Google My Business Guide

How to Set Up, Verify and Optimize Your Business's Listing

How to set up your GMB listing:

Setting up Google My Business (GMB) properly for your business is crucial for good local SEO: If you want your business to show up in Google's Local Pack, if you want a search for your business to display a Google Knowledge Graph, or if you want it to show up in Google Maps searches, they all depend on having a well-created listing.

It's important for you to keep your listing data correct and updated. Especially given that most people these days will search for local businesses online first.

Follow these steps to set up your GMB listing:

1. **Set up a new Google Account, if you don't have one already.**

   Please note you do NOT need to have a Gmail account in order to have a Google account and use Google My Business. You can choose the "Use my current email address instead" option
   Here is a link with instructions, click on the Step 1 button in the link to create the account:

   https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/27441?hl=en#
   Or access your Google My Business login, if you have one.

2. Visit business.google.com
Click 'Manage Now'.

3. Add your business name
When you type your business name you may notice that Google suggests similar businesses in your area to you. This is so you avoid duplicating a listing if one was already created. Your business details can actually show up in the suggestion as details may come from public records. If you see your business, select it from the drop-down options.

Click Next when you are done with this step.

4. Enter the location of your business
Add the address where your customers would show up to do business with you.

If you deliver goods and services to your clients, you will need to check the option for Service Area Business that appears at the end of the form. You can add all the locations where you are able to serve your customers (cities, towns or post codes, whatever makes sense for you).

If you do not receive your customers at your store (for example, plumbers, electricians, etc), choose the option "Hide my address (it's not a store)"

When ready click 'Next'.

**Note: Sometimes Google will present a map with a marker indicating your location. If so, just check if it's correct. If not, just re- position the marker as necessary. Then click "Next".
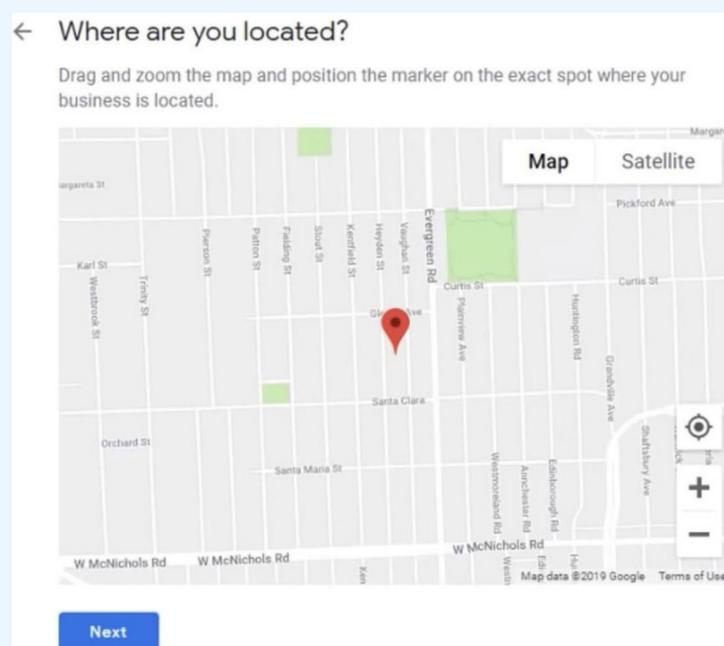
5. Choose an appropriate business category.

Choosing the right business category will impact the way you show up for search terms on Google. Therefore, it would be a good idea to find out what categories are being used by your competitors and see which one would make the most sense for you.

Having the right category for your business can also impact the other sorts of information that can be offered on your listing. For example, you could be able to add your menu, or online order sites, if you are a restaurant, or you could add a booking button, if it applies to your business too.

6. Add your business's phone number and website URL

It's a great idea to add your phone number and website url to your listing as you can have customers contact you right away from their phones, and you can take advantage of Google's call tracking feature.

**Important: Make sure you don't add information in your listing that is not permitted by Google's guidelines or your listing can be suspended.

Review Google's guidelines on this matter here: https://support.google.com/business/answer/3038177?hl=en-GB

How to check if your GMB listing has been verified:

1. You can do this by visiting the following link to use Google's verification tool (make sure you are signed into your Google account to use it):

   https://support.google.com/business/workflow/9289460?ctx=gmba wf1

2. Another way to see if your business listing has been verified is to do a local search for it on Google. Type the name of your business and the location in Google's search bar. Then, have a look at the Knowledge Graph that comes up for it. If you DON'T see the phrase "Own this business?" next to "Suggest an edit", then it means that the GMB listing has been verified.
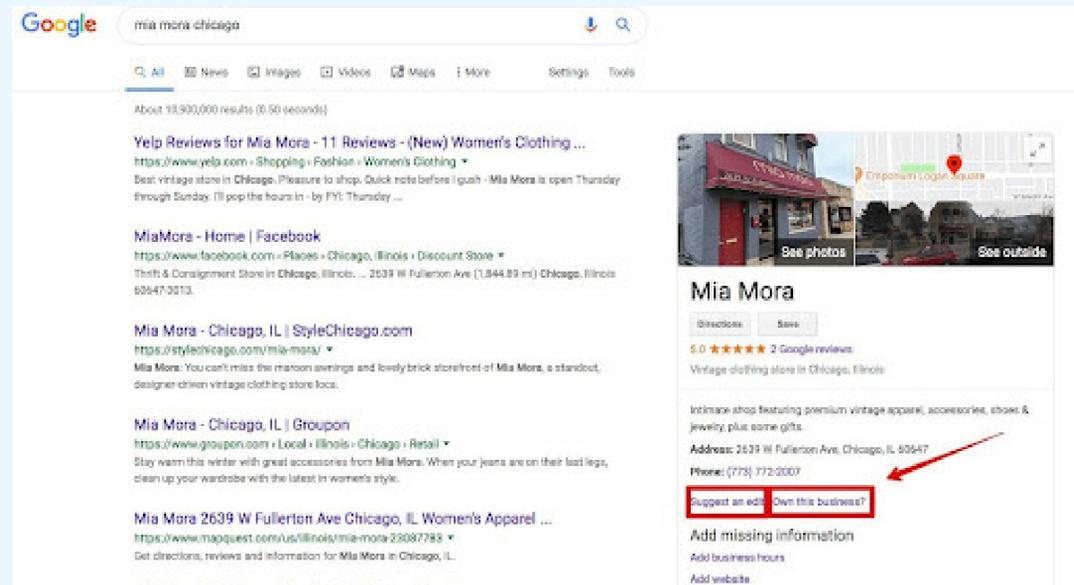
3. If you search for the business in Google Maps, then, instead of "Own this Business?" a "Claim this Business" link will likely show up.

   **Note: if your listing does not come up, then no listing has been created and you need to set one up. Go back to the previous page to the section titled "HOW TO SET UP YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING" to find out how.

How to claim an existing GMB listing:

If the business listing has been verified by another person you can still claim the listing. Following is a Google support article on how to go about it:

https://support.google.com/business/answer/4566671?hl=en

1. Click the "Own this business?" link
2. Then (make sure you are logged into your Google account) click the "Manage now" link
3. Then choose your verification method.

How to verify your listing:

It is super important for your business to verify your GMB. Until you do, you won't be able to manage the information of your business in Google Search or Google Maps. You won't be able to make any changes in your listing, view listing stats, upload photos to your listing or even respond to Google reviews.

Besides appearing more trustworthy to your customers, verifying your listing can also protect you from fraud from having another person not belonging to your business claim the listing as their own and add their own details.

There are three ways to complete verification of your new GMB profile:

1. **By postcard:** This is the most popular way to verify your listing. Google will send you a postcard to the address you added to your new listing. It will contain a code you will need to submit to your GMB account in order to complete verification. If you don't receive your postcard after some time (a couple of weeks), you can just request a new one by clicking the "Request another code" alert in your GMB dashboard. It's a good idea to not change any business information (business name, address, category, etc.) until your business is verified or this will delay the process. Also note that Google won't send any verification letters to PO boxes.

2. **By phone:** Some businesses will be offered the option to verify their listing over the phone and that option will show up. In this case, your verification code will be sent to you by phone. Be careful with scammers trying to contact you by phone saying they're from Google: https://support.google.com/business/answer/6212928?hl=en

3. **By email:** Some businesses will also be presented with a "Verify by email" option, which will send the code to the Google Account that you associated with the GMB listing. If this option is available to your business and you are going to use it, be careful that the email address that shows up on your screen (which is the one Google will use to contact you) is correct and that you have access to it.

Find more info on Google's support article: https://support.google.com/business/answer/7107242?hl=en-GB

More resources for GMB listings:

- GMB Help Community: https://support.google.com/business/community
- GMB Twitter Support: @GoogleMyBiz.
- GMB Facebook Support: https://www.facebook.com/GoogleMyBusiness/
- GMB Help Center: Fill out the form on: https://support.google.com/business/contact/verification_cod e_issues? from=cuf

How to optimize your listing:

Log back into your GMB listing: www.google.com/business
In the dashboard you can see how complete your listing is:

Complete your listing info to the best of your ability in order to improve the chances of your business showing up in search results.
Go to the "Info" section of the left-hand side menu of your GMB dashboard.
That will bring up a summary of the info available for your business. Add and edit the info as necessary by clicking on the pencil icon.

**Note: By going in this "Info" section you are able to add secondary category options for your listing. Add one or two additional categories if you wish, but make sure they are relevant to your business. Trying to add other categories that are not relevant (or too many) in order to rank for them can get your listing suspended. Besides your regular business hours, you can also add Special Hours if you have specific hours for bank holidays or other special days.

If you use Appointments or Bookings you can set the Appointments page to your booking page on your site, your online calendar, or, you can just have it point to your site's Contact page.

It's also a good idea to add a short business description and to add any other relevant details for your business that may help your potential customer decide if you are the right business for them before they call you.
Ignore the "Photos" link in this "Info" section for now. We'll talk about how to add photos in the section below.

Now, if you click back on the "Home" link in the left-hand menu you will see that the completion % of your profile should have increased positively.

Adding images to your GMB listing:

Once you've completed the Info section as best as you can, it's a good idea to add photos to your listing, especially if it would help your customers consider doing business with you.

Find the "Photos" section in the left-hand menu on your GMB dashboard.
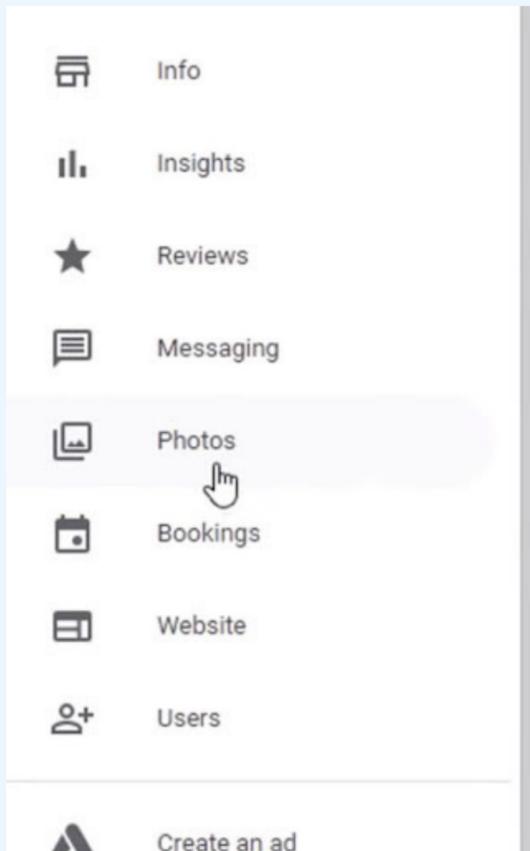
Add relevant photos and images related to your logo, cover photo and other photos and videos (even 360 images) that can visually describe your business and set your listing apart from your competition.

**Note: Be careful to not post pictures of clients without their approval.

Remaining questions, comments, or concerns?

Feel free to contact **support@netblaze.com**. We are always happy to help!