

# GOOGLE MY BUSINESS: FUNDAMENTALS

Fact Sheet for Businesses

Brought to you by



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CLEARWATER**

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# Accessing Google My Business

Google My Business is a free, easy-to-use tool for businesses and organizations to manage their online presence across Google’s products, including Search and Maps. Google My Business is the only way you can control the information that appears about your business on Google.

There are 5 business types that use Google My Business:

1. Storefront Location
2. Service Area Business (you serve customers but do not have a public location)
3. Hybrid Business (storefront address and a designated service area)
4. Individual practitioners (public-facing professional)
5. Departments or businesses within another business (i.e. universities, medical facilities, and government offices).

## SIGNING IN OR SIGNING UP

You will need a valid Google account to begin, and the account you choose will become the “owner” of your business within Google’s products. Any @gmail.com account will work, or you may set up an account using your own email address. To create a Google account, follow this link: <https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>. Note that you can switch to using an existing email address with the link directly below the “choose your username” field.

## CLAIMING YOUR BUSINESS

Once you’ve logged into your Google account, you’ll need to verify your business. Verification is a security measure that Google uses to ensure that the people managing a business’ information are the actual owners.

If your business has a listing on Google already, try a search on [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) or [maps.google.com](http://maps.google.com) for your business name and click the link “Own this business?” in the Knowledge Panel for your business. (see example to the right).



The screenshot shows a Knowledge Panel for "Rodneys Kitchen" with a star icon and a close button (X). It displays a 4.6 star rating from 23 Google reviews, the category "Restaurant", and a distance of 1.7 miles. There are buttons for "Website" and "Directions". The address is listed as "624 Sycamore St, Waterloo, IA 50701". The hours are "Closed today" with a dropdown arrow. The phone number is "(319) 234-3663". There are links for "Suggest an edit" and "Own this business?". At the bottom, there is a link for "Know this place? Answer quick questions".

This link will take you to the confirmation screen shown below. Check the box to indicate that you are authorized to manage this business and click “continue.”

Then you’ll choose how you will verify the business. Choosing by phone, by text or by email will send a confirmation code to the contact information listed. In some cases, these options may not be available to you and you will have to use the “by mail” option which sends a postcard with the confirmation code to your listed address. The postcard generally arrives in 3-5 business days.

You won’t be able to control or access many of the features of the Google My Business dashboard until you are verified.

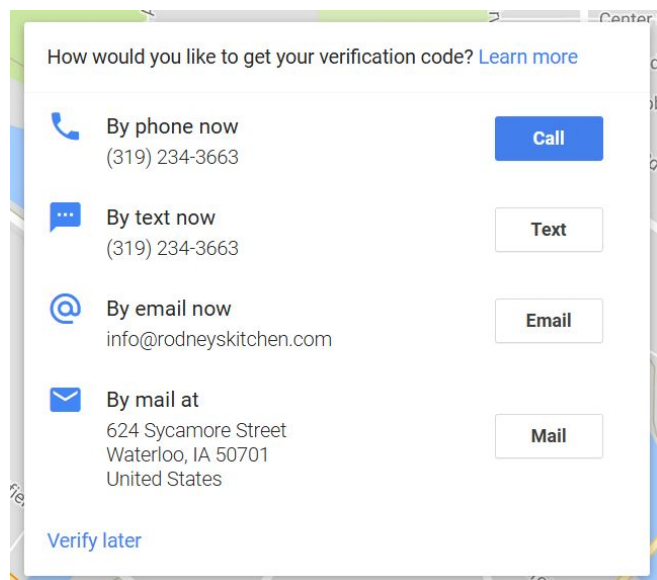
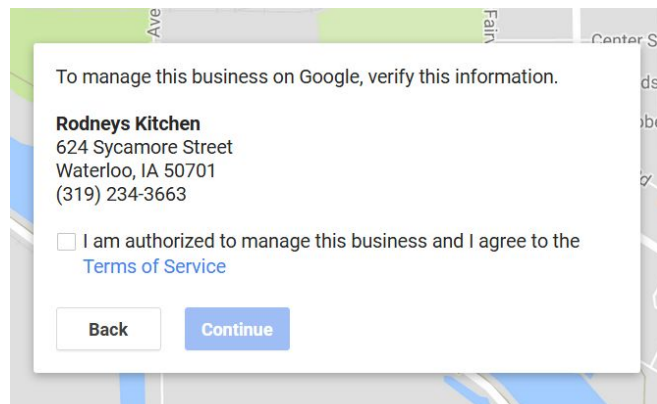
## ADDING A NEW BUSINESS

If your business is not already listed on Google maps, you should instead visit the GMB site here: <https://business.google.com> and look for the “start now” button which will walk you through the process of setting up your new business. You can also do this by “adding a missing place” within the desktop or mobile Google maps app.

## ACCESSING YOUR BUSINESS INFO

Once you’ve set up your account and claimed your business, you can access the GMB portal via: <https://business.google.com>

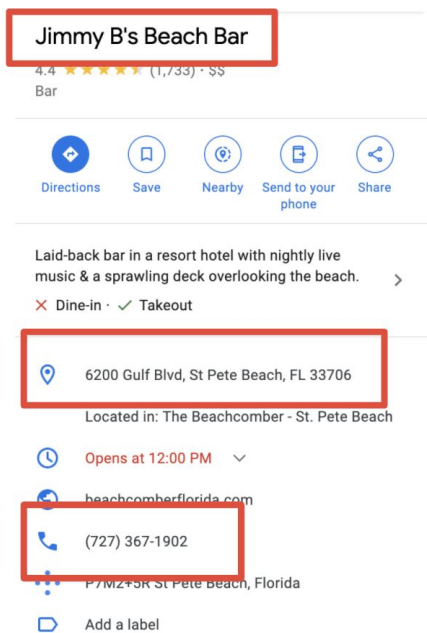
If you have multiple locations, it’s possible to add all of those as separate locations under one main account. You’d just repeat the verification steps for each location while logged into your account.



# Profile Completeness

## NAP Time

Sadly, this isn't the part where we all put our heads down and catch a quick 15 minutes of shut-eye. NAP in this case is short for Name, Address and Phone Number, which are three of the most important items you have in your business listing on Google.



## Category Choices

You will need to choose from a pre-existing category from Google's list (there are more than 3,000 categories available in the U.S. so there should be something that works for you). Aim for the one that is most accurate, if your specific niche isn't included. You're allowed to select up to ten categories for your business. One primary category and nine additional categories.

## Hours

Business hours is another data point that seems easy to skip, but is actually really important. Listing your business hours isn't just important because people are very likely to be searching for your business to find out whether you are open or not (although that is one reason why they matter). According to Google's search data, there's been a 300% increase over the last two years for searches involving businesses "open now." The results for those searches will only include businesses that have hours included because those are the ones it can confirm are open.

Day	Hours
Sunday	8AM-10PM
Monday	8AM-10PM
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	8AM-10PM
Thursday	8AM-10PM
Friday	8AM-12AM
Saturday	8AM-12AM

## Website

Cancel [Apply](#)

**Please note:** Edits may be reviewed for quality and can take up to 3 days to be published. [Learn more](#)

## Website

Of course it's important to have a link to your website included for your business listing. This doesn't just appear in search results. The information also appears across a range of different Google products, including Maps, the Travel Guide, and many more.

## Description

The business description is a great opportunity to showcase the unique aspects of your business and differentiate yourself from your competition. The description was made available to verified businesses (except hotels and a few other categories) in 2018 after several years of being unavailable.

### Tips for Writing a Good Description

One key to writing a great description is to show people why you're special rather than telling them that you are special. That sounds simple, perhaps, but it's among the most common mistakes businesses make in copywriting. Every place says its the best (like the scene in *Elf* when Will Farrell's character goes in and congratulates the random diner about their sign "World's Best Coffee.") But there's a big difference between saying you're a hotel with the best sheets compared to explaining to a potential customer that you spent three years testing different sheet



[Feedback](#)

manufacturers to find the perfect thread count and manufacturing process. Obviously that's an extreme example, but it will be more effective to explain the why and how of your unique value proposition rather than just trying to tell people that you are great.

## Listings for Service Area Businesses

Local businesses may not serve their customers from a brick-and-mortar shop front, but operate from a home address or may be mobile and don't have a shop front that customers visit. If you have a business that serves customers at their locations, you should list it as a Service Area Business on Google. Your business will appear in Google SERPs for local search, but may not display a physical address. The radius indicates the area your business serves and can be dictated by city boundaries, zip codes or miles from your business.

### Adding a Service Area Business

Sign in to your existing Google account and navigate to [google.com/business](https://google.com/business). Click the green “Start Now” icon to add your business. Enter in the Business Name (As you type, suggestions will start to appear—if you see your business, click to select. If it's not your business, ignore the drop downs and continue providing your business information.)

1. Add the Country and Full Address as shown on the right. You also need to include the business phone number, business category, and website.
2. As a **Service-Area Business**, select “Yes” to “I deliver goods and services to customers at their location.”
3. Click “Continue.” A pop-up will ask you to confirm your business delivers good and services and will ask the area your business serves. You can enter the city, region, or zipcode. You can also add a radius of how many miles from your business that you serve. Select if you also serve customers at your business address.
4. To submit, click “Continue.” A pop-up will ask you to verify that you are authorized to manage this business.

The image shows a screenshot of the Google My Business 'Add business' form. The form is titled 'Google My Business' at the top. It contains several input fields: 'Business name', 'Country / Region' (set to 'United States'), 'Street address', 'City' (with a prompt 'Enter the full city name'), 'State' (with a 'Please select' dropdown), 'ZIP code', 'Main business phone', 'Category' (with a search icon), and 'Website' (with a prompt 'Enter a URL'). At the bottom, there is a question: 'I deliver goods and services to my customers at their location - important information' with radio buttons for 'Yes' and 'No'. The 'No' button is selected. A blue 'Continue' button is at the bottom right.

## Editing or Removing a Service Area Business

Sign in to your Google My Business account. Choose the listing that you'd like to manage and click "Manage location." Click "Info" at the top of the page and follow one of the prompts below.

- **EDITING A SERVICE-AREA BUSINESS:** Click the "Address" section. A pop-up will appear prompting you to select **Yes** next to "I deliver goods and services to my customers at their locations." Enter your service area information. You can set your service area based on the postcodes or cities that you serve, or on a given area around your location. Select the box next to "I serve customers at my business address" if you want your complete address to appear on Google and show you also serve customers from your business location. Click "Apply."
- **REMOVING A SERVICE-AREA BUSINESS:** On the left side of the screen, click the field that lists your service area. In the window that appears, find "I deliver goods and services to my customers at their location." Immediately under it, click the "No" button. Click "Apply."

I deliver goods and services to my customers at their location — [Important information](#)

Yes  No

My business delivers goods & services to customers within this area:

Region, city or postal code [ADD](#)

Within  km  of my business

I also serve customers at my business address. (Your address will be hidden from the public if this box isn't checked.)

CANCEL [APPLY](#)

# Checklist

- Sign up for a Google account, or use an existing Google account.
  
- Claim your Business Profile
  - Verify your business profile. (If you need additional assistance with this reach out to the Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Team)
  
- Complete your basic Information
  - Name, address, phone number
  - Category
  - Hours
  - Website
  - Description
  
- Select your “Service Areas” (if applicable)