

Kardia Social



Create more time...

ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

“Reputation and influence must be earned. Social media is the quickest way to show your audience how good you are.”

Stacey Kehoe

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS - WHY IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT

Google is the world's number one search engine and it's also become the fastest-growing website for customer reviews.

Based on a recent survey, 63.6% of consumers said they check reviews on Google before trying any business - which is more than any other review site.

Google themselves have said that that customer reviews help determine business search rankings, and experts also believe that these reviews are one of the top local SEO ranking factors today.

So - it's really important to set up a Google My Business (GMB) listing. If you don't, you could miss out on potential customers that'll be finding your competitors instead of you!

GMB is a free tool - you can add your Business information, appear on Google maps and engage with your customers through Google reviews. And if you're a verified business you're twice as likely to be considered reputable by consumers!



“If in doubt, Google.”— C.S. Woolley

SETTING UP 'GOOGLE MY BUSINESS'



Setting up Google My Business is quite a straightforward process – initially you just enter your name, address, and phone number.

Following that you'll need to verify your information, choose the correct type of business for your listing, then add all the good stuff!

Adding Your Business...

Visit [Google](#) to sign-in or create a Google account for your business...and then go to the [Google My Business home page](#)

- The screen says 'engage with customers on Google for free' click 'manage now'
- Then 'find and manage your business?' Type in the business name... If it's already listed, click on the correct name, if not it will say 'create a business with this name'
- What's the name of your business (auto-filled) click next
- Choose the category that fits your business best, click next
- 'Do you want to add a location that customers can visit, like a store or office?' Click yes or no
- If yes, the next page asks for address details.
- If not, 'where do you serve your customers?' is an optional next step
- 'What region is your business based in?'
- 'Contact details' Add and click next
- 'Finish and manage this listing' click finish

Verify Your Business...

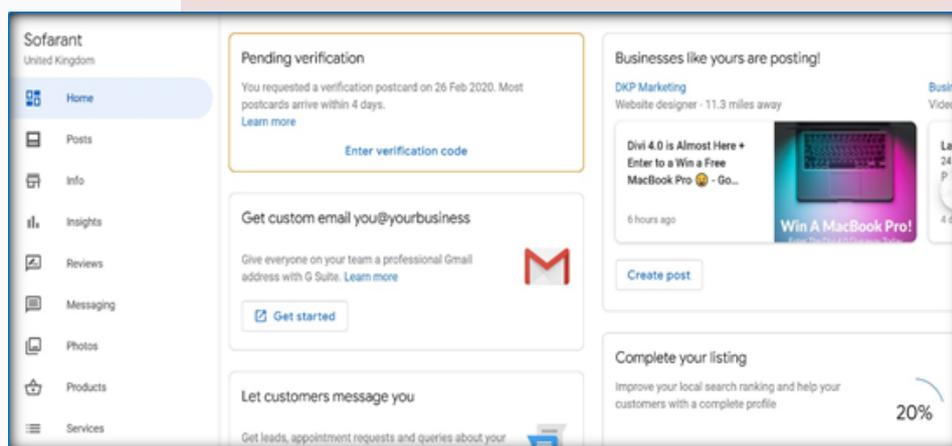
The next step is the Google My Business verification - you need to prove to Google that you own or manage the listing.

This is an important step in the process which gives you ownership of your page and enables you to update and manage your business information. Verified businesses are also twice as likely to be considered reputable by users!

Usually the verification code will be posted to you (you can sometimes verify a business on GMB by email, phone or Google Search Console but these options are rarely available)

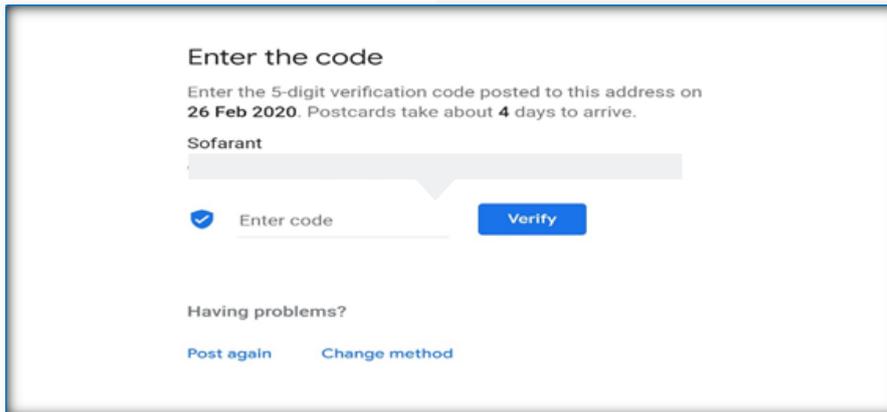
Follow these steps to verify...

- In your GMB account, click on your business listing, then the 'verify now' option
- At the postcard request screen, check that the listed address is correct (you can also request a postcard through the GMB app by tapping the 'send postcard' button).



- Click 'I don't have a code' and complete your request for a postcard
- You should then receive an email from Google My Business to say your verification code is on the way.

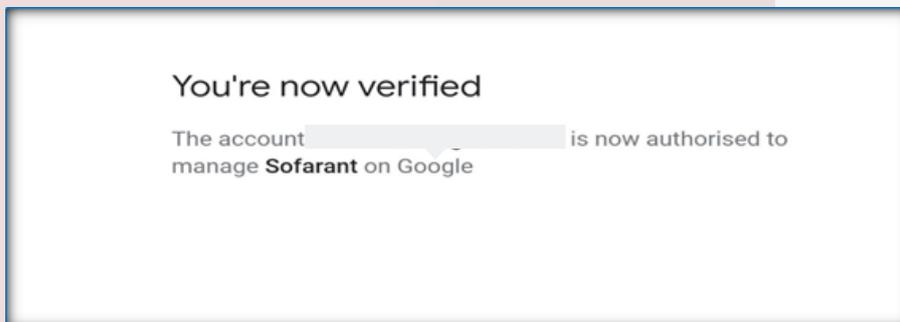
- The code can take up to two weeks to arrive – don't be tempted to change any information during this time as it could mess up the verification process!
- Google will send you a notelet containing your verification code... once you receive it, click on the business location you want to verify and tap the 'verify location' button in the menu or the 'verify now' option.
- Enter the five-digit code and click 'verify' to complete the verification.



The screenshot shows a verification screen with the following elements:

- Enter the code**: The main heading.
- Text: "Enter the 5-digit verification code posted to this address on **26 Feb 2020**. Postcards take about **4** days to arrive."
- Business name: "Sofarant" above a greyed-out address field.
- Input field: A text box with a checkmark icon on the left and the placeholder text "Enter code".
- Button: A blue button labeled "Verify".
- Text: "Having problems?"
- Links: "Post again" and "Change method" in blue text.

- You'll then see a note saying 'you are now verified' ...



NB The code is only valid for 30 days, so ensure you follow the verification procedure within that time, or you'll have to start the process again!

Bulk Locations on GMB

If you're managing a few business locations (10 or more), the good news is - you don't need to add them one by one - you can use the Bulk Location Management tool.

TIME TO ADD THE GOOD STUFF!

Add Descriptions of Your Business

Add your business description – you have up to 750 characters to summarise your company and make it really stand out!

When someone searches for your business this is what they'll see first as it's usually displayed next to your online reviews and ratings

- Make it good, make it interesting and make it useful for your customers!
- Use it as an advert to sell your business - but don't do a 'hard sell' with promotions or prices.
- Don't add URL links or too many emojis as they'll detract from the real info
- Check for any typos!

On your Homepage click 'add description', add all your important details and click 'apply'



Adding Services and Menus...

Add all the services that you offer and also include menus, opening hours, disabled access etc. Think about what you'd want to know about a business and include it!

To add a menu, click info, then you have 2 options for "menu". You can either add a menu URL (that links back to your menu listing) or you can add items to your GMB listing one by one.

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS...

The photos you add to your account are massively important...

They're the first impression of your business and can attract customers or just as easily, drive them away! When asked what was important for them in their local search - 24% of people said profile images were a deciding factor.

The images should be JPG/PNG file format - minimum size of 720 x 720 pixels and the overall image file size should be between 10 KB and 5 MB.

Make them clear and without filters or obvious changes.

In addition to all of your general photos you can have two images for your cover and profile. These are a brilliant way for customers to recognise your business and show off your company personality – make them **stand out!**

And people LOVE **videos** – so add some! They have to be less than 100 MB file size, no longer than 30 seconds and a minimum resolution of 720p



Add Photos and Videos to GMB

In the menu, select the 'photos' section - you can upload any photo or video – just click on the blue '+' button to start adding your media.

Remove Photos

NB: Your customers can also add photos to your business page – so be sure to check in regularly!

There may be some images that don't meet Google's criteria, and if that's the case, you can flag them for Google to review - just select them in the 'photos' section and click the flag icon in the top right-hand corner.

You can also flag images via Google Maps through the three-dot menu icon on the top-left corner of your screen and click the 'report a problem' button.

Managing Google My Business...

NB – Any amendments to your profile will be reviewed for quality and can take up to three days to be published.

Add or Change Your Hours

Be sure to let your customers know when your business is open...

- Sign into your GMB account and click the **'info'** tab from the Menu.
- On the Info page, click the **pencil icon** on add or change business hours
- The pop-up menu that appears will allow you to add or change your hours. Once you're done, click **'apply'**

You can also add Bank Holidays or special events to your times by entering in the **'Special Hours'** section.

Google My Business Posts

As with all your other social media platforms, make sure to create GMB posts on a regular basis – they're like mini ads, so make the most of them!

You can create and post up-to-the-minute content for your customers – it can include text, video and photos.

To create and publish posts: Sign in to your account

- Click **'create post'** or **'posts'** from the menu.
- Choose which type of post you'd like to create from the options given
- Add photos, videos, text, events, or offers to your post.
- Click each field to enter all relevant information.
- Click **'preview'** and if you're happy with the post, click **'publish'** in the top right corner.
- If you'd like to change your post, click **'back'** on the top left corner to edit it until you're happy to publish.

Questions and Answers

You should respond to ALL questions received through GMB

Unfortunately, there aren't any notifications when new questions pop up, so you need to check in regularly...

- Go to 'info' - 'questions & answers'
- Click 'see all questions'
- Next to the question, click 'answer'
- If you need to edit or delete your answer, click 'more' then 'edit or delete'

The person who asked the question will get a notification after you've answered



View Insights...

On the Insights page, you'll be able to see loads of really useful info including...

How customers searched for your business, what keywords they used, if they searched via Search or Maps and what they did when they found you...

Check it out!!

To access Insights for individual listings:

- Sign into Google My Business
- Click 'insights' from the menu

Read and learn!

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOGLE REVIEWS

All online reviews are massively important to your business – use this [Kardia Social Guide](#) to help you manage ALL your customer review sites

Surveys show that businesses that respond to their customers (particularly to negative ones) see improved sales and get higher ratings as a result. People want to be listened to and acknowledged and 78% of consumers say that seeing businesses responding to online reviews makes them feel like the company actually cares about what they have to say.

Thank those that leave a good review and find out from the negative ones what you could have done to improve their experience. Make sure all your customers feel important and have been listened to.

94% of consumers say that bad reviews convinced them to avoid a business, and 45% say they're more likely to visit a business that responds to negative reviews.

These figures highlight just how important it is to respond to all of your customer reviews - and promptly, or there's a chance you'll drive them away!

Google reviews are incredibly important and can help or hinder your local search ranking – so you need to keep a close eye on them...



Review Alerts

To help you keep an eye on your reviews, GMB will notify you of new ones via email. The email notification includes information such as: - the reviewer name, star rating, part of the review text and a link to the review. (These alerts don't go to businesses with more than 100 locations [2019])

MANAGING GOOGLE REVIEWS

Requesting Reviews

There are many things you can do to improve your Google ratings with reviews...

- You can share your review from a link for customers to add their comments - share it on your website, across your social media profiles, in e-mails, receipts and feedback cards!
- Ask your customers for reviews – more and better reviews will help to improve your search ranking - but don't ask friends to post over the top comments - real customers won't be impressed if they think they're fake and you'll lose their trust
- Encourage reviewers to add photos and videos of your business, it makes your company even more credible to the readers

A practice commonly referred to as 'review-gating' definitely must be avoided. It's done by sending customers a feedback or survey form through channels such as email, SMS, or social media. Based on their responses, customers are then asked to either post a review on Google if they had a positive experience or share details of their feedback privately if they had a negative experience. Google prohibits businesses from 'review-gating.'

To stay compliant with Google policies make it clear to your customers that they can leave both positive and negative results if they want to.

Google won't let anyone post anonymously when they rate and write about your business and their reviews can be seen and managed using GMB on Google search results and Google Maps.



Responding to Reviews

Responding to reviews ASAP can protect your online reputation and immediately improve perceptions of your business, but, on the other hand, not responding will be seen as ignoring your customers and can damage your brand

Click the 'reviews' tab on your home page and you'll see every review that's been posted on your business, organized by date.

You can respond to each individual review by clicking 'reply'

Be sure to respond to both positive and negative reviews – all are equally as important.

Your response is published immediately and an email notification is sent to the customer 5 minutes later - the 5-minute delay allows you to edit or make any corrections to your response after initial submission

Google also sends notifications to users if their review is attracting likes and views. These notifications can encourage consumers to leave more reviews when they visit other businesses.



Can you delete the reviews if you're not happy with them?

A negative review on Google could potentially drive customers away, but you can't just delete it because you're not happy with it. You can however 'Flag' it to Google if you don't believe it to be fair and within their guidelines.

The best thing you can do is engage offline with the customer who left the review to find out more about the issue. Once resolved, you can ask them if they would mind either editing or deleting their review.

How soon will a review show up on my listing?

You may need around 4 or 5 reviews and ratings to appear in Google search results, and at least five reviews for your business to show up and include your aggregated star rating (Google ratings have a five-star system)



Google Review Algorithm

Google doesn't calculate your overall rating by adding all your stars and dividing the total by the number of reviews you have. It's not actually the average rating.

GMB help page explains it like this:

'We calculate an overall rating based on user ratings and a variety of other signals to ensure that the overall score best reflects the quality of the establishment'

If one business has eight perfect 5-star reviews, it shouldn't really rank higher or have a better rating than a business that has collected 60 5-star reviews and a handful of 3-star reviews

Google never gives out much information about its algorithm for calculating ratings. It's possible that their algorithm is intended to estimate what your overall rating might look like if you had more reviews

Analysing Your Reviews...

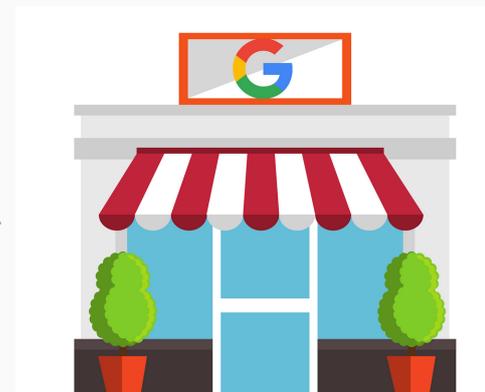
Spend time looking at your current reviews.

- What are your customers saying - are there any common issues or likes in your reviews?
- What did they love so much that they left a 5-star review?
- What did they not enjoy and why?

By reviewing your feedback in more detail, you'll achieve a much better understanding of your customers, and in turn your business. The insights you gain are going to be extremely valuable in contributing to your business plans going forward.

Use Marketing Kit by Google

You can use 'Marketing Kit' by Google to create, download, and print free, personalized marketing material to turn your reviews and business info into social posts, stickers etc



Can You Link Facebook Reviews to Google?

For some businesses, Google automatically links the reviews on their Facebook Business Pages to their Google account, and Facebook Recommendations, reviews, and ratings will then also appear on their business listings on Google

However, even though Google aims to do this for all businesses it doesn't always work. To get the best chance of it working for you, make sure your business information is exactly the same on both Facebook and Google My Business.

If Google sees identical accounts, it might pull in your Facebook reviews, but it can't be guaranteed, and there's no 'official' way to do this through GMB

Google Local Guides

Google Local Guides is a worldwide community of top reviewers. The more reviews a user writes and posts on Google, the more benefits they enjoy

If you get a review from a Local Guide, it's more likely to show up at the top of your reviews when a user clicks on your GMB listing.

This could be because Google gives special preference to their reviews, or simply because they do tend to be more detailed and include photos.

The Local 3 Pack...

One of the most stand out positions in Google's local search is the Google Maps Pack - also known as 'local pack' or the '3 pack'

It's a set of three highlighted Google-Maps-based results featuring the most highly ranked businesses based on a few factors that determine local ranking (e.g. reviews, local citations, etc.).

The Google Pack can take as much as 44% of the total clicks on search engine results pages!

How to Get Your Locations in the Local 3 Pack

Whilst there are no guarantees that you'll get in the 3-pack – sticking to the points below can definitely help!

- Claim your business listing on Google My Business and manage your information
- Encourage every customer to post a review – it's unlikely you'll get in the 3 pack if you have less than 4 stars
- You need a steady posts of positive reviews, and the more recent the better!
- You need a large number of reviews (not just for the trust factor but for your business to rank for long-tail keywords in the review text)

Generally, your whole listing should be kept up-to-date with an interesting business description, no typos, regular posts, all reviews responded to and loads of photos and vids!



There you have it – Google My Business – It's a straightforward, free and useful marketing tool.

Potentially it can drive a massive amount of traffic and interest to your company, which in turn can lead to more dialogue, conversion and business! Give it a try ...