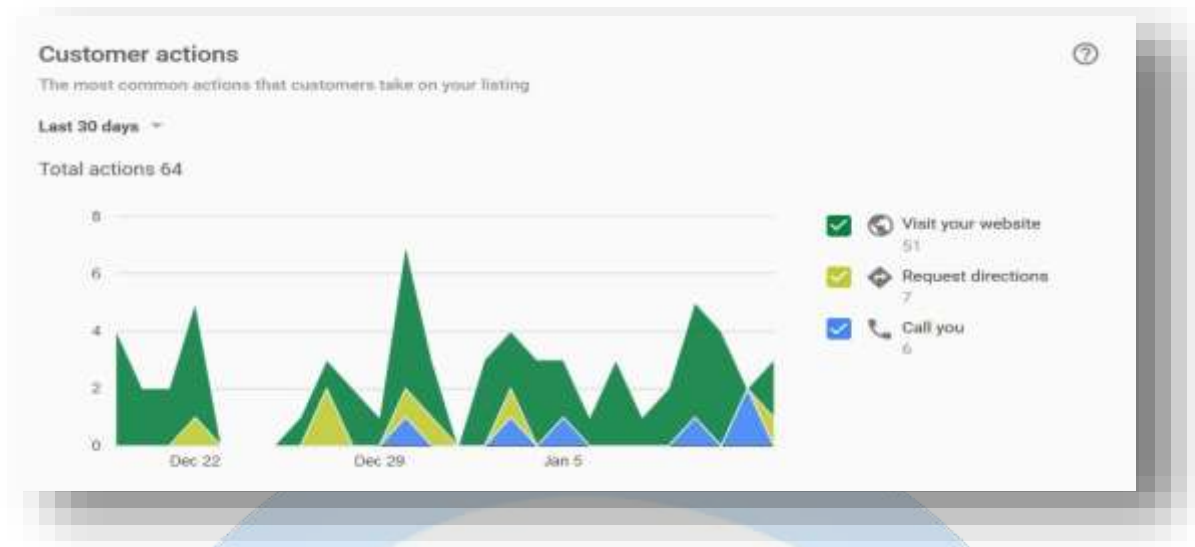
- Discovery traffic is defined as "customers who find your listing searching for a category, product, or service". This type of traffic is more organic and displays your listing in the local pack or map. You can attribute this traffic source directly to your SEO campaign.

Where Customers View Your Business On Google
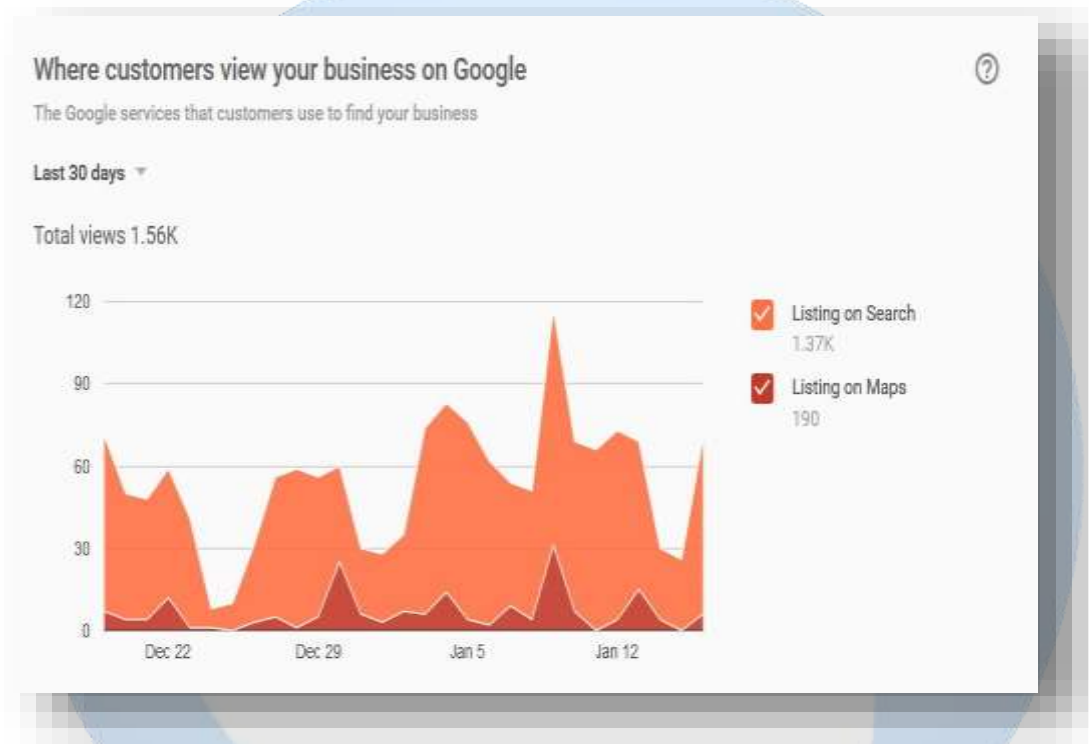
The where customers view your business metric is another very useful bit of data. This shows whether your listing is seen on the search results page, or on maps. This gives you a good idea of how your target audience is finding your listing.

Customer Actions

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The Customer Actions data shows how users interact with your listing. This shows the most actions that users can take once they are on your listing.

Visit Your Website – this data tells you how many times users visited your site after interacting with your listing.

Request Driving Directions – how many times users looked for directions to your business.

Call You – the amount of phone calls your listing has generated

Based on your business, some of these metrics would matter more than others. For example, if you manage a local Dunkin Donuts, you might focus more on the request directions data.

If you operate a home services business, you might focus on the amount of calls or clicks to your website that could convert into leads.

Driving Directions Requests

This section shows the amount of times users looked for driving directions to your location. Depending on what type of company you have, you may have many or none. For example, you will get more data as a restaurant or service business at a single location like a gas station compared to a company that has a service area (ie. plumber).

Note: the chart above with no data is from a service area business that does not serve customers at their location.
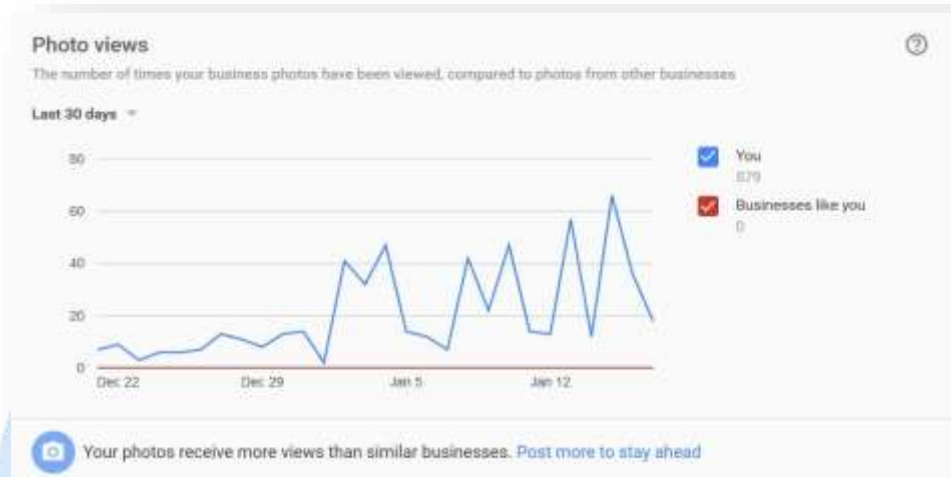
Phone Calls

Similar to the Customer Actions, you can see the number of phone calls here. The thing that stands out here is that the numbers here won't match the numbers under Customer Actions. The reason for that is because you can only see 4 weeks (28 days) of data compared to 30 days in the Customer Actions section.

Photo Views

In the Photo Views section, you can see how many times users have looked at photos associated with your listing. This is a great indication that you have quality photos on your Google My Business listing. Google recommends that you upload quality photos to your listings, and if you do this, you will see an increase in photo views.

Photo Quantity

The Photo Quantity insight tells you the number of photos currently associated with your listing. As mentioned in the Photo Views section, it is always recommended to upload quality photos and update them often.

Another great feature about this is that you can see the amount of user generated photo content added to your listing. This is great for business where customers take a lot of pictures of your products or services.

In Conclusion

Anyone who works with Google My Business listings in any capacity should start tracking traffic data. We all know that GMB is very valuable to any business, but now you can realize how valuable.

Properly optimized listings have a high click thought rate when they are displayed. Not only that, they generate a good amount of conversions according to Google Analytics.

Start tracking your Google My Business traffic, and start seeing results today, folks!
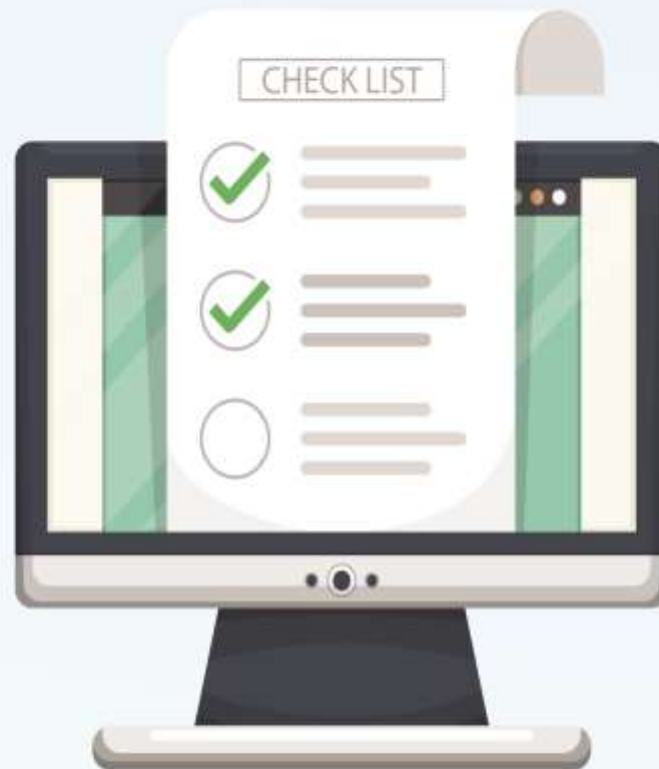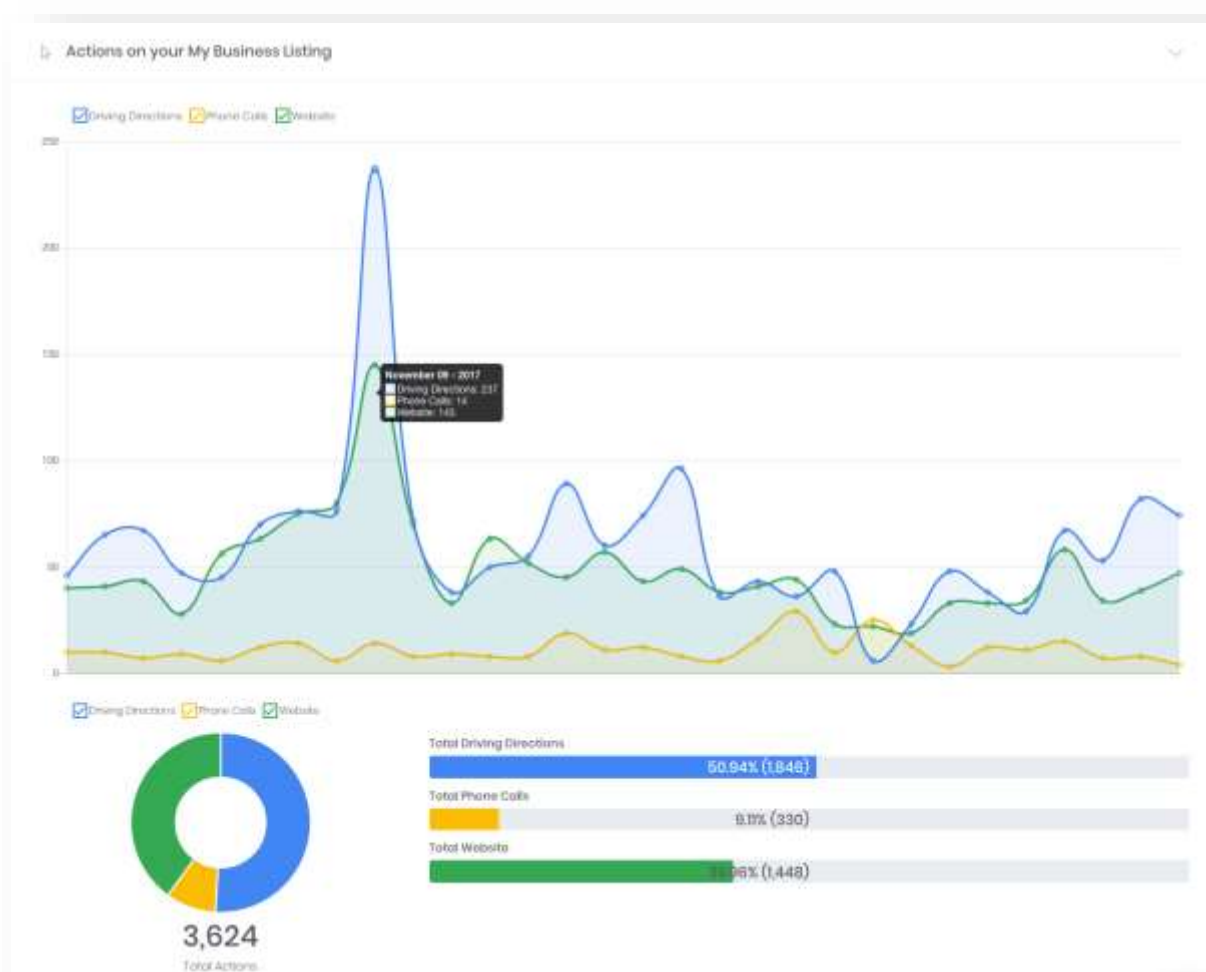
Chapter 12

Case Studies

Case #1: A Real-World Example of Success with Google Posts

GMBData.com was working with one of their clients, Aspen Creek Grill, a restaurant in Irving, TX. They used Google My Business Posts to feature their Veteran's Day Weekend lunch special for the weekend of November 10th. The Post was setup as an "event" and was published live on GMB a week before the holiday to build interest and capitalize on local search trends.
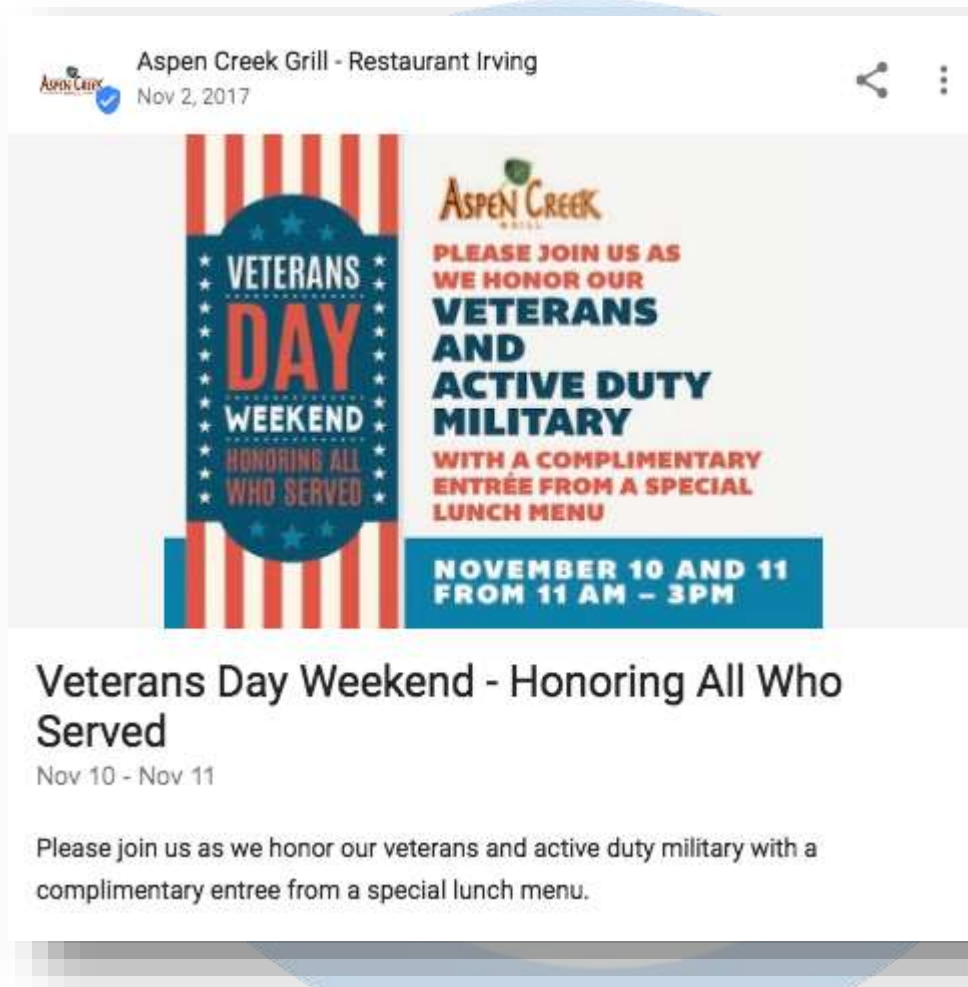
The GMB insights data that they captured showed that on November 9, 2017, (the day *before* the event "started"), *this business' Google My Business listing* in Irving, TX, generated *all-time highs* in Discovery Searches, Direct Searches, Views on Search (associated with local 3-pack rankings), Views on Maps and *even* Direction Requests over the last 18 months.

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After diving into Google trends and researching keywords like "Veterans Day Lunch" and "Free Veterans Day Lunches," GMBData.com found that there *were* large increases in the number of searches for exactly the type of event that the restaurant was promoting during the week of November 5th-11th.

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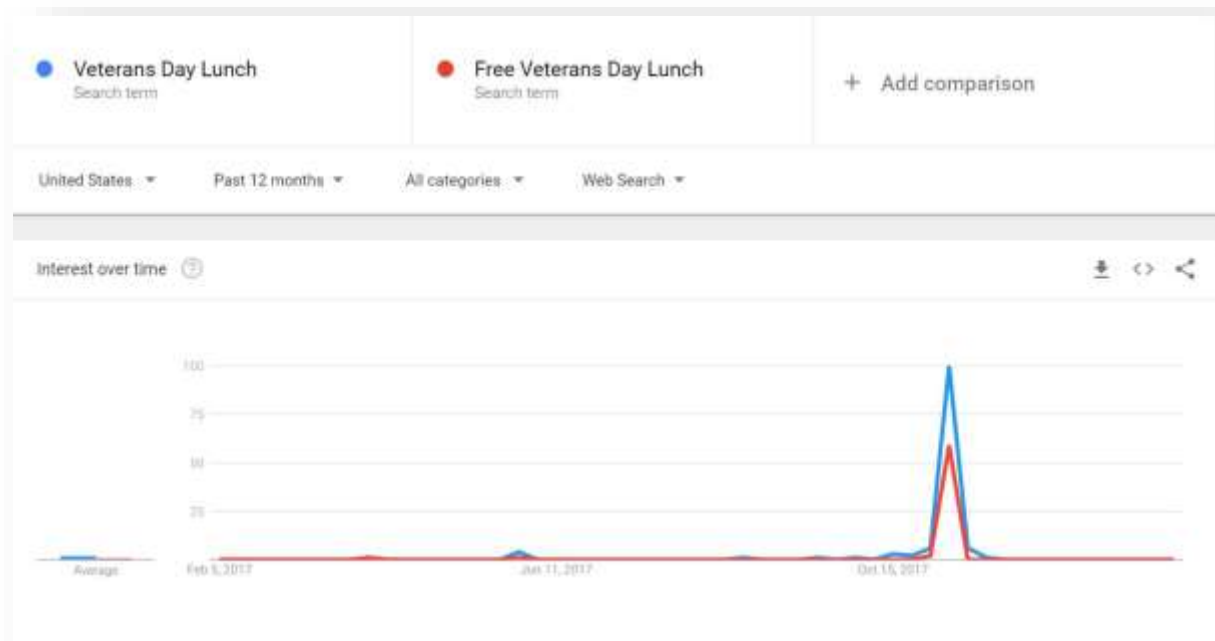
Since the location of this business (Irving, TX) is close to a lot of active and non-active duty military communities, it is likely that the utilization and timing of the Google My Business Post correlated to the increase in Search Visibility and Actions recorded on GMB.

In this case, search volumes for keywords like "Veterans Day Lunches" likely increased (as Google Trends indicated) the week after publishing the Post, and Google used the date and timing of the Event Post (along with the keywords in the content of the Post) to determine relevancy and that helped the restaurant's business listing rise to the top of search results during that timeframe.

The real key to the success in this example was not just about throwing up any old Post, it was about publishing content that connected with users in those coveted "micro-moments." It was carefully orchestrated and was a true confluence of opportunity and planning.

Case #2: CNC Cabinetry optimizes Google My Business listings for a multi-location business.

CNC Associates located in New Jersey is one of the Northeast's largest manufacturers and distributors of Kitchen Cabinets, Countertops, Bathroom Vanities, and Vanity Tops. CNC

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Associates has been in business for twenty years and has roughly 300 independent dealers who buy and market CNC Cabinets to consumers.

CNC's marketing agency, Titan Publishing in Tierra Verde, Florida specializes in digital marketing and handles CNC's website projects, email campaigns, tradeshow logistics, social media and more — including directory optimization.

CNC Cabinetry and their marketing agency used Google My Business to raise activity and awareness not only their own digital profile but the online presence of 78 of their preferred partners.

By automating the Google My Business listings of ALL their dealer locations with one post per week at the touch of a button, the team at CNC gave their dealers the gift of free marketing through Google Maps, promoted their product in multiple markets and ensured dealer loyalty.

Directory optimization allows a business to be served up in more searches. It's tedious (but not hard) work, creating directory information that the search engine finds relevant. Until now directory optimization has been a manual process of finding photos, adding latitude/longitude and other data behind the scenes. And once it's done, the impact is fleeting so a unique post must be created every week to achieve ongoing results.

When Titan Publishing found that dbaPlatform is the only tool for automated multi-location posting, it changed the game. Now suddenly, Titan could optimize infinite locations in one click. Titan simply offered to CNC a pilot program where CNC Cabinetry's profile could be cloned to all of their dealers simultaneously giving every single dealer a $250/month advantage — optimization of the greatest local directory-- Google, thereby producing thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars of revenue right down the industry channel.

Titan Publishing reached out to dbaPlatform right away. Can this be done? Can we "syndicate" the content for our client's dealer base?

Absolutely.

dbaPlatform, the first of its kind, automates the management of business listings for Enterprise Clients and Digital Agencies. What Hootsuite did for social media, dbaPlatform

does for Google My Business listings. The platform optimizes listings seamlessly, effortlessly, and with consistency across all locations. Just load locations and apply photos, posts, meta-data + more — across all the locations. Whew! What a time-saver. Never miss a location! Multiply efforts.

The agency researched the pilot program and realized that not only could the dbaPlatform accomplish the goal but dbaPlatform was the only Software as a Service (SaaS) available for managing virtually all aspects of GMB listings in one place and with one click. It's the only option available — not only does it automate but it also schedules for agencies who want to:

- Update business information;

- Manage reviews;

- Create, optimize, schedule and publish posts;

- Create, optimize, schedule and publish photos; and,

- Set up call tracking

The Results:

Map Views

The program brought 390,046 new Map Views, a 296% increase, which means nearly 300,000 extra local people were exposed to CNC and their dealer's services or products. People were finding their listing. Prospective customers had driving directions, store hours, website, phone number and more all with one-click once they found the listing.

Search

Search also more than doubled with a substantial 118% increase with the use of dbaPlatform. Appearing high in search results is a powerful place to be and certainly makes a difference when prospective customers are searching for a business's services or products.

Discovery

The 274,150 increase in Discover is also extremely valuable because this means 274,150 more people stumbled across the listing with CNC product before they even knew who they were. Being discovered and getting found on Google by people who were searching by keyword (not searching directly for the name of the business) means exposure to customers who weren't aware of the business previously — new prospects.

Direct

Local search optimization with dbaPlatform is so valuable that even direct searches saw a 26,165 increase. This means that even when people were already directly searching for one of the businesses by name, they were finding the business more often!

Photo Views

The Photo Views more than tripled (a huge 210% increase.) The program generated almost 1 million photo views in a 6-month period. The dba photo tool allows the marketing professional the ability to add EXIF data and other important optimizations to photos before they're scheduled and published to the listing. What can be seen from the data above is that using the photo tool made a major difference in how often prospective customers were viewing their photos, and in turn, finding them in search.

Phone Calls, Driving Directions & Website Visits

As a direct result of the syndicated program, CNC dealer received an extra 2,745 phone calls in the 6-month period as well as 4,229 additional driving directions. Website visits more than doubled with an additional 15,651 searchers delivered to websites.

Each of the 78 dealers paid nothing and only completed a simple form to allow access to the Google profile for posting purposes. With zero effort, each dealer (on average) achieved results like the numbers listed below.

Google Maps listings are the most important digital marketing vehicle for local businesses. Updating multiple listings is time-consuming and tedious, but it doesn't have to be. dbaPlatform has proven success, like the case of CNC Cabinetry. When Google listing optimization is automated, it leaves more time for other important marketing initiatives.

Check out some more Success Stories here:

Success Story #1: Jackalope Brewing Co.

Two friends open a Nashville brewery and find success by connecting with people who share their love of craft beer. Jackalope uses Google to help customers find them and their new brews.

Check out the full success story here -

https://www.google.com.hk/intl/en/business/success-stories/#?modal_active=ss-yt-lhYIuiHOD1s

Success Story #2: Otis James

One man's love for handcrafted items leads to a small southern shop where caps and ties are made with simple, stylish details. Google helps him bring old fashioned crafting to people all over the world.

Check out the full success story here –

https://www.google.com.hk/intl/en/business/success-stories/#?modal_active=ss-yt-W1VmT5Vlxww

Success Story #3: Faidley's Seafood

The fourth generation of Faidley's Seafood. See How GMB helps her preserve her legacy business and carry it forward and making a mark in this world

Check out the full success story here –

https://www.google.com.hk/intl/en/business/success-stories/#?modal_active=ss-yt-mINlZmeZkco

Conclusion

Having a business in today's world is a challenge, as you would be always facing a lot of competitors. It is always a great thing to find ways to stand out, and optimizing your Google My Business account would do just that. Through this tool, you would be able give your business the visibility it needs, and help potential customers find you.

Google My Business can improve your business' visibility through local SEO, give you opportunities to connect with new audiences, and help you understand online customer behavior surrounding your business. While there is a degree of time and effort involved in maintaining your listing, the benefits of Google My Business far outweigh the investment required to get started.

So is Google My Business right for your business? Definitely and here's proof. So get going with updating your GMB listing and ready to roll in leads and profits by following these best practices.

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