

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILES

Everything you need to build a bigger, better Business Profile on Google.

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WHAT IS A GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE?

Where do you go to find out more about a business? You probably hit the internet! The internet is full of different types of business directories like Yelp, TripAdvisor and the Yellow Pages (yes, it's online now). You've probably visited these many times while looking for an address or a business in your area.

These websites are places for businesses to publish all the pertinent information about their hours, address, operations and reviews in a place that is easy for the consumer to access. If you've created a Yelp or TripAdvisor page already, you will be very comfortable with a Business Profile on Google as it has a lot of the same elements. Google Business Profiles are essentially a business directory on steroids - with an important twist!

Like the old fashioned Yellow Pages, you can look up a business name on Google and get the phone number and address - but the internet allows you to add so much more information and really give your business a personality. Prospective customers can get all the information about your business in a single click on a single page!

Google Business Profiles have several different features that a business would want to take advantage of. First, it allows you to add your correct address to Google Maps, so it shows up in location-based searches, a crucial part in making sure your business is easy to find by local customers.

You can also add a business description, photos and videos, frequently asked questions, and even list your products and services to make sure people know what you are all about. All of this info is presented to potential customers searching Google on their phones, tablets, or computers. That is powerful!



HOW IS A BUSINESS PROFILE DIFFERENT?

Google Business Profile is a powerful tool often overlooked or underutilized.

Having a complete, up-to-date Google Business Profile will lead to more conversions and leads - full stop. Businesses with more complete profiles get more leads because they provide more information to the consumer, so they don't have to look elsewhere. From 2017 to 2018, experts found that clicks from Google Business Profiles increased by nearly 30 percent with phone calls increasing by 22 percent. And these numbers have only increased year over year!

If you took the time to put your business on Yelp or TripAdvisor, then you have to take the time to also create a Google Business Profile. Those business directories are crucial, but they're not packed with the same SEO power that a Google-backed profile has. If you want to get your business found, then start with Google Business!

[24 Stats That Prove Importance of Google Business Profiles](#)



Businesses with more complete profiles get more leads because they provide more information to the consumer, so they don't have to look elsewhere.



HOW TO SETUP YOUR PROFILE

Local SEO is a crucial tool for local businesses and there is no better way to leverage that on Google Search than with a Google Business Profile. These profiles are important for telling your prospective customers where they can find you and what you can offer them in their moments of need. The first step to getting found on Google Search is simply setting up your Google Business Profile.

Create A Business Profile

Your first step is to choose which Google account (or Gmail address) you would like associated with your business. If you don't have one, you can easily sign up for a free Google account on Google.com. Got it? Now sign in and let's move on to the next step.



[Click Here To Watch The Tutorial](#)

Claim Your Business

Once you are signed in to your Google account, you will go to google.com/business and search for your business name. If your business is in the database, you'll see your business name show up in a dropdown list. If not, you'll be prompted to add your business.

Next, you will be asked if you deliver goods and services and whether you would like to hide the address to your business. If you operate a storefront business, you'll want to make sure your address shows up. If you operate a service-area business, you have the option to hide your address from maps, if you operate a hybrid business, then you can choose both options. If you have selected that you have a service-area or delivery zone, you will now select the area in which you service or deliver to.

Next choose your best-fitting business category. Think about what people will type to try and find your business. (Don't worry, you can add more later.)



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VERIFYING YOUR PROFILE

To create a Google Business Profile, you need to verify that you own or represent the business. You can choose to do it right in the moment or select the option to verify later. Verification requires you to take an action to prove you are connected to the business. Depending on your business category, you may have the option to verify by postcard, email, phone, video or with bulk verification.

Choose whichever you feel is easiest for you.

01

Postcard Verification

Sign in to your Google Business Profile and select the option to verify by postcard. Make sure that the address on the screen is accurate.

Next click "Mail." Google will send a postcard to that address within 5 - 14 business days. Once you hit "Mail" don't change your business name, category, address or request a new code until your business is successfully verified; otherwise, you may delay verification.

Once you receive the postcard, follow the instructions on the card and enter the five-digit code found on the postcard. That's it! It's very simple. If you don't receive the postcard or misplace it, you can request another.

02

Email or Phone Verification

In some cases, you can verify your business through phone or email. To do this make sure your email address is correct and select the "Email" option. You will receive an email with a verification link. Once you click that, you will be verified. This option is only available for certain businesses that meet the criteria but it's the quickest and easiest way if it is available to you. The same will apply by phone, where you'll need to receive a call or text and enter a code to verify.



03

Video Verification

Google launched video verification in 2018, but it was not so easy to use. As technology has advanced, and most people have a camera in their phone, verifying your Google Business Profile via video.

You'll need to record outside signage such as your street name or nearby businesses, then show inside your business or tools of your trade, and then show proof of management.

04

Bulk Verification

Does your business have several locations and don't want to have to verify each separately? Google allows bulk verification for businesses with 10 or more locations.

Once you login to your account and select the option to verify your business click the option "Chain." Fill out the form completely - it will ask for addresses as well as names of people who will be using Google Business for the locations and a business manager to represent the business. Once you submit it can take up to a week before Google responds.



THE THREE MAIN TYPES OF BUSINESSES



Before getting started on your Google Business Profile, it is important to determine what kind of business you have. This may seem obvious, but it is an important distinction and will dictate what kind of tools you can use to create your profile.

Right now Google Business Profiles support three different types of businesses: storefront businesses, service-area businesses and hybrid businesses. But wait, what does that all mean?! Which one describes my business? It's quite simple (and you can always change it later.)



Storefront Businesses

Storefronts are the most common type of business. These businesses exist with a physical location where customers can visit you. To qualify as a storefront business, you have to have a physical location that is staffed during business hours where customers can buy your products and services. Examples of storefront businesses include retail stores, supermarkets, gyms, salons, spas, restaurants, and gas stations. Basically, any kind of physical shop where you purchase an item or service on-site is considered a storefront business.

As a storefront business, the most important things you want to rank for are relevance and location. Since your business is very dependent on customers being in physical proximity, you want to make sure the customers you are reaching are nearby. Your Business Profile can help!

Service Area Businesses

Service-area businesses are any kind of business that does not conduct business in one physical location but instead services, you guessed it - a service area. This can include plumbers, contractors, marketing agencies, delivery-only restaurants, and more.

These businesses may have a corporate office or a home office. If you don't want someone getting directions to your home (it's happened to me), you would use this option to hide your physical address on Google Search and Maps. (Note, Google does not penalize you for hiding your address.) Instead of showing your address, your business will appear in the selected service area. You can choose up to 20 services areas but be sure to choose local areas (not entire states or countries) because Google expects you to select a service area where you can actually provide your products and services when customers need them.

Hybrid Businesses

The final kind of business is a hybrid of the previous two. These businesses exist and operate in a physical location and provide services to a specified area. An example of this is a business that sells outdoor furniture and structures in a storefront but also provides design and installation services at customer's home. Another example is a restaurant that has a dining room or takeout but also provides delivery.

If you have a hybrid business, you will want to have both your address and service area specified on your Google Business Profile. This way, you show up when people are searching for a storefront to visit or looking for services in the area. If you provide delivery, you should also note that on your profile! You want to make sure that it is clear you can accommodate your customers either way, so people can know that it's okay to call or drop in for an appointment or request you to come to their home or place of business.



CHOOSING A CATEGORY

To get your Google Business Profile in front of the right people, you must make sure your selections best represent what your business offers. To do so, Google has a preset list of business categories from which you can choose up to 10.



Google has more than 3,000 category options in the United States, so chances are you will find at least one that describes your business well.

Your business category has a big impact on what tools you can use to create and manage your Google Business Profile. For instance, if you mark yourself as an educational institution, you won't be able to receive reviews. If you choose the wrong category, you may not be able to create posts or upload products and services. Not having access to those features can make it harder for your business to rank in local searches because others will be more relevant.

Categories are an important factor when Google Search is trying to figure out how your business is relevant to a consumer's search query. For instance, if you are a pizza place but you've marked yourself as a supermarket, you will not show up when people are searching for pizza. The more accurately your selected categories (you have up to 10) reflect your business, the more relevant your business will be in searches.

The best way to choose what categories to select is to think about what people would search to find your business. Think about how you would describe your business to others and see if those categories exist.

When all else fails, think about your competition and see what they are doing! Don't copy them necessarily because all businesses are different, but it may give you more of an idea on how to build a bigger, better Business Profile.



BUSINESS DESCRIPTION



The business description on your Google Business Profile serves to tell prospective customers what your business is all about. It can be the story of how you got started, information about the business itself, what you sell, what you are known for, your mission statement or things you take pride in. This is the place to show off! If you've won an award, add it! If people always compliment your pizza sauce, make sure people know that you have the best sauce, in town!

You want to give any prospective customers a good impression on what your business is all about and the description is the place to do it. You also have a lot of freedom in the description to choose what information you want to provide.



What Should I Include?

A good business description tells the customer enough about your business to make them want to spend money with you. You have up to 750 characters and should include 1-2 high value keywords and make sure they appear in the description. Think of what keywords customers may search for on Google.

- Your description should always include a little about what your business does and maybe how long you've been doing it.
- If your company has ever won an award, this is a great space to mention that!
- If you have an interesting history or your business is family owned, you may also want to briefly mention that.
- This is also a great place to include things about your business that may be helpful like high-end, affordable, kid-friendly, and so on.

What Should I Leave Out?

- Don't make your description read like spam! Save the hyperlinks for the section where you can add links. Adding a bunch of links to your description will make it look suspicious and Google doesn't allow it.
- Also don't include offers or sales pitches for the same reason. You can easily add an offer to your profile with the "Offer" tool.
- As if it needs to be said, avoid profanity and misleading claims. If you add made up claims about your business or products, Google may end up removing you off the platform

Taking the time to create a thoughtful description for your business will benefit both your local SEO and how your business looks to potential customers. Although you can write a description filled with keywords that might look good to a computer, it won't turn readers into customers. Make sure it is both informative and written for humans!



OPERATING HOURS

When you are searching for a local business, what information are you looking for? You are likely either looking for the address or the hours of operation. How many times have you googled a business to check if they are open? And how mad do you get when those hours end up being incorrect?

It's so simple, but oh-so crucial! Having up-to-date operating hours will help bring in customers because they know when you are there to serve them.



Setting Normal Business Hours

If you operate a business, you likely have normal operating hours that don't change much week-to-week. You can set these by going to the "Info" link. Scroll to the business hours section and click on the pencil to add or edit them. Be sure to double check that they are correct before saving.

If you ever have a major change in hours (like many businesses did during COVID) remember to come back to this section and edit them. You can also add COVID hour changes and information to make sure your profile is as up-to-date as possible.

Special Hours



Here's where operating hours get even more important. When holidays roll around, people often turn to Google Search to see if a business is open like on Christmas Eve or Veteran's Day. Setting these holiday hours is important because you don't want people showing up when you are closed, which makes for a pretty upset customer.

If you are in the hours editor you will see the option titled "Special Hours." Here you can set special hours for specific dates. Your best bet is to grab a calendar and mark all of the holidays you know your business will be closed or operating on an adjusted schedule. Don't assume you will remember to add the dates as they roll in because we all know life happens. Better to do it in one fell swoop.



Why Do Hours Matter?

If people can't figure out if you are open, they will go to your competitors. Few people will pick up the phone and call to ask, and even fewer will search for your business on another site to see if your hours are there. If people are certain your competitor is open and uncertain that you are, guess who they will choose? Not you.

Having the correct operating hours is crucial when your business shows up in search. If someone searches "pizza near me" at 10pm and you are the only one open in your area, they won't know it unless your operating hours are up-to-date and active.

Service options: Online appointments

Hours: Monday	9AM–6PM
Tuesday	9AM–6PM
Wednesday	9AM–6PM
Thursday	9AM–6PM
Friday	9AM–6PM
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

Likewise, if your business is closed but it says it is open, you will have some pretty upset customers showing up at your door. And why burn those connections if you don't have to? In this economy, a small business can't afford to lose customers over that kind of simple miscommunication, so be sure to keep your hours updated.



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PHOTOS & VIDEO

Adding photos to your Google Business Profile is essential if you want it to attract more customers. **Business Profiles with photos see 35 percent more click-throughs to their website** because consumers love visuals.

Each photo you upload should be at least 720x720 pixels and in the JPG or PNG format. The higher the resolution (less blurry) the photo, the better!

Cover Photo

This is the most important photo of the bunch. Your cover photo can be the one that shows up at the top of your Google Business Profile on both Google Search and Google Maps, so it's like your billboard on Google.

This photo should represent what your business is about. Many businesses choose to upload an exterior shot of the business so people can easily locate it

when visiting you in person. Others choose to photograph some of their products or an interior shot of the storefront. All of these are great ideas! Just be sure to choose something that is representative of your business and a shot that you will want everyone to see. Make sure it is crisp, clear and conveys a message of quality and professionalism. Do a little setup before taking this photo if you can - you can use it to represent your business all over the internet if you like. Try and avoid screenshots or snapping a photo of the screen from your phone camera.



[Watch This Video on YouTube](#)

Profile Photo

This photo is one that will show up whenever you take an action on Google Business like when replying to a review or question. This will also show up on your profile if someone clicks through to view more information.

For this image, you can select another photo representative of the business or choose to add your logo or a photo of your main sign. A logo or sign photo is a great choice here because it is secondary to the larger, more location-centric cover image. It is also important that this image is crisp and clear.



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Other Images

Once you've uploaded the main two images, don't stop there! Google recommends you add several more images to give your business listing more of a personality. Try and upload at least 5 additional photos outside of the cover and profile photos. You'll also want to get in the habit of adding additional photos over time.

Here are a few suggestions for types of photos that work well for businesses on Google Business...

Interior Shots

Google suggests adding three photos of the interior of your location. This can include sales areas, the cash wrap, or a display that you think is attractive. Select whatever images you think represent the inside of your location best.

Exterior Shots

You should also add more images of the exterior of your building. Google suggests adding three or more and making sure you take exterior shots both during the day and at night, so people can easily locate your storefront. These can be of the physical location, the sign or even a wider shot of the shopping area in which you are located.

Products/Services Shots

If you sell something physical, you should add photos of it. Have a new dish you are proud of? Have a new selection of sweaters? These things make great additions to your profile. If you provide services, take photos of your equipment and before/after shots of your work. Google suggests three of these as well but that doesn't mean you can't add more! Find what you are most proud of and snap a photo.

Action Shots

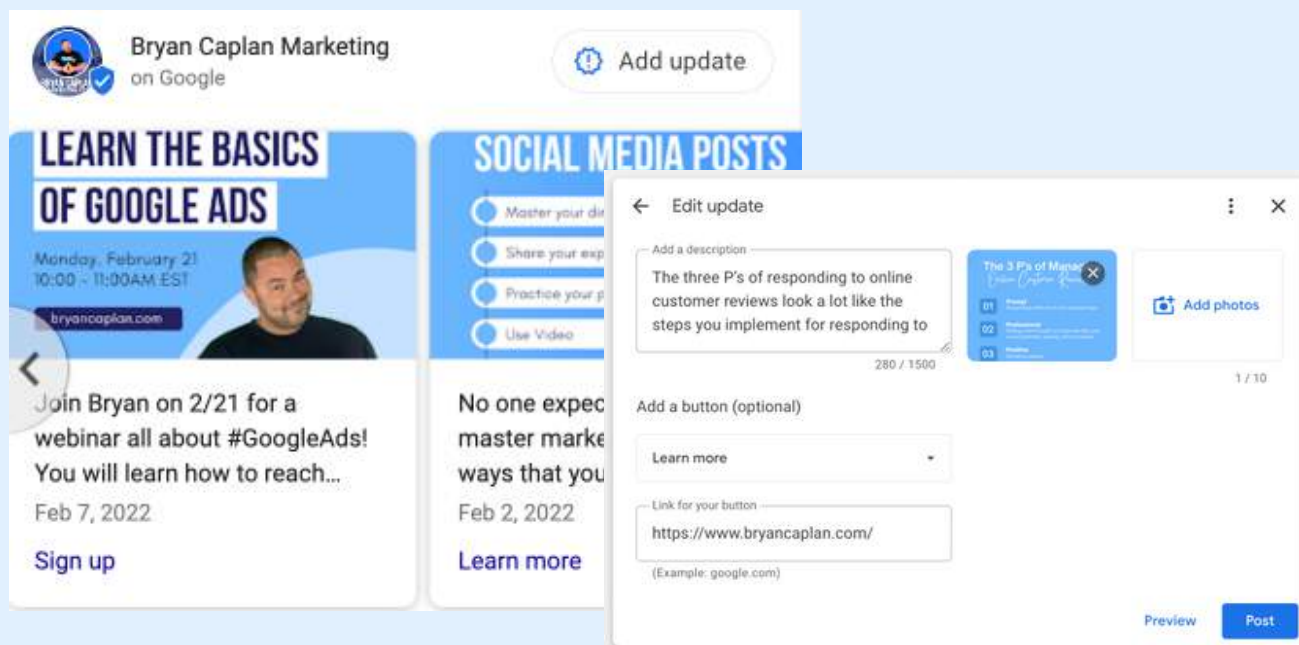
In addition to the photos above, you will want to add a few action shots! These should include employees doing what they do best like a chef cooking, a server serving or a hair stylist styling. Ask your employees permission first, of course! A few of these will let customers understand your atmosphere and help bolster the community feel for your business.

Team Photos

Who doesn't love a family photo! To round out your profile, add photos of each team member and/or the entire team together. These kinds of images will seem inviting to prospective customers and make them feel more comfortable when asking questions or making requests. Make sure everyone is smiling! Those smiling faces make your business more inviting to new customers and reinforces your dedication to the customer experience.



POSTS



One thing that separates Google Business Profiles from other online business directories is that it also doubles as a "kind of, sort of" social media platform. Google Business Profiles let you interact with your customers! One way it does this is by allowing you to create "posts."

Posts are just like they sound - they are updates, information, photos and more about your business that you would want to share with new and existing customers, except **they live right on Google Search and Maps!** This is a feature that is neglected by the majority of businesses, which gives you a competitive advantage. Posts help attract, engage, and educate customers when they're searching. Think of it as a social media post that people will see when they search for your business, and you don't have to worry about followers or fans!



Why Should I Post?

Posts are a great way to keep customers updated on what's going on at your business in the moment. People can read your description and get a feel for your business, but they can get the latest updates through your posts. Are you changing your hours or have to close due to a snowstorm or power outage? Post about it. Do you have a new item on the menu that everyone has to try? Post about it.

It's essentially free real estate to advertise what is going on at your business right now.

What Kinds of Things Can I Post?

There are a few different kinds of posts you can create depending on what you need to get across. Always create a post with a photo to make sure it is visible!

What's New?

I call this the "blank canvas" post. Here is where you will want to post about upcoming events, new products and services, or just facts and interesting things happening at your business. You can promote and link to a blog post, an email list subscription form, or anything in between! This is essentially the same as a social media post except you can choose a call to action to add with a link.

Offers

Here is where you will want to add any new offers you have running. You can add a photo, description, price/discount and beginning and end dates for the offer. Update this whenever you run a new sale since it will be enticing to those seeing your business when they are searching for your products and services on Google.

Events

If you have any type of event like a flash sale, open house, or VIP experience, you can use the this post type to drive RSVPs. Be sure to upload a photo, write an exciting description, add the date and time, and link to a registration page (if applicable.)

How Often Should I Post?

A good rule of thumb is to post at least once a week, two ideally. Whenever you post something in "What's New?" it will stay on your profile for about 7 days. If you set a date for an offer or event post, the post remains until the date you set. Google will remind you via email to create a new post, which is a helpful accountability feature.

Two posts a week is perfect! Try out different kinds of posts and see what kind of traction you get! You can easily see clicks and activity in the Google Business "Insights" tab.



OFFERS

Do you have a big sale you want to promote? Maybe a 'buy one get one' type of thing? Now is the perfect time to explore "Offers" on the Google Business Profile.

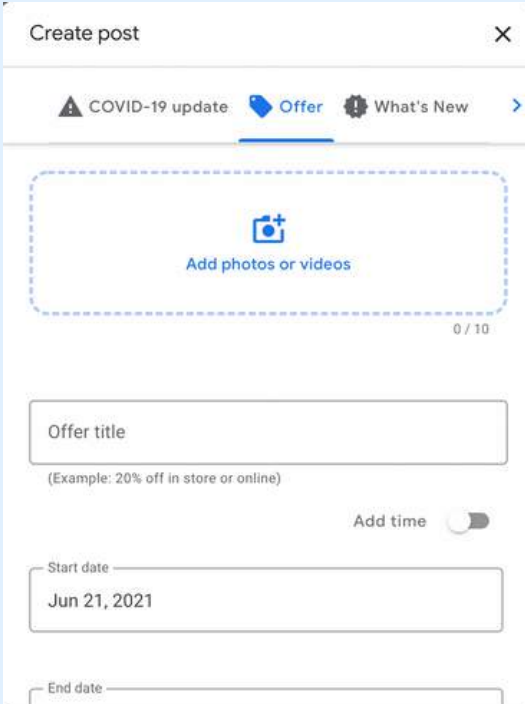
Businesses run sales and offers to boost sales and entice prospective customers. When you are running a sale, you want to get it out there to as many people as humanly possible. Showcasing your offers on your Google Business Profile is a great way to get it out there for all to see.

How Do I Add An Offer?

Adding offers is easy! Simply sign in to your Google Business Profile and select "Posts." Once you are there, select "Offer" in the post type tab. Now you will be prompted to fill out a few fields about your offer. First you will want to upload an image that represents your offer. You can choose a graphic that states the offer, an image of the product or service that is on sale, or a general stock image if you don't have any of your own images.

After adding an image you will add a titles and description of the offer. In the title, be sure to clearly state the value of the offer! Just using the word "Sale" won't cut it. In the description, add 2-3 sentences to clearly describe the offer and help it to stand out.

You also want to add a start and end date, optional coupon code, a URL (if applicable) and the terms and conditions. Terms and conditions are important if there are any restrictions or if the offer is only valid on something very specific.

A screenshot of the Google Business Profile 'Create post' interface. At the top, there's a 'Create post' header with a close button. Below it, a navigation bar shows 'COVID-19 update', 'Offer' (selected), and 'What's New'. The main area has a dashed box for 'Add photos or videos' with a camera icon and a '0 / 10' indicator. Below this is a text input field for 'Offer title' with a placeholder example '(Example: 20% off in store or online)'. To the right of the title field is a toggle switch for 'Add time'. Below the title field is a 'Start date' input field showing 'Jun 21, 2021'. At the bottom, there is an 'End date' input field.

PRODUCTS & SERVICES



Building an effective Google Business Profile isn't difficult, but it definitely requires time and patience to hit on all the nuances. One of the areas that is very beneficial but can seem daunting to business owners is the products and services section.

In any Google Business Profile, you have the opportunity to add a list of products and/or services your business offers. You can include a description, details, and price as well. If you have a wide array of items or services, this may seem excessive and time consuming, but it will also increase your visibility when potential customers search for a specific product or service instead of your business name or category.

These additions will also show up in a carousel directly under your Google Business Profile on Google, giving you free real estate to advertise what you are selling! It is worth it to take a little time and add in your products and services or, at the very least, highlight your most popular, most profitable, or most requested products and services.



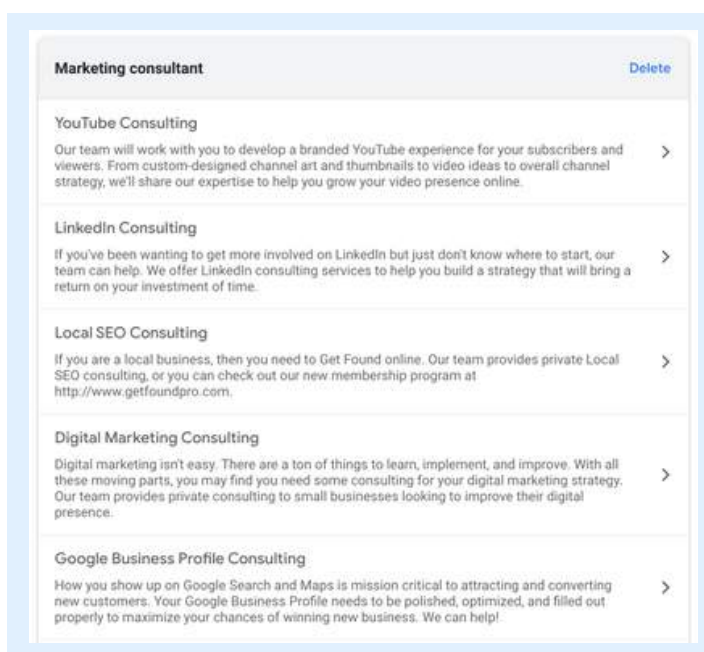
Getting Started

Depending on your primary business category, Google will provide you the opportunity to add either products, services, or both to your Business Profile.

Products

When adding new products you have the opportunity to fill in the fields: name, description, photo, and price. The price setting can be a fixed price or a price range if it varies. Once you fill in the fields you can link out to a listing on your website or other shop to purchase or find more information.

This is a great way to show potential customers what you have to offer. When customers are searching for a business, they are usually looking for something specific. The more specific you can be in your Google Business Profile the more often your business will show up in more specific local Google searches.



Services

If your business offers services, this is the place to list them all out. For instance, a nail salon would add all the different kinds of manicures and pedicures they offer.

Click on the "Services" link in the main navigation bar and it will prompt you to select a business type and then a service type related to that business - select as many as are relevant. You can then add pricing information as well as a description.

People are often looking for a specific service when they search. If you are a nail salon, you want to let your customers know that you do indeed offer gel manicures or custom nail designs. The services you list here will help you accomplish that.



The Product Feature Is Important...But Why?

The Product feature may seem boring and straightforward but it's a pretty powerful tool if you want your business to get seen. So why take the time to add your products when you have a million other things to do?

1) It's HIGHLY Visible

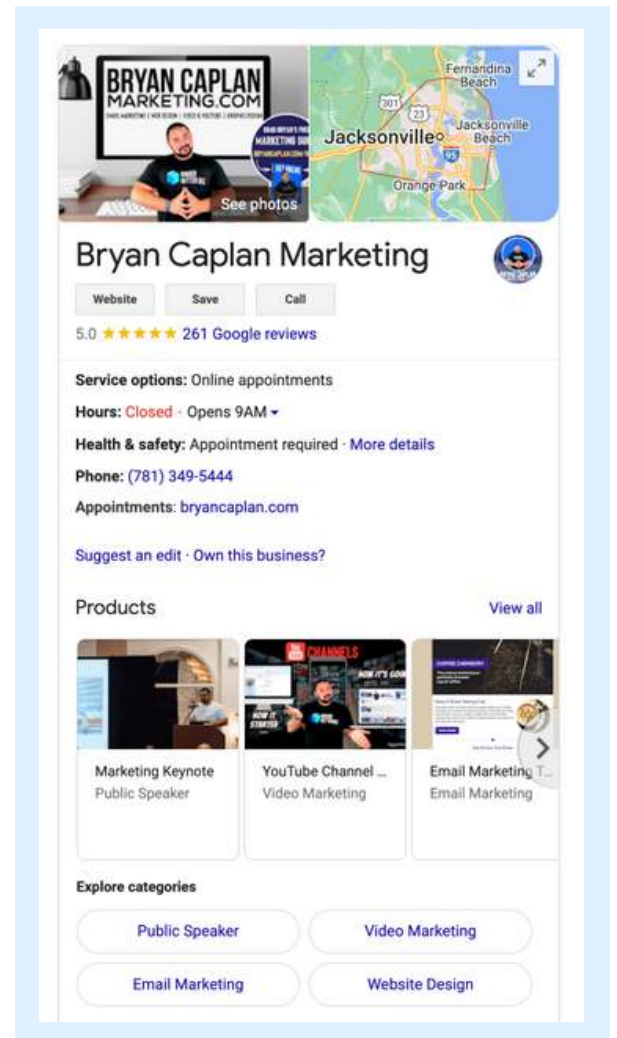
When you are looking at a Google Business Profile on the Search Results Page, you'll see important information like your business name and reviews, but look what shows up directly below?

Go search your business name in Google right now and look on the right side of the screen. What information do you see first?

If a business has included products in its listing, those products magically appear in the center of the Business Profile.

This is like free advertising! You get a free space right in Google Search to show off your products prominently with images!

Not only are your products seen prominently right in the main search page, but they appear right after your main information everywhere your Google Business Profile is seen.



2) It Helps You in Search

One of the best ways to get a leg up in search is to get more and more specific about what your business offers.

If someone is looking for a specific product in their area and you sell it, then having it on your Google Business Profile makes it much more likely that your business will come up in a local search for that product.

This is called relevance, one of the three pillars of local SEO. The more relevant your business is to a search, the more likely it is to show up.



PRODUCT FEATURE HACKS

There are a number of ways you can use the Products feature in interesting ways to boost your Business Profile and put that visible space to work for your business.

01

Add Animated GIFs

Want to make your business stand out? Add some animation! Adding some animated GIFs will really make your listing stand out from the rest. To make this work you will have to do a simple workaround that will only take a minute. Google will not support GIF images but you can quickly and easily convert any GIF into a JPEG and easily upload that to your product page without losing any of the animation. A few things to keep in mind...

- Keep the animation simple
- Keep the animation classy
- **Moderation is key:** You don't have to do it for every product

02

Services As Products

Say your business doesn't sell physical products but rather provides services, you may think you can't use the Products feature. You would be wrong! Depending on your business category, your Google Business Profile may provide you with the Products tab.

The prominent placement of the Products feature makes it a great place to showcase services as well. Though the Google Business Profile does also have a Services feature, the placement is not always as prominent and there is no harm in doubling up!

Feel free to upload some of your services as products on your page as well. This will ensure they receive prominent placement in your profile.



03

Features And Brands

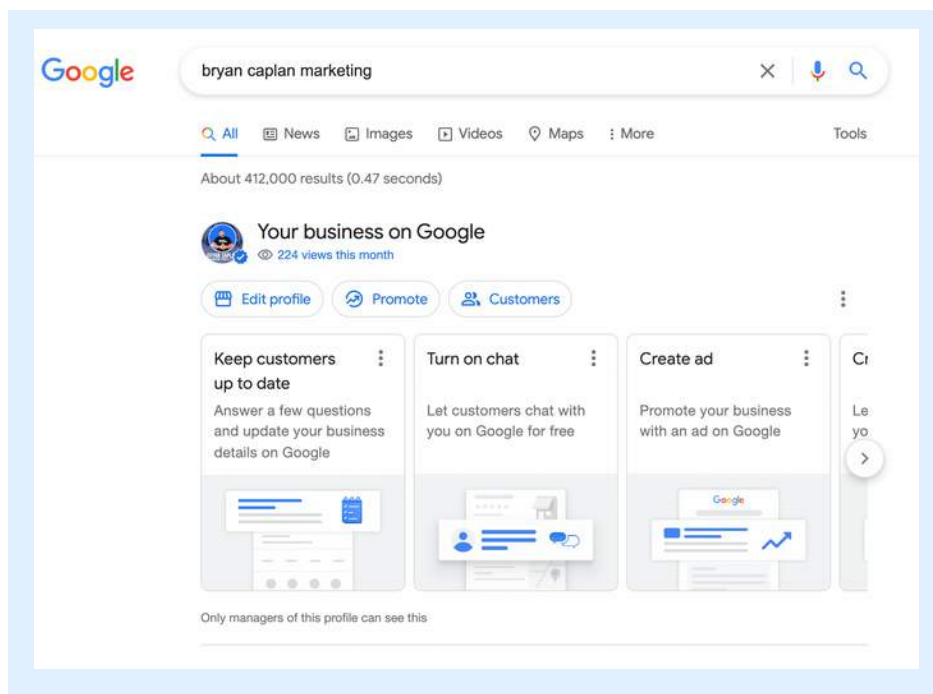
You can get creative with the Products feature if that suits your business better. Many businesses who have a ton of products opt to instead list all the brands they carry instead of each individual product. This is a great alternative that also helps in local search and takes advantage of that prominent search placement.

Other businesses also list things like curbside pick-up, online ordering and various other services that their business provides as products, so they are prominently seen in search. If these are services that are highly sought after and important to your business, then they may be worth featuring prominently.



ALWAYS BE EDITING!

Congratulations, you've successfully created your Google Business Profile, but don't stop here. Continue monitoring, editing, and tweaking to make the most of this invaluable Local SEO listing.



Find It in Google Search

Before you try and find your business to edit be sure you are logged in to your Google account!

One way you can access your profile is to go to google.com/business. This option works right now but will be phased out and will only be accessible to those who are owners of multiple Google Business Profiles.

The best and fastest way to access and edit your Business Profile is through Google Search. While signed in, simply search for your business name or **type the words 'my business'** into the search bar, and you will see it appear at the top of the page with the headline 'Your business on Google.' Click on 'Edit Profile' and you will be able to start editing.

