

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · LOCAL SEO

HOW TO SET UP A GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE (AND MAKE IT **WORK HARDER**)

Your Business Profile is the listing that appears on Google Maps and in the local results when someone searches for what you do near them. It's free, it's often the first thing a customer sees, and it takes about half an hour to set up properly.

By **Jack Easterbrook** 8 steps 8 min read Updated September 2026



BEFORE YOU START

- ☐ A Google account, ideally on a business email rather than a personal Gmail
- ☐ Your business name exactly as it appears on your signs, vans and paperwork
- ☐ Your phone number and website address
- ☐ Your address, or the towns and areas you travel to
- ☐ Your opening hours
- ☐ A handful of good, real photos: your work, your team, your premises

Good to know: Business Profiles are for businesses that meet customers in person, at your premises or theirs. Online-only businesses aren't eligible.

THE STEPS TICK EACH ONE OFF AS YOU GO

1

Search, then add or claim

Go to google.com/business and sign in. Search for your business first: if a listing already exists, claim it (or request ownership if someone else has). If not, choose to add your business.



2

Use your real business name

Enter the name customers see in the real world. Don't add keywords or locations ("Smith Plumbing", not "Smith Plumbing Emergency Plumber Weston"). Extra words break Google's guidelines and can get a profile suspended.



3

Pick the right primary category

Choose the most specific category for your core business, like "Plumber" rather than "Contractor". You can add a few secondary categories later for the other things you do.



4

Location or service area

If customers visit you, add your address. If you visit them (most trades), add the towns or areas you cover and hide your address. Home-based businesses shouldn't show a home address.



5**Add your phone and website**

Tip: add tracking to the website link so Google Analytics can tell these visits apart, for example [yoursite.co.uk/?](#)

[utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=gbp](#). Our free [campaign link builder](#) makes these links for you.

6**Verify your business**

Google will offer one or more methods: a phone call or text, an email, a live video call, or a postcard. Postcards usually arrive within 14 days and the code expires after 30, so don't change your details while you wait. Google then reviews it, which can take up to 5 business days.

7**Fill in every section**

Opening hours (and holiday hours), a short description, your services or products, attributes, logo, cover photo and photos. Complete profiles give Google more to match against searches.

8**Start collecting reviews**

Copy your review link from the profile and send it to every customer. Our free [review-request kit](#) writes the messages and makes a printable QR card for you. Then reply to every review you get, good or bad.

HOW GOOGLE DECIDES WHO SHOWS UP

Google looks at three things: relevance (how well your profile matches the search), distance (how close you are to the searcher) and prominence (how well known you are, including reviews and links). You can't change distance, but a complete, active profile helps with the other two.

BEST-PRACTICE TIPS

A

Keep it accurate

Update hours, holiday hours and phone numbers the moment they change. Wrong info costs trust fast.

K

Photos, little and often

Real photos of recent jobs, your team and premises beat stock images every time.

Q

Ask every happy customer

A QR code on invoices or a link in your follow-up email makes leaving a review easy. Make both in our [review-request kit](#).

J

Reply to every review

Thank people for good ones. For bad ones, stay calm, be helpful and take it offline.

10

Post updates

Share offers, news, events and recent work. It keeps the profile fresh and gives people a reason to call.

9

List your services

Add each service with a short description, in the words customers actually search with.

A

Don't try to game it

No keyword-stuffed names, virtual offices or PO boxes. Google says there's no way to pay for a better local ranking.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

Is a Google Business Profile free?

Yes. Creating and managing a profile costs nothing.

How long does verification take?

It depends on the method. Phone, text, email and video can be quick; postcards usually arrive within 14 days. After that, Google's review can take up to 5 business days.

I work from home. Can I still have one?

Yes. Set it up as a service-area business: list the areas you cover and hide your home address.

Why isn't my profile showing up?

Check it's verified and complete. After that, ranking comes down to relevance, distance and prominence, so reviews, photos and accurate details all help.



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Sources

- Add or claim your Business Profile (Google Business Profile Help): <https://support.google.com/business/answer/7039811>
- Verify your business on Google (Google Business Profile Help): <https://support.google.com/business/answer/7107242>
- Tips to improve your local ranking (Google Business Profile Help): <https://support.google.com/business/answer/7091>

The online version of this guide, with any updates, is at jaedigital.co.uk/advice/google-business-profile/.

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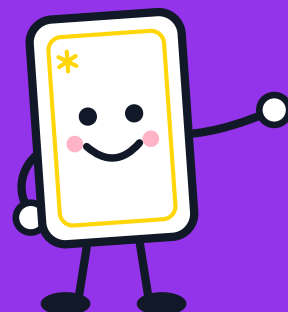
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