

FREE BEGINNER GUIDE

Google Business Profile Made Simple

A step-by-step guide to helping local customers find your business

From Overwhelmed to Confident

Clear instructions, practical checklists and friendly tips - without the confusing jargon.



What is a Google Business Profile?

A Google Business Profile is a free listing that helps an eligible business appear on Google Search and Google Maps. It can display your business name, location or service area, opening hours, telephone number, website, photos, products, services, updates and customer reviews.

PLAIN-ENGLISH EXPLANATION

Think of it as your digital shop window - open even when you are enjoying a cuppa.

BE DISCOVERED

Help nearby customers find your business.

BUILD TRUST

Show accurate details, photos and genuine reviews.

MAKE CONTACT EASY

Customers can call, visit your website or ask for directions.

STAY ACTIVE

Share services, offers, photos and business updates.

DIGITAL AVENUE TIP

A complete, accurate profile is more useful than one that was created and forgotten.

CONFIDENCE CHECK

I understand what a Google Business Profile does: Not yet [] Nearly [] Yes []

First things first: are you eligible?

Google Business Profiles are generally for businesses that make in-person contact with customers during their stated hours.

STOREFRONT

Customers visit a staffed business location.

SERVICE-AREA

You travel to customers. Hide a residential address and show genuine service areas.

HYBRID

Customers can visit your staffed location and you also travel to customers.

Usually not eligible

- ☐ Online-only businesses that never meet customers in person
- ☐ Rental or sale properties
- ☐ Virtual offices that do not meet Google's staffing and signage rules

WATCH OUT

Use real, accurate information. A made-up location or unsuitable virtual office can cause verification problems or suspension.

Get these ready before you begin

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A Google Account you will keep access to | ☐ Regular and special opening hours |
| ☐ Your exact real-world business name | ☐ A short business description |
| ☐ The most suitable primary category | ☐ A list of products and services |
| ☐ An accurate address or genuine service areas | ☐ Your logo and clear, recent photos |
| ☐ Your business telephone number | ☐ Verification evidence: signage, branded equipment, tools, workspace or non-sensitive documents |
| ☐ Your website address | |

DIGITAL AVENUE TIP

Keep your business name, telephone number and address consistent across your website, social media and other online listings.

My setup details

Google Account used: _____

Primary category: _____

Main telephone number: _____

Website: _____

Step 1 - Find, add or claim your business

1

Sign in to the Google Account you want to use.

2

Visit business.google.com/add.

3

Search for your exact business name.

4

If it exists and is unclaimed, select Claim this business or Manage now.

5

If it does not exist, select Add your business to Google.

6

Follow the on-screen instructions.

WATCH OUT

Do not create a second profile if one already exists. Duplicate profiles cause confusion and may need to be removed.

30-MINUTE ACTION

Search Google and Google Maps for your exact business name and location. Write down whether the listing is missing, unclaimed or already managed.

What I found:

Steps 2-4 - Name, category and business type

STEP 2: ENTER YOUR BUSINESS NAME

Use the genuine name shown on your branding, signage and website. Do not add keywords or town names unless they are truly part of the business name.

Avoid: Sarah's Flowers Best Cheap Florist Wolverhampton Wedding Bouquets

STEP 3: CHOOSE YOUR PRIMARY CATEGORY

Choose the most specific category that describes your main service. Your primary category matters most. Relevant secondary categories can be added later.

STEP 4: CHOOSE YOUR BUSINESS TYPE

Select storefront, service-area or hybrid based on how customers genuinely interact with your business.

DIGITAL AVENUE TIP

Do not select categories simply because they contain attractive keywords. Choose the closest honest match for what you mainly do.

Step 5 - Add your address or service area

STOREFRONT BUSINESS

- ☐ Enter the complete, accurate address.
- ☐ Check that the map pin is in the right place.
- ☐ The location should be staffed and able to receive customers during stated hours.

SERVICE-AREA BUSINESS

- ☐ Enter the real base address when Google requests it for verification.
- ☐ Turn off Show business address to customers if customers do not visit.
- ☐ Add only towns, cities or postcodes genuinely served.
- ☐ Google allows up to 20 service areas; service areas are not entered as a radius.

HYBRID BUSINESS

Display the address only when customers can genuinely visit the staffed location. You may also add the areas where you travel to customers.

DIGITAL AVENUE TIP

Covering the whole country may sound impressive, but accuracy beats ambition here!

Steps 6-8 - Contact details, hours and description

STEP 6: PHONE AND WEBSITE

Use a number that is answered as your business. Link to the correct website or the most useful landing page.

STEP 7: OPENING HOURS

Enter genuine customer-facing hours. Add special hours for bank holidays, Christmas and temporary changes.

STEP 8: BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Explain what you do, who you help, where you work and what makes you different.

DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

[Business name] helps [type of customer] with [products/services] in [location]. We are known for [main benefit]. Whether you need [service one] or [service two], we aim to provide [positive outcome].

DIGITAL AVENUE TIP

Write for humans. Avoid keyword stuffing, excessive capital letters, links and over-the-top sales claims.

My first description draft:

Steps 9-10 - Services and photos

STEP 9: PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

List your main offers in plain language. Add useful descriptions and prices where appropriate. Explain the benefit without assuming customers understand industry jargon.

Example

Instead of only writing "SEO", explain: Local SEO support to help your business become easier to find in relevant local searches.

STEP 10: QUALITY PHOTOS

- ☐ Logo
- ☐ Exterior and entrance
- ☐ Interior or workspace
- ☐ Team
- ☐ Products
- ☐ Completed work
- ☐ Branded vehicle or equipment
- ☐ Behind-the-scenes image

DIGITAL AVENUE TIP

Use authentic, recent images that help customers recognise and trust your business. Avoid blurry, misleading or heavily filtered photos.

30-MINUTE ACTION

Choose and organise five strong photos ready to upload after verification.

Step 11 - Verify your business

Google decides which verification methods are available. You cannot select a method that Google has not offered. Options may include video recording, phone or text, email, live video call or postcard. Some businesses may need more than one method.

Prepare for video verification

- ☐ Show street signs, nearby businesses or the exterior location
- ☐ Show permanent business signage where relevant
- ☐ Show products, tools, branded equipment or the workspace
- ☐ Show proof you manage the business, such as access to staff-only areas or non-sensitive documents

SAFETY FIRST

NEVER SHARE YOUR VERIFICATION CODE. Google says it will not ask you to give the code to anyone.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

After you complete the verification steps, Google's review can take up to five business days.

IF POSTCARD VERIFICATION IS OFFERED

Do not change the business name, address or category while waiting. Postcard codes expire after 30 days.

You are verified - what happens next?

- ☐ Check every detail is correct
- ☐ Add your remaining services and photos
- ☐ Publish a welcome update
- ☐ Ask genuine customers for reviews
- ☐ Reply politely to every review
- ☐ Update holiday and special hours
- ☐ Add fresh photos regularly
- ☐ Check profile performance
- ☐ Review all details monthly

SIMPLE REVIEW REQUEST

Thank you for choosing [Business name]. If you were happy with our service, would you mind leaving us a quick Google review? It really helps other local customers find us.

WATCH OUT

Do not offer gifts, discounts or rewards in exchange for positive reviews.

MY NEXT STEP

Common mistakes to avoid

- ☐ Creating a duplicate profile
- ☐ Using different contact details across platforms
- ☐ Stuffing keywords into the business name
- ☐ Ignoring customer reviews
- ☐ Choosing a vague or incorrect primary category
- ☐ Forgetting special opening hours
- ☐ Showing a home address when customers do not visit
- ☐ Treating the profile as set it and forget it
- ☐ Listing unrealistic service areas

A LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT

You do not have to make everything perfect in one sitting. Start with accurate information, complete verification and improve your profile a little at a time.

WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE A HELPING HAND?

Digital Avenue Marketing offers friendly, jargon-free support for small businesses that want to be found online. From Google Business Profile setup and optimisation to website and social media audits, you will receive clear advice and practical next steps.

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Guide note: Google features and verification options can change. This guide was checked against official Google Business Profile guidance in August 2026. Google and Google Business Profile are trademarks of Google LLC. Digital Avenue Marketing is not affiliated with Google.

Official sources: support.google.com/business - Add or claim your Business Profile; Verify your business; Eligibility and ownership guidelines; Representing your business; Business address; Service areas.