



A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE



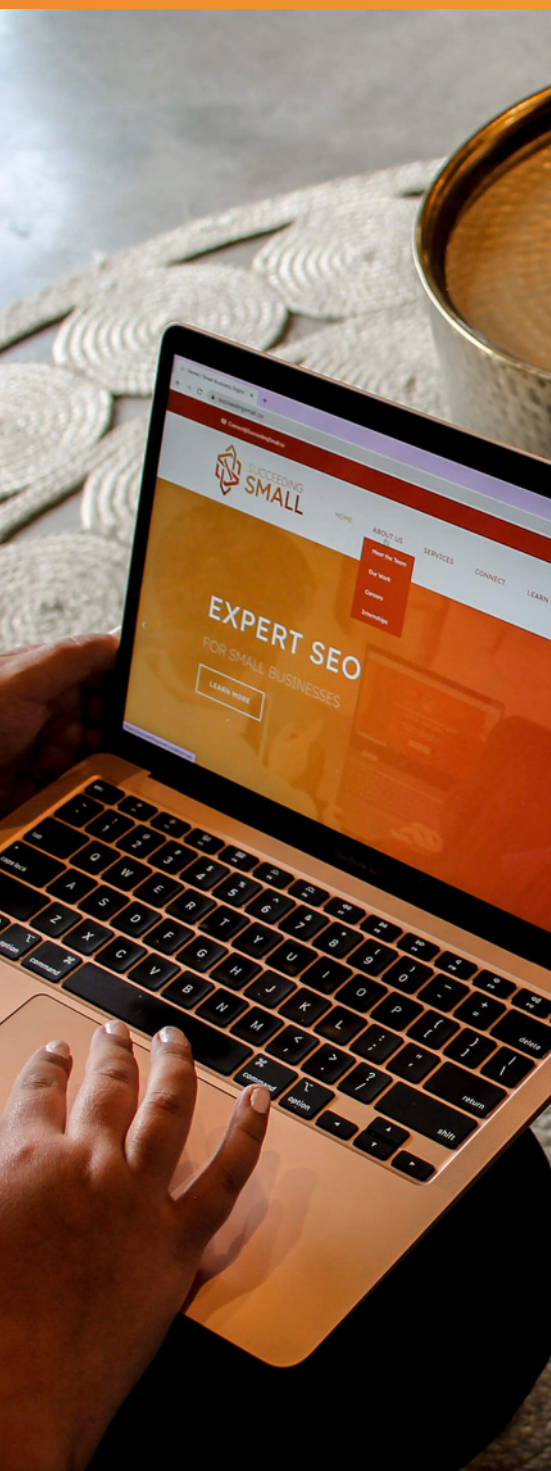
TO GOOGLE
BUSINESS PROFILES



SUCCEEDING
SMALL

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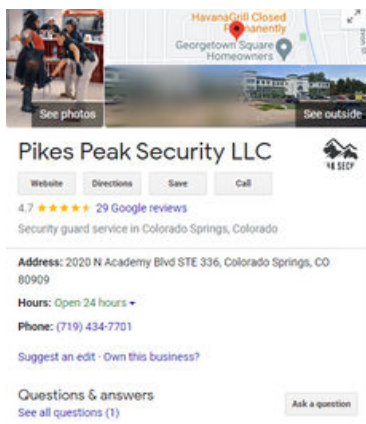
WHAT IS A GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE?

Google Business Profile (formerly known as Google My Business) is a free tool that lets you manage how your business shows up on Google products, like Maps and Search. With a Google Business Profile (GBP), you can update your hours, share important information with your customers, and manage reviews.

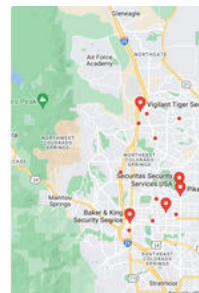
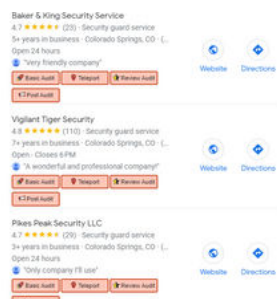
WHY DO YOU NEED A GBP?

Google Business Profiles increase your business's visibility across Google products. Instead of just showing up in a list of links when someone in your area searches for a service, you can also show up...

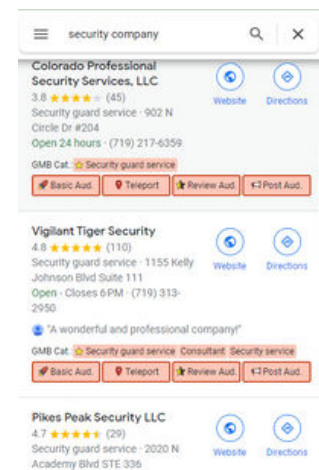
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HERE:



AND HERE:



Having a GBP is the BEST way to rank for local keywords, like “Chiropractor Colorado Springs,” “Furnace Repair Near Me” or “Best Landscaper in San Francisco.” With a properly set up GBP, you may even show up in Maps when someone searches for your local competitors. That’s pretty cool!

Being more visible to searchers in your local area means more leads for your business!

In addition to improving your local visibility, a GBP allows you to easily update your online business information, so if you close early for inclement weather or change your hours for summer, you can let your customers know right away.

You can also collect and manage reviews through your GBP, so your five-star rating is one of the first things people see when searching for a service like yours.

SETTING UP YOUR GBP FOR THE FIRST TIME

STEP 1: Create or log in to your existing Google account.

If you don't have a Google account already, use your business email address to create your free account. Then visit this URL: google.com/business, and click the "Manage Now" button.

STEP 2: See if there's an existing listing for your business.

Even if you haven't created a business profile yet, someone may have added your business to Maps, or a previous owner may have set one up. If there's an existing profile, click "Request Access" and follow the instructions provided. Creating a new profile when one already exists can result in Google suspending your profile.

STEP 3: Enter the name of your business.

It's important to use the business name that appears on your website, storefront, and marketing materials.

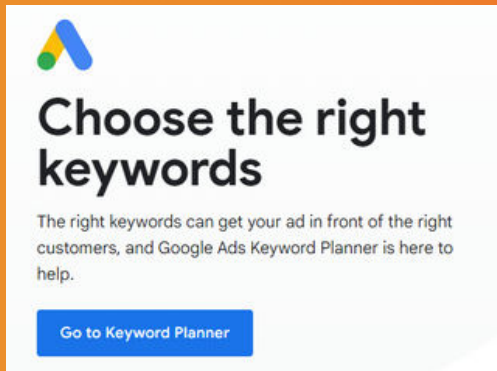
Some businesses try to improve their GBP ranking by adding keywords related to their service in their business name, but Google doesn't like this AT ALL!

Not only can it come across as spammy, but using a different business name than what's on your site can actually hurt your SEO. Using consistent business information on all of your listings and platforms helps Google (and other people) understand who you are and what you do.

PRO TIP:

Keep your business name, address, and phone number consistent across the internet.

STEP 4: Choose your primary business category.



Choose the category that most accurately describes your business. If there are multiple categories that fit your service offerings, you can do a bit of research to decide which will give your listing the most visibility. (You can also add secondary categories later.)

Start by looking up your competitors on Google Maps to see what primary business categories they're using. This is a good starting point, but there may still be a better option.

If you have access to a keyword research tool, type the different business categories into your tool to find the term with the best search volume and lowest competition. That is the category that will perform the best for your business.

If you don't have a keyword tool, there are free and low-cost versions available like [Google Keyword Planner](#) and [Keywords Everywhere](#). It's also okay to choose the category that you think fits best with your services and skip this step. You can always edit it later.

STEP 5: Enter your location or service area.

Google will then ask if you have a storefront or if you meet customers at a secondary location, such as a plumber or consultant. You will be prompted to either add your address or select service area.

You can select up to 20 zip codes for your service area, but it's best to keep them within the same general area or you may not rank as well. (Google recommends choosing areas within 2 hours of your location.)



STEP 6: Enter your phone number and website.

Displaying this information allows people to quickly and easily find out more about your business and contact you to book a service. Make sure to use the same information here that you use on your website, social media, and other business listings.

Because Google knows that your business name, address, and phone number (or NAP) are key pieces of information for any person that wants to buy from you, they actually use them as a ranking factor. If you use different names or phone numbers across the internet, Google won't trust that you're a credible business and likely won't show your listing to searchers.

STEP 7: Verify your profile.

You will need to verify your profile through a phone call, text, or email. Then Google will review your listing, which can take up to 7 days.

Sometimes Google will request additional information to verify your listing. They may send a postcard with further instructions to your business location or ask you to provide another verification method.

Your listing will not show up on Google until it is verified, so complete this step as quickly as possible and respond promptly to additional requests from Google.

Congratulations! You're all set up!

Keep reading for ways to get the most out of your Google Business Profile.



MAKING YOUR GBP MORE VISIBLE

Now that you have a Google Business Profile, it's time to optimize it. Optimizing your profile improves your visibility and allows you to show up in all of those places we mentioned earlier. Here are a few of the strategies we use with our clients:



BE THOROUGH

Fill out every section of your Google Business Profile. Now that your profile is set up, you can add a business description, secondary business categories, hours, and service options.



ADD PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

This makes your business appear more trustworthy to potential customers.



REQUEST CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Google uses both the number of reviews and key terms in your reviews to decide how to rank your business. Follow up with every customer, and ask them to mention what service they hired you for in their review.



RESEARCH COMPETITORS

You can use a free browser extension called [GMB Everywhere](#) to see what secondary business categories your competitors are using and get inspiration for your own profile. You can also use this tool to see how your listing looks to potential customers when they search for your service.



RESPOND TO FEEDBACK

And once you have reviews, create a personalized response to each one, even the negative ones!



UPDATE YOUR PROFILE

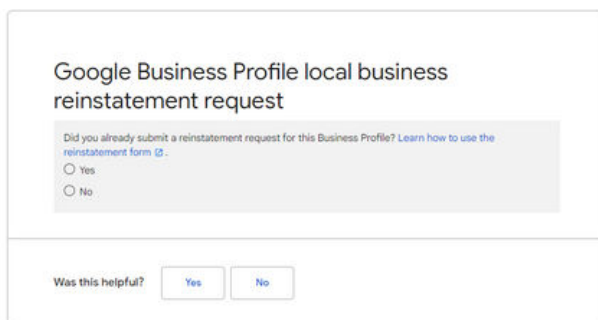
If your hours are changing or you're closing early for a holiday, let your customers know. This builds trust with your customers and Google. You can even create posts about upcoming sales or events.

TROUBLESHOOTING YOUR GBP

What should I do if my profile's been suspended?

If your GBP has been suspended, it's because your profile is not following [Google's guidelines](#) for a business listing. Here are a few things to check:

- Are you using a virtual office as a business address? If you don't have an official business address, change your profile settings to a service area business or use your home address to register.
- Are you accurately representing your business? Make sure your business name is correct and doesn't include extra information. Google also recommends not using too many secondary business categories, but picking the right ones can make your profile more visible.
- Are you using the same address for business listings in different cities? To have Colorado Springs and Denver listings, for example, you should have separate addresses and phone numbers for each.
- Does your business have multiple listings? Google only allows one listing per business, unless you have multiple locations. Request access to the original listing and post your updates there.



Google Business Profile local business reinstatement request

Did you already submit a reinstatement request for this Business Profile? [Learn how to use the reinstatement form](#) (3)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Was this helpful?

Once you've corrected the issue with your profile, you can [file a reinstatement request with Google](#).

Why has my Google Business Profile post been removed?

If you create a post for your Google Business Profile, Google will review the content before it goes live. Occasionally, they will remove the post for violating their [content policy](#), but you can repost once you find and correct the issue.

DO

- Post relevant business content.
- Edit carefully and use a spellchecker.

DON'T

- Include your business phone number.
- Post spam content.
- Share inappropriate information, such as personal details.

I got a bad review on my profile. Is there anything I can do about it?

If you receive a bad review, it's best to follow up with the customer directly to see if there's anything you can do to resolve the situation. No one likes to receive bad reviews, but if you respond with professionalism, you'll continue to build trust with your customers. Plus, Google finds it a bit suspicious if you only have positive reviews.

If you believe that the review was posted by a competitor or former employee, however, then you can report a conflict of interest to Google and request to have the review removed.

I have two listings. How can I merge my profiles?

If you accidentally made two Google Business Profiles for the same business, follow the steps below to merge your profiles.

1. Make sure you have access to both listings. You can see all of the listings you have access to on your GBP dashboard. If you don't have access to the duplicate listing, you'll need to search for the listing and follow [these instructions](#) to request access.
2. Submit a claim with Google by filling out this form: <https://support.google.com/business/gethelp>. Once you fill out the form, select the business you are trying to merge listings for. Then select "merge profiles."
3. Fill out the contact information section using your business email address.
4. If it asks for a URL for your Maps listing, enter your business address (as it appears on your GBP) into Google Maps then copy the URL.
5. Hit submit and wait for Google to email you with follow-up instructions. A majority of the time they'll just take care of it for you.

WHO WE ARE

We help get small businesses the visibility they deserve with strategic web design, SEO, and digital marketing. We are an award-winning digital marketing company helping hundreds of small businesses reach success and grow their businesses by generating them more leads online.



THE SUCCEEDING SMALL PODCAST

Tune in to The Succeeding Small Podcast, where we share the small business stories & strategies that will take you through every step of your journey as you start, scale, and succeed in business.

[TUNE IN](#)

OUR TOP EPISODES

-  SEO EXPLAINED in Under 20 Minutes
-  5 Ways to Increase Conversions on Your Website
-  Top 5 Social Media Post Topics for Small Businesses



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GET MORE LOCAL LEADS

If your small business isn't getting the visibility it deserves, contact us today! We can help you set up and optimize your Google Business Profile, or, if you have that part under control, create a comprehensive SEO strategy for your business. Let us know how we can support you!

[HELP ME WITH MY PROFILE](#)

[MORE EDUCATION](#)



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