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# GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

*For Beginners*



[Google My Business](#)

## **Google My Business for Beginners**

The Internet has become a tool that consumers rely on even when they're seeking the best options for local shopping and services. The search tool they turn to in almost all cases is Google.

Yet, most offline businesses don't take advantage of the search engine and its ability to provide them with a free business profile that can help them attract and engage with their prospective customers and clients.

Instead, when someone is searching for a business they need, they often come up empty-handed in terms of gathering information about a company or its products before they invest their hard-earned money in it.

Think back to when you needed to find a local business for something. Maybe it was a restaurant or a doctor – or even a health food store. Google can give you a head start in delivering results, but a business profile goes the extra mile.

### **What Is Google My Business?**

Google My Business gives local store and service providers an edge over their competition by showcasing their listing in a unique way. It provides more information than a simple snippet pulled from the company's website does in the typical search results.

Instead, the consumer gets a nice snapshot into the value that business creates within the community. They get to see a star rating for starters. The overview shows them if the store is open or closed and pinpoints where they are on the map in relation to the person searching.

The customer can click on tabs that show them photos of the store. They can read the Google reviews about the store or service to see what other consumers are saying about it.

The listing makes it easy for the customer to make a call to the location, and get directions so they can go there immediately. If they want to plan to visit

## [Google My Business](#)

a different day, a simple drop down menu shows them the hours the business is open.

The listing can be linked directly to your website so that customers can click through and get even more in-depth information about your business.

### **Use Google My Business to Improve Your Reputation**

Many times, business owners are not aware of a customer's dissatisfaction with their products or services. With Google showcasing your reviews, you have the opportunity to see the feedback and make improvements.

You can respond to the person and let others see how you handle any issues. This kind of personalization is imperative to helping you create and maintain a positive reputation within the community.

Many business owners don't understand the value of this aspect of search engine optimization. It's no longer enough to show up in a search results page. What matters is what people have said about what they experienced.

Any good business owner knows that it's important to make sure your customer has a positive experience. You can get direct data from people who may have been too shy to speak up in person and find out what tweaks you need to make to your business operations to ultimately beat the competition.

If a consumer searches for your type of business and sees your listing at a 3.6, while another business has been awarded a 4.7, it's easy to see which one they'll trust more. So make sure you use this feedback as a way of levelling up and improving your products and services.

### **Use Built In Metrics to Increase Profits**

Metrics are a wonderful tool to help businesses to thrive. You can see the results 'Google My Business' is delivering for you and tweak your efforts online easily to match what consumers respond best to.

## [Google My Business](#)

For example, you'll be able to see how many Google users call your store from your listing. If you rely on a recording and you're getting many calls, you may want to tweak it so that you have an employee answering the phone at all times to get people in the door.

Another metric you can use is seeing how many people click on your website. If you haven't taken time to have a professional website built, and you simply threw something up, take a look at your metrics to see how many potential customers you might be losing if people are flocking to the site and not following through with orders.

You'll also be able to see how many people ask for directions, how many follow your business, and how many bookings you receive, if applicable. It will show you how often you came up in the search results and what kind of activity your listing got.

This may spur you on to do several things. Improving your Google My Business listing is a task you'll want to work on over time. Don't just leave it up to chance, especially when it can help you beat the competition and increase your sales.

### **Improving Your Listing**

There are a couple of things people see right off the bat when your listing comes up in Google My Business results. The first is reviews. While some business owners see what happens to evolve in their reviews and ratings, others actively pursue feedback.

Now you never want to ask people to create phony reviews for you. That's not an ethical way to run any business. The best way to do it is to solicit reviews from satisfied customers.

For instance, you could have an area printed on your receipt which your clerk circles that asks them to leave a Google review. If your worker is friendly and the customer is happy, the chances improve that they'll leave feedback about your business.

## [Google My Business](#)

In fact, some might do it while they're in your store, so they don't forget. Just asking for a review is one small task that many business owners fail to consider, and it can mean the difference between your having a couple of reviews versus thousands.

Another thing you can do, besides tweaking your website, is to have plenty of photos attached to your 'Google My Business' listing. Make sure your photos look good.

You don't want dark, dingy or blurry pictures showcasing your local business. There are plenty of apps that help amateur photographers perfect their photos. You might consider staging your business, depending on what it is, so that it has even more appeal in pictures.

Make sure your images are bright and colourful and have a variety so that some show the outside of the business, some are indoor pictures, and others are detailed images of specific products.

If you have events, be sure to snap pictures of those, too – and include them in your Google My Business listing. People like to see what all you have for sale as well as the environment and people associated with the company.

Make sure your listing is in the right category. If you're not sure, do some research to see where it might fit in best. You want to show up when consumers are targeting the category your business relates most to.

When you sign up for your 'Google My Business' listing, you'll be able to add posts to your listing in addition to photos. You can also list the services that you offer. The more you expand your profile, the more clicks you'll get from customers.

### **Post Updates About Your Business**

If you have an event or want to share information with your prospective customers, you can create a post that gets added to your Google My Business listing. First, go to Google My Business and log in to your account.

## [Google My Business](#)

Click on Posts on the dashboard and select the type of post you want to create. This might be an event your store is hosting, a sale, or a simple update about inventory or services, for example.

You can add a mixture of media formats to this post. Include the text to explain your post and then decide if you want to add any pictures or videos to the post. You're also allowed to add a button if you want.

Then you'll publish the post. If you ever want to edit or delete it, you can do that. Make sure you follow the recommended rules for media file size. They do have some other rules you have to adhere to as well.

Your post shouldn't include a phone number. It needs to be a quality post that's well-written and not offensive. It should be something anyone can read without hesitation, meaning family-friendly and safe.

### **Let People Order From Your Listing**

It is possible for some retailers to enable the option for consumers to place an order directly from their listing. It shows a little shopping cart icon next to the instructions that say: Place an order (with the website URL next to it).

You're allowed to let people make a number of purchases, including booking an appointment, making a reservation, placing a food order and placing a shopping order. This is a great way to maximize sales without making the customer take extra steps to fulfill their needs.

You can also enable the messaging system so that customers can message you with questions before they buy. This is a real time option for companies to be available for their customers and clients.

All you do to include this is log into your 'Google My Business' profile and turn on the messaging system. You can turn it off whenever you want to. You can block or delete conversations if you need to.

## [Google My Business](#)

Sometimes, you'll want to send a customer a picture of a product, and this system will allow you to do that. Your incoming messages will appear in the Google My Business app, and you'll get a notification so you can respond.

You want to respond as quickly as possible, because customers will be able to see your average response time. If it's a few minutes, that's great! But it might show a few hours, within a day, or in a few days.

The longer your customer has to wait, the worse it is for you as a business. To help with this, you're allowed to let others in your business join in on responding to customers. They just have to be able to manage your business profile.

### **Avoid Having Your 'Google My Business' Listing Suspended**

For many businesses, having their Google My Business listing suspended can be heartbreaking. It's the only way many know to achieve significant results being found in Google's search engine.

So you want to avoid the dreaded suspension. If you do get suspended, all hope is not lost. You have a chance at having it reinstated. But it's best to avoid the problem altogether.

One common reason suspensions happen is due to quality issues. They're not going to tell you the exact reason for the suspension, but you can figure it out and take corrective measures to fix the problem.

Start by making sure you haven't broken their most basic guidelines like avoiding prohibited content. Your listing should accurately showcase your business and not give false information.

All of the data should be up to date and precise – including your address, phone number and website URL. When you choose categories, pick the best one(s). You don't want to put your listing in an irrelevant category just because you want more exposure to your business.

*Google My Business*

Make sure your business is eligible for a listing. For example, you can't create a listing for lead generation agents or rental properties. And everything you say about your offer or service needs to be true, not misleading.

Keep in mind that Google can suspend your account based on how you interact with customers. So don't be abusive with anyone, even if they're angry with you. Always provide optimal customer service so that you can show Google that your business is above board.

Be aware that many businesses will get the suspension notification, and it's not the end of the world. It's usually a small detail that you can easily correct. But if you've engaged in spammy behaviour or something else that's questionable, you may lose your ability to get listed for good.

'Google My Business' listings are helpful for both consumers and business owners alike. As a free tool, it's unmatched in its ability to send you targeted traffic that's ready to spend money, so take your time and do it right and you should reap the rewards for years to come!