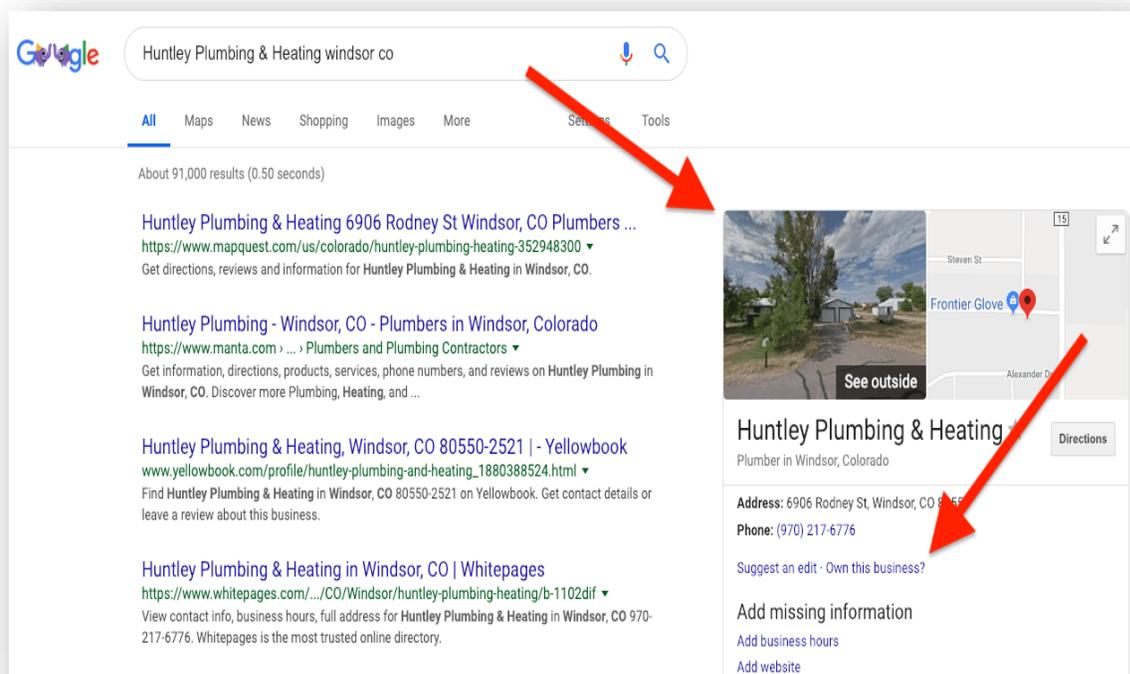


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Claim Your Google My Business Listing

This checklist will walk you through getting your GMB listing claimed, verified and optimized so you can start getting the increased customer calls and visits that come from being in the Google 3-Pack!

Start by doing a search for your business on Google. Go to <https://www.google.com>. Enter your business name, city and state. Look for a “knowledge panel” listing for the business.



Claim a Google My Business Listing

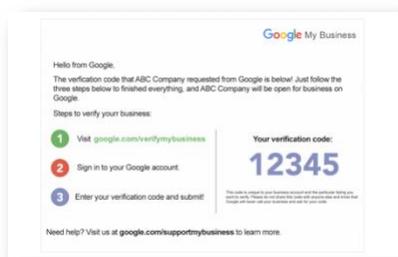
Sign in with a valid Gmail account. (Create one if you don't already have one.) Click the “Own this business?” link (desktop) or “Claim this business” link (mobile) then follow the instructions to verify your information and claim the listing.

If you don't see a GMB Listing, go to google.com/business and create one. Sign in with a valid Gmail account. (Create one if you don't already have one.) Go to google.com/business and click the “Manage Now” button then follow the prompts to create a new listing.

Verify Your Google My Business Listing

The next step after claiming or creating a GMB listing is to verify the listing. This lets Google know that you're a real physical business. The two most common ways to verify a listing are either by postcard or phone call.

You cannot choose which methods Google makes available. 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.



Postcard Method

You'll be sent a postcard within 14 days with a verification code. When you receive the card, log in to Google My Business and enter the verification code for your listing.

Phone Method

Ensure that you are prepared to 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.

Optimize Your Google My Business Listing

Fill in the business information sections as completely as possible. Do not skimp. Many of your future prospects will scour this information so make it count.

Business name

Use the same business name as on your signs, business cards and legal documents. Do not spam your business name with cities, search terms, taglines or anything else. It is against Google's terms of service and could lead to listing problems or suspension in the future.

Business categories

The primary category is hugely important for making sure your GMB listing is shown to the right people. Make sure the primary category best represents your business. It is the only one that people see on your business listing. Take advantage of additional categories and add as many as apply to your business. Don't be tempted to use categories that do not directly apply to your business.

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Business location

Only enter a physical address if customers actually visit your place of business. Put the physical street address in the first line and put suite numbers in the second line.

Service area

Only enter this if you serve customers at their location (service area businesses). Enter the cities, postal codes or regions that you service. Note that no matter how big a service area you set, your GMB listing is still unlikely to appear in a search result greater than 20 miles away.

BUSINESS HOURS:		
Mon.	<input type="text"/>	to <input type="text"/>
Tues.	<input type="text"/>	to <input type="text"/>
Wed.	<input type="text"/>	to <input type="text"/>
Thur.	<input type="text"/>	to <input type="text"/>
Fri.	<input type="text"/>	to <input type="text"/>
Sat.	<input type="text"/>	to <input type="text"/>
Sun.	<input type="text"/>	to <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>		

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

Phone Numbers and Call Tracking

Use your primary, local phone number in the "Primary Phone" field. Add toll-free and secondary phone numbers as "Additional Phone" fields.

If you use a call tracking number for your Google My Business listing, place the call tracking number in the "Primary Phone" field. Add your primary, local phone number as an "Additional Phone".

Website and Appointment URLs*

Insert the full URLs (web address) for these inputs. All URLs must be live at the time you enter them into Google My Business.

- **Website URL**

For single location businesses, use the homepage of your website. For multi-location businesses, use the specific page for each location.

- **Appointment URL**

Use this to link to your contact page or an online appointment system. Certain types of businesses can instead use Reserve with Google to integrate specific booking systems into their Google My Business account.

- **Menu URL (Restaurants)**

Restaurants can also add a special URL to link to their menu. Must link to a page on your website. Links directly to PDFs are not supported. Another alternative, instead of linking to the menu on your website is to directly add your menu to the GMB listing.

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- **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

Only available for certain types of service businesses (dentists, attorneys, insurance agents, hotels, marketing agencies, and others) Only shows up for end users in the Google Maps app right now.

Create separate sections for the different categories of services you offer. Create a separate service for each specific service you offer. Enter the appropriate name and price of each service. Add a description of each service up to 1000 characters. Take advantage of this space to describe each service for customers using rich keywords.

Menu

Only available for restaurant-type businesses. Use this in addition to a link to your menu on your website. Create separate sections for each section of your menu. Create a separate menu items within each section. Enter the appropriate name and price of each menu item.

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

Products

Only available for certain types of retail-oriented businesses.

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

Create separate collections for each product category you'd like to feature. Enter the collection name. Add a collection description up to 1000 characters. Take advantage of this space to describe each collection / product category using rich keywords.

Create individual products within each category. Enter the product name and price (price ranges are not supported). Add a product description up to 1000 characters. I recommend using the same description that you would use in your product catalog.

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Business-Defined Attributes (Objective Attributes)

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

Go to your listing in Google My Business. Click “Info” and then click “Attributes”. Select as many attributes as apply to your business. Do not spam these attributes as Google has been known to confirm these by asking Google users to submit “subjective attributes.”

- **Business Description***

The business description is an open text area that you can use to tell potential customers more about your business. It appears in both desktop and mobile web search, but does not appear on the Google Maps app.

Go to your listing in Google My Business. Click “Info” and then click “Description”. You can write a description of up to 750 characters, however, only the first 244 characters display on your Google listing unless the visitor clicks “More”.

- **Recommendations for business descriptions:**

Think about what you’d want your customers to know most about your business. Pretend they know nothing about you.

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.

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

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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.

Images you upload will not appear on your public listing until you verify your listing. All images should be in JPG / PNG format, no larger than 10MB and a minimum of 720×720 pixels. Use good photography. Remember that these images are the first impression that many people will have about your business. Don’t go cheap!

Avoid promotional or other non-natural text on your images. Do not use stock photography. Those may be flagged and removed.

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.

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- **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.

Unfortunately, you cannot 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. 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.

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.

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.

GET STARTED NOW

Don't wait! Your Google My Business (GMB) listing and account are absolutely central to achieving success with local SEO.

Now that you've got this powerful information, you're on your way to dominating your local market and getting those really cool benefits from being in the Google 3-Pack.

Keep an eye on your inbox. In the next couple of weeks, I'm going to send you a mini-course on how to use your new Google My Business listing to attract and close more customers than you could have imagined. Be sure to look for it!

To Your Success,

Chris Carter

