The definitive guide to Google My Business for Tour, Activity, and Attraction Operators in 2020
About this Guide

Goodreviews and TourismSolved have partnered to create this comprehensive guide to Google My Business - specifically aimed at Tour, Activity, and Attraction Operators. We're going to deep dive into the details, and there are a lot of details to cover and consider when making sure that your business has an optimized listing. If you’re ready to dig in and do the work, grab a cup of tea and read on.

If you don’t have time to update Google My Business yourself, it’s ok. We know that your time is valuable. So, if you’d rather stop reading now, TourismSolved can update your Google My Business listing - for free. That’s right, we’re offering a free session to update your Google My Business listing.

Simply click here to schedule a free 30 minute session and get on your way to a better Google My Business presence.

Who is TourismSolved?

TourismSolved is a digital marketing agency that specializes in travel, using search, social and online advertising to drive direct business to you.

When you choose TourismSolved, you get to work with people who have been senior executives at the online travel agencies (OTAs) and are passionate about bringing our expertise to growing your business.

We care about the same things you do – more direct leads and optimizing your sales channels to maximize revenue across your business. That’s why we’ve designed our business to let you focus on delivering a great experience while we focus on driving as much direct business to you as possible. We do this by delivering practical, proven digital marketing solutions to grow your Tour, Activity and Attraction businesses.

We work with you to drive more business at a lower cost per sale. As marketing and travel specialists we understand the entire ecosystem and how to get better returns at less cost. Showing up online gets your business in the game to be chosen, not just seen. We are masters of the online marketing tools and best practices to deliver on this promise.

Who is Goodreviews?

Goodreviews is a leading review platform that helps businesses collect and leverage their google my business reviews.

Did you know that 88% of individuals now look to reviews before making a decision? Social validation has become more important than ever when it comes to being considered by a potential customer. Think about it yourself, how many times have you chosen one business over another because they had more or better reviews? We do this almost every day. Google data shows that 50% of all searches are now localised search, meaning to prosper online you need to be at the top of the Search Engine’s Results page. The most influential factor to where you rank, and how potential customers will choose you, is your review profile. That’s why you need a solution that not only helps you collect reviews consistently but showcases them on your website.

As a special offer to this guide, we are giving away one free month so you can see the power of reviews.
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**Introduction**

Google My Business (GMB) is a relatively new marketing tool that gives business owners more control over the way their company appears in search results.

It is no secret, GMB has solidified its place as the dominant entry point for local search. Recent studies have found that 74% of consumers conduct local searches at least once a week. Of those searches, 54% said they would visit the business in person, either right away or the same day.

**That’s crazy.** One in two are ready to become customers.

So for business owners having the power to manage what comes up about them in search results is a big, big deal. Businesses can catch customers’ attention in the search results, manage their own reputation, and reap the rewards of cleaner, bolder web presence.

This step-by-step guide will help you understand Google My Business inside and out so that you can improve your Google Map rankings, engage with customers, control your online presence, and generate more leads.

**We will cover:**

1. What is Google My Business & why it matters in 2020
2. How to setup an optimized profile from day one
3. What ongoing optimisations are required
4. How to collect and respond to reviews
5. Tools that you can use to stay on top of your game
6. Expert advice from around the world

Let’s get to it.

**What is Google My Business? (the official answer)**

Google My Business (GMB) is a free tool created by Google to help business owners manage how they appear in Google search results and on Google Maps.

**Why is it important?**

I’m going to hold on the technical mumbo jumbo for a second and instead do some back of the envelope math...

The search term “Walking Tour Near Me” gets 60,500 searches a month in New York City.

Of those searches, 17.3% go to the first business listed in the local pack. Meaning, whoever is in position 1 gets 10,466.5 visits to their website.

The average cost of a walking tour in NYC is $49 and let’s say a conservative 2% sign up for a tour.

That’s $10,257 a MONTH generated from your GMB Profile and booked direct on your website. (not including Life Time Value or any repeat purchases). Realistically the real revenue numbers would be far larger.

There is the **business answer** to why GMB is so very important. It is a core element of local SEO and when optimized lets you reap the benefits of more leads and more revenue.

The best part? The anatomy of a highly-effective GMB profile isn’t rocket science. Every business owner can implement simple changes and realize remarkable results.

**How important is GMB in 2020?**

For those of you who remember, we used to pick up a big yellow book and comb through the pages to find local businesses. Now, anytime, anywhere, we can open Google and get 322,000,000 results in 0.77 seconds. And that’s what we do, every day and every year we do it more.

Google Trends data shows the dramatic increase in “near me” search queries providing businesses with an opportunity to target potential customers seeking a local business.

*Continued next page.*
The local 3 pack continues to receive a dominant proportion of clicks, currently making up 32.3% of all clicks on the Search Engines Results Page (SERP). There is no denying the impact of that traffic to your business and the revenue it can generate as a channel. Businesses can no longer forgo focusing time and attention on their listing.

Brightlocal analyzed click-through rates of the Search Engine Results Page (SERP) and found:

1. Organic position 1 27.4%
2. Local Pack position 1 17.3%
3. Local Pack position 2 12%
4. PPC Top position 1 10.5%

**“32.3% of all search clicks go to the Local Pack”**

Here are some additional stats if you’re not yet convinced:

- 46% of all Google searches are local
- 64% of local customers use search engines and directories as their main way to find local businesses
- 50% of local mobile searchers look for business information (like a company’s address or phone number)
- A whopping 78% of local mobile searches result in an offline purchase

(Source: Searchengineeland.com and Business2community.com)

**Google continues to make changes**

Google’s intentions remain strong as they continue to invest time, money and energy into their GMB product. As you can see below, the velocity of changes over time has been consistently accelerating.

(Source: https://www.sterlingsky.ca/google-local-changes/)

**Why Google’s creation should make you stop and think**

Google’s core business model has always been the monetization of attention. They’ve mastered both the dissemination and distribution of business information. When they wield their gauntlet to monetize, many companies who have historically relied on them— and paid them— to get visitors through the door perish.

At the beginning of the last decade, websites like Kelkoo, Pricerunner, Shopping.com and Dealtime dominated online shopping. Now, they barely make an impression in search results.

**What happened to them?** Google Shopping.

And now with Google My Business, people don’t need to visit your website anymore to:

- Book a ticket
- Get a quote
- Call you
- Message you
- Ask questions
- Post reviews
- Find your offers and pricing
- Find directions

...all those things people go to your website for. Google Travel is headed in the same direction, with products like Reserve with Google.

Think about that for a second... and where this could lead.

**Contest Google at your peril**

That last section might have got you referencing some 1984 quotes or debating Google’s ethics of keeping their own traffic.

But ultimately we have two choices.

We can complain about how Google is evil.

Or, we can delve into this new digital landscape, understand it and systemize our efforts to increase our digital reach and ultimately our baseline revenue.
We haven’t **mentioned** something very, very significant

**“88% of people trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.”**

Every year, without a doubt, potential customers rely more and more on reviews.

Let’s face it, nobody likes the guy at the party gloating about how awesome they are.

We don’t like it online either...

We like hearing from others, which is why in 2020 reviews are one of the most important parts of not only your GMB but your collective business efforts.

In fact one of the most important parts of buying psychology is...

Social proof. (just ask Cialdini)

Shawn Joshi, a veteran digital marketer, examined the difference in GMB traffic vs. Organic traffic. Whilst he didn’t reveal the client he did say “The numbers are significant(analyzing millions in revenue).”

**So what was concluded?**

Revenue per lead (search traffic): $197  
Revenue per lead (Google My Business traffic): $679

Leads from Google My Business are worth 245% more than regular search traffic- wow. It is also important to note here that Organic Traffic is usually the highest converting digital channel.

Imagine if you could up lead quality like this on your website? Well, you can with the Goodreviews tool that pulls in your Google My Business reviews and allows potential customers to browse your brand credibility. (oh, and it automates your review collection).
Set up a Google My Business Listing That is Optimized From Day One
STEP ONE

Visit the official page

Navigate to the official business page. Found here: [https://www.google.com/business/](https://www.google.com/business/)

Click the Blue Manage Now button.

If you’re not already signed into Gmail, it will ask you to sign in.

Be sure you are signed into the Gmail account you want to be associated with your Google business listing.

**Pro Tip:** Use the email you use for other Google Properties like Search Console or Google Analytics.

Then click next.
Enter your business name (don’t keyword stuff)

As with most aspects of life, doing the right thing is the right thing to do. Attempting to deceive search engines with keyword stuffing shortcuts isn’t going to work – following legitimate SEO best practices will.

With that said, Google in many cases fails at creating an equal playing field and many take advantage of that inequality for short-term gain.

In the 2018 version of Moz’s Local Search Ranking Factors Survey, their survey placed having your Product/Service Keyword in your GMB Business Title as the number #4 most important ranking factor.

This saw the extreme rise of adding keywords to your local listing alongside a location call out.

So instead of a business name like Mary’s Firm SEOs would change titles to Mary’s Divorce Lawyers London.

Here’s an interesting example...

The top screenshot shows how an agency was able to gain a knowledge panel for the non-brand search term “digital seo agency” by putting “SEO Agency” in its GMB profile. Even after the spammy name was reported, the knowledge panel remained, as shown in the second screenshot.

Now you’re probably thinking to yourself...

Well.. it works! Why wouldn’t I do it?

Well, this screenshot was from Q2 of 2019, in Q4, Google released an algorithm update that punished those with a location in their business name (especially if it was located at the end). However, different SEO Experts between 2019/2020 have noticed rankings bouncing back.

Was does this mean? What should I do?

Google is in constant flux, sometimes there are clear cut definitions and sometimes there are not. At the time of writing this, the jury is still out on how businesses should proceed.

With that said...

Here’s what you should know. Google’s policy states:

“Including unnecessary information in your business name is not permitted, and could result in your listing being suspended.”

Sterling Sky’s case study on keyword stuffing found that keyword stuffing led to a suspension from Google in 40% of cases! Those are pretty high odds to reap the benefits of the rank boost keyword stuffing provides.

As always, my opinion is to do the right thing and continue to do it over time. You might forgo some short-term wins but ultimately you will come out on top.

So here for your business name represent your business as it’s consistently recognized in the real world across signage, stationery, and other branding.
STEP THREE

Select business category (proper GMB Category Associations)

The same Moz survey found that GMB Category Associations was #3 most important ranking factor.

As with the business name be specific about what and who you are.

To use the same example of a tour operator just look how many categories there are. Pick the one that BEST represents you.

You might be saying to yourself here, we offer multiple services?

Well, I would say out of those services does 1 make up 80% of revenue? If so, go with that- that really is WHO you are right now. All in all, you can change it at any time if you need to or your revenue-driving activity changes. We will also be adding sub-categories.

STEP FOUR

Setting the Address of Your Business

The Moz study found that the two most important factors to your ranking are where the searcher is located, aka. proximity (#1) to the physical address of your business (#2).

Google wants to serve you the most relevant business that is close to you, so that next time you need to search, you go to Google. Imagine if every time you searched for something near you, it was over an hour away. Would you still use their service? Probably not. Would they lose customers? Most definitely.

We will get into optimizing so that you are more likely to appear within proximity, but the point here is not to fool yourself by thinking you will dominate your entire city.

Here you have 3 options, do you:

1. Let customers come to you
2. You go to your customers
3. Or do you do both.

Fill as required.
**STEP FIVE**

**Let’s get verified**

Depending on what kind of business listing you’re attempting to create (or manage) you will have different options available to you. With that said, 90% of businesses will need to wait for a postcard.

All options:
- Verify by mail (postcard)
- Verify by phone
- Verify by email
- Instant verification
- Bulk verification

Once your postcard arrives you’ll need to sign back into [google.com/my-business](http://google.com/my-business), click Verify Location from the menu or the Verify Now button if it’s available, then enter the 5 digit code from your postcard.

**STEP SIX**

**Set up the bare minimum(s)**

Once you have an officially verified listing, it’s time to optimize your Google My Business.

Enter the following (we will explain in further detail the other sections to fill):

- operational hours
- special hours (public holidays etc)
- business phone number
- profile short name
- appointment link
Add optimized photos

“A picture is worth a thousand words”

Don’t take this for granted, 60% of consumers say local search results with good images capture their attention and push them towards a decision.

Google advises businesses to upload several different types of image;

- At least three strong exterior photos, taken at different times of the day and showing the approach to the business from common angles
- A minimum of three interior photos
- Product photos for the most popular products and services you sell
- One image of any common areas your business may have, such as the reception
- A minimum of three management and team photos
- For tours, activities and attractions, images of the customers on tour should be uploaded

![Image requirements](image.jpg)

**Image requirements**

- Format: JPG or PNG
- Size: Between 10 KB and 5 MB
- Minimum Resolution: 720px × 720px
- Quality: The photo should be in focus and well lit, and have no significant alterations or excessive use of filters. In other words, the image should represent reality.

What does Google say?

“Businesses with photos receive 42% more requests for driving directions to their location from users on Google, and 35% more clicks through to their website than businesses that don’t have photos.”

Geotag your photos

Techy explanation: Geotagging is the process of adding geographical information to various media in the form of metadata.

General explanation: Add some information that tells Google where the photo was taken.

Navigate to [https://imagemeta.io/](https://imagemeta.io/) follow the steps.

Tip: You should have 10 or so geotagged photos within your profile.
**Add Videos**

Across the digital landscape, video content continues its rise to prominence. Its use within GMB is important.

Don’t just add random videos. Ensure your videos aren’t shaky and aren’t shot in portrait mode.

Ask yourself, “If my competitor uploaded a video like this, would I make fun of them or envy them?”

As I’ve said in this guide countless times now Google will always punish companies who aren’t truly representing themselves. Google can and will remove videos if the primary subject of the content is not related to the location. So, don’t use stock video.

### Video requirements

- Max File Size: 100 MB
- Max Video Duration: 30 Seconds
- Video Min Resolution: 720p

### Content ideas to get you started:

1. Video tour of your business
2. Video of staff (either doing work or giving an introduction of themselves)
3. Video of owner explaining why they made the business (mission/vision etc)
4. Video highlight of your tour or activity that travelers will experience

**STEP NINE**

### Write an optimized & compelling business description

You can add a 750-character description to your GMB profile. This text should describe your business in an engaging, authentic manner and shouldn’t reference things like sales or promotions.

Writing a comprehensive and compelling business description takes work. I recommend that you write out several versions before selecting which one you want to go with. Be sure to read all the business description guidelines (shown below) so you know what you can (and can’t) include in your Google My Business Business Description.

### Tips for writing

- Tell the viewer what makes your business different
- Why should they shop with you & not someone else
- Don’t spam
- Don’t keyword stuff
- Don’t put promo’s in and sound gimmicky
- Don’t use ALL CAPS
Add additional categories

Earlier in the guide, we selected our primary category. While the primary category is the most important choice, secondary categories are still important to ranking and relevance. There are over 3000 GMB categories as of 2020 (3942 to be exact). Google allows you to select up to 10 categories for your business. You can view a complete list here.

When you select a category, you’ll have the best results if you follow these three rules of thumb:

1. Be as specific as possible when choosing your Google My Business category – The more specific you are, the fewer businesses you’ll be competing against for customers.
2. Add the least number of Google My Business categories possible to describe your core business – The more categories you have, the weaker each individual category gets in a potential customer’s search for businesses that do what you do.
3. Describe your business… not your services or amenities – If you are adding a new restaurant to Google My Business and that restaurant has a bar, you should not add “Bar” as a category because that does not describe your business, it describes your amenities.

Add product collections

Product Collections are for small- and medium-sized individual businesses. For your tour and activity products, use this as an opportunity to give Google further information about who you are and what you sell. Showcase your KEY products and drive customer interactions.

Navigate to products tab on the left and click get started. The process is straight forward and can be viewed in full here.
**Set up tracking – the right way**

If you measure the wrong thing, you set the wrong targets and if you aim at the wrong target, you arrive in the wrong place.

Tracking is one of the most important parts to get right from the get-go.

We need to set-up UTM tags.

Why?

Without UTM tags, a page could be receiving organic traffic from two places and you wouldn’t have any idea which was the biggest driver:

2. Google My Business profiles (knowledge graphs, local map packs, Google Maps)

Sure, in the Google My Business backend there are some reports, showing the number of impressions (how often my listing appeared), clicks on the phone number, get directions button or website button and some other data:

In Google Analytics, if we use UTM tags we can uncover things like: How many pages did they view or did they make a revenue-driving action.

Go to URL Builder and enter your relevant naming conventions. If you haven’t already set up a complete UTM naming strategy I would recommend this. For GMB I would recommend the following:

1. Source = Google
2. Medium = organic
3. Campaign = mybusiness
4. Content (only if multiple locations). If you have multiple locations use this section to add an identifier like postcode.
   By doing so, you will be able to break your data out per location and dive deeper into per store analytics.


Once you’re all set with creating your new UTM tracking URL, you need to add it to your listing. To do this, simply go to your account dashboard and select either info or edit. This will bring up a new screen with your company information.

Scroll down to find the existing URL and replace it with the new UTM tracking URL.

Once you add the new URL to your listing, you can refresh the page and it should be live.

**How to view in Google Analytics**

Now all of the hard work is complete, we’re able to tap into our Google Analytics account and garner deeper insights. Login to your Google Analytics account and select the appropriate profile. Then navigate to: Acquisition > Campaigns > All Campaigns. You will be able to see how those coming from your GMB interact with your website and importantly their onsite conversion rate. We’ve seen conversion rates of 16% through GMB but most hover at 6%.
**STEP THIRTEEN**

**Download the GMB App**

The Google My Business app for [iOS](https://apps.apple.com) and [Android](https://play.google.com) is a great tool for monitoring the latest activity related to your listing.

Tapping the Notifications tab from the Menu gives you an overview of your latest reviews, insights on your most recent posts, bookings, payments, and product updates.

Use the Google My Business app to:

- Update your business hours, location, contact information, and description
- Post statuses and pictures
- View search insights
- Respond to reviews

![Google My Business App](image)

**STEP FOURTEEN**

**Familiarize yourself with GMB Insights**

Delve into and make use of Google My Business Insights, to learn things like:

- How many people visit your website
- How many people searched for driving directions
- How many people called you
- How many people viewed photos of your business

To benchmark, your business’s GMB performance against others in your industry, take a look at this [Google My Business Insights Study](https://.example.com).
We’ve covered our basis, now what do we do?
Arguably the most important part: Reviews

Why do sitcoms have laugh tracks?
Why do travelers pick their next holiday destination?
Why do we want to try a restaurant when we see it at full capacity?

The answer, Social Proof. A psychological and social phenomenon within consumer behavior where we look at others in order to take action.

Reviews are the lifeblood of small businesses. It is one of the most influential factors when it comes to people making a buying decision. In fact, when people add our google review tool to their website we’ve seen conversion uplifts from 5-25%.

But reviews don’t only affect your onsite conversion rate...

According to Moz, review factors (total amount, review velocity, review diversity) make up of why 15.44% of all local search ranking factors - crazy right.

Another study by Bright Local examined the average number of google reviews by local ranking position. They found the following.

And here is the average amount per industry:
So where do you stack up? Are you dominating your competition already? Are you below your industry average? Or are you yet to get your first review?

Regardless of where you are, it is undeniable that companies with a systematic and scalable review strategy will outperform local competition and achieve long term success.

Here are some interesting numbers:

• 63.6 percent of consumers are likely to check Google reviews of a business before visiting their website — this is more than any other review site (Yelp, Facebook, etc).

• 94 percent of people say an online review has convinced them to avoid a business altogether.

• 90 percent of consumers read 10 or fewer online reviews until they can trust your business.

• Positive customer reviews can increase conversions by 270 percent.

Shameless plug... Using a tool like goodreviews not only will increase your profits immediately but will also let you set and forget your review collection process. Check it out here.

**How do you get Google reviews?**

The short answer: Just ask.

Don’t beat around the bush when it comes to asking for a review. Sending them a direct email with your request is the best way to feed a response. Techniques that garner better results:

**Personalize Your Message**

Make your customer feel special — you’re not going to get a review with a boring, desperate email saying, “Review us please!”.

**Send in a timely fashion**

Catch them early, when your business and products are still fresh in their mind. (Most likely, this is also when they’re the happiest about your product’s capabilities or benefits).

The longer you wait to ask for a review, the less of a chance you have of getting customers to give you one. Don’t take those chances.

**Keep It Short**

You’re already asking them to take the time to leave a review, so don’t take any more of their time by having them read a novel of an email.

**Include a Review Link**

As always reduce friction wherever you can. Make it as easy as possible for your customer to leave a review – give them a link!

Want proven templates?

We’ve put together a step by step guide on how to skyrocket your reviews with our proven email templates.

You can get the guide here:
More customers expect businesses to respond to their reviews — and quickly.

According to ReviewTrackers’ survey findings, 53.3 percent of customers expect businesses to respond to their online review within 7 days.

In the digital space — just as in traditional feedback channels like post-transaction surveys and support and service phone calls — customers want to be heard individually and addressed personally when something goes wrong.

Review responses make a real and measurable difference — not just to the consumer who leaves the review, but to everyone else who visits the business’s review page. 45 percent of consumers say that they’re more likely to visit a business if it responds to negative reviews.

Take away. ALWAYS respond to reviews.

But how do I respond to negative reviews?

Negative reviews are inevitable.

The sheer depth and breadth of who we serve will never cater for everyone. Also, a business is made up of people and as people we sometimes fail - that’s ok.

What’s not ok is letting that be the end of it.

How to respond to a negative review (4 Steps)

Step 1: Apologize and sympathize

Acknowledge the customer’s concerns. Even if they are unfounded, show sympathy that they had a bad experience.

“I’m sorry to hear about your bad experience.”

Step 2: Insert a little marketing in your response to the bad review

Explain what your customers usually experience. “We’re normally known for our exceptional attention to detail, and we regret that we missed the mark.”

Step 3: Move the conversation offline

Provide contact info with someone at the business so they can discuss the problem in person. “My name is [name] and I am the [Owner / Manager]. I would love to discuss your experience further, please contact me at [phone number/email].”

Step 4: Unhappy to happy

As always, do what you can to turn the situation around. Once you have done so, see if they will remove their negative review. We’ve found wording like this to be successful:

“Many people like you rely on online reviews to make sure they get the best service possible. Having a negative review hurts our businesses’ ability to stand out and provide value. If you feel your experience with us has changed it would mean a lot if you removed or updated your Google review.”
Oh no... someone has left a fake review

Who knows why fake reviews happen. Sometimes they’re written by competitors hoping to one-up you, or even customers who have mistaken your business for someone else’s! What’s important is that you know how to spot and get rid of them in order to keep your online reputation as authentic as possible.

Flagging a review

If you believe you have received a review that is fake, inappropriate or promotes a competitor you can flag it to be reviewed by Google for removal. Only reviews that violate Google policy will be removed.

Follow these steps to flag a review:
1. Log into Google My Business.
2. Select the location (if you have multiple)
3. In the menu, select “Reviews”
4. Find the review in question. Click the three-dot menu, then select “Flag as inappropriate.”

It can take several days for someone at Google to review your request and determine whether they will delete your Google review. If possible, ask other people to flag the review also, as this might draw more attention to an offensive review and encourage Google to remove the Google review.

Report to Google Small Business Support

Flagging the review and/or responding to the unfair comments sometimes gets the review removed. But if those strategies fail, the next step is to report the review to Google Small Business Support.

To contact Google’s support for businesses, follow these steps:
1. Go to support.google.com/business
2. On the top right of your browser, select “contact us”
3. Select “customer reviews and photos,” and then “Review removal issues”
4. Choose to receive help via phone, web chat, or email

Using any of these methods, you can expect help within 24 hours. If you choose to contact Google via email or chat, it is helpful to have a screenshot of the review in question ready to go.
Google My Business Posts

According to Google, Posts is a feature that allows businesses to publish events, products, and services directly to Google Search and Maps. By creating posts, you can place timely text, video, or photo content in front of customers when they find your business listing on Google. In other words, this is a hyper-localized communication channel between your business and your local audience (prospects & customers).

Google openly promotes 4 main benefits:
1. Facilitate direct communication from you to your local customers
2. Improve customer experience with timely information
3. Promote your sales, specials, events, news, and offers
4. Appeal to your customers with engaging videos and photos

An in-depth study by RioSEO Google Posts improved performance on 4 key metrics:
• Total weekly searches increased by 61.08%
• Total views increased by 47.69%
• Total discovery searches increased by 76.54%
• Total actions increased by 47.49%

Takeaway?

Use Google Posts to increase your reach, visibility, and sales.

Post types

What’s new posts: Posts that provide general information about your business. You can include a photo/video, link, call to action (CTA) button, and other information. For example, a restaurant could make a post to promote a new menu item. In some countries, Google My Business may also provide automatically suggested posts based on your 4 or 5-star customer reviews. You’ll see these suggestions when you sign in to GMB, or via email notifications.

Event posts: Posts that require a title, start/end dates and time. If no start/end times are entered, then the system will default to 24 hours on the date it’s posted. These posts may also include a photo/video, CTA button, and other information. For example, a bookstore may advertise a local author’s book signing or a book club meeting.

Product posts: Posts that emphasize a specific product your business sells. Product posts require a title and photo or video. You can also include a CTA button and other information. For example, an electronics store may promote a new phone for sale.

Offer posts: Posts that provide promotional sales or offers from your business. Offer posts require a title and start/end dates and times. A “View offer” CTA button is automatically added to the post. You can also include a photo/video, coupon code, link, and terms and conditions with the post. For example, a pizza parlor may advertise a 20% off large pizzas for a week. The offer posts will appear near the top of the Business Profile in Search. They also appear with all other posts in their own tab.

Pro tip: If you are distributing content on other channels (blog, FB, etc) add this to part of that process.
Google Q&A, introduced in August of 2017, is a consumer-facing, crowd-sourced FAQ feature, similar to the Ask the Community feature on Yelp and TripAdvisor, that allows consumers (and businesses) to ask and answer questions about the business from the local Knowledge Panel.

Google’s goal for its local Q&A feature is to provide consumers with enhanced details about a business. In theory, this additional information will allow consumers to find meaningful, timely answers to questions, directly influencing their decision to call or visit the business right from the Knowledge Panel.

BrightLocal put together a deeper study into the dental segment and found:

- 38% asked if the dental practice performed a particular procedure and, if so, how much it costs
- 32% focused on types of insurance accepted
- 7% asked about basic business info, such as email address and fax number

Ok, so now we know more about it.

Well, firstly, as hinted above, anyone on the internet can answer these questions. Would you want one of your customers incorrectly answering a question? Or as a savvy business owner would you prefer to control the way your business is represented?

I’m guessing the latter.

The second thing you need to know is that you cannot access Q & A from your business dashboard because this is a bolt-on powered by Maps rather than Google My Business.

However, if you have enabled the Google My Business app on your mobile phone, you will get push notifications when someone posts / asks a question.

To update these / respond to these you have to do it directly from search results.
That’s right. You can chat back and forth with your potential customers just like on a Facebook.

The rise and use of live chat is undeniable. Today, more than 41% of customers expect live chat to be on your website.

If you have the resourcing use this to steer people into your business and have real conversations. The process is straightforward and has been laid out nicely by Google Support.

**Pro tip:** If a reception person or junior staff member will be managing this we recommend you empower them by having a script to run off, key questions noted (use the FAQ of your website) and most of all ensure they know who is the main lead handler. Those who come from the GMB channel are ready to buy. Ensure your staff can show them how to do just that.

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**Short names & URLs**

You can add a short name to your profile now as well. Doing so will give you a link to your GMB listing that is more branded.

You can use this to promote your listing and provide customers with an easy link to leave you a review.

You can set your short name listing by going to the Info pane of your GMB dashboard.

We’ll be honest, Google adds and removes features all the time so it can often take a while before we see if a feature is really worth it. In this case, we suggest grabbing a short name as soon as you can. Whether or not we find short names to be an important factor for GMB listings, you’ll want to reserve your short name before someone else does.

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**Get people to follow you**

That’s right. You can follow businesses and people can follow yours.

Most people aren’t using this feature—take advantage.

Google knows that people are looking for ways to save money and find good deals. With this new feature, businesses can reward their customers by giving them welcome offers.

By following your business, they can get first-time deals and always keep in touch to see when new deals are posted.

Not only will this bring you new customers but also repeat customers because people will be notified every time you have new deals.

To set up a welcome offer, open your Google My Business app and tap on your profile. Under “Turn followers into customers,” click on ‘Create Welcome Offer’ and hit ‘Create.’

You can enter the following information in your offer:

- **Title** (10% off walking tour)
- **Description**
- **Coupon Code** (Optional)
- **Terms and Conditions** (Optional)
- **Website** (Optional)

Once finished, you can preview your message and publish. For notifications on new followers, and editing or deleting offers, you can read more on [Google Support](https://support.google.com/business).

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**Messaging customers on GMB**

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Top GMB tools to help you succeed
Top GMB Tools

Google My Business App

Mentioned a few times in this guide GMB App is a no brainer. A free mobile app that helps you manage your business. With the app, you can do the following: Manage how your local business appears on Google Search and Maps. Edit your business information (e.g. address, phone number, and hours).

Goodreviews

Few tools can instantly boost your revenue, this is one of them. This product allows you to:
1. Showcase your Google reviews anywhere across your website
2. Enable your visitors to effortlessly leave reviews as they browse
3. Build social proof and rise to the top of Google
4. Plant trees and help the environment prosper

Google Data Studio

Data Studio is Google’s reporting solution for power users who want to go beyond the data and dashboards of Google Analytics. Using a Data Connector you can get great oversights. Having something like this can help you understand your analytics for multiple locations.
Top GMB Tools

**Localviking**
Schedule GMB Posts, track where and how you appear and manage all of your Google My Business properties from one easy to use dashboard. Localviking is one of the more popular options within local seo communities as it allows you to get great visual maps of your listing by number.

![Localviking Map](image)

**Bright Local**
Whether you’re looking to boost local rankings, increase online visibility, build citations, develop an amazing online reputation or even grow your marketing agency, BrightLocal’s powerful tools can help you succeed. Many use the software daily to identify and analyze ranking functions and check-in on historical ranking patterns.

![Bright Local Ranking](image)

**Places Scout**
This tool is loaded with useful features and data. They have an incredibly detailed competitor analysis tool and they also have a solid rank tracker that plots rankings on a map across a geographic area so you can see how you rank from multiple searcher locations.

![Places Scout Map](image)
Expert advice for Tour, Activity and Attraction Operators
TourismSolved is a digital marketing agency that specializes in travel, using search, social and online advertising to drive direct business to you.

When you choose TourismSolved, you get to work with people who have been senior executives at the online travel agencies (OTAs) and are passionate about bringing our expertise to growing your business.

We care about the same things you do – more direct leads and optimizing your sales channels to maximize revenue across your business. That’s why we’ve designed our business to let you focus on delivering a great experience while we focus on driving as much direct business to you as possible. We do this by delivering practical, proven digital marketing solutions to grow your Tour, Activity and Attraction businesses.

We work with you to drive more business at a lower cost per sale. As marketing and travel specialists we understand the entire ecosystem and how to get better returns at less cost. Showing up online gets your business in the game to be chosen, not just seen. We are masters of the online marketing tools and best practices to deliver on this promise.

tourismsolved.com

Get free help

That’s right. You've made it this far and we're rewarding you with a free offer.

TourismSolved will extend a free offer to fix up your Google My Business listing, normally priced at $500, for free.

Simply click here to schedule a 30 minute session to get started.
A final note from me...

Our time is precious. Our resources are limited. That’s why we’re offering a free month, so you can collect and leverage your reviews without having to do it manually.

As any marketing professional worth their salt will confirm, successful marketing is based around a process, where you ‘test, measure, test measure’. Test everything you do within GMB and then look at the big picture. GMB is only one part of your digital marketing efforts and should be seen as one piece of the puzzle - look at it as such.


Most of all, I hope you got huge value out of this 7000+ word piece and are ready to go and dominate your local competition.

Saul Edwards
Goodreviews.io