

Google™

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 in the example below), go ahead and click on it.



What's the name of your business?

Business name

maryland home inspection

maryland home inspection
Create a business with this name

Broadneck Home Inspections, LLC
Bayview Vista, Annapolis, Maryland, USA

Total View Home Inspections
Annapolis, Maryland, USA

Swartz Home Inspections
Annapolis, Maryland, USA

Fishing Creek Home Inspections
Arnold, Maryland, USA

Then click next.

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

← Where are you located?

United States

Street address

City

State ZIP code

I deliver goods and services to my customers.
[Learn more](#)

Next

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 the checkbox "I deliver goods and services to my customers"
- 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.
Note: It is very beneficial to have an address in the GMB listing so don't hide it unless absolutely necessary.

← Where are you located?

United States

Street address

City

Kentucky ZIP code

Check if you're a SAB

I deliver goods and services to my customers. [Learn more](#)

Hide my address (it's not a store)

Check if you want to hide your address

Next

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., inspectors, 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

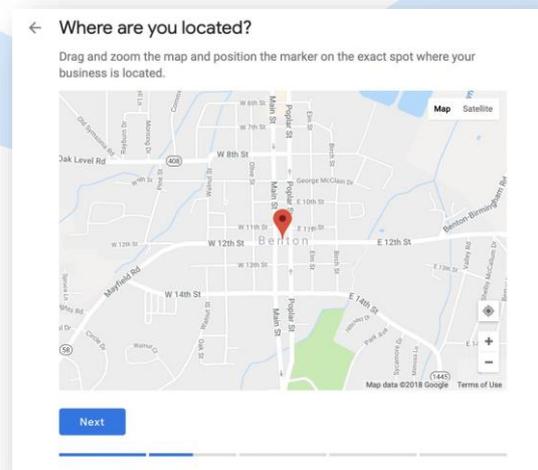
- grocery stores
- gas stations
- doctor's offices
- mechanic's shops
- restaurants (that don't deliver)
- churches
- lawyers
- accountants

Examples of Service Area Businesses (SABs)

- general contractors
- exterminators
- home inspectors
- 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?

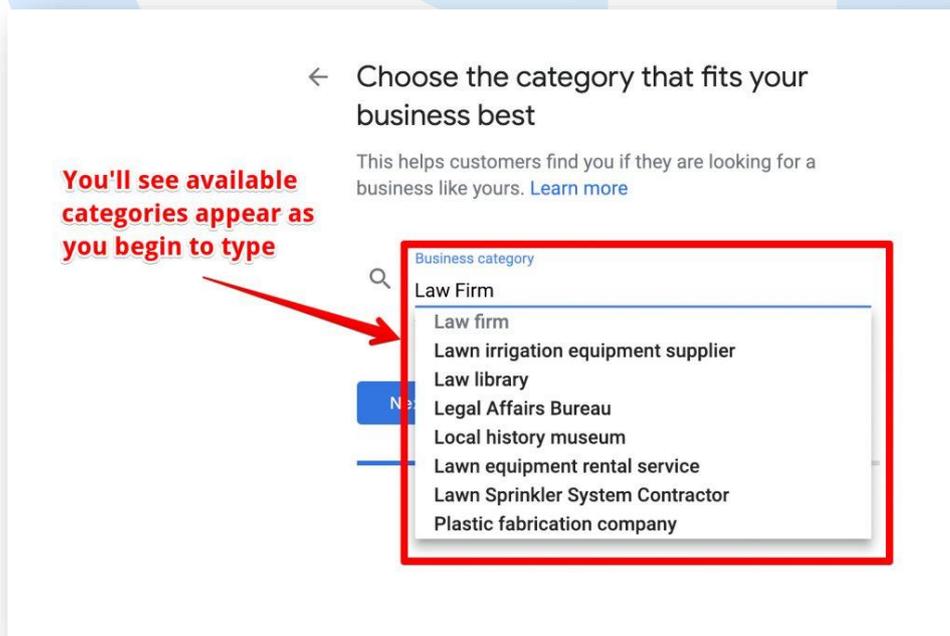
You can set your service area based on the city, county, state, zip-code, country, and so on.

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, so don't rush through this. Take your time and do it right. When you set your "categories" in GMB you'll be able to set both primary and secondary categories. The primary category is displayed for viewers.

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.

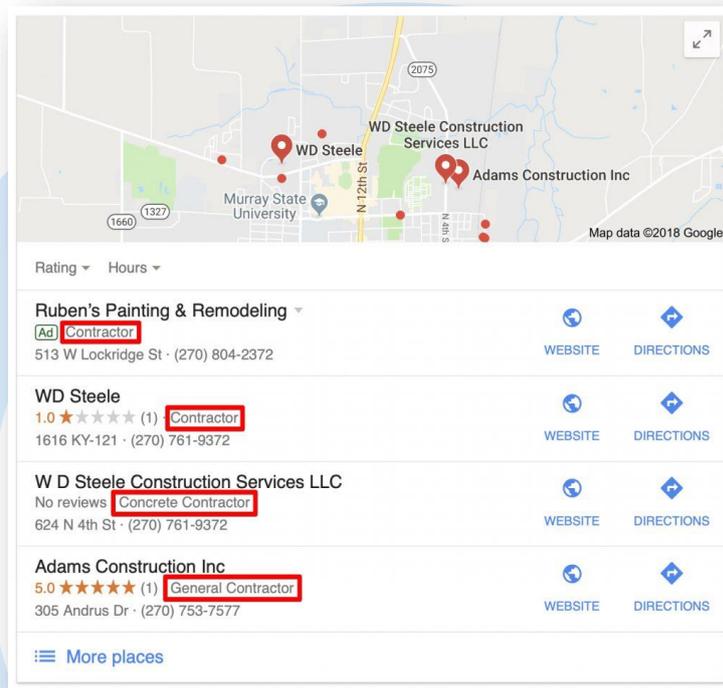




How to Choose the Best Google My Business Category

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, 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.

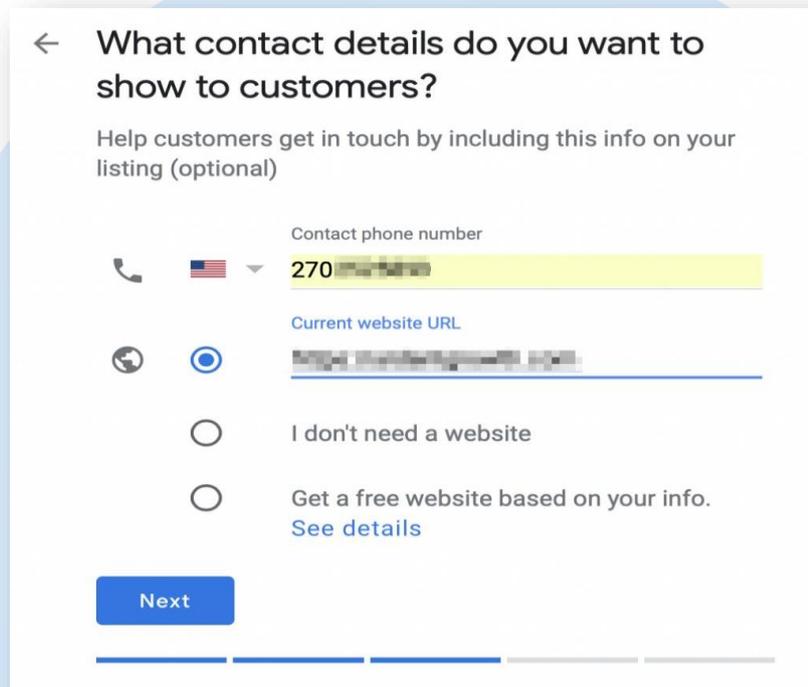
• Step 7: Set What Contact Details to Show Your Customers

- Adding this information to your Google My Business listing is optional but it is highly recommended.
 - Make a note of exactly how your address is written so you can be consistent with all business listing. (i.e. Street vs St. – yes, it matters)
- 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.



- You can use Google Analytics to track visitors that come to your site from Google My Business
- Listing your phone number gives customers a direct way to reach you.
 - You can use Call Tracking to track phone calls that come from Google My Business

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.



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

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

Contact phone number

  270 [redacted]

Current website URL

 [redacted]

I don't need a website

Get a free website based on your info.
[See details](#)

[Next](#)

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.

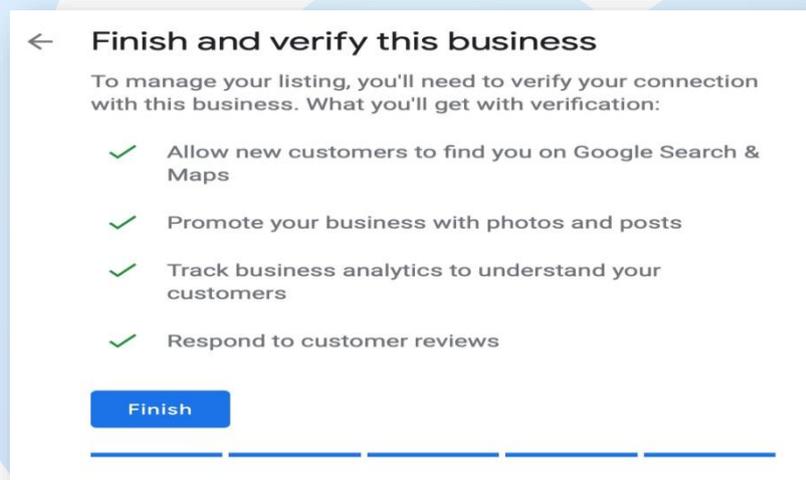


Important:

- 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).
- This also true for your address: Suite vs Ste., Avenue vs. Ave., Street vs St., etc.
- Once you've filled out that information, press the "Next" button once again!

- **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 can verify by phone or you'll have to wait for a postcard to be mailed to you from Google.



Choose a way to verify.

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

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



Postcard by mail

Have a postcard with your code mailed to this address

May take up to 5 days to arrive

Contact name

Mail

Business address

1800 Capital Centre Lane, Apt. A, Murray, KY 42071, United States



Verify later

You can't fully manage your listing until you're verified

Later

A postcard is coming!

You'll get a postcard with your verification code and next steps in about 5 days.



Attn: ~~Business Owner~~

~~Business Address~~

~~1800 Capital Centre Lane, Apt. A, Murray, KY 42071~~

Continue

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
- Video verification

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

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 code. Doing so can potentially become a nightmare for you to untangle (involving some phone calls with Google customer support).

See Chapter 7 for additional details on existing listings.

See Chapter 7 for information on optimizing your listing once it is verified.



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. Show pictures of recent projects or products.

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. You can even create the questions and answers so viewers can see answers to common questions.

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. Take the time to give the image files good names and even consider adding geotags to your images.

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 boost 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. They only appear for a limited time so new posts should be added on a regular basis.

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.

The events do not have to be only those you're hosting. They can be charity events, community events, industry events, etc. Showcase your community involvement.

- **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.

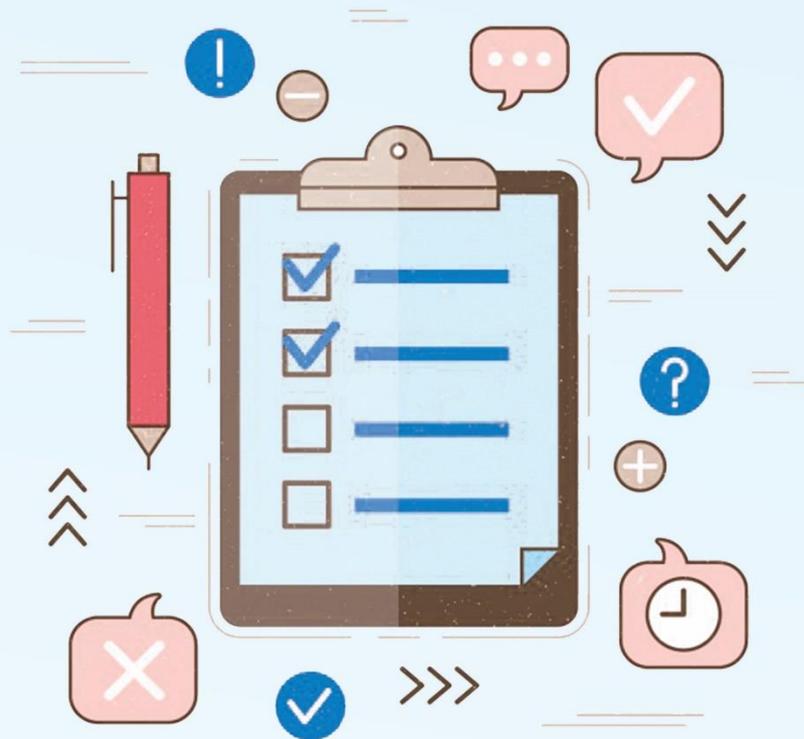
Conclusion:

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 a short time, 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 ranking 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 its 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. Even using different abbreviations is not recommended (ie Street, St, St., ST) – be 100% consistent in every business listing.

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 how 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, these errors are 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.

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

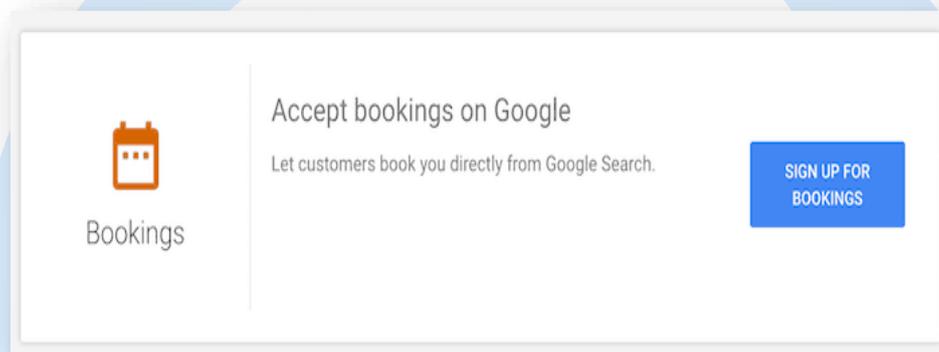


GMB can help you reach and attract new potential clients. People who do not have a particular company in mind search for types of products or services, looking for providers who show up at the top of the list.

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 released new features that benefit your opportunity for local SEO rankings.

- **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 inspection
- Scheduling 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.

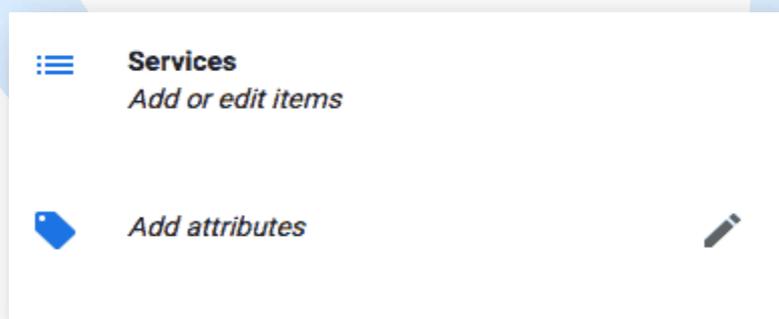
The breadth of options here make this a convenient feature for others as well. The list may include inspectors, contractors, physicians, insurance agencies, computer repair shops, service companies, and many more.

Add the url for the scheduling/booking page on your website.

- **MENU EDITOR ADDED (ALSO FOR PRODUCTS & SERVICES)**

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, 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.



← Back

Add section

Section name

Examples: Massages, Facials, Haircuts, Golf lessons, Tax services 0 / 140

Add item

Enter at least one item per section. You can add more later

Item name	Item price (USD)

0 / 140

Item description

0 / 1,000

Cancel
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 locales. 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 the diversity of their services to potential new customers.

If you offer products or services with set fees add them here. Be sure to update the information when any price changes occur.



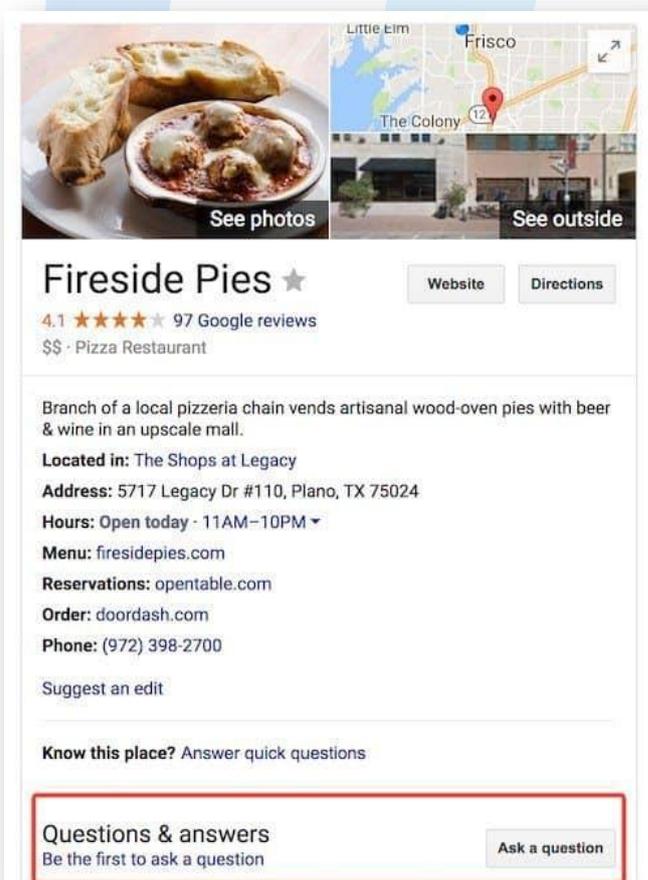
- **DIRECT MESSAGING WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS**

Direct messaging is an excellent way to communicate with customers and potential customers. For many, if not most, people texting is their preferred means of communication. However, Google ended their direct messaging feature within GMB in March 2019.

- **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.

You can also post questions and their answers yourself. Take advantage of this to post to your GMB page any of your frequently asked questions.





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 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.

- **MARKETING KIT WITH GOOGLE (SMALL THANKS INITIATIVE)**

Marketing Kit With Google (formerly Small Thanks) 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.

The kit 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 notecard containing the appropriate URL so they always know how they can post their experience.

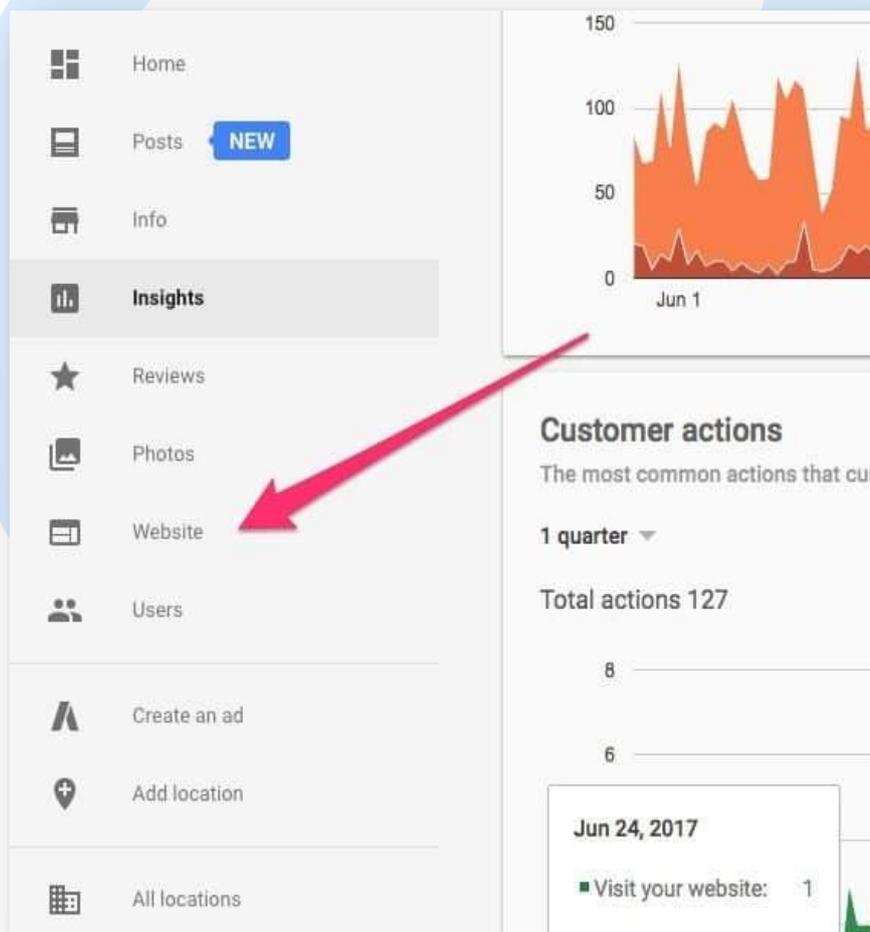
- **GOOGLE WEBSITE BUILDER**



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.

Of course it is best to have your own quality website and keep it updated. But if this is not an option for you then with GMB you can still have a website.

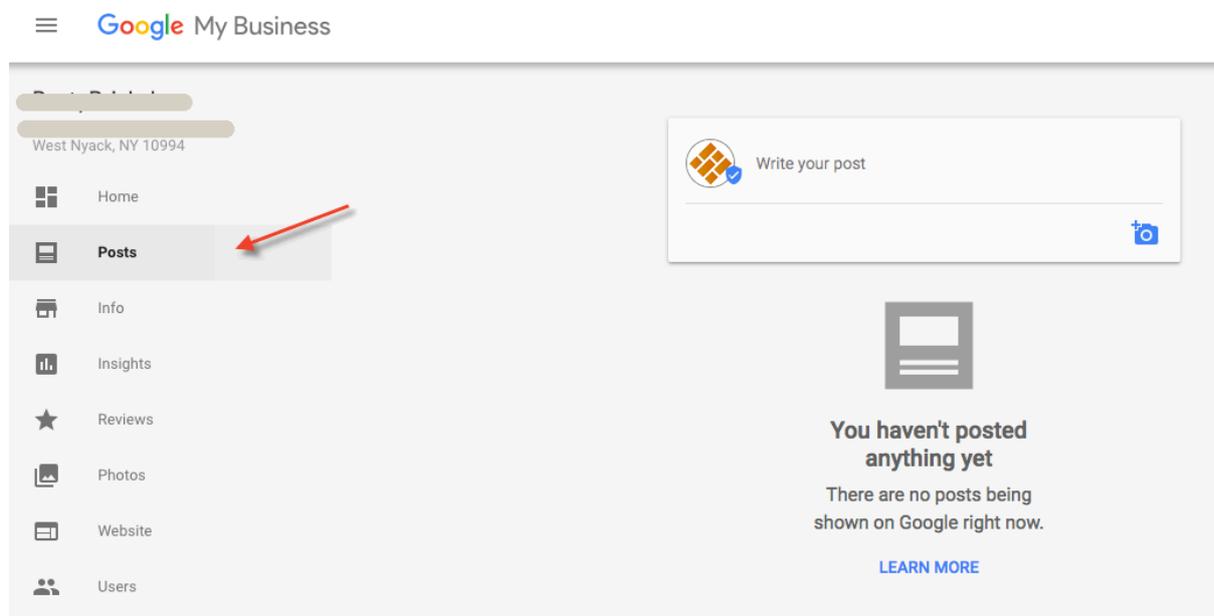


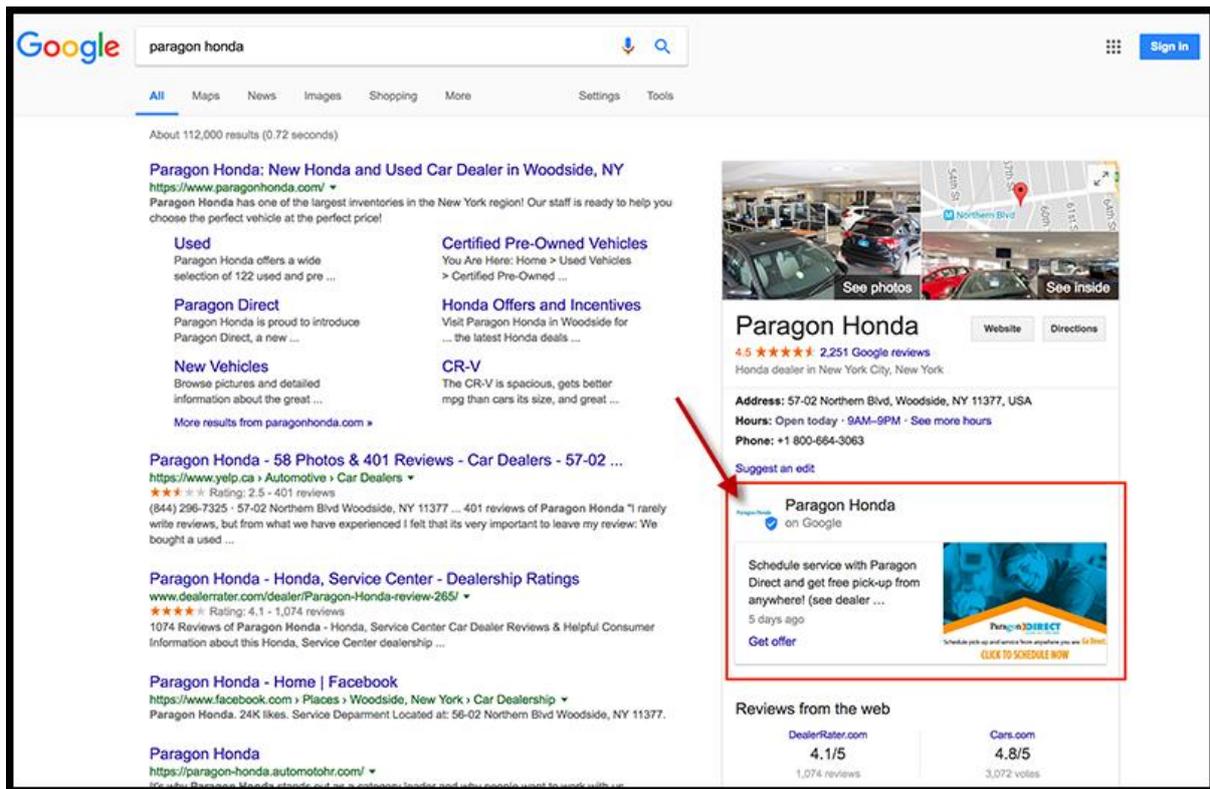
- **GOOGLE POSTS**



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 center. Google Posts are more visually appealing than a regular listing and encourage increased interaction.





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.

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



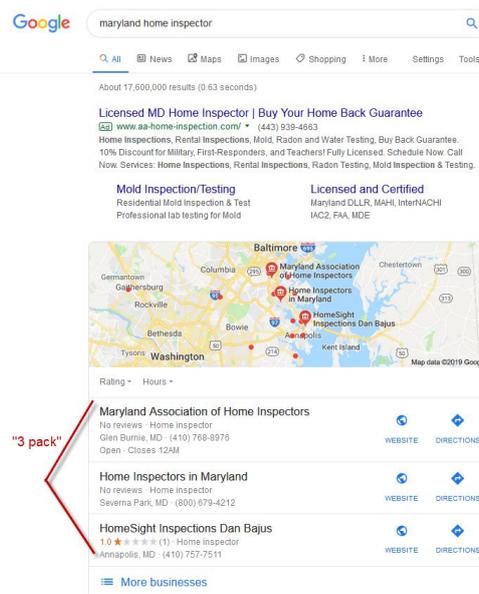
What's Local SEO?

Local SEO is 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. 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 is the local 3-pack?

As internet surfing tendencies evolved to become dominated by smartphones, Google decreased its 7-pack to add only 3 results, in order to provide 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 chose from the regional 3-pack options supplied and don’t look further. Hence getting that place in the search results may send 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.
- 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 and 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 are in their eyes. This lays a solid foundation upon which you can construct a mutually beneficial customer connection.

See It In Action

You simply take out your mobile phone. Google “ice cream closest to me” and you are supplied 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 for potential clients that are looking for your services and products.

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 from the company's website... it comes out of their Google My Business profile site. If you do not have a GMB page setup and optimized then you're missing out on a precious chance to get in front of consumers.

We'll talk about how to optimize your GMB profile shortly. Right now, let's go over some items that can help you improve your website's search engine results and make Google like your site more. Having a website that Google likes can also help where you rank in the GMB listings (in or out of the 3-pack).

Curate High-Quality Articles and Content

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

If you consider it from Google's standpoint, it does make sense. Google's objective is to send searchers to the most applicable and current webpage for their own search.

From Google's viewpoint websites with more information supply more value and therefore are probably a much better match for searcher's queries. Review key pages on your site and see if they contain at least 500 words of content that are applicable.



Make frequent, even if minor, changes to your website regularly.

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 and applicable citations are significant, they are not the sole element.

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

Get Busy on Social Networking

There has been a great deal of disagreement about whether social network marketing is among those signals Google uses to rank companies. Regardless of your agreement or not, there is no denying that social networking is a fantastic chance to produce more content and buzz about your company.

Improve Your On-Site SEO

On-site search engine optimization (SEO) means that your site is properly structured using good url structure, title tags, descriptions, utilizes alternate text for images, has good, relevant content and some other geeky factors.

Improve Your Site Speed

Every second counts. 40 percent of consumers will wait no more than three seconds for a web page to render before abandoning the site. While a fast site won't necessarily give you a boost in the rankings, a slow site can be a negative ranking factor.



The biggest culprit? Most often it's images. If images are not resized to the size needed for the website and instead the full image is uploaded this will slow the site down dramatically. Even after resizing the images should still be compressed to help with site speed.

Boost Your Site for Mobile

Individuals are looking for companies using their phones. Even at home, people search from their phones instead of their desktop computers.

Google has stated that they are determined to focus on ranking sites based on their mobile experience.

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

Conclusion

Now that you are aware of how local SEO with Google My Business profile will help your small business, you're able to better handle your business' online presence to build your customer base.

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Chapter 5

Tips To Improve Google Places Page Ranking



So, how to improve your Google My Business rankings this year. In addition to optimizing your Google My Business listing, there are additional steps you can take:

#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.

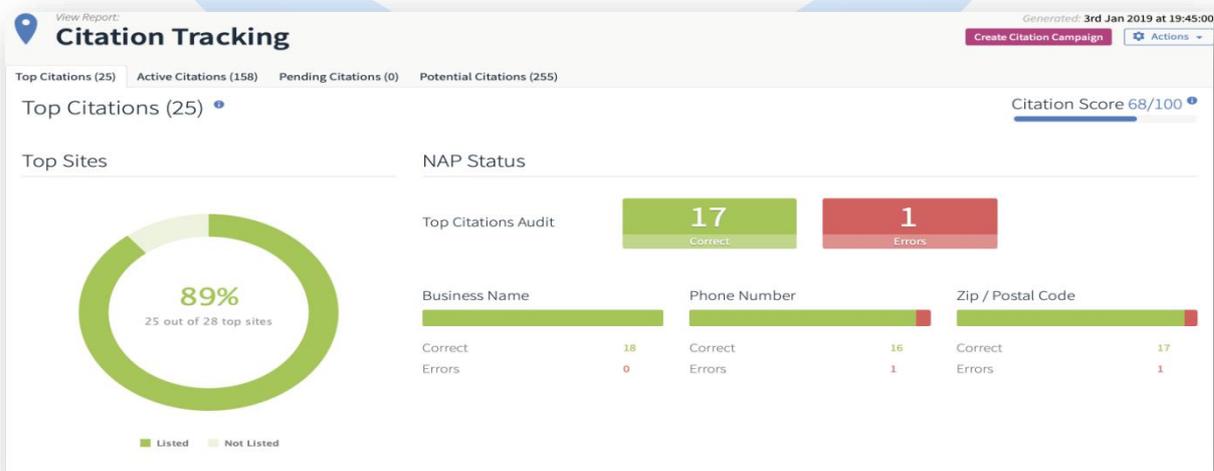
The easiest way to get cited or listed is to submit your business to local and national business directories.

#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. Google website crawlers will get confused should you have a seemingly different NAP listed on various business directories.

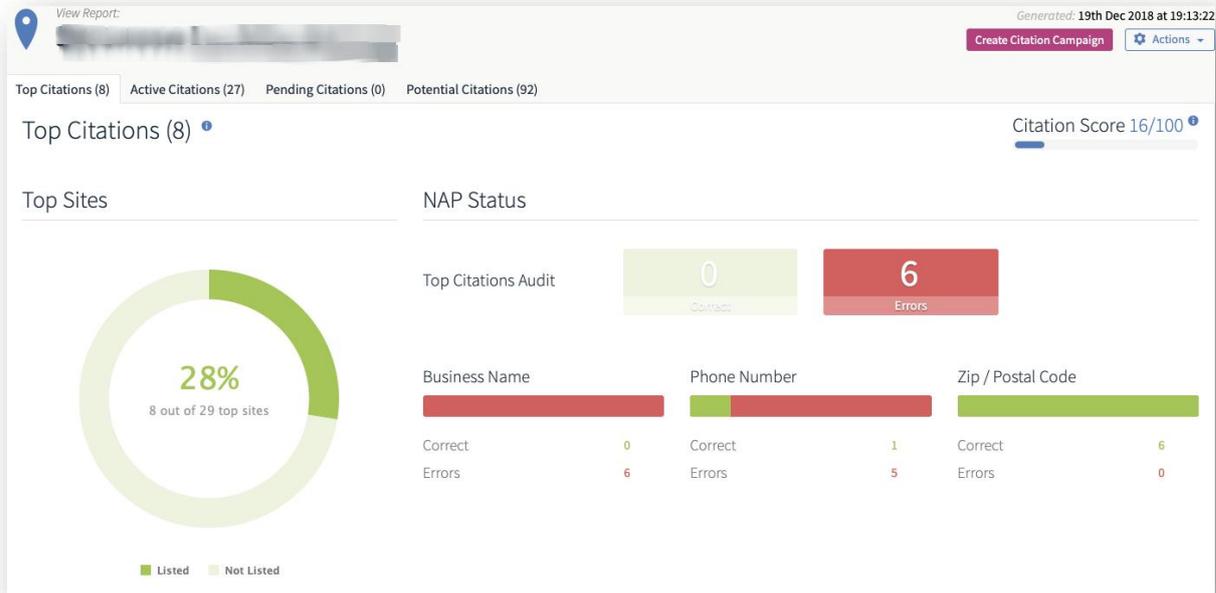
To make sure your NAP is consistent, do a search for your business. Click to see what every listing of it looks like. If the information is incorrect on a website, contact them and have it changed.

Here's example of a good NAP Score:





Here is a 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 it is done using the Schema markup in the coding.

#4 – 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 listing.

Embedding is fairly easy. Simply search your business name while in Google Maps (<https://www.google.com/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.



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.

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.



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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.

If Google adds a category that works for your business type much of the competition won't have the new category yet. By being one of the first to add the new category, it can be possible 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.

6. The concept of "category dilution" is not true according to 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. The opposite has been found to be true. Adding more categories often results in an increase in ranking and clicks because you now show up for more related queries.

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 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.

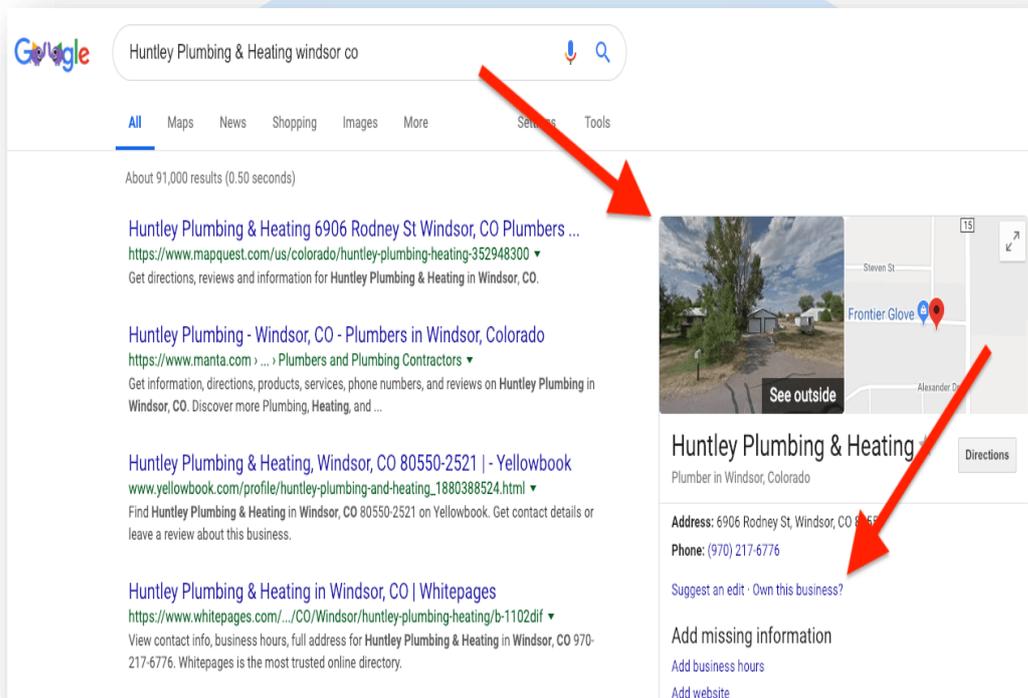
Does your business qualify?

- Yes – Search for Your Business on Google.
- No – You cannot create a GMB listing for your business.



Claim Your Listing

- Search for Your Business on Google
- Go to <https://www.google.com/>
- Enter the business name, city and state / province
- Example: “huntley plumbing & heating windsor 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

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 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.
- 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.

Assess for Duplicate Listings

- Creating multiple listings for one business is against Google's terms of providers and can influence your ability to position in results. When checking GMB, make sure that only one entry for your business is displayed. If there is more than one listing work with Google to have the duplicate removed.

Include 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.
- When people see your listing they easily could be wondering if they can call right now. If you're the only one of the 3 companies listed that shows "open" in GMB you may get the call instead of a competitor.

Insert Relevant Categories



- Make sure the primary category best represents your business. It is the only one that people see on your business listing.
- The more 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. One trick is to examine the categories other top-ranking regional companies have chosen in their own profiles and use exactly the same ones. 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

- 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

Before November 2018 the service area was set up as a radius around your business. If you set up your GMB before then and haven't updated the service area be sure to update this information.

- 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.
- 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.

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.
 - Use a local phone number in order to show in local search results.
 - Add toll-free and secondary phone numbers as “Additional Phone” fields.
 - “Pay” phone numbers like 1-900 numbers are not allowed in the 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.

Questions and Answers

- Monitor and respond or it can result in misinformation about your business, irrelevant/off-topic questions, or worse create reputation issues; this is a crowd-sourced feature and any user can ask questions and provide answers.
- Provide answers to users, even if someone else has already given the correct information.
- If there are really good questions in there that you want potential searchers to see, you should “like it”.
- Address complaints and comments.
- Report spam, inappropriate, or off-topic questions.
- Create your own questions and answers for questions you are asked most often.

Website URL

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



- For multi-location businesses, use the specific page for each location.
- Properly format your URLs
- All URLs must be live at the time you enter them into Google My Business.
- 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.

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



- 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. Service must have a set price to use this feature.
- 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 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 category.
- Enter the product name and price (price ranges are not supported).
- Add a product description up to 1000 characters. It is recommended to use the same description that you would use in your product catalog.



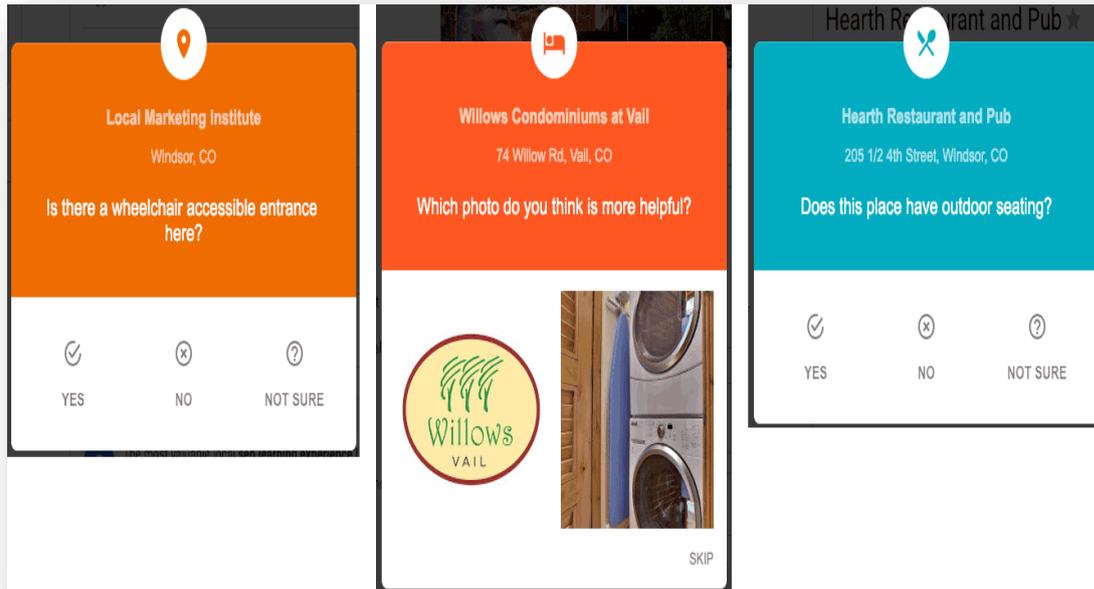
Business Attributes

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.



Google My Business Subjective Attributes

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.

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 be in JPG or 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 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, then 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.

Videos

- Once two or more videos are added, it will trigger a Videos tab under Photos.
- Both businesses and users are able to upload videos to a listing.
- Users and business owners can report videos for removal.



- Duration: Up to 30 seconds long (up to 1.5 min maybe), File size: Up to 100 MB, Resolution: 720p or higher.
- Must be filmed at place of business (not stock).
- Video creates high engagement with your prospective clients/customers.
- Depending on your type of business, a virtual tour is a low investment that can have a high-return.

Get More Reviews

Most companies struggle to acquire customer testimonials online. This is because it requires effort on your clients' part to write the review. The dilemma is that testimonials are incredibly important to establishing credibility for your company, which Google enjoys.

Regrettably, there's absolutely no totally simple solution here. 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 for you. Develop a company procedure for requesting testimonials so it is done consistently.

Also respond to reviews. This is particularly important for any negative comments. People don't expect a perfect 5-star rating. In fact they sometimes assume a 5-star rating is fake. What they want to see is that the company responds and cares about people after the sale.

Factors Outside of GMB

Make Sure Contact Information on Your Website Is Accurate & In Text Type

Proceed to your website's contact page and affirm all your contact information is listed on the webpage in text. Google must be able to read and verify your contact information and they cannot do this if it is recorded as a picture. Make sure the text is 100% consistent with the information in your GMB listing.



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

It is even more helpful if the coding on your website provides the information in schema format.

Make Sure Your Own NAP Information on the Internet Is Consistent

NAP stands for Name, Address, Phone. Google additionally compares the contact information on your site to information recorded on other sites across the whole internet.

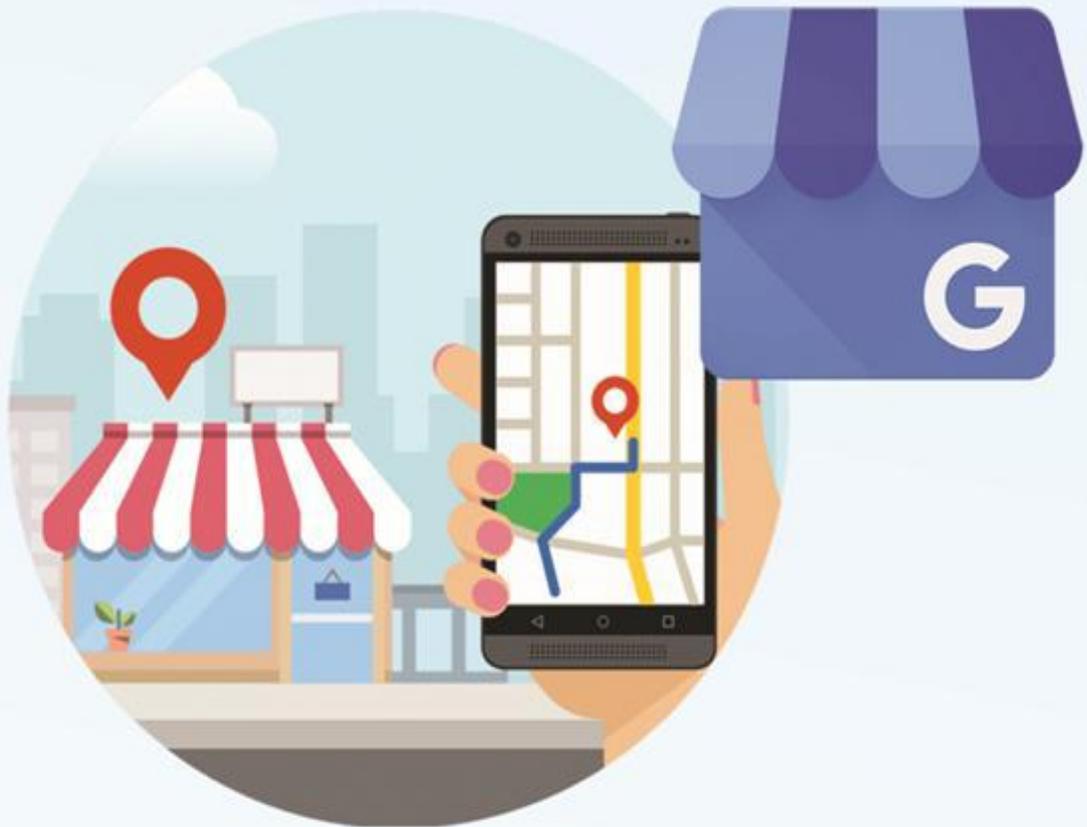
Your NAP must be the exact same on each and every page that lists your contact information. Largely this is referring to company directories; these are the kinds of sites most likely to exhibit your contact information publicly online.

Check for Missing Citations

A citation is the reference of your NAP on a different site. We noted 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. List your business in multiple directories using 100% consistent information.

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Chapter 8

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

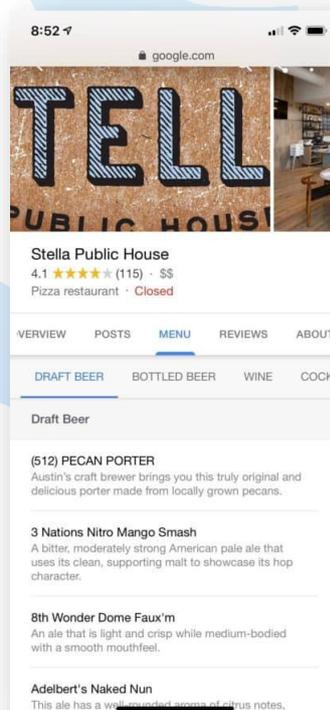


Most restaurant owners make sure their tables are clean and their bars well-stocked. But when it comes to attracting customers, it's equally important to ensure your online presence sparkles. Today's consumer relies on Google search to decide where to eat or grab happy hour, and nearly 70% of these local 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

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, 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!





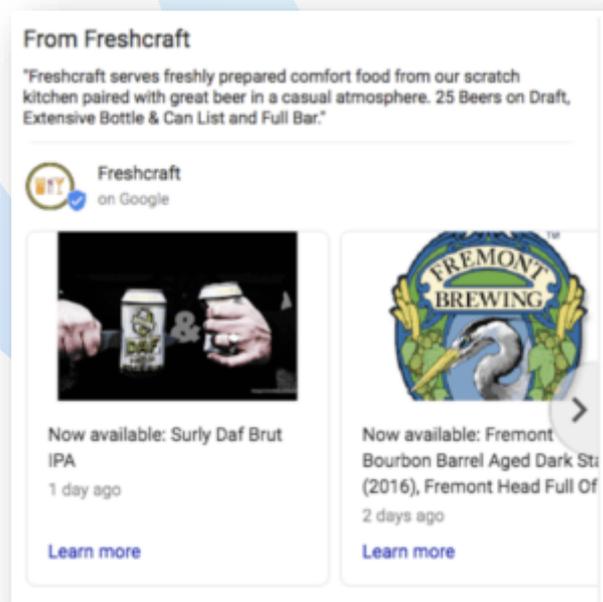
HOW TO LIST & UPDATE YOUR MENU ON GOOGLE

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 an integrated platform to automatically update your 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: nearly everyone uses Google, only some people use Facebook or Instagram, especially when searching for a place to eat.

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.

Unlike social platforms like Facebook, Google My Business posts expire after seven days, so being able to use software which allows for post scheduling can be a life-saver for bars or restaurants without a dedicated social media person



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Chapter 9

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 robust 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.

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 the listing is 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.

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 show up near the top of the local results.

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.

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 less than 250 characters of the description, and users will be comparing you next to dozens of other businesses when they make a decision.

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 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 business over others without any information from other customers to guide them.

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 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.

Duplicate Listings

What's Wrong: If there are duplicate listings for the same business this hurts the positioning of the business listing. Work to get any duplicate listings removed.

CONCLUSION

These 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 10

Analyzing and Measuring Google My Business
Traffic Data



We now know that Google My Business is used to improve your company's local search presence and for attracting new customers via reviews, photos, company information and much more. 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 wants leads and has 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 creating 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. 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. But it provides very limited data and is the lesser of the two methods. Even though this gives a limited amount of data, it 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 has 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.

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.

- 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 your 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.



Fill out the required fields (marked with *) in the form below, and once complete the full campaign URL will be generated for you. *Note: the generated URL is automatically updated as you make changes.*

* Website URL
The full website URL (e.g. `https://www.example.com`)

* Campaign Source
The referrer: (e.g. `google`, `newsletter`)

Campaign Medium
Marketing medium: (e.g. `cpc`, `banner`, `email`)

Campaign Name
Product, promo code, or slogan (e.g. `spring_sale`)

Campaign Term
Identify the paid keywords

Campaign Content
Use to differentiate ads

Share the generated campaign URL

Use this URL in any promotional channels you want to be associated with this custom campaign

Set the campaign parameters in the fragment portion of the URL (not recommended).

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.

Share the generated campaign URL

Use this URL in any promotional channels you want to be associated with this custom campaign

Set the campaign parameters in the fragment portion of the URL (not recommended).



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

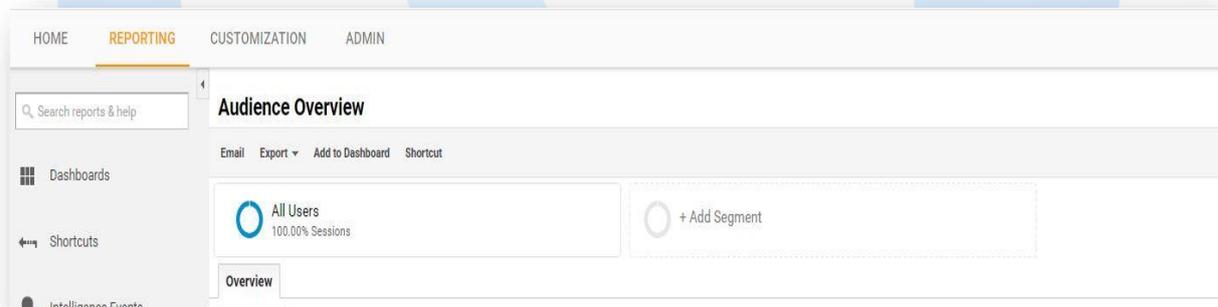
Once you're all set with creating your new UTM tracking URL, you need to add it to your listing. To do this, simply go to GMB dashboard and select either info or edit. This will bring up a new screen with your company information.

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.



Segment Name Save Cancel Preview

Demographics

Technology

Behavior

Date of First Session

Traffic Sources

Advanced

Conditions

Sequences

Traffic Sources
Segment your users by how they found you.

Filter Sessions Filter Users

Campaign ? contains

Medium ? contains

Source ? contains

Keyword ? contains

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 info as when you created the UTM tracking code.

Segment Name Save Cancel Preview

Demographics

Technology

Behavior

Date of First Session

Traffic Sources 3

Advanced

Conditions

Sequences

Traffic Sources
Segment your users by how they found you.

Filter Sessions Filter Users

Campaign ? contains gmb

Medium ? contains organic

Source ? contains local

Keyword ? contains

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



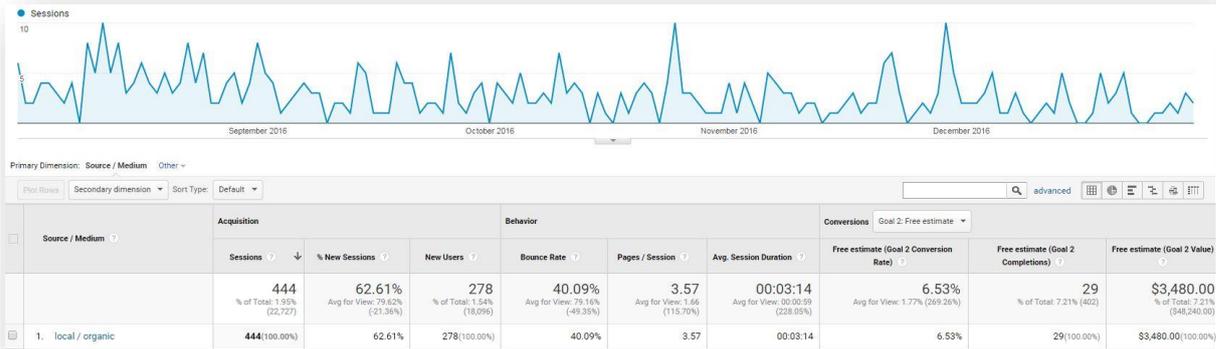
Seeing Google My Business Traffic In Google Analytics

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, 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.

	Source / Medium ?
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. google / cpc
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. google / organic
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. (direct) / (none)
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. bing / cpc
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. bing / organic
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. local / organic
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. lm.facebook.com / referral
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. yahoo / organic
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. / referral
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. m.facebook.com / referral

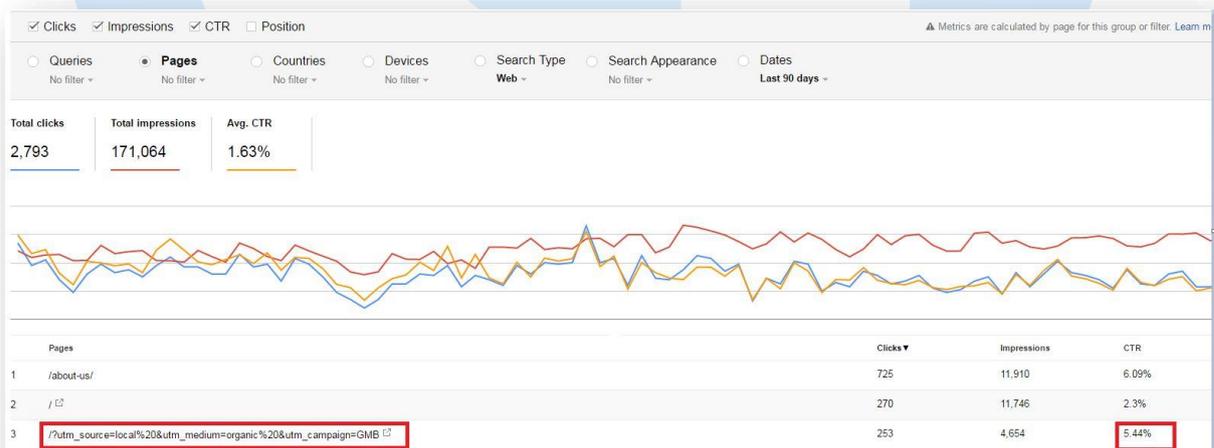
Another way to see your Google My Business traffic within Google Analytics is to look at the campaigns. To see this, look under Acquisition again then Campaigns > All Campaigns. This will display the following screen.



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 is a great way to determine how many users come to the site from the listing, what keywords are used to find the listing, and how many impressions 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.

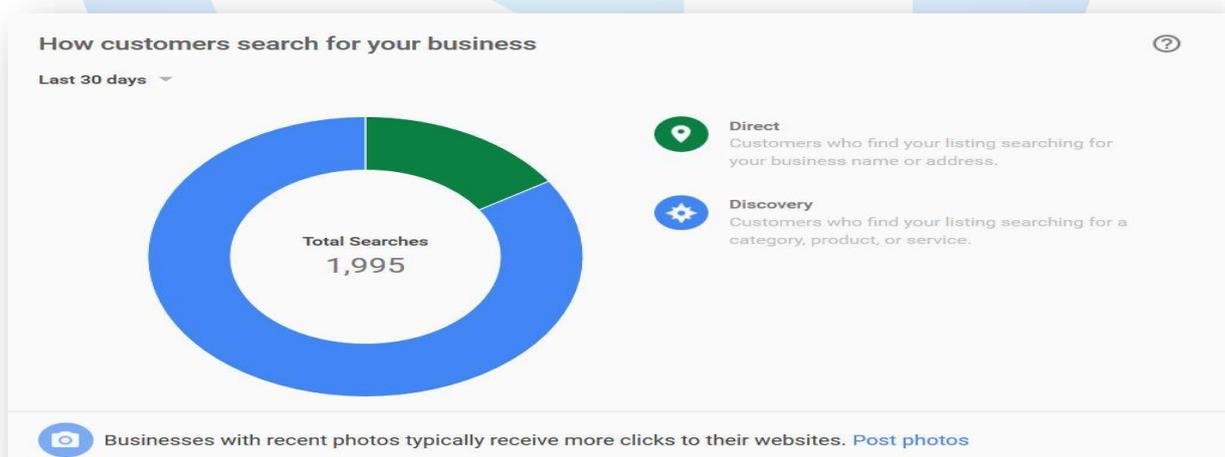
These metrics give details about the current performance of your listing such as:

- 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.

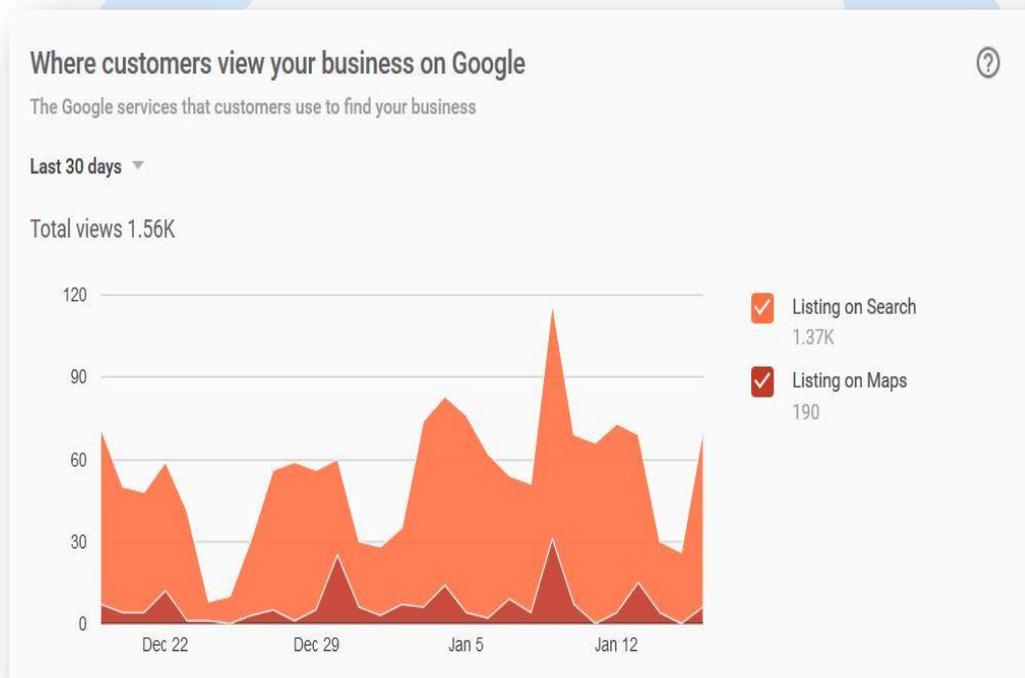


Google My Business has two ways of looking at traffic, and they are called Direct and Discovery. This data shows impressions rather than clicks.



- 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 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.

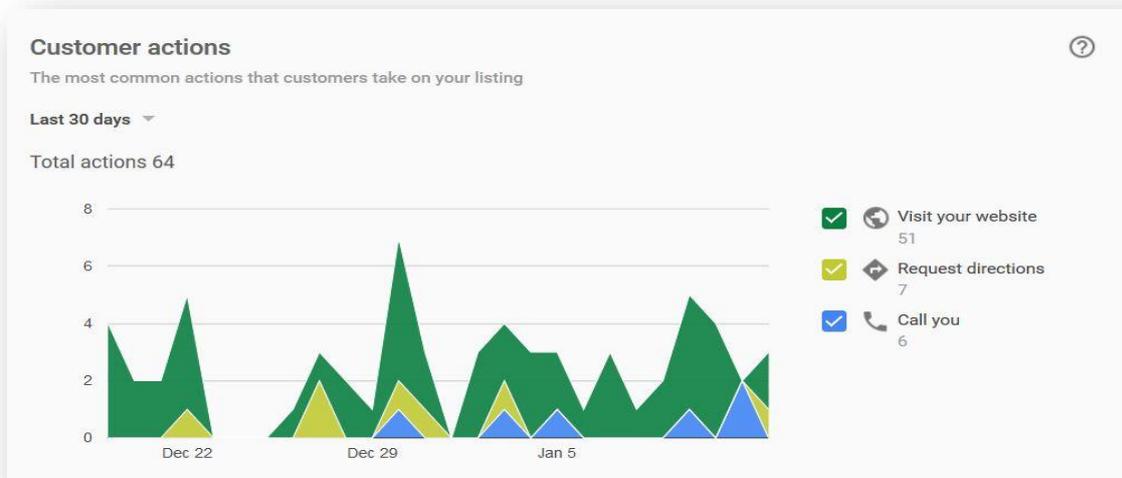
Where Customers View Your Business On Google



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



The Customer Actions data shows how users interact with your listing. This shows the actions that users 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.

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

Driving Directions Requests - how many times users looked for directions to your business.

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. inspector, plumber).

Phone Calls - you can see the number of phone calls here. 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 - 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.

Photo Quantity - the number of photos currently associated with your listing.

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

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.

Anyone who works with Google My Business listings in any capacity should start tracking traffic data. Properly optimized listings have a high click through 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!



Conclusion

Having a business in today's world is a challenge, as you will often 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 does just that. Through GMB, you will 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. Get going with updating your GMB listing and be ready to reign in more leads and profits by following these best practices.