Optimising Google Business Profile For Your Establishment

Informed by experts and curated by UFS

What is 'Google Business Profile?'

Google Business Profile is a product from Google that lets you create and manage a free 'Business Profile' that appears in search results. Have you ever searched Google or Google Maps and seen a business pop up at the top or on the right-hand side with pictures and reviews? That's the one.
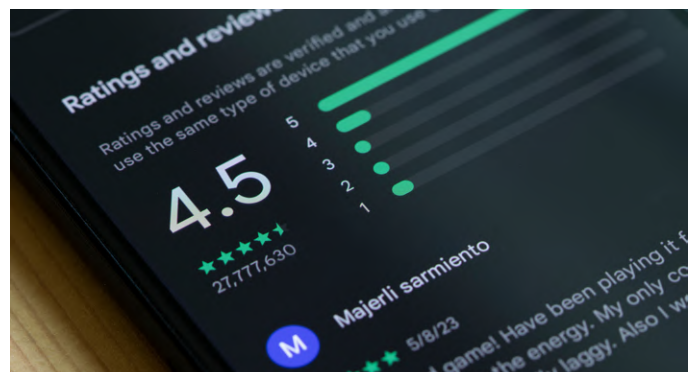
Why it's worth having

Well, businesses that fill out their profile are 2.7 times more likely to be considered reputable by users. When a business sets up a listing and provides as much information as possible, they make themselves more visible and more attractive to potential customers. In fact, customers are 50% more likely to consider purchasing from businesses with a complete Business Profile.

It also has some really helpful features, specifically for hospitality businesses. For example, you can include specific action buttons such as:

- **Placing an order**
- **Reserving a table**
- **Viewing menus**

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Claim and verify

The first step is to figure out whether or not you already have a Google Business Profile. Even if you don't remember creating one, another user or customer may have done it for you. Simply do a quick Google search of your business (also try this in Google Maps) and see whether a profile pops up for your business. If so, you'll need to 'claim' it as your business. If not, you can create a new one.

How to set up a new account

1 Go to the Google Business Profile Manager page and sign in at the top-right hand corner (you may need to create an account first).

2 Enter your business name.

3 Choose if you would like your business to show up on Google Maps.

4 Search and select a business category.

5 If you have one, enter your website URL and phone number, then select finish.

   You'll then be prompted to verify your business.

How to claim an existing account

1 Google your business name. You may need to include your address in the search if your name is similar to another business.

2 Click the 'Own this business?' link.

3 Follow the prompts. You will be asked to confirm your business name, address, category (e.g. cocktail lounge, cafe, restaurant) and contact information.
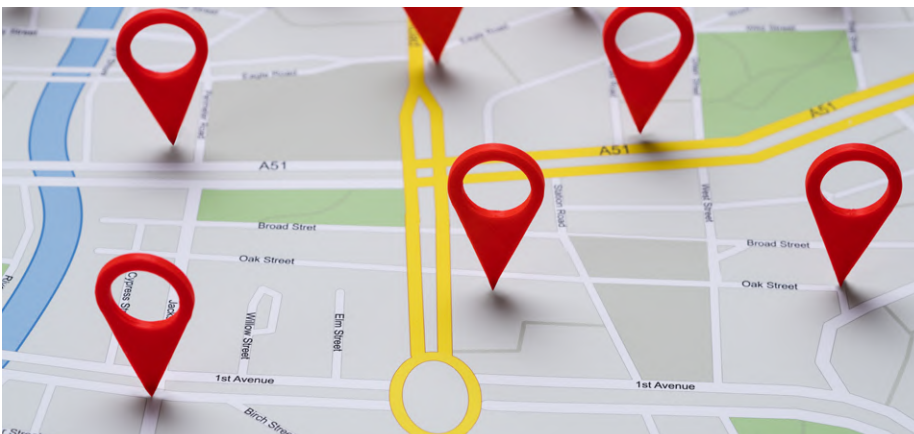
Editing and populating your listing

Basic info

To edit your listing and update basic info, login to Google Business Profile and select your business. Select 'Info' and then click 'Edit' next to each section. If you've verified, it'll only takes a few seconds to update anything on your listing. A good place to start is ensuring your opening hours are listed and accurate. You can even let potential customers know whether or not you deliver!

tip: You can also add 'additional categories' to your business listing. While you may be a restaurant, you may also have a private hire space and other additional offerings, which could help users searching for those keywords find your property.

Adding photos

There are three types of photos you can upload:

1 Logo: Your businesses logo, if you have one

2 Cover photo: A picture of your establishment, your signature dish etc.

3 Additional photos: Anything that supports your business. Food, drinks, team, customers, etc.

It's important to note that customers can also upload photos of your business and attach reviews to them, too.

Businesses that have photos <u>receive 42% more requests for directions</u> than those that don't. And the better those photos are, the more effective they'll be!

Including a menu

Menus can now be viewed right from Google search results! Here's how:

1 Visit the 'Info' tab on the left side of Google Business Profile

2 Scroll down to the Menu section and select 'Add or Edit items'

3 Click 'Add Menu'

This will bring you to a new section of Google Business Profile, where you can add different menus for breakfast, lunch, dinner etc.

Appointment bookings

Google has now included the ability to book appointments via Google Business Profile, which can be useful for restaurants. For example, you could add a 'Book table' button directly to your listing. Google explains how to add bookings here.

Keep it fresh with 'Posts'

Once you've set up your profile, try and make sure you update it as often as you can. Your basic info may not change, but there are other ways of keeping it fresh, such as posting promotional offers and discounts.

Another way of boosting your profile is by utilising the 'Posts' function which can be found in the Menu. Use this feature to promote special offers, events and updates. Posts can also show video or photo content.

Reviews and engaging with customers

Food businesses thrive on repeat customers, and smart restaurants and cafés are using their Google Business Profile to encourage people to keep coming back. One important way to do this is by encouraging your customer to leave reviews on your profile. After all, customers trust reviews!

Recent research found that 77% of consumers 'always' read online reviews when browsing for local businesses. Not only that, companies with positive reviews will be pushed up the search rankings.

But, don't forget to engage with the reviews too. Users get notifications when you reply and, for most people, this goes a long way. If you encounter negative reviews, it's important to respond quickly, calmly and constructively to any feedback. Sometimes simply taking the time to respond is enough to convince an unhappy customer to give your business another chance. Even if it doesn't, your response shows future customers that you're attentive and you care.
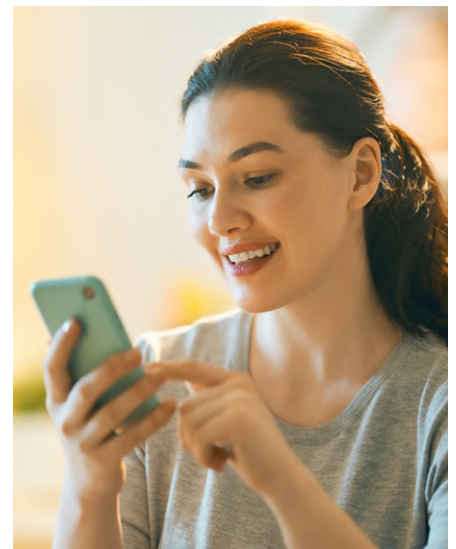
Adding
social media links

Social media profiles can now be added to your Google Business Profile! In an era where online presence is paramount, integrating social media links into your Google Business Profile is a game-changer. This feature empowers small to medium-sized businesses, allowing them to align with larger chains in offering a comprehensive and seamless online experience for modern consumers.

Consumers today seek not only local search results but also a direct connection to businesses through their social media channels. With the integration of social media links, your business can bridge the gap between the local and the digital, offering potential customers a multifaceted view of your brand. Social is the number one channel for brands to connect with consumers. When asked which communication channels give brands the best opportunity to connect with their customers, survey respondents ranked social media as number one. Google, recognising the significance of this trend, has streamlined the process, making it easy for businesses to showcase their social media profiles alongside essential information.

You choose which social media platforms to showcase, Google provides the formats for optimal display here. Note that availability varies by region:

Add, edit, or remove one of each for the following social media links:

- **Facebook**
- **Instagram**
- **LinkedIn**
- **Pinterest**
- **TikTok**
- **X (formerly known as Twitter)**
- **YouTube**

Adding social media links

1   Access your Google Business Profile

2   Navigate to 'Edit Profile' > 'Business Information' > 'Contact'

3   Select 'Social Profiles' and choose the desired social media platform, insert the link in the web address field

4   Click 'Save'

Editing social media links

1   Access your Google Business Profile

2   Navigate to 'Edit Profile' > 'Business Information' > 'Contact'

3   Select 'Social Profiles' and update the web address field

4   Click 'Save'

Removing social media links

1   Access your Google Business Profile

2   Navigate to 'Edit Profile' > 'Business Information' > 'Contact'

3   Click the 'Trash' icon next to the profile you want to remove

4   Click 'Save'