

Google Business Profile

A Step-by-Step Setup Guide for Small Business Owners

What Is a Google Business Profile?

A Google Business Profile (GBP) is your free listing on Google Search and Google Maps. When someone searches for your business — or businesses like yours — your profile is what shows up in the panel on the right side of the results page. It displays your address, phone number, hours, photos, reviews, and a link to your website.

Why It Matters

- **Visibility.** Customers searching locally see your GBP before they see your website — if they see your website at all.
- **Credibility.** A complete, active profile with photos and reviews signals that your business is legitimate and open.
- **It's free.** This is one of the highest-return things you can do for your business at zero cost.

The Setup — Five Steps

Step 1 — Claim or Create Your Profile

Go to **business.google.com** and click “Start now.” Google will prompt you to sign in and choose a Google account. Once signed in, you'll be able to search for your business name. If it already exists, claim it. If not, select “Add your business to Google” and enter your details.

✦ **Tip:** *It is preferable to use a dedicated business Google account — not a personal Gmail. If you have multiple accounts saved in your browser, Google will ask you to choose, and it's easy to pick the wrong one.*

Step 2 — Complete Your Profile

Fill in every field you can. These are the ones that matter most:

- **Business Name:** Use your exact legal or operating name — no extra keywords.
- **Address / Service Area:** Physical address, or a service area if you go to customers.
- **Phone Number:** A number you actively answer.
- **Hours:** Keep these current, including holidays.
- **Business Category:** Choose the most specific category that fits your primary service.
- **Description:** 2–3 sentences about what you do and who you serve. Plain language, no fluff.
- **Website:** Link to your website. If you don't have one yet, that's a separate conversation.

✦ **Tip:** *A complete profile ranks higher in local search results than an incomplete one.*

Step 3 — Verify Your Business

Google needs to confirm you actually own or operate the business. Verification options vary — you may be offered a postcard mailed to your address, a phone call, a text message, or email. Choose whichever works best for you and follow the prompts. Until you're verified, your profile won't show publicly.

✦ **Tip:** *Don't skip this step — until you're verified, your profile won't appear publicly regardless of how complete it is.*

Step 4 — Add Photos

Photos make your profile look active and trustworthy. You don't need a professional shoot — clear, well-lit photos from your phone are fine.

- Your logo
- The exterior of your location (so customers can find you)
- The interior or your work environment
- Your team or yourself at work (optional but builds trust)

✦ **Tip:** *Businesses with photos receive significantly more direction requests and website clicks than those without.*

Step 5 — Request Your First Reviews

Reviews are the single most visible trust signal on your profile. Start simple: reach out personally to 3–5 customers you've served well and ask them directly. Give them your review link — found in your GBP dashboard under "Get more reviews."

✦ **Tip:** *Don't offer incentives for reviews — it violates Google's policies. Just ask.*

Setup is the easy part; you just did it. Optimization is what actually gets you found.

Category strategy, review systems, ongoing profile management: the stuff that turns a complete profile into one that ranks. If you'd rather have that handled than DIY it, let's talk.

clkcomputing.com/google-business-profile-optimization