

# Claiming Your Listing

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## Information You Will Need for Your Listing

### ***Company/Organization Name***

It's important to list your business just as it is anywhere else that you advertise. Your real business name as you would list it in the phonebook.

If Google detects a discrepancy between your business name, your Website, other online advertising and Google Places listings, you could potentially be penalized.

### ***Business Address and Website Address***

Your business address is very important. You want to be very consistent with your address when creating listings. Google looks for discrepancies when it sees your address on your listings, your website and other internet sources and you would not want your account to get suspended (just a possibility).

If you are a business where the client always comes to you to do business, then you are going to want to list your storefront address. If you are in a business where you go to your customers' houses or workplaces or if you work from home, Google allows you to hide your address.

Google has also implemented a "Service Area" feature which allows you to designate a service area radius, up to 60 miles or 100 kilometers, or list specific cities/towns you want to target.

### ***Phone Number***

You'll want to use a local phone number instead of an out-of-state or toll free number. You want your customers (and Google) to recognize the number as a local number they can trust.

### ***Description***

Including a strong description is necessary for achieving a high ranking in Google Places. Your description is the first thing Google Places looks at to see who you are and what you do. It's also the first place that potential customers look to see if you offer the goods and services they're looking for.

An appropriate, keyword-rich, well-targeted description is necessary for ensuring the success of your marketing results. You want to use as much of the 200 characters allowed when writing your description. Make sure you always write for humans while including the most important search terms for your business.

This is where a marketing consultant can help you understand how to optimize your listing. Selecting keywords with high search traffic is something that a marketing consultant knows how to do.

### **Category**

Picking the right category is really a task for a marketing professional, which is why a consultant is critical if you want this listing to be optimized. Google checks categories to make sure that they're consistent with the content on your Website and the keywords in your Google Places description.

Far too much goes into selecting categories (you can have up to five) to discuss in this guide, but I will mention the most important information that an industry professional would consider before selecting a category for your Google Places listing.

The first category that you choose should be one of Google's categories. As you start typing your category, you'll see a drop down list of possible categories. You must select one of these for your primary category if you hope to rank highly in Google Places.

Your other four categories should ideally be categories in Google's category list, but this is not a requirement. You should create your own category only if you think Google would approve, or if they have approved similar categories in the past. You can always change this later.

Google will look at the five categories in the order that you place them. The most important category goes at the top, and the least important category goes in the fifth slot. This is a vital decision to ensure you're ranked highly for terms that users search for. The decisions you make will depend on your marketing goals.

### **Becoming highly visible for keywords you care about... Is**

becoming more critical by the day.

If you use Google Search, you'll notice the Google Search Results feature a map prominently on the right side of the page.

The map lists several businesses that are near the city you live in or the city you searched for.

Your goal is to become one of the top businesses through proper optimization of your Google Places listing, because front page ranking in the search engines can translate into more customers finding you.

Being findable online is critical for creating increased traffic to your business, and one of the ways you can achieve it is through an optimized Google Places listing.

## **Now You're Ready to Claim your Listing**

Here are some basic steps to follow if you want to add your local business to Google Plus Local:

- If you don't already have one, you'll need to create a Google Gmail account. Go to <http://www.google.com/gmail> and then click on "Create an account." in the top right corner of the page.
- Fill out the form. Remember, this is for a business account so you won't want to use your personal email address. Use some form of your business' name is usually best.
- Now that you have your Gmail account and password, go to the following URL: <http://www.google.com/places> & login using your Gmail username & password. Click on "Add a New Business".
- Select your Country and enter your local business phone number. Then select "Find business information". Your business may already be on Google Maps, but if it isn't, then click the button that says, "Add a new listing."
- Enter your Basic information such as Business Name, Address, Phone Number, Email Address, Website & Category.

Add the optional information like business hours, photos, videos, payment options and service areas to your listing too. Not only does Google use these additional details about your business to rank your listing higher, it also provides valuable information for your customers.

- After you fill in this information, click "Submit" which will take you to the validation step.
- Validate your listing. You will need to validate your listing with either a phone call to your local number, which is fast and easy, or they

can send a postcard to the business address, which can take several weeks. Sometimes you are not given the phone option.

- PIN number. Google will either give you the PIN over the phone or mail it to you on the postcard. This PIN number will activate your listing.
- They will give you an idea of the length of time before your listing will appear. You are now on your way to having a verified Google listing, Congratulations!

### **You have made a great start in getting your business found online.**

People use the internet in very different ways, and you can't possibly hope to capture every single person who might be looking for a product or service like yours. However, you can make it extremely easy for people to find your business by being prominent in multiple places online.

With so many different types of content, and various ways of receiving information, there are limitless possibilities for marketing your website on the internet. Whether in the form of local business directories, online classifieds or videos about your product posted on popular websites, the opportunities for local consumers to find your business are endless.

Internet marketing is essentially about being “found” online by the people who will become your customers. They are looking for what you are selling, and you have to make it as easy as possible for them to find you.