

Why is Google Local so important for small businesses?

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Local sales are very important to many small businesses. Google Local Search Results are displayed just under the Google horizontal sponsored links. This area is prime real estate for any businesses interested by local sales.

Google Places is the new name for Google Local Business Center. All Google search results are based primarily on keywords relevance and this is not different with Google Places. However, Google Places also uses geographic distance and other information gathered from multiple un-disclosed sources. Google Places is a free service, so there's no way to request or pay for a better ranking. Here is a three steps process to get good ranking with Google Local Search Results.

Step1 - Get a well designed website and good Google ranking first (first things first).

- A. Include your complete address and phone number on every page of your website.
- B. Include your city and perhaps your state in your home page title tag.
- C. Include a link on your home page and encourage customers, business partners, or website visitors to review your business in Google Places. Use an incentive such as a coupon or discount for providing a review.
- D. Get other local websites to link to yours. Ask for text links that include your keywords or parts of your title tag.

Step2 - Create your Google Places listing and take the time to do it right.

- A. Make sure the information you submit is accurate and matches the offline world, especially for the business name, address, phone number and website. Use the precise and complete address for the business.
- B. Use all available fields and enter as much information as possible, including pictures, company logo, and videos. Reuse your website keywords, title, and description as appropriate. Don't skimp on details about your specific products and services.
- C. Verify your location on the Google Places map and, if necessary, correct it.
- D. Choose the correct categories for your listing. Use multiple categories if you can.
- E. Use your complete local phone number in the listing, not your 800 number.
- F. Use a complete physical street address for your business, not a PO box.
- G. Eliminate duplicate listings that would confuse Google Places.
- H. Do not create multiple listings of the same business, even if multiple services are offered. Use categories instead.
- I. Do not create multiple listings of the same business, even if you operate in multiple areas. Pick a central location instead.
- J. Play fair and do not try to manipulate the information you enter.
- K. Encourage visitors to review your business. Use an incentive such as a coupon or discount for providing a review.
- L. After a while, use the data provided by Google Places to refine your listing as appropriate.

Step 3 - Build trust. Google Places will verify and validate your listing from multiple sources. Make sure your business information is consistent.

- A. Register your business with other top shelf local directories and social networks.
- B. Review your artwork, business cards, letterheads etc.
- C. Review your phone book listings.