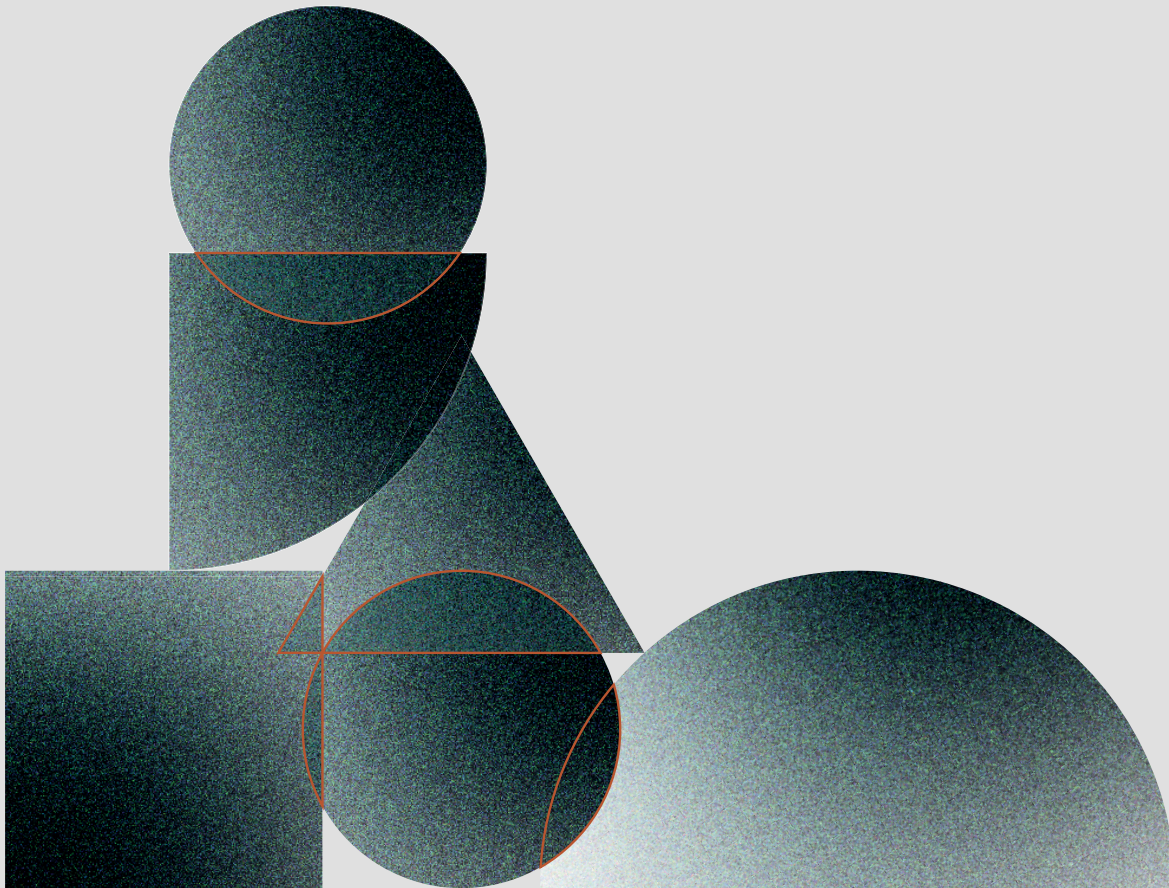


Making the Most of Google My Business



Google is most people's go-to tool when they want to find something, whether that's the answer to their kid's homework questions or who the best builder in their local area is. Establishing and maintaining visibility on Google should therefore be an essential part of your business' operations. For people to find you easily, you've got to showcase your business as the solution to their query.

In addition to getting search engine optimisation (SEO) right for your website, and encouraging your customers to leave reviews, your Google My Business listing is a key tool in improving your search rankings.

In this guide, we'll outline how to:

1. **Set up your business listing**
2. **Ensure your essential information is accurate and up to date**
3. **Attach more keywords to your listing to**

widen search catchment

4. **Keep your business feed updated to improve search rankings**
5. **Create effective product and service listings**



Initial set up

Setting up and verifying your business listing on Google is the first step in the process and it's important to get it right and provide as much accurate information as possible.

Investing time in the initial set up of your Google My Business listing will prevent you from having to go back and make unnecessary amendments at a later date. It will also ensure that your listing starts with a firm foundation that can be built on over time.

1. Create your listing

Go to [Google My Business](#), click 'Manage Now' and search your business name. Select your business if it appears in the suggested matches. If not, you will need to select 'Add Your Business' and provide the requested information.

As you answer questions, remember that the more specific and accurate the information Google has about your business, the better it will be able to correctly classify and display your business listing.

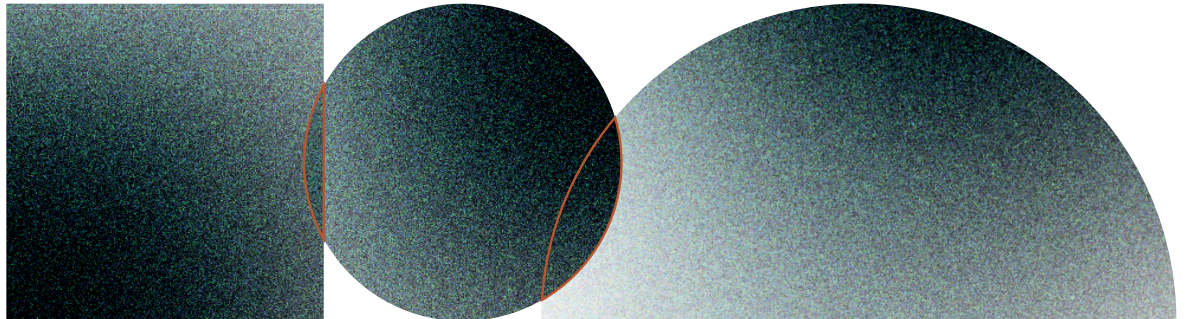
Think about how you want your business Name, Address and Phone Number (NAP) to appear across the web and use that NAP here (i.e. will you spell out S-t-r-e-e-t, or use St.?) The address that you use here should become your default address across the web. Consistency is important.

2. Category selection

You will be asked to choose a Category that describes your business.

The category selection is very important as it is essentially the way Google will classify your business, and the type of search query it will display your listing for.

Google has preset Categories, or keywords, for each industry. Start typing your keyword in to see if Google produces a match, then select the best one. You will get a chance to add more categories later on but remember that whatever you choose from the preset list will appear as your primary category.



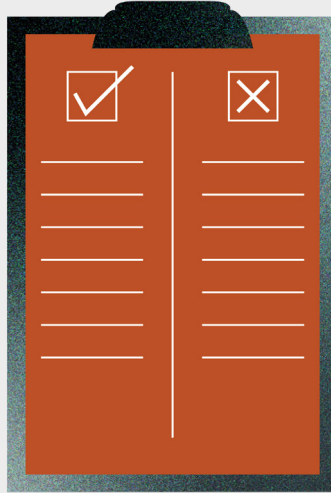
3. Verify your business

Google will want to verify that your business is located where you say that it is. This usually means waiting 1-2 weeks for a postcard with a verification PIN.

Occasionally, you may be given the option to receive your PIN by text message or automated phone call – take it – it’s much faster and easier!

Once you have verified your business, you can start adding more detailed information to your listing to increase the types of search query your business will appear in.

If you do have to wait for a postcard, remind anyone who handles the mail to be on the lookout for it, then try to verify it as soon as you get it (you have 30 days). You’d be surprised how often businesses have to go through the verification process 2 or 3 times because someone threw the postcard away or forgot to use it once they received it!



Basic information

Ensuring you fill out every applicable section on your info page will help to boost your business listing on Google. Don't forget that each bit of information you add tells Google - and therefore people searching on Google - more about you and makes it easier for the right people to find you.

You'll find a navigation panel on the left hand side of your screen. Select 'Info' and work through each section. Provide as much basic information as possible to help customers find what they need to know easily. Click the pencil icons to make amendments or additions.

1. Consider your business name

Your business name may seem like a straightforward piece of information to add, however it is possible to make more of it than you might think. You can add key services to your business name to improve rankings, i.e. we are 'Smith Goodfellow' but by adding ' PR | Marketing | Creative' to the name on our business listing we already improve our chances of appearing in searches for those things.



The primary business category you selected at initial set up will appear directly under your business name. You can now add further categories from Google's preset list by clicking the pencil icon.

2. Help people find you

Include an accurate address for your business' physical location - this helps people find you on Google Maps and get accurate directions. It will also help you appear in local searches.

3. Show where you serve

Add your geographic service area (i.e. just a local area such as 'Manchester' or a national one such as 'United Kingdom'). Note that, if your business operates internationally, you will need to add each individual country in which it operates.

4. Times of operation

Include opening hours and make sure you update any changes such as opening times or closures for public holidays etc. Be aware that Google may make some automatic adjustments based on regional public holidays, so make sure the information is accurate and remember to edit the hours again when normal opening resumes.

Make sure to regularly review any suggested changes from people who flag inaccurate or different details to what's listed.

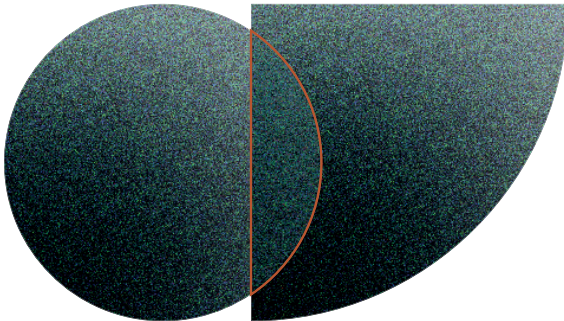
5. Contact details

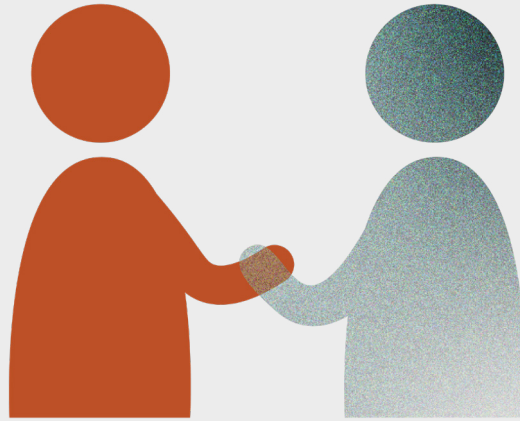
Add up to date contact details including an active phone number and website.

If your business operates on an appointment basis and customers can book online, you can include a link to your bookings page in the 'Appointments' section so people can book straight from the Google listing.

If you don't have a company website, you can set up a basic one through your Google My Business account for a small annual fee - you'll find the option to do this towards the bottom of the left hand menu.

There is a products section within the info page but we would recommend adding products separately once the basic information is complete. We will look at this later in the guide.





Adding services to your listing

Only the first business category listed under your business name is recognised in searches and you are also restricted to the options in Google's preset, drop down list. In order to expand the number of searches your business is likely to appear in, you can add service or product keywords to your business category by manually typing them into the services section on your Info page.

As when editing previous sections, click the pencil icon next to 'Services' and it will open to show your previously chosen business category/ies.

You can then free type the various services or products associated with each of your business categories.

You have the opportunity to be very specific here so take the time to think about what you want people to know about your offering. Eg. we are a public relations firm but we specialise in construction PR, so we list this as a service, along with specific types of work we carry out. You can add as many as you want.



Highlights & overview

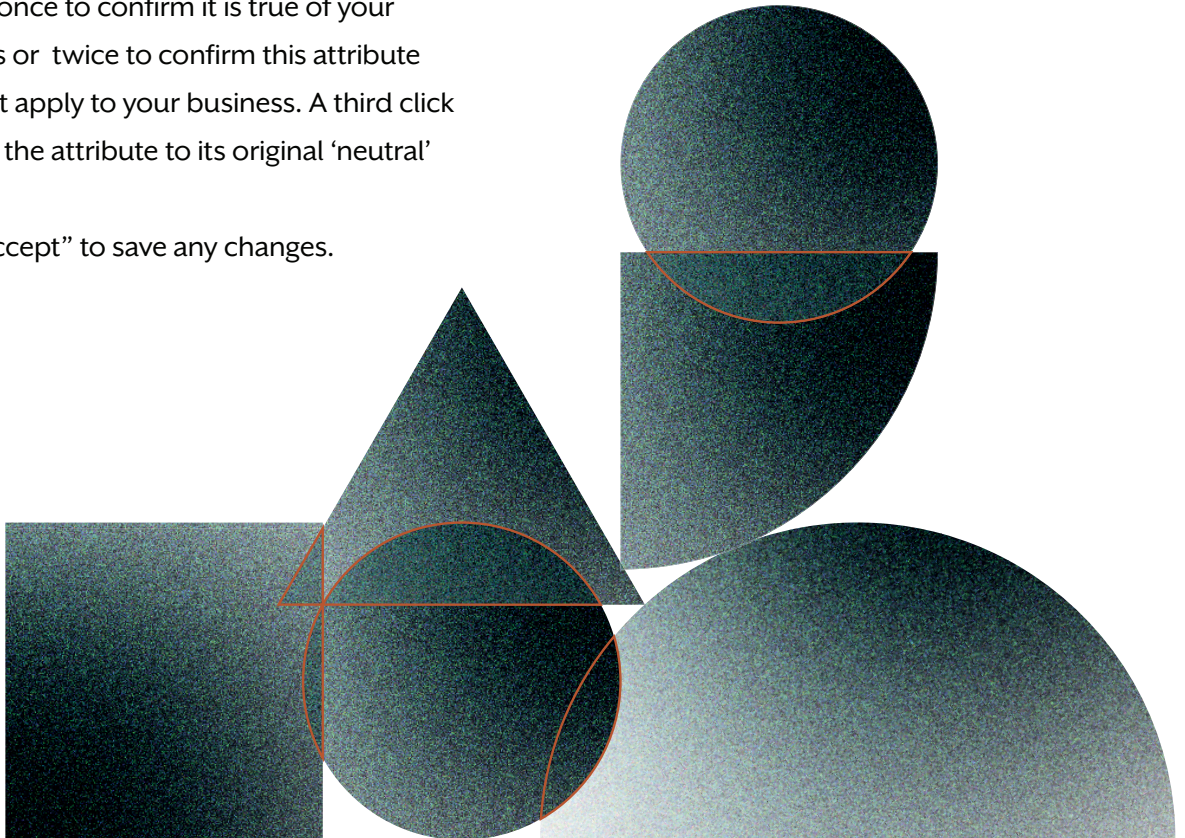
These sections can help to emphasise specific details about your business, making you more easily discoverable by people who may be searching for those things. Whilst content in the 'Highlights' section is largely dictated by Google, in your overview you can choose to showcase whatever you want about your business.

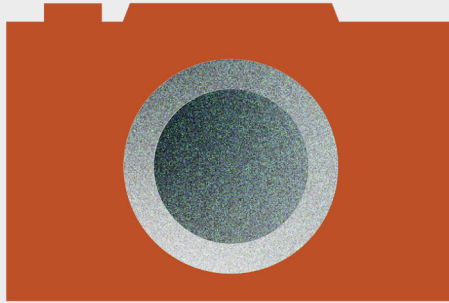
Back on the main Info page, you have the opportunity to add 'Highlights'. These are attributes suggested to you by Google and you cannot add your own, you can only choose to accept Google's suggestions. These might be things such as 'Woman led', 'LGBTQ friendly' etc. You don't have to add any of the suggestions if you don't wish to.

1. Click the pencil icon next to Highlights
2. You will be offered an attribute by Google
 - click it once to confirm it is true of your business or twice to confirm this attribute does not apply to your business. A third click will take the attribute to its original 'neutral' state.
3. Click "Accept" to save any changes.

Beneath Highlights, there is the opportunity to add a short block of text giving a general overview of your business.

1. Click the pencil icon next to the 'From the business' section
2. Free type a brief, engaging paragraph explaining who you are and what you do.





Photos & videos

The final section on the Info page gives you the chance to upload photos and videos. We strongly recommend you take advantage of the opportunity to add these to your business listing, as this gives people further insight into your company.

Start with your company logo and a relevant cover image. This helps create a visual identity for your business listing.

1. Click 'Add Photos'
2. Click the blue circle with the plus icon at the right hand side of the screen
3. Upload the images you would like to include from your computer

In addition to your logo and company header, you could upload images and videos to provide a further look into how your company operates and what you do. This might include:

- Your office/factory/workshop
- Employees
- Events
- Products

Be aware that there are limits to the size and length of the videos you can upload - max 30 seconds/100MB.

Customers or visitors can also upload photos of your premises. You will be notified if this happens and can review the photos added.



Products

Even if you don't sell physical products, services can be listed in the product section. This provides more keywords that will help improve your business' search ranking and is also an opportunity to showcase your offering.

You can add products from the button on the left-hand menu or by returning to the relevant section on the main Info page.

1. Product categories

Start by creating product/service categories. For example, one of our main service areas is written content but this can include anything from news releases to technical articles and blogs. ‘Written Content’ is therefore one of our product categories, under which we list each type of written content we offer as a separate ‘product’.

Written Content		⋮
	Technical articles	⋮
With 40 years of experience writing for the construction industry, and a dedicated team who prioritise staying up to date with industry issues and regulations, technical articles are our bread and but...		
	Blogs	⋮
Whether you're looking to showcase the personality of your team, spotlight a particular product or issue or wanting to share a technical 'how-to', we can craft optimised blog content to get your messa...		
	Thought leadership	⋮
Demonstrating the knowledge and expertise of individuals within your company is a great way to showcase your business's capacity to serve your clients. We can help you develop thought leadership piece...		
	Press releases	⋮
Launching a new product? Got an exciting announcement to make? We can write a press release that packs a punch and gets your news out into the world.		

2. Get the visuals right

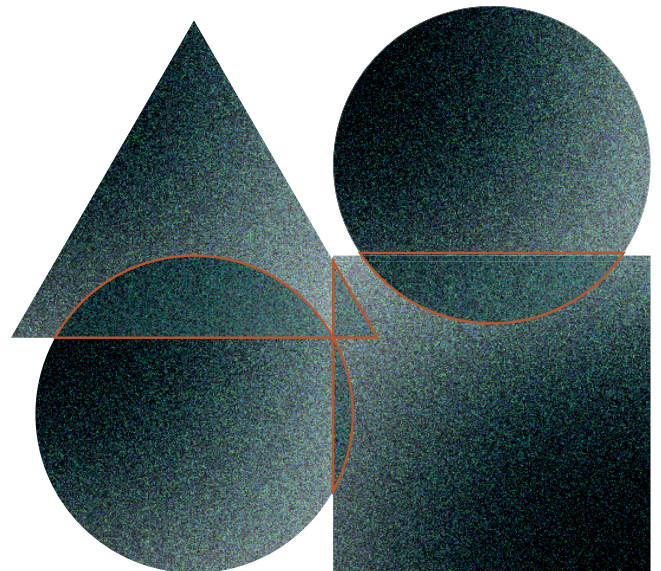
In order to make your product listings as appealing as possible, be sure to include images (relevant stock images are fine - you can source free ones from sites such as [Pexels](#) or [Pixabay](#)). This is important because it impacts how your product listings appear when customers click through to see what you offer on your business listing.

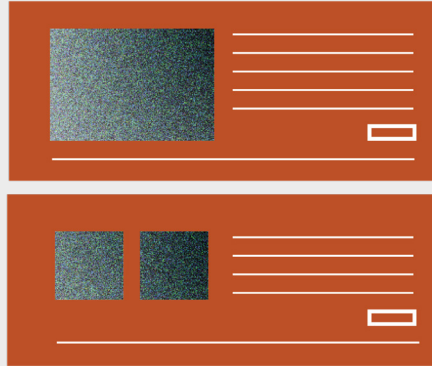
3. Sell your offering

For service listings in particular, include compelling descriptions and a call to action (you can add a link to the product/service on your website and choose an appropriate CTA 'button' such as 'Learn More' or 'Order Online'). You will have the opportunity to add a price to each product listing if you want to but you can also choose to leave it blank.

If you are running a special offer or promotion on a product, service or across your business, you can share this on your 'Posts' feed which we will explore in more detail in the next section. particular, include compelling description and a call to action (you can add a link to the product/service on your website

and choose an appropriate CTA 'button' such as 'Learn More' or 'Order Online').





Posts

This section acts like a news feed for your business. Regular posts improve your search ranking as they demonstrate that you are an active business and the search algorithm rewards you for it.

The posts section gives you the opportunity to showcase your organisation's personality. Use the posts feed to share news, updates, and links to products/promotions/services/blog posts from your business.

1. From the left hand menu, navigate to 'Posts'. There are several different types of post you can make use of: Offers, Updates, Events and Products.
2. Click the type of post you wish to create and begin by adding short, engaging copy including a clear call to action.
3. Add an image to make the post visually engaging. (If you don't have a relevant image then use your logo - it's important to always include some kind of image.)
4. Add a 'button' from the options provided and a relevant link for people to follow. (Again, even if there isn't something specific you are directing people to, it's important to include some kind of link so they can take action - link either to your website homepage or one of your social media platforms.)

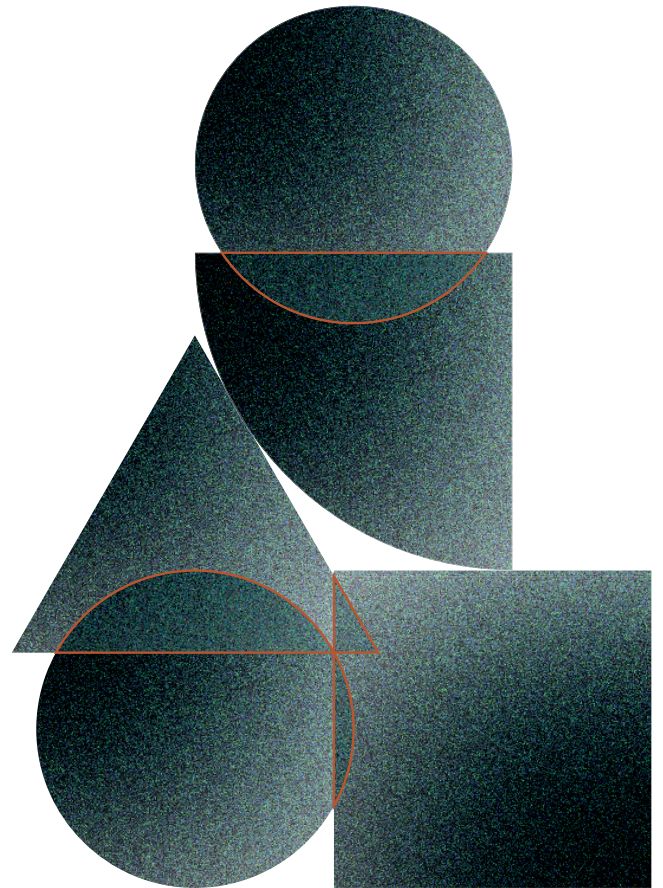
For general update posts, you might share existing content from your blog or website, encourage

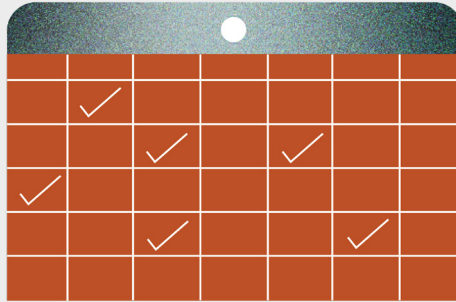
people to follow the business on social media, highlight particular services or share insights into your team or day to day operations.

Google occasionally adds specific posting options to reflect national or global situations. Take advantage of these options to share business updates, such as changes to staffing, opening times, supply chain or general operations, and keep your customers informed.

If you have a time-limited promotion, use the 'Add Offer' option. You will have the option to add a time period to the offer and Google will automatically remove it from your listing at the end of the specified time. Be sure to give it an eye-catching title!

Even if you do not have specific offers, events or products to share, ensure you are regularly posting general updates to maintain an active presence. Try to share a post at least once a week, even if you are resharing older content or just a general 'Check out our website for our full range of products/services' - this will help your search rankings.





Staying active

Once your business profile is up and running, it's important to stay active on it. Google rewards active businesses and consistent activity will help boost your search rankings.

Treat your Google My Business page like another social media platform and put energy into maintaining it - it will pay dividends over time!

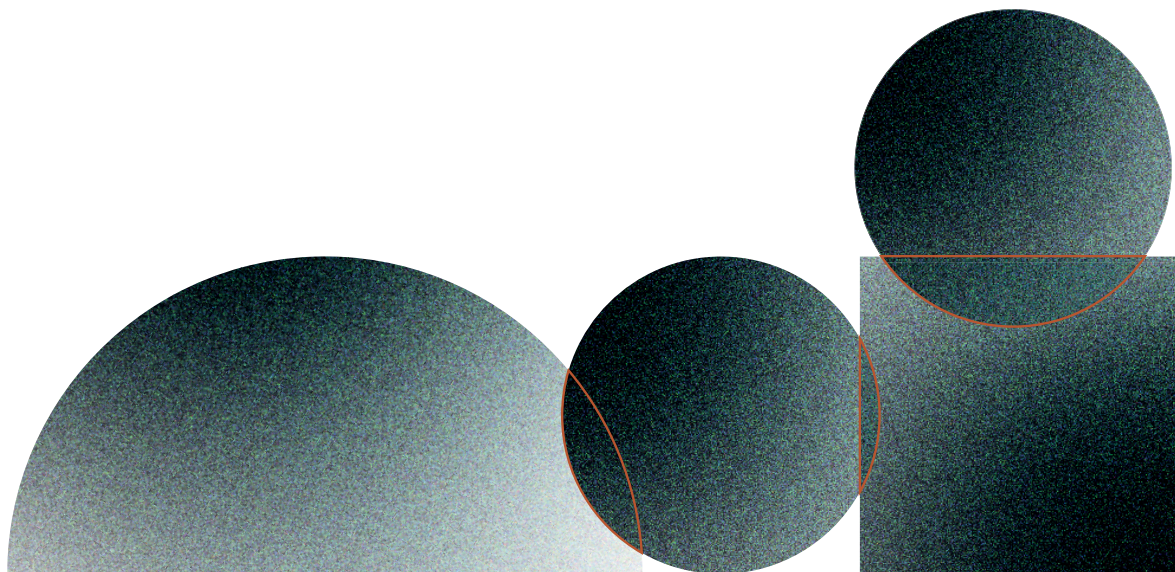
Remember that getting the most out of Google My Business, like any digital platform, relies on what you put into it.

Here's a quick recap of key things to do to keep your business listing active:

1. Share regular posts with updates, offers, events or to simply promote your website or social media channels.
2. Add photos (and keep adding new ones!) to make your listing visually interesting.
3. Keep basic info, such as contact details, opening times and website address, up to date, including any temporary changes for public holidays etc.

One other important thing to do is to encourage your customers to leave reviews. Share the link to your review page through your social media channels and on your website.

You could also include the link at the bottom of order confirmation emails or in your general email signature.



Want some support to
put this guidance in place
and create a Google My
Business listing that real-
ly showcases your
organisation?
Get in touch - we can
help!

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