

Google Places:

“How to Get NEW CUSTOMERS on AUTO-PILOT with a Top Google Places Business Listing”

What is Google Places and Why Use it?

With a Google Places Business Listing, your business can reach thousands of local Google users very quickly.

As you probably know, more people search for products and services online than anywhere else today. So it's important to make sure your business listing can be easily found on Google.com and Google Maps.

When people go to Google.com, they type in a keyword term or phrase to find whatever they are looking for. Once they do the search, a page will come up with multiple listings of websites that most closely match those search terms entered by the user.

There are pages and pages of results for just about any keyword search term you enter. However, the ultimate spot for any business looking to capitalize on that traffic is on page one.

And the best place to be on page one is in the Google Places section, which usually shows at the top of the screen and stands out with red markers.

Most people don't go beyond page one when searching for a product or service. In fact, many people will go with businesses in the top positions because they “assume” that they're the best. Of course this is not always the case.

Those businesses on top have more than likely invested in an online marketing campaign that helped them out-rank their competitors.

You're probably thinking, “my business already shows up on Google,” but have you verified your listing? If not, your listing could contain inaccurate information with incorrect details. Not only that, but unverified listings are easily outranked by competitors who have claimed, verified, and optimized their listings.

Even if your unverified business is at the top of Google Places, it could quickly be forced down the list at anytime if you do not take the necessary steps to keep it there.

Setting Up Your Google Places Listing

Setting up your Google Places listing is not hard. However, you should know what you're doing in order to reap the benefits of reaching the top of the listings. Just being listed is a good thing, but there are certain things that you must do to set your listing up for top search engine rankings.

To setup your Google Places listing:

1. Go to: <http://www.google.com/local/add/>
2. If you already have an account setup with Google, sign in to you account. If not, create a new account.
3. Click on "Add a New Business" and enter your company information.
 - a. Use your primary business address and your main local business phone number.
 - b. Use your actual business name and physical address.
 - c. Enter your hours of operation.
 - d. Provide a keyword rich description of your business.
 - e. Choose as many categories that relate to your business.
 - f. Add up to 10 photos and up to 5 videos.
 - g. Add coupons.

Fill out as many of the fields as you can in regards to your business. The more information the better and you can always edit this information whenever you want.

Be sure to add photos and videos relating to your business because this gives more strength to your listing. Coupons are also very good to use because in addition to making your listing stronger, coupons are very good for converting visitors into customers.

If Google says that you already have a listing, you can claim that listing when you are prompted.

Once you are finished adding your listing, you will have to validate it using a PIN that will be provided by Google. You can validate with Google by phone or by mail.

If you want to validate by phone, they will call immediately after you complete your listing. So before you add your listing, plan ahead to make sure you will be able to take their phone call.

Otherwise, you can choose to verify via mail. Google will mail a postcard to you with your PIN on it within 2-3 weeks.

Once you receive your PIN, log back into your Google Places account and click on the section that says "Enter your PIN" and click "Go."

That's it... your Google Places listing is now completed! Just so you know, it may take a day or so before your listing is live.

Maintaining Your Google Places Listing

Once you've listed your business in Google Places, you should focus on maintaining it and making it stronger, which could result in higher rankings.

There are several things you can do to accomplish this and grab a bulk of the internet traffic being received.

One thing you can do is continue to update and add posts to your Google Places listing. The information you post can be anything related to your business that would be good for anyone who visits your page to see. This will add more relevance to your listing helping its positioning over time.

Also, make sure your website is fully optimized. Having an optimized website is important when it comes to how high your Google Places listing will rank for your chosen keywords. The two work together and help each other gain rankings in the Google search engine.

Make sure your site contains the proper keywords, title tags, description tags, and all other pertinent on-site optimization components. However, you should not keyword stuff your listings as Google does not like this. They have to be worked in naturally in order to get ranked properly.

You should also use a variety of off-site SEO strategies in order to totally maximize exposure. This includes things such as article marketing, press releases, social media networking, and video marketing.

It is also important that your business name, address, and phone number are an exact match to the information on your Google Places listing. Make sure you have a "Contact Us" page on your website with a map as well.

Google scrapes business information from other business directories to verify your business name, phone number, address, etc. So you should add your listing to other business directories such as Yahoo and Bing.

You don't have to stop there. There are plenty of other sites where you should list your business as well. These listings are called "citations."

Some of the other online business directories you can use are Yellowpages.com, Citysearch.com, Yelp.com, and Superpages.com.

Listing your business on multiple citation sites will also help Google verify the accuracy of your listing and to help improve the strength of your listing.

Customer reviews are also very powerful when it comes to maintaining your Google Places listing. Google loves reviews so those listings that have reviews perform better than those that don't. To get reviews from your customers, just ask them to go to your Google Places page to give their review.

You can also offer an incentive for them to give you a review. There are a lot of creative things you can do to get reviews depending on the nature of your business.

In addition to your Google Places page, get your customers to provide reviews for you on all of your business listings. This will increase the power of those listings, which will in turn increase the power of your Google Places listing. Whatever you do, don't do fake reviews for various reasons that we won't get into here; just take our word for it.

Reviews are also good for converting visitors to into buyers. When looking for a product or service to purchase, people place a lot of value on what other people think. So if you have a lot of happy customers, this could definitely work to your advantage.

Getting to the Top of Google Places and Staying There

If you followed all of the steps in the last section, you are well on your way to getting more customers and increasing sales using the internet!

Now that your listing is setup and claimed, it's time to boost your ranking. Most business owners make the mistake of letting their listing sit once they complete it. That's one way to lose business for sure.

Google loves activity so stagnant websites and Google Places listings get pushed down the list by more active listings. By being active, you are "raising your hand" to let Google know that you are still in business and want to be seen.

If you routinely maintain and add to your website and Google Places listing, Google will reward you nicely.

What can you do to keep your website and Google Places listing moving to the top of Google?

1. Keyword research is the first and most important step to search engine optimization. You need to know what people are actually typing into the search engines when looking for your product or service. Not only that, but you need to know how many searches your keyword is getting each month.

Good keyword research is the only way to know for sure what keywords you should be using when optimizing your website and Google Places listing. These keywords should be used (not stuffed) in your Google Places listing to help tell Google what your business is about.

2. As mentioned in the last lesson, customer reviews play an important role in optimizing your listing. Getting customer reviews should be an on-going initiative in your business and should never stop. The more reviews you have, the more love Google gives you. This is the ultimate way to let Google know that you are alive and kicking. Plus, people are more likely to do something if they see other people doing it. Be sure to constantly add testimonials/reviews to your website as well.

3. Keep your actual website active by constantly adding content to it as well. Websites built on blog platforms are perfect for this. A blog is a place where people post constant updates and articles related to their business, industry, products, services, and many other things.

Follow the steps outlined in this lesson and you will leapfrog many of your competitors. "Activity" is the key to having a website that Google likes.

Keep your Google places listing updated with things such as coupons, videos, and photos. Keep your website updated with fresh, unique content.

This is your recipe for top Google rankings and more customers, more sales, and more profits.

FAQ's About Google Places

Are you still kind of fuzzy about Google Places and how it works to deliver new customers to your business on complete auto-pilot?

You're not alone. With so many different ways to increase your online presence, it's hard to figure it all out sometimes.

In order to help clear things up a little bit more for you, here are some frequently asked questions (FAQ's), when it comes to Google Places:

FAQ #1: Isn't Google Places and Google Maps the same thing?

No, they are not. Google Maps is a service from Google that provides map views, driving directions, and contact information about businesses and points of interest.

Google Places is the service that you can use to put your business on Google Maps, with more content. You can add photos, video, your web address, hours, categories, and more, to help local customers find you.

Google Places helps people find business when searching a specific location. Google Maps helps people explore a geographic area in many different ways, including street views, business listings, etc.

Google frequently tweaks and adjusts these services. For instance, Google Places was recently re-named; the previous name was Google Local Business Center.

FAQ #2: My business already comes up when people search for my business in Google. Isn't that enough?

First of all, you want to come up on searches that are generated for your product or service - not your business name - if you want to get new customers. Your goal is to target people who may not even know your business exists.

Also, just because your business comes up in Google Maps doesn't mean that it's visible or accurate. Google Maps pulls information on most businesses from the community and other business directories, and aggregates it.

Many times, this information is incorrect and needs to be corrected and verified by the business owner.

FAQ #3: I have some pretty popular competitors and there's no way my business could ever get to the top of Google, right?

This is not true at all. Just because you have a popular competitor doesn't mean you can beat their position in Google. Your Google ranking doesn't

have anything to do with “popularity” and everything to do with “optimizing.”

Just by following the steps in the earlier lessons of this E-Course, you can beat out a lot of your competitors because most of them probably aren't doing anything with their listings.

FAQ #4: I have to have a website in order to be listed in Google Places, right?

This is incorrect. Although it is strongly recommended that you have a website if you want to get to the top of Google Places for popular keyword terms, you do not have to have a website to list your business there.

Google requires a business name, mailing address and phone number. Start with these, and you can make your business visible on Google Maps and Google Places.

Google is the king of the Internet and is constantly making changes to refine the way search results are given priority. The best way to stay on top of these changes is with the help of an online marketing consultant who can help guide you.

We hope you've learned a lot and are prepared to grab your share of the hundreds and maybe even thousands of local searches being done for your service.

If you would like the assistance of a professional online marketing consultant to help you get listed in Google Places or improve the ranking of your existing Google Places listing, contact me at 402-720-7375.

Thank you,

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