

## HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

There's no question that Google dominates the web in nearly every aspect as it accounts for a whopping 76% of global searches on search engines and there are about 40,000 search queries every second ([firstsiteguide](#))! With its huge marketing potential, Google is a driving force in the business world, and every sized company needs to focus their marketing efforts on taking advantage of all that Google offers. Many businesses fail to utilize Google's free services for businesses, and one of the most under-utilized (but incredibly powerful) free platforms for businesses is Google My Business

### WHAT IS GOOGLE MY BUSINESS?

Google My Business is a platform or tool that allows businesses to easily connect with customers across Google Search and Maps beyond their free Business Profile. For users searching a business, it's the key information that's published on the right side of their screen that allows them to learn hours of operation, location, Google Reviews, and whether the business is open or closed during these uncertain times of COVID-19. It's important to note that a company's Business Profile, Google's term for a Google business listing, can exist on its own, separate from a Google My Business account. Google has reported that [46% of all searches have local intent](#), so when a business creates a Google My Business account, it allows that business to access, manage, customize, and enhance their Business Profile, all for free.

### WHY IS GOOGLE MY BUSINESS IMPORTANT?

When a company optimizes their Google My Business listing to maximize their Business Profile, it improves engagement with their target market. Increasingly, more and more consumers are conducting searches on Google without actually clicking into any other website. Why? The information they're searching for is already published in the SERPs, resulting in more and more "zero-click searches." If your Google My Business listing is lacking key information, consumers will look elsewhere.

Furthermore, optimizing your Google My Business listing sends signals to Google that your Business Profile (and website) is active and contains quality content, which allows your website to rank higher in local results, which means more visibility, engagement, and conversions. When you put time into optimizing your Google My Business account, it will positively impact your conversions – consumers will be able to discover you beyond just searching for your exact company name. Instead, you'll be discovered in keyword searches, and consumers will call you, visit your website, research your company and services, request a quote, book an appointment... the possibilities are endless!

### USING GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

Google My Business can be an incredible marketing tool, especially for companies looking to dominate in their local market. Here are some key ways every company should utilize Google My Business to truly elevate their overall digital marketing strategy.

First and foremost, every company should use Google My Business for its intended purpose – to highlight the business! As previously mentioned, your Google My Business listing provides a dynamic snapshot of your business that allows users searching for information about your company to quickly access that information, without having to actually scour your website. The best thing a company can do is to fill out ALL of the information on the Google My Business dashboard. Yes, complete every section!

From your Google My Business account dashboard, you can control the information that's in your easy-to-view listing, and you can provide information beyond just operating hours and location. You can provide a link to your website (because those clicks matter too!), a description of your company, products and pricing, and any other details that make your business unique, including photos, answers to Frequently Asked Questions, and a link to a message portal to field customer's questions.

### TIPS FOR OPTIMIZING YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING

Here are some key tips to optimizing your Google My Business listing:

- Choose a Category. Choosing a category is simply a MUST to be found in discovery searches. 84% of Business Profile views on Google come from discovery searches – that means, the consumer searched for a service, product, or category and the Business Profile appeared, as opposed to direct searches (when the consumer typed in the exact business name or address). Be specific when you add a category (for example hair salon vs nail salon), and choose secondary categories. When you add a category, it'll unlock even more category-specific features for your business! For example, businesses categorized as "restaurant" will be able to add a menu and reservation button.
- Put Time Into Your "From The Business" Description. Use all 750 characters, with the most key information in the first 250 characters. Repurpose content from your mission statement or "About Us" section on your website, and maximize keywords your target market might use to search businesses like yours. Don't use links or HTML, but be sure to use this space to distinguish your business from competitor.
- Add Photos Regularly! A 2019 study by BrightLocal showed that "businesses with more than 100 photos get 520% more calls, 2,717% more direction requests, and 1,065% more website clicks than the average business." Anyone can add photos to your Business Profile, but by adding your own photos, you can control the quality to ensure your profile looks its best. Regularly adding photos signals you are active and your profile is up to date, which will boost your rankings. Don't go overboard and add hundreds, but one new photo every week is ideal – images should be quality, unique to your business, and should have clear descriptions.



- Get Google Reviews. The number one influence on consumer buying is reviews, so it is a key ranking factor in their complex algorithm. Reach out to your long-time, loyal customers to leave a positive review, and ask new customers! Encourage a review during in-person conversations, and create a review shortcut link on your website and in communications – such as via email marketing efforts, text messages (SMS marketing), or on your social media platforms. Plus, it's a great idea to respond to reviews! Publicly thanking customers for their business incentivizes other customers to leave reviews, and shows potential customers you care about your business and customer satisfaction.
- Hire a professional – As a busy business owner, crafting and optimizing the images and posts can be time-consuming, A professional digital marketing business can step in and manage it for you.