

bubyli

**Is Your Business Missing
an Opportunity with
Google My Business**

First Page of Google – The Holy Grail

As local business owners we all want our business to appear on the first page of Google when a prospective customer or client searches for the products that we sell or the service that we provide.

Achieving that first page place has always relied on good search engine optimisation (SEO) of our websites. Some have even resorted to risky ‘black hat’ SEO strategies to achieve page one placement which, if detected, will consign their websites to obscurity.

But is traditional SEO the only way?

The Google Search Results Page

Looking at a typical Google search results page in the example below it’s clear to see that relying on traditional SEO methods that managed to achieve page one ranking would still leave your business some way down the page, behind the paid listings and the Google My Business section.

The screenshot shows a Google search for 'gutter cleaner brentwood'. The results are categorized into three main sections:

- Paid Advertising:** A banner advertisement for 'Gutter Cleaning | Call Today for 50% Off | jh-cleaningservices.co.uk'.
- Google My Business Listings:** A map showing local businesses, followed by a list of three businesses:
 - Gutters4u Ltd:** 4.2 stars, 110 reviews, 1.7 mi away, 07552 259873.
 - Pro Gutter Cleaners:** No reviews, 1.6 mi away, 07620 704287.
 - Revive Cleaning and Maintenance:** 5.0 stars, 3 reviews, 2.3 mi away, 01277 724592.
- Organic Search Results:** A list of organic search results, including 'Gutter Cleaning in Brentwood - Find a trade with Checkatrade', 'Gutter Cleaning in Brentwood - Super Gutter Vac', and 'Gutter Cleaning in Brentwood Essex | Steve's Gutters & Sons'.

One of the most powerful local SEO strategies a business can use to improve their local search rankings is to claim and optimise their Google My Business listing. It costs nothing and done well will place your business towards the top of page one and in front of your competitors organic listings.

In the remainder of this document I am going to introduce you to some proven tips and strategies. This information is based on real world data where we have studied 1000’s of data points collected across a number of GMB listings to determine what is and isn’t working.

Google My Business

If you've already claimed your GMB listing then you can skip over this section

Creating a Google Business Profile allows prospective customers or clients to find your business when searching Google or Google Maps for your business or businesses like yours. Google My Business makes it easy to create and update your business profile.

To get started with your business profile go to <https://www.google.com/intl/en-GB/business/?hl=en-GB&ppsrc=GPDA2>

Google will present you with a list of questions about your business. Make sure you complete as much as you can here (the next section explains why this is important).

Once you've claimed your listing and filled in the information you're ready to put it to work for you.

A few GMB Tips

- Make sure to include some good quality photos in your listing. Make them relevant to your business e.g. if you're a house painter then upload some images of completed jobs.
- Make sure you respond to all reviews both good and bad.
- Upload videos (30 second limit) – use videos to introduce yourself or to introduce other long form content such as a new blog post or a longer YouTube video and then direct them to that content.

The Importance of Checking Your GMB Listing Frequently

When people click on your Google My Business listing they will see a link to 'Suggest an edit'.

This means that anybody could suggest a change to your listing – including your competitors. Google do say that they send out an email to the listing owner (hence why it's vitally important to claim your business listing) when an edit has been suggested but there are reports of these notifications going missing. So there is a possibility that a suggested edit could be made live without your knowledge.

The last thing your business needs is somebody altering your website address or telephone number.

It's therefore important that you log into your listing on a regular basis to ensure that no one has made any unwanted changes.

Google Posts

This is where we get into the nitty gritty. Google Posts is an area of the Google My Business listing that is so underutilised by local businesses that it gives your business the chance to stand out.

Google rewards businesses that keep their business information up-to-date. If business A is posting regularly and business B isn't then Google is going to favour business A. So how do we get your business to be the favoured one? It's going to take a little bit of effort but if you put the work in you'll see the rewards.

The first important point to note is that posts stay live for seven days so to keep your content fresh the recommendation is that you post once per week to make sure that there is always a post live.

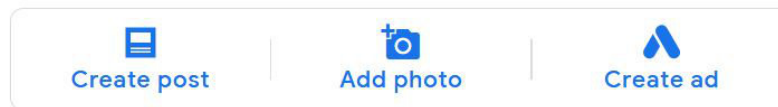
What should I Post?

Here are a few ideas on the types of things that can go into a post. Try experimenting with them.

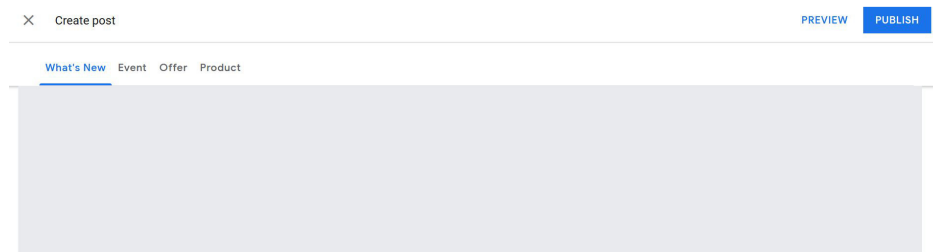
- Quick summary of your latest blog post
- Upcoming events that you will have a booth or a presence at
- New videos you've posted on YouTube
- Feature an employee with information on why they are being featured
- Highlight a new product or service that you offer
- Highlight a sale or special offer
- Promote what's going on in your local community
- Location changes, temporary closures due to unexpected circumstances such as weather
- Show off 5 star reviews
- Contests and giveaways

How Do I Post?

From the Home page of your GMB listing you'll see these options presented to you.



Click on 'Create post' and you'll be presented with the following screen.



Here are some ideas of what to post under each of the four headings:

What's New – Summaries, new videos, blog posts, new locations, general information, 5-star reviews. This is the most commonly used post type.

Event – Sales that last at least a couple of days, community events, events you will have a booth or presence at, contests or giveaways (Event posts do not have the seven day limit and will stay live until the event is over).

Offer – Special offers, coupons, sales and deals.

Product – Used for promoting a product or service. This is the post to use if your goal is simply to sell.

Posting Tips and Need to Knows

- The first 80 characters of the post are the only ones seen unless the viewer clicks 'Read More'. You only have a few seconds to catch a prospects attention and persuade them to click on your post so these characters really need to grab their attention
- Google My Business posts are sometimes displayed differently on mobile devices so avoid using images with text. There is a possibility that the image will be resized rendering the text unreadable.

- Use a 'real world' tone when conversing with your prospective customers or clients and don't use commercial slang like BOGO or industry speak – keep it simple and conversational; people want to feel like they're talking to a human being
- If you're using something like a 'Learn More' button in your post to direct a person to your website make sure that the content on that page matches the post content. i.e. don't take the person to the home page of your website, consider creating a separate landing page that matches the content.
- The best image size is 750 x 750 pixels and make sure the images are centre weighted – make sure the subject of the image is centred to avoid having essential elements like people's heads for example, chopped off.

Some Common Trends that We've Seen

Posts get less views when:

- Posts are very long (more than 3 sentences)
- Posts use industry speak (your prospects won't always know the terms that you and your business use on a regular basis)
- Posts aren't valuable or relevant to them

Posts get more views when

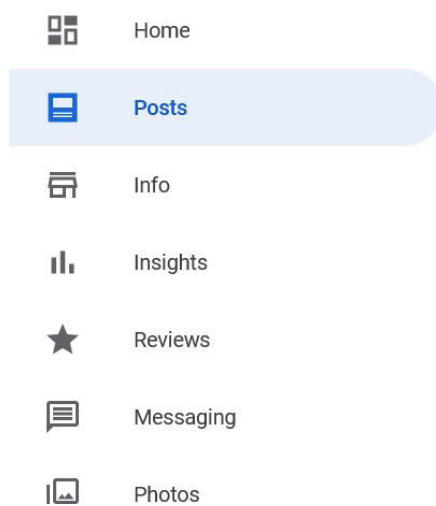
- The content offers something to the viewer (this not only includes offers for your services or products but also knowledge that they may be seeking).
- Posts show your certifications or qualifications (prospects will feel more comfortable contacting your business if they know that they can trust your knowledge and experience)
- Posts contain brief, general explanations of a product or service that your business offers. This ties in with the very long posts mentioned above. Here we're looking for the viewer to click a 'Learn More' button to take them to your website.

How do I Know if What I'm Doing is Working

There are two places to look to gauge how well your GMB listing is performing.

Check the Post Views

On your GMB page click on the Posts option on the left hand menu to see a list of your posts.



Under each post you'll see the number of people who have viewed your posts together with the people who have clicked any button that you have included in the post.

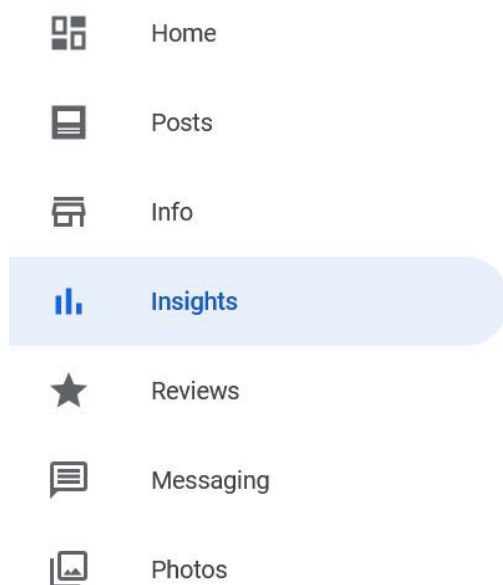


Check the Insights Page

The Insights page provides a ton of information on how people are finding your business listing.

From the means by which they found your listing to the search terms used and any interaction they had with your listing such as visiting your website or calling you.

On your GMB page click on the Insights option on the left hand menu.



The top of the page will show you your search data. Scroll down the page to see more insights.



Conclusion

Well that concludes our introduction to Google's GMB feature and the benefits that it can bring to your business. I hope that you have found it useful and that you'll start to put some of our suggestions into practice.

Always remember with this strategy that what works is work! Keep posting on a regular basis and Google will reward you for it.

Delight your prospective customers or clients with engaging content. Always remember that they are the heroes so create your content around them and what your products or services can do for them.

Wishing you success!

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