Google My Business

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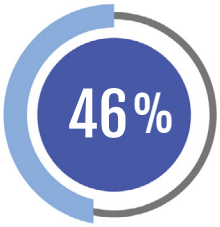
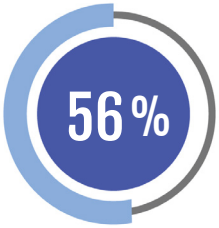
Google My Business

Google My Business (GMB) is an incredibly powerful, free platform for local businesses to convert Google searchers into actual customers.

Leveraging the full potential of GMB is key for brick and mortar businesses developing local marketing strategies.



Today, the vast majority of people learn more about local businesses online than anywhere else. 46% of Google searches are looking for local information.



It's surprising that over 56% of local retailers have yet to claim their Google My Business Listing. We don't want your business to be part of this statistic. We're here to help you get up to speed.

What is Google My Business

Simply put, Google My Business is a way for business owners to formally list their businesses in Google. It's essentially the modern version of the Yellow Pages. It's a simple, quick way to up your SEO game at zero cost. Every business should claim their GMB listing, even if it's not brick and mortar.

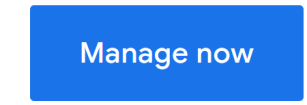
Benefits of Google My Business

With a GMB listing, you can take control of what information is displayed on Google Maps and Google Search which is paramount for local businesses. You can also manage Google reviews which is key for customer engagement and improving SEO. Additionally, you can share updates and news pertaining to your business through GMB.

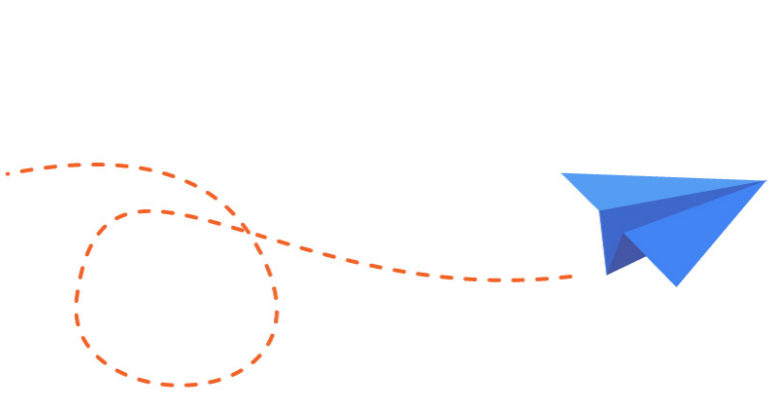
Setup and Optimize your Google My Business Listing

Google's algorithm is designed to show the most relevant results for what searchers are looking for. By thoroughly completing your GMB listing, you ensure that Google bots will be able to find your business easily.

1 Start by clicking on Google My Business and click, "Manage Now".



2 After setting up your account, you'll be required to verify your business. A postcard with a verification code will be mailed to your business address. This usually takes less than seven business days.



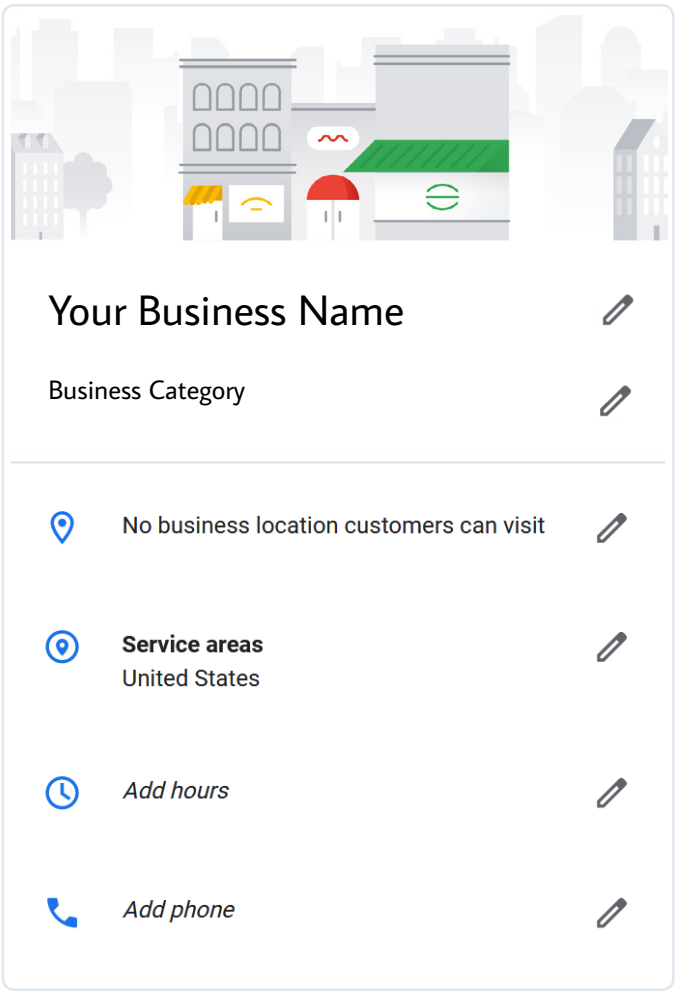
3 Fill in all the fields. While some may be optional, the more information you include the better.

4 Select categories to correctly describe your business. Google calls this labels. Labeling is technically optional, but don't skip this step. This helps Google determine which business type you fall under. Labels are one of the first things the search algorithm looks for. Examples of labels include, "Chinese restaurant", "auto body shop" or "certified public accountant".

5 Add your business contact information. In your GMB listing, use a local number (not a 1-800 number). Use the same local number across all your platforms such as your website, social media and GMB listing. Make sure all your information is consistent.

6 Keep store hours accurate including special hours on holidays or for events. Quick tips for editing hours.

7 If your business delivers goods and services to customers at their location then you can include this in your GMB listing. Under "Manage Location" select yes next to "I deliver goods and services to my customers at their locations." Then you can select your service area to specify where you make deliveries.



8 Maximize your tags, include contact information and build out all fields. This will ensure your critical information is prominently displayed in maps.

9 Upload photos of your business to your GMB listing. Google encourages uploading a profile photo, cover photo and a video. For your cover photo, go beyond a generic photo of the product, but personalize it. If you're a coffee shop, take a photo of your seating area to make it look inviting to potential customers. Listings with photos drive 42% more driving directions selections in maps than those without photos. We also recommend uploading an image of your logo.

Understand How Google Ranks Local Businesses

These are the three pillars Google algorithms base rankings on: Relevance, Distance and Prominence.

1 Relevance:

How well your listing matches what a searcher is looking for. Increase relevance by making sure your GMB listing is completely filled out with all pertinent information.

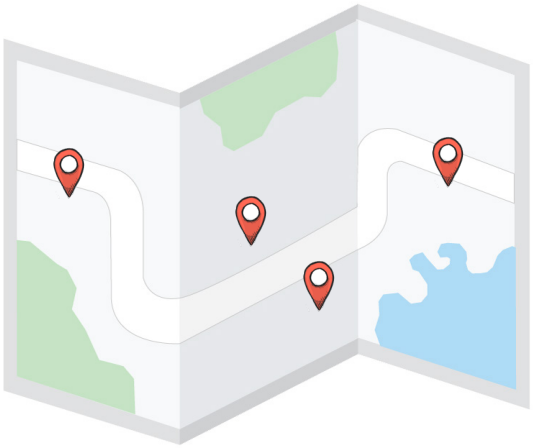
2 Distance:

How far away your business is from the exact search result. For example, an auto repair shop located in Burbank won't show in the top search results for someone searching "auto repair Pasadena" even though they are relatively close. 72% of consumers that did a local Google search visited a store within five miles of their current location.

3 Prominence:

How well known a business is compared to others. More famous landmarks, brands or restaurants will show up in search results before lesser known names. This is generated by how well Google knows the business from across the web in external links, article mentions, reviews and directories.

Importance of Google Maps



With GMB, your business can be listed in the "three pack", or the first three listings on Google Maps. Three pack listings receive more clicks and calls than paid ads or even top search results!

Three pack results show up before the organic search results when searching for local businesses. Try viewing this yourself by Googling, "coffee shop Santa Monica". In order to see additional listings beyond the three listings in maps pack, searchers need to click on view more places at the bottom. About 80% of searchers won't click on more places.

If you have a brick and mortar business, showing up in the three pack is critical.

About 70% of people who are given the three pack listing will click on them before organic search results or ads.

Claiming your business listing on Google will allow you to have more control over your maps listing.

Optimize your Website for Google Maps Results

As anyone savvy with SEO knows, having a great website improves your Google ranking organically. This includes having an abundance of relevant content, a top notch user experience (UX) and local keywords utilized throughout (primarily on your homepage).

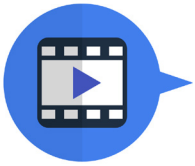
Your website must be responsive or work flawlessly between computers, mobile devices and tablets. Google shows fewer search results for non-responsive websites.

Embed a Google Maps link on your website. Embedding this validates with Google that your business is actually located where you say it's located. Google will always favor their own content.

Increase Google Reviews

Create an easy instant URL to send people to leave a Google review. First you have to obtain your place ID. In order to do so, you need to have a verified GMB.

1. Go to https://developers.google.com/places/place-id to get your Place ID
2. Add Place ID to this URL:
   https://search.google.com/local/writereview?placeid=place_id_goes_here
3. Create shortened URL via bit.ly or other tool



See our full YouTube tutorial here!

If you can start tallying up reviews, this can drastically improve your ranking on Google Maps.

- Ask for reviews from customers that have had a positive experience.
- Place signs next to your register or in or near the restroom with your URL to write a review.
- Print your URL on your receipts.
- Add your URL to your email signature.
- Hold monthly contests for all new reviews coming in.
- Respond to reviews as they come in (including negative reviews).
- Respond to direct messages from customers through GMB messaging.

Google My Business Listing Insights

Use Google My Business Insights to see how customers interact with your GMB listing and how they find your business on Search and Maps. Business owners can log into their business profile on Google Maps to see how often searchers view their business.

To view Insights analytics, log into Google My Business, click “home” and under the “Performance” section you can see how many searchers viewed your Maps listing.

With Google Insights you can also see if customers find your business via direct search (directly searching by your business’ name) or discovery search (searching by business category).

Then you can see what actions customers take when they come across your GMB listing. Actions include requesting directions in Maps, calling directly, viewing photos or visiting your website.

Conclusion

Google My Business is a free, user friendly tool that can instantly help raise brand awareness, bring in more customers and increase revenue. GMB can also provide basic customer insights to support marketing efforts. If you’re just starting out with SEO, start with Google My Business before anything else!