

97% of consumers, first look online for local businesses,\* with Google being their first destination - could your Google listing be performing better?

**Take it away**

\* Brightlocal.com, 2017

**USING GOOGLE BUSINESS PAGES**

**Take it away | Retailers Marketing Guides**

[www.takeitaway.org.uk](http://www.takeitaway.org.uk)

**When marketing budgets are small or non-existent, getting the basics right is imperative.**

**Google is the first place most of your customers will discover you. The following outlines how to ensure you're getting the most out of your free Google listing.**

**This is intended as a basic introduction, if you have more advanced questions, please get in touch [info@takeitaway.org.uk](mailto:info@takeitaway.org.uk)**

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## **Why is a Google Business page is important?**

Google is often the first point of contact between you and a customer. Most people will search Google before visiting your shop. It's therefore the first place to ensure your listing details are correct and complete.

Ensuring that you have an accurate business listing on Google is one of the most fundamental basics of marketing your business online.

Google offers businesses a [free listing](#).

To ensure your business is correctly set up on Google, first Google your business! If your business is there it will appear on the right hand side of the page, next to the search results. If you have not previously 'claimed ownership' for the listing it will say 'Own this business?' – if you see this for your business, click on this link.

If your business has never been added to Google, there will be no results shown on the right hand side of the page. If this is the case, go straight to the [free listing page](#).

You will be taken through a series of steps to verify and update your business, which include:

- Verifying the Google map location for your business
- Adding a business category
- Adding a phone number and website (it's very important that you use exactly the same number and website address, and formatting on all your listings)
- You'll be asked to verify these details via email, phone or post.
- Once verified, you can then start to edit the page details, adding opening times, photos and descriptive information, etc.

If you are already the owner of your business page, ensure all the details are up to date and correct.

Ensure that the images and video used are professional and welcoming for potential new customers.

### **Google Reviews**

Good Google reviews increase the trust in your services. New customers are likely to have a mixture of musical expertise and checking your Google reviews will help convince or dissuade them from visiting.

Encourage your customers to add Google reviews about their experience of shopping with you, you can do this by speaking directly to customers and by adding a message on your website and other social media channels. Some shops even include a request to review on Google on point of sale material.

If you get negative reviews, address these immediately. There's nothing worse for your reputation than a bad and then unanswered review. Bad reviews are always a positive opportunity to engage and make improvements.

Tips for replying to negative reviews or comments, include:

- Step away for a moment and take time to investigate before replying in the heat of the moment.
- Apologise whether legitimate or not, ensure the apology sounds sincere and then continue any conversation offline where possible.
- Take the opportunity to improve customer services where possible.
- Openly say you will address the issues raised and follow through with any necessary actions.

You can also reply to thank people for positive reviews.

### **Check the consistency of any other website listings**

Having your business appear consistently across any sites you are listed on is very important for search engine ranking. You may have listed your website address using the format <https://yourname.com> on Facebook and [www.yourname.com](http://www.yourname.com) on Twitter. If this is the case, Google sometimes cannot tell that you're the same company and this can result in lower search rankings.

You can check the consistency of your search listings for free on the [Moz Local](#) website. If there are inconsistency's these must be addressed. **This is really important to do.** This free tool will also tell you which other free listing sites you can add your site to and again, ensure this is done consistently.

### **Google Posts**

If you have the time and inclination, it's now possible to add [Google Posts](#) to your Google Business Listing. These can be similar to Facebook events or blog posts – they are mini updates and could advertise events or special offers.

### **Insights from Google**

If you're interested in finding out more about how Google aims to support retail, they publish [regular articles](#) on the subject. Whilst many of these articles reference multinational retail businesses, there are plenty of useful insights that can be applied at any scale.

### **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)**

If you are interested in optimising the content on your website to help more people find you via search engines, you may be interested in [this](#) article about Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) for local business from Moz and [Hubspot](#) also have some helpful articles about improving local search results.

### **More help**

If you have any specific questions, feedback or suggestions, please contact the Take it away team and we'll be happy to help [info@takeitaway.org.uk](mailto:info@takeitaway.org.uk)