

15 Steps to FREE Local Business Promotion

Jeremy Phillips | www.findingyourbusiness.com

Get Found @ Finding Your Business

"Make it a challenge for people to avoid finding your business."

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About the Writer:

Jeremy Phillips is the creator of www.findingyourbusiness.com. Check out the site for more resources and tools to make it a challenge for people in your community to avoid finding your business.

If you have questions about the content or would like to contact him, visit the website or email him directly at getfound@findingyourbusiness.com.

Findability Disclaimer:

Under no circumstances am I saying or implying that if you do these steps people will definitely find your business, become your customers, and buy from you. I am simply saying that the more places you can be found, and the more accurate your online information is, the greater your potential findability.

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Introduction:

Is it easy for people in your community to find your business? The sad part is that many business owners and company leaders would say yes.

The amazing thing is that they would say yes even though new people do not seem to be finding their business. New customers are not walking through the doors or calling in numbers that make a difference.

Instead of figuring out what to do about it, they complain and blame. But if you ask them if their business is findable, they would likely say yes.

Why would they say yes?

They might give you a few reasons like this.

- > We have an ad in the yellow pages.
- > We invite our customers to tell their friends and even spend a lot of money promoting our sales and products with mailings.
- > We have a website on Geocities on the internet.
{and have a brand presence on our MySpace page}
- > We put a sign out front that says...
"You found us! Now get in here and give us your money!"

The purpose of this guide is not to spend a lot of time talking about what has or has not worked in the past.

I would rather discuss simple and FREE strategies that make a difference in making your business more findable in your local community.

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I have intentionally written this to be short and action oriented. I would rather you do the steps than to take hours reading about the steps. I have also inserted several screenshot graphics showing you what to look for throughout the process.

I will not spend a lot of time explaining why you should take these steps either. If you do not think a specific step will be helpful in your situation, skip it.

The point is to begin taking more action to expand and improve the findability of your business.

There is one thing I want you to keep in mind as you begin.

Many businesses like to put all of their promotion focus on one or two channels. TV or Radio commercials, newspaper ads, their website, promotional brochures, mailings or door-to-door sales may be their two or three methods of promotion.

While those methods may work, you also need a consistent blanket of promotion working for you at all times. Yes, even when you sleep. Even when you do not have time to focus on promotion.

It needs to be out there working for you.

Make it a challenge for people who live in your community to avoid finding your business.

Use every possible method of promotion you can, especially when that method is FREE and online. When they search for your type of business, you want to be there.

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To become more findable you have to put your correct business information in as many places as possible.

The great part? The ideas in this guide are completely FREE at least for now. You can of course pay to use more of some of their services. But the basic level is free.

If it is free, why hold back? Do as many of these as you can. So, turn on your computer, laptop or tablet and let's get started.

Step #1

Create a Gmail / Google Account

Even if you have a personal Gmail account, you will want to begin by setting up a FREE Gmail / Google account for your business. If you do not have a personal Gmail I would consider that as well.

I am sure the Gmail setup and features we will look at in this step can be done with some other email systems. But most are not as flexible as Gmail. For the examples in this guide, I am using Gmail.

You can use any email address to complete the steps and create the accounts needed for local promotion. However, for certain steps like setting up your Google Business page you will need a Google account anyway.

So, you might as well get the benefit from using Gmail. Plus, you can try to get some version of yourbusinessname@gmail.com, which could be useful for other purposes.

If you are using Gmail for both your business and personal accounts there are a couple of settings you can change that will make it more functional. This will make it easier if you do not want to have to login to both accounts to work through the process.

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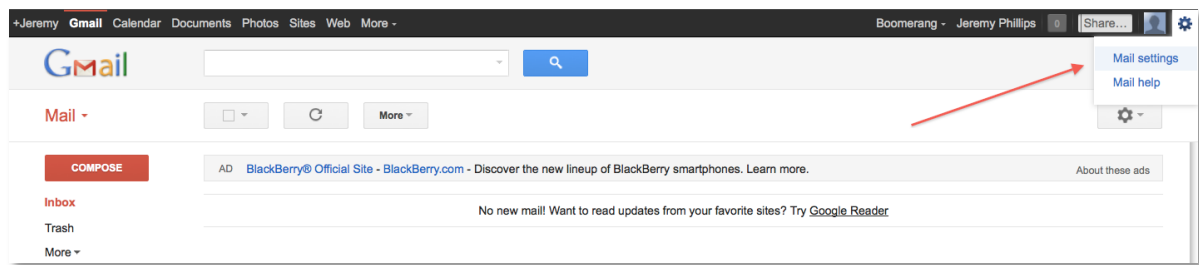
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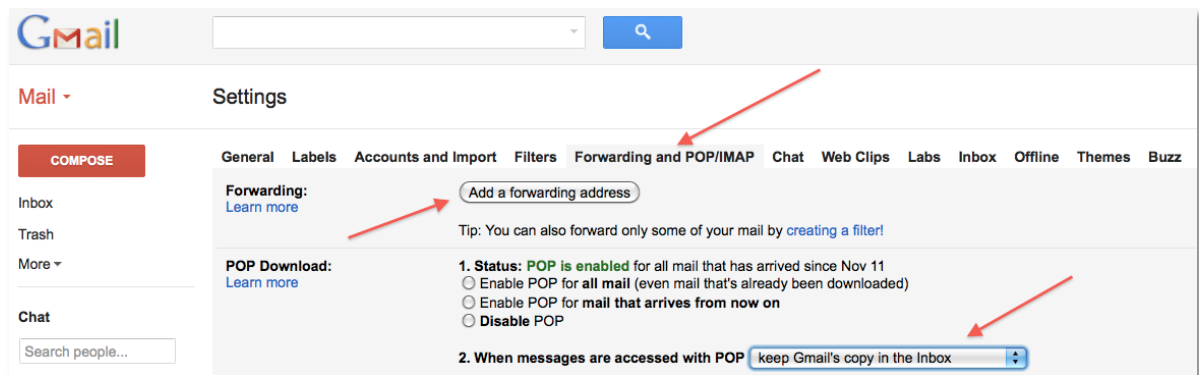
You will want to make sure that setting up a business Gmail and connecting your personal accounts is approved by your business. But, if your business and personal accounts are completely separate, it can get really annoying as you continually have to confirm and reconfirm by logging into a separate business email when setting up the FREE accounts throughout the process.

First, forward the business Gmail to your personal Gmail account.

To change and adjust your settings in Gmail, login and go to mail settings. This is currently at the top right corner of the Gmail screen and looks like a round gear graphic. >> **Of course Gmail can change the look and the process at any time.** *Note: The email address used in the example is no longer in use.*



In the business account mail settings click on "Forwarding and POP/IMAP", then click "Add a new forwarding address". Enter your personal Gmail email account and your mail should begin forwarding through.



Make sure you click to "Forward a copy of incoming mail" to your personal email. Then click to choose whether you would like to leave a copy in the business Gmail account or not.

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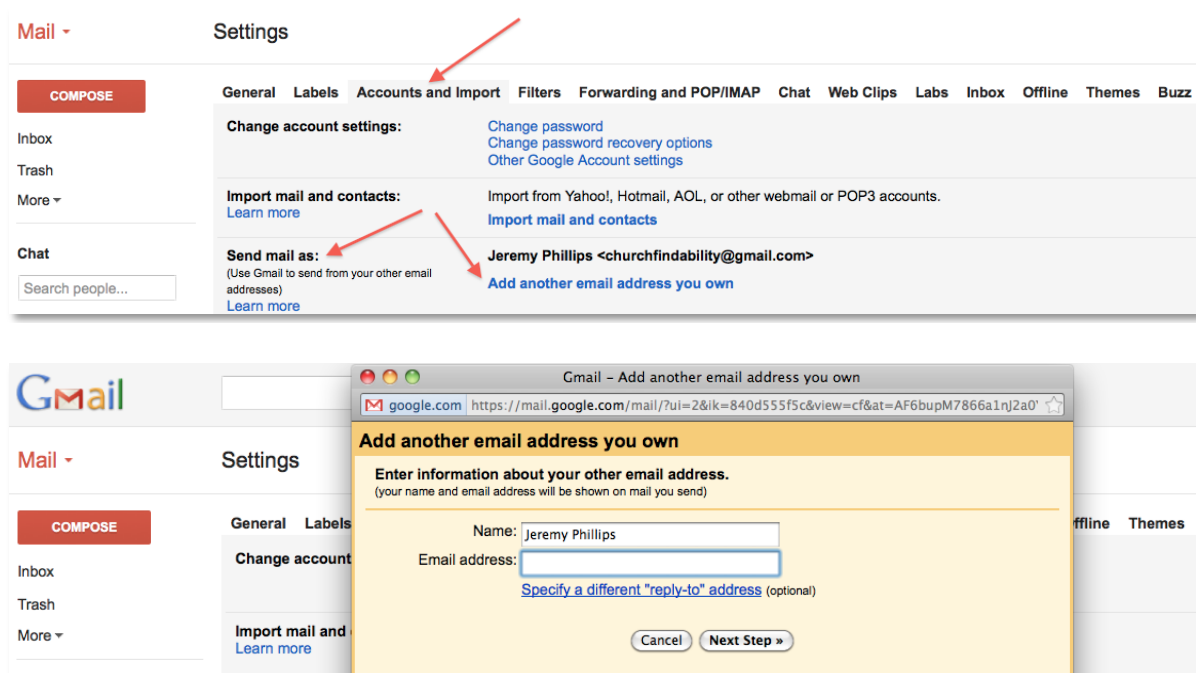
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Second, setup your personal Gmail to send email as if you were sending from the business account.

You can set your personal email to reply automatically as if it were the business Gmail when you reply to business emails. In addition, you will be able to send new email from your personal account as if it were from the business email. You can also set this up for other email accounts you own.

To set this up, login to your personal Gmail account and go to "Accounts and Import" in mail settings.

In the "Send Mail As" section click on "Add another email address you own". Enter your business email address.



It will ask you how you want to send your SMTP Mail. Just click to "Send through Gmail" as it will be the easiest to setup. Then it will send a verification email to you through your business email address. If you have already completed the previous step and forwarded your business Gmail to your personal email, it will forward and you can confirm. Otherwise you will need to login to your new business Gmail to confirm.

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Add another email address you own

Send mail through your SMTP server?

When you send mail as [redacted], the mail can either be sent through Gmail or through [redacted] SMTP servers.

☒ Send through Gmail (easier to set up)

☐ Send through owassofirst.com SMTP servers [Learn more](#)

[Cancel](#) [« Back](#) [Next Step »](#)

Enter the PIN code it gives you in the email and you will be setup to send and receive email in your personal account as if it were your business Gmail account.

Add another email address you own

Verify your email address

Before you can send mail as [redacted], we need to verify that you own this email address. To perform the verification click "Send Verification". We will then send an email to [redacted] with instructions on how to verify your address.

[Cancel](#) [« Back](#) [Send Verification](#)

After adding the address and clicking next, click to "Reply from the same address the message was sent to". This will allow you to automatically reply as the business email address when you receive it in your personal account. If you do not check this setting, all replies will be sent as your personal email.

Mail ▾ Settings

COMPOSE

Inbox
Trash
More ▾

Chat
Search people...
Jeremy Phillips
Set status here ▾
Call phone

General Labels Accounts and Import Filters Forwarding and POP/IMAP Chat Web Clips Labs Inbox Offline Themes Buzz

Change account settings: [Change password](#)
[Change password recovery options](#)
[Other Google Account settings](#)

Import mail and contacts: [Learn more](#) Import from Yahoo!, Hotmail, AOL, or other webmail or POP3 accounts.
[Import mail and contacts](#)

Send mail as: (Use Gmail to send from your other email addresses) [Learn more](#)

Jeremy Phillips <churchfindability@gmail.com> default [edit info](#)
Jeremy Phillips [redacted] make default [edit info](#) [delete](#)
[Add another email address you own](#)

When replying to a message:
☒ Reply from the same address the message was sent to
☐ Always reply from default address (currently churchfindability@gmail.com)
(Note: You can change the address at the time of your reply. [Learn more](#))

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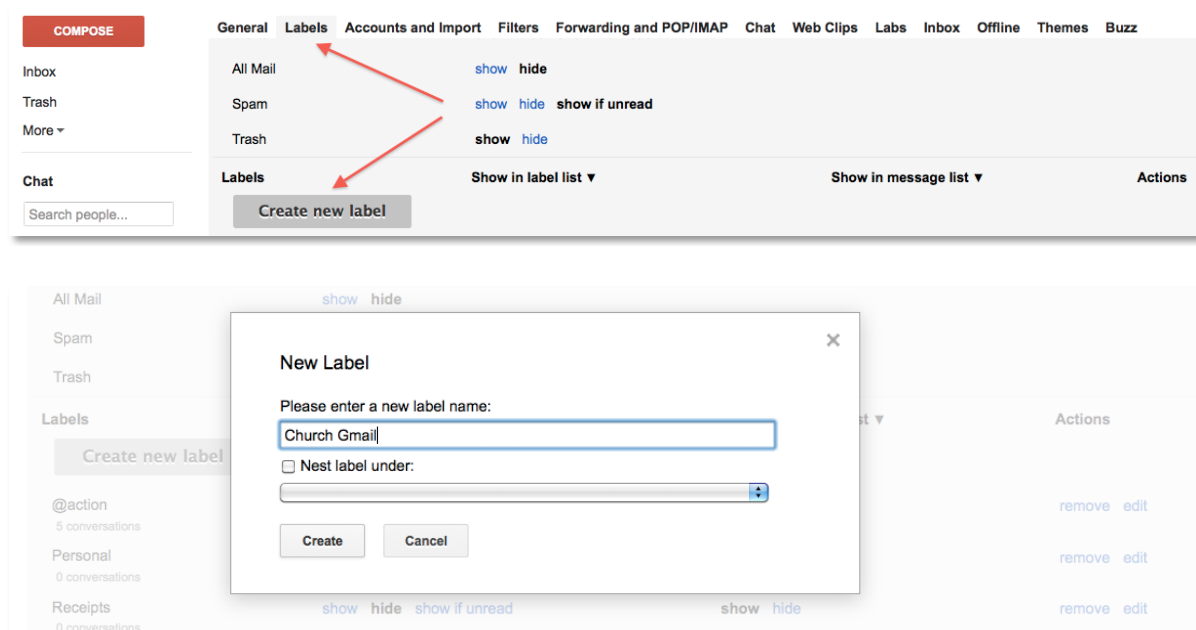
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After changing these settings, you should be able to send new email and reply to email from your personal Gmail as if it was from the business.

To send new email as the business from your personal account, compose a new email. Then, click the “From” area which should now have a drop down menu giving you the options for which email addresses you can send email from. Your business email should now be an option. People you send email to will not know it came from your personal email account, but will think it is from your business.

Finally, the last adjustment you may want to make is to separate your incoming business email from your personal email into an email folder.

You will need to create a Label or Folder for all of your business Gmail to be filtered into. Go to “Labels” and click to “Create new label”. Name it whatever you want and click “Create”.



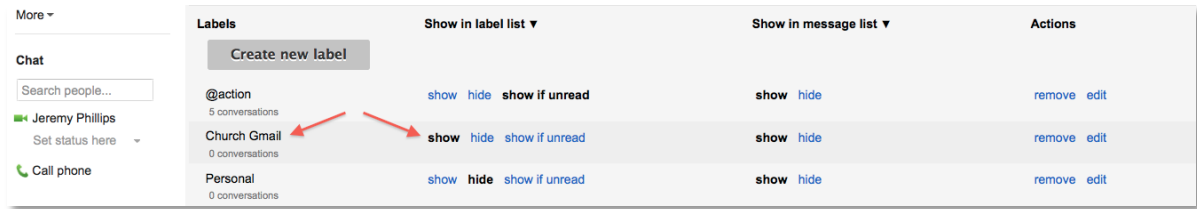
Now, click to have the folder show near your inbox, hide in a dropdown of folders or to show only if there is unread mail. This will show up in the left sidebar with your other email folders.

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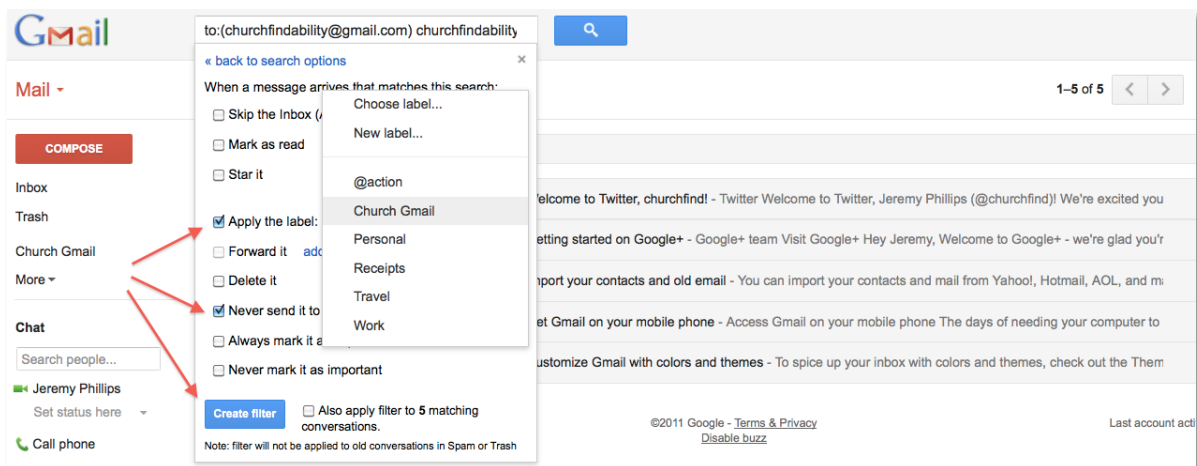
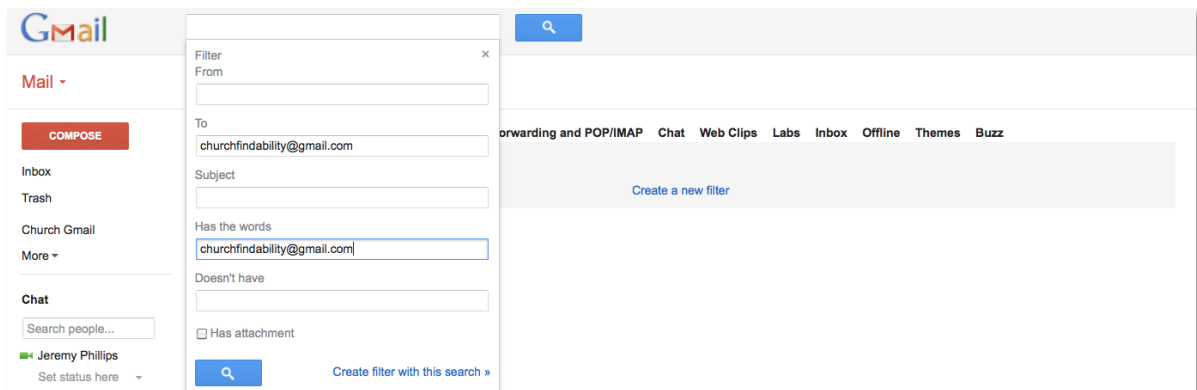
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I prefer the “show if unread” options so that I only see the folder if there is something I need to act on.



Now that you have created the folder. Filter email to go into that folder.

Go to “Filters” then click to “Create a New Filter”. The simplest filter to create would be in the “To” or “Has the words” areas. Enter the business email address in those areas and then click to move to the next step. With this filter, any email that is to your business Gmail or has your business Gmail address in it will be filtered separately.



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In the "Create a Filter" page, I would choose "Apply the label". You can create a new label here as well, or choose the label you just created for your business Gmail. Click to "Never send it to Spam". Then, click to "Create filter".

You can even click to apply this filter setting to your existing email if you have already been receiving forwards from the business email address. All existing mail with your business email address would then be moved to that new business email folder.

Step #2

Create your Local Business Promotion Document

The most challenging part of the local promotion process is keeping your accounts and information organized. The level of organization is up to you, but ***I would strongly recommend keeping everything in one place.***

Even if you do not organize the information well within that document, you will at least know where to find it. It will be there for you even if you have to scroll awhile to get to it. And, with most programs you can find what you need quickly with a document search.

Before we go any deeper into the steps, we need to create that one place to put everything.

That one place should be a simple document that you have easy access to. Preferably, you will have access to this document and information wherever you go.

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Keep in mind that one of the goals of this system is to be simple and transferable. If you are a business leader or manage a team of employees, your goal may be to equip another person in the business with this information. The more centralized, accurate and complete it is, the easier it will be to pass it on to someone else.

What should go in this document? Everything.

During the process you will be setting up many individual accounts. Gmail, Yahoo, Bing and other community and national websites.

You will want all of that information easily accessible.

Thankfully, as long as you have access to the email address that you set the account up with, you can nearly always retrieve a password. And with most of the accounts, you can tell it to remember your information and enter your password automatically.

That makes it extremely easy for you if your intention is to do all of the work. However, if you want to get others involved in the process it is important that you make correct account information easy to share.

I know it sounds scary to say, “make correct account information easy to share”.

But, remember that most of these accounts are not holding secure information. With the exception of the Gmail, which is the main email address you will use, you are just using the accounts to spread the word about your business.

It is important to make sure that whoever has access to the accounts is trustworthy and not going to put inaccurate or unapproved information on the sites.

It is possible that you will receive comments from your various accounts and listings from people viewing your content. These could be messages that they want to go directly to you or an employee to manage and respond to. That is a definite possibility.

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If you are worried about giving access to the main business Gmail, then you or someone in a position of authority would need to setup the actual accounts and do account maintenance that requires Gmail activation or verification.

I would not hesitate to give the right people access to random community website accounts as long as someone is monitoring the end results of the information they put on the sites. If you are clear and up front with the employee about what you want, that should not be an issue.

If you are splitting responsibilities between staff and multiple employees, this document is extremely valuable. When you define what each role is going to be, you can create specific documents that only have information that person needs. Then you only share what each person needs to know to do what they need to do.

Having everything in one place allows you to create employee specific documents more quickly.

There are a couple of tools that will help you accomplish this. Of course you can just make a simple Microsoft Word document, but I would rather use a resource that allows the information to be more portable.

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Dropbox

If you go with a Word document or other offline method, I would recommend using a Dropbox account to make the document accessible online. You get a huge amount of space for free and it will be useful in other aspects of your business too.



Go to www.dropbox.com for instructions as to how to create an account as well as how to download and setup computer widgets and mobile apps for both Android and Apple. This resource is free.

Evernote

Evernote is another simple and portable tool to use to create this document. You get a huge amount of free space to store your information. Much more space than you would ever possibly need for this project.

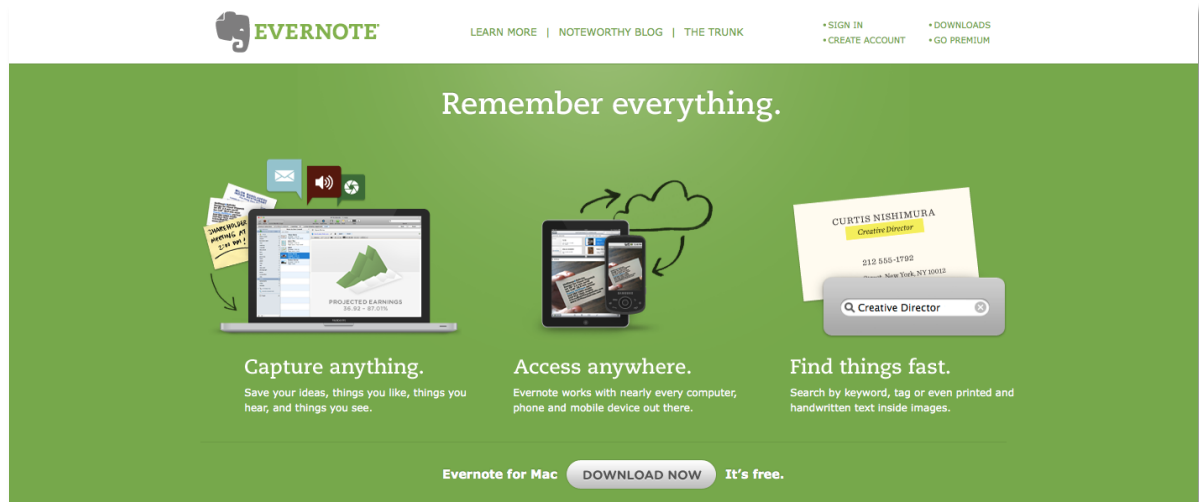
After signing up for your free account, you can create a simple note with all of the information, or multiple notes shared with different employees if you need to split responsibilities. Then you will be able to access it online and with free desktop widgets as well as Android and Apple mobile apps.

In addition to the simple note function, you can take pictures, add documents and even record audio messages to yourself from your smartphone and it will be sent directly to your Evernote account.

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Everything in one place. Go to www.evernote.com to get started.

Google Drive

This is a feature in your Google/Gmail account and is also a great option for creating this document.

The obvious benefit is that it will remain connected to your Gmail account. You can access the information anywhere online, and you can find mobile apps that work with Google docs in the Android and Apple app stores.

To access this free tool, login to www.google.com/drive with your business Gmail login. You can create documents, spreadsheets, and even presentations. But, you can also upload a huge amount of files for FREE and store them online connected to your Gmail account.

Initially I created my document as a document in Google Drive, but have moved all of my organization efforts to Evernote.

Even if you just want to create a simple Word document, start out with everything in one place.

Title your document whatever you like and add new sections as we go along for links and information that you will need to remember or delegate to employees.

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Step #3

Choose Your Landing Page

The website landing page for your local promotion efforts is one of the most important keys to having this strategy work for you.

Yes, you can put your phone number and address in every listing and hope people take the next step of contacting you. You could also put your hours of operation and business specific details scattered over all the sites to give people as much information as possible.

However, there is one huge problem. If you change anything such as your hours of operation even for one week, the information that potential customers are finding is out of date and incorrect.

The goal is to put a system in place that will work for you while you sleep.

I am not lazy, but I do want my efforts to be as easy, but also as effective as possible. Even though we are putting all of our logins into a centralized document to make it easier to make changes to listings, we do not want to have to change that information unless absolutely needed.

We want to make all of our general information that is in online and in business directories as consistent and correct as possible. The best way to do this in my opinion *[at least for people with limited time]* is to leave specifics out and point everything back to an updatable landing page.

Pointing everything back to one website landing page accomplishes a couple of important things.

>> First, you can keep all of your information up to date by changing just one page instead of having to go back and change everything you have ever put online.

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It is nearly impossible to change and correct everything online anyway as other sites pick up your information and duplicate it. We will look at that more in a future step.

As we all know, things change. Business hours change. Your business may be closed due to weather. Things happen.

Direct people back to your website or landing page for the most up to date information.

>> Another huge benefit is that you can offer much more complete details about what is going on in your business on your landing page.

If you include extremely specific information in random places online, that is all the information they are going to get. If you direct them back to your site you can tell them your current products and promotions, upcoming events, display video and pictures and whatever else you are doing in your business at that time.

That provides a huge impact as opposed to just giving out your awesome phone number. You should provide your phone number and address, but I would leave out specific details that can change from week to week and focus on bringing people back to your landing page.

What should your landing page be?

For some of you this will be a simple and obvious choice. If you have a website, that should most likely be your landing page.

This is especially true if you have taken the time to optimize the front page of your site to make it user friendly for new customers. If you have not done this, then it may be a good idea to create and direct people to a separate page on your site directed at new potential customers.

At the least, your landing page should have your basic information such as hours of operation and contact info. But, this would be a home run if you could include upcoming events, products and promotions targeted toward new customers, or at least links to those types of pages.

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This landing page does not have to be your own website, but I think that is preferable. If you do not have a website or do not want to use it, then consider using a Facebook page. If you do not want to use Facebook, you can link to your Google Business page, which we will setup in an upcoming step.

Whatever you do, choose a landing page! Make sure you keep it up to date with current information so that when potential visitors begin finding it they are not finding wrong details about your business.

One thing to consider: When you enter content in local business directories and on community websites there is usually a length limit to what you can enter. If you have an extremely long website address like www.mybusinessisbetterthanyoursandicanproveitbymyprices.com it is most likely not going to fit well into the space they provide.

The best approach for search engines and your potential customers is to put your actual website address into each listing as it gives you links back to your website and helps people learn your website name. But, if it is way too long to do that you at least have a couple of options.

First, you could purchase an additional website address [also called url or domain name] that is a shortened version of your site. Maybe just the initials of your business or whatever is available that still represents your business well. This is not preferable, but is an option.

You can then have the person who develops your website point that website address to your existing site, Facebook or Google Business page. That way when people visit that shorter address they land on the same website as the long web address.

Check out the “Business Resources” page at www.findingyourbusiness.com for my recommended place to purchase additional domain names.

Second, you can use your Google account to create a shortened version of your website address. I have used this tool to put long website addresses into print pieces so that it will fit in that small space.

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The Google website shortened address will look something like this when you first create it - <http://goo.gl/Ck0Yd>. But you can change it to include the www. instead so it looks more normal like – www.goo.gl/Ck0Yd and it will still work correctly.

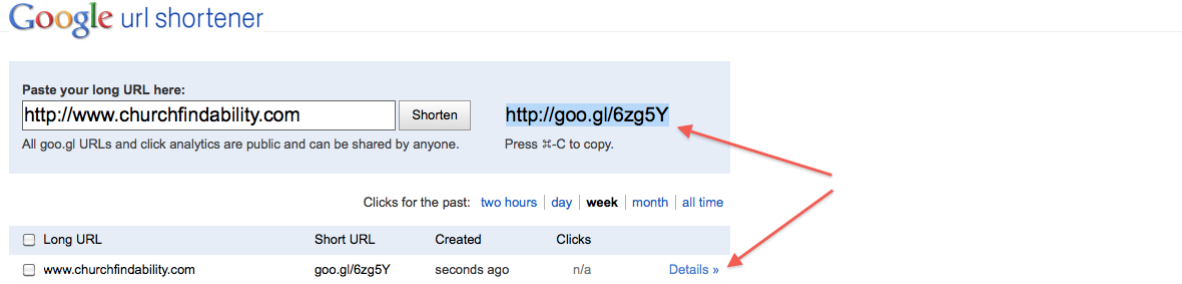
This will obviously not look as normal as your regular website address. However it does come with an added advantage. You can access statistics to see how many times people have clicked on that link. Free statistics can be very helpful to measure how your local promotion campaign is working.

You could even create multiple shortened website addresses that all lead back to your landing page. That way you could track and see which of your efforts is bringing in the most clicks.

Just be sure to create a section in your Local Business Promotion Document to keep track of which shortened links have been placed on which sites.

Using the free goo.gl service is simple.

Go to www.goo.gl and login using your business Gmail username and password. Enter the website address of your business and click to shorten the link.



The screenshot shows the Google URL Shortener interface. At the top, it says "Google url shortener". Below that, there's a section "Paste your long URL here:" with a text input field containing "http://www.churchfindability.com" and a "Shorten" button. To the right of the button, the shortened URL "http://goo.gl/6zg5Y" is displayed. Below the input field, a note states: "All goo.gl URLs and click analytics are public and can be shared by anyone." Below the shortened URL, it says "Press ⌘-C to copy." Below this, there's a section "Clicks for the past:" with links for "two hours", "day", "week", "month", and "all time". At the bottom, there's a table with columns: "Long URL", "Short URL", "Created", "Clicks", and "Details". The table has one row with the following data: "www.churchfindability.com", "goo.gl/6zg5Y", "seconds ago", "n/a", and a "Details" link. Two red arrows point from the "Details" link in the table to the shortened URL and the "Details" link in the table.

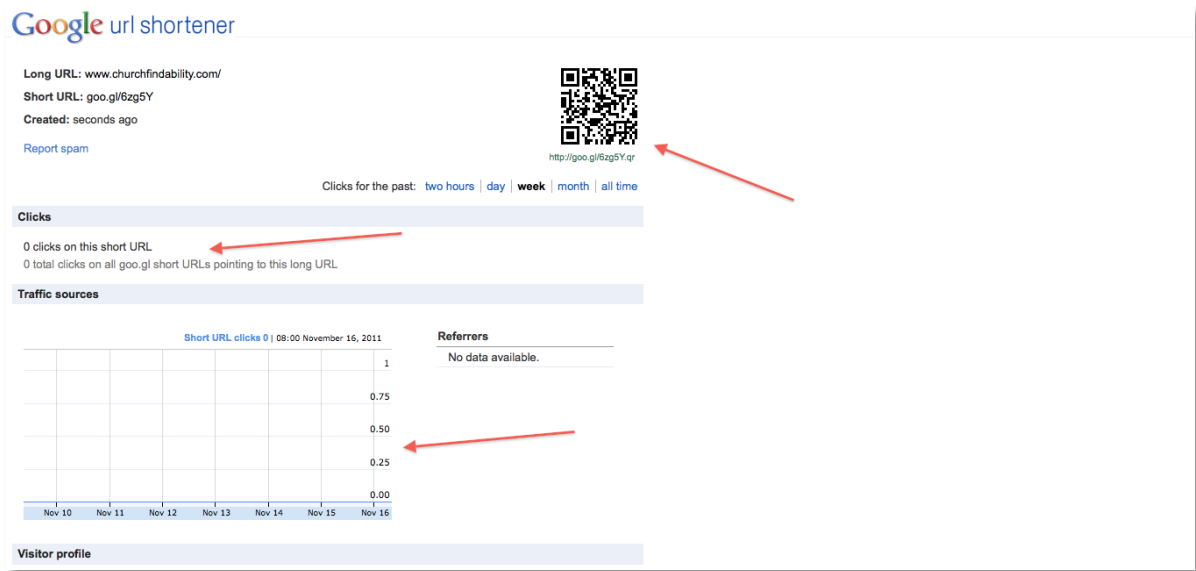
Long URL	Short URL	Created	Clicks	Details
www.churchfindability.com	goo.gl/6zg5Y	seconds ago	n/a	Details »

After you create the link you can copy and paste it into your online listings or in print. To check the statistics for each link click on "details" to the right of each shortened website address when logged into www.goo.gl.

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If this approach to your local business promotion is going to work, you are going to have to make your decision regarding your landing page and stick with it.

You can create other landing pages for special products or events to be used for specific promotion campaigns, but for general online listings keep it simple.

Choose your landing page before moving ahead.

Step #4

Write out your Business Promotion Template

You will find it helpful many times during this process to write out a text template. You will need some things written out the same or nearly the same again and again.

It is helpful to have those templates written and stored in your Local Business Promotion Document.

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Some of this you can do even before beginning the process. Some templates that you will need will be discovered along the way.

Many times due to space allowed on the websites, you will not be able to use your template exactly as written. You will have to edit it down for space. But, having something quality and accurate to start with will still make the process go much more quickly.

What are good templates to write out ahead of time?

1. Title of your Business

This would seem obvious, but depending on your business name and connections there could be many possible versions of your business name.

Some businesses have changed their names to remove past associations such as lawyers who split practices. Some business are connected to organizations and franchises. Some spell out the full name, and some abbreviate parts of the name. What do you definitely want in the name and what are you going to leave out? Decide up front how you want your name in your title and stick with it for consistency.

Another thing to consider is the length of the business name.

Do you abbreviate certain parts of the name or do you spell everything out? Does your business just go by initials of the actual name? Is that enough to let people really know who you are?

One somewhat humorous problem that I ran into with church names is having the word of "Assembly" in the name.

Sometimes online depending on the size of screen or if the person is viewing it on a mobile phone there are issues. Some of the name gets cut off.

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Unfortunately, the part that is never cut off is the first three letters in the word Assembly. That is an obvious problem if all you see is the first three letters of Assembly. So, I changed it to AG for Assemblies of God instead of writing it out to prevent this from happening.

There may be times when you have to change it up depending on the space they will allow in the listing. But if at all possible, keep it consistent for everything you put online.

2. Address, Phone, Email & Website

We have already talked about this a little when we were deciding on a landing page. But, it is important that your address, phone, email and website landing page be consistent online.

This is even more important as Google Maps and other search tools become more dominant.

What can happen on Google Maps type websites is multiple map placements due to differing addresses. The address may actually be the same, but on one you spell it avenue and the other you put ave. One you may put your P.O. Box and the other you may put your actual business address.

You would think Google, MapQuest and RandMcNally maps websites would be smart enough to notice and correct these issues. Most of the time they probably do. But you do not want your business to be the one that it does not catch.

At the least you can end up with two or more different listings for the same business location. You may have filled in all of the information and are keeping up with one of them, but the other ones just have a basic address or worse, wrong information.

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You cannot control how people search, but you can control what people find.

If a person looking for your business finds the wrong listing, you have missed an opportunity.

But, when your address and contact information remains the same and people click it for a map, you want them to find your correct listing to see all of the correct details.

3. Description and Keywords for your church

A couple of entry fields that come up repeatedly during this process are the description and keywords. Sometimes they come up during these first steps, but even more when you get into putting up YouTube and other online content.

This is also important to have in the actual code on your website. If your title, description and keywords are not in the head code of your website, change it or have your web designer enter it into your pages throughout your website.

If you have a title, description and keywords already written out or in your website code, take a few minutes to rethink it. You may have changed directions and focus in your business and need to take the description in a different direction.

In addition, you will want to think about it through search engines in mind. Is your city and your business name in your title? Could people find your business in your local community based on your title, description and keywords. Put thought into this once and stick with it. You can change it later, but the more thought you put into it before you start the better.

However you reach the end result, having this written out in advance will take some of the thinking time out of the process as you move through the steps.

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The actual description of your business should probably be written more for people however than for Google. This description gives people an idea of what type of business you are so it has to be clear and concise.

Part of this description is viewable under the title of your business when people search for you on Google if you have this information in your website code. So, you want this to make sense and not just stuff it with keywords to promote your business.

The description should be shorter than 160 characters if possible. Anything beyond that may not get viewed anyway depending on the screen size and space allowed on each website profile listing.

Keep your description short, simple, clear and concise.

Individual keyword and keyword phrases are important too as they become tags that people can search for to find your listing on some sites.

In addition, keywords give search engines a handle to use when looking for your content.

An example of an extremely basic keyword would be "florist".

An example of a keyword phrase would be "Dallas wedding florist".

The more specific you are with keyword phrases that are more than one word the better as there is less competition as you get more detailed.

However, for this part of the template we are just wanting to get general keywords that would help Google know where to categorize us, what type of business we are, and for people to know where to find us locally.

I would use your business name, business affiliation or franchise name, the simple words used to describe your business, your city name, large or small city names around you that you are trying to reach.

Write them out with a comma between each phrase or word in your Local Business Promotion Document.

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Each site will give you different instructions as to how to enter the keywords or tags, but start out with a comma in between as that is how many sites will want it. For those you will be able to copy and paste it in.

4. Anything else that gets repeated in the process

As you move through the steps, write out anything you see that looks like it might be repeated again and again.

Save yourself some time.
Don't make this hard on yourself.

If you think something may need repeated in the future, write it out and save it in you Local Business Promotion Document. This will be helpful as you find new sites to enter your information into, and as you pass this information on to be done by other employees.

Remember, the templates are just a starting point. You may have to adjust the wording for some sites, but having the basics written out will definitely save you time.

Step #5

Google your Community

Even in small cities and communities there are usually newspapers and websites that are willing to print information about your events.

This may be in the form of a community calendar for a radio station, or a list of events on the website for your city.

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The goal of this step is to find every place online in your area that will allow you to submit information about your business and promotional events. I would not stop with your own city, but also search for surrounding communities and small towns.

In addition to finding the main website, also search for the actual event or calendar submission page. This will save you time when entering events if you can start at the actual submission page instead of the main website.

Copy and paste all of the web addresses for the submission pages into a section of your Local Business Promotion Document. You will use these links in the initial setup and entry of your information as well as in the future for submitting business info and events on a regular basis.

This step does not take up much space in this book, but it will take you awhile to complete. Begin finding sites and paste them into your document. When you submit events to them in the future, it will be FREE.

Step #6

Google Yourself

After you Google your community, Google yourself. I think you will be surprised at what you find.

What are people saying about you?

First, you may be interested to see what others are saying about your business. You cannot fix all of this, but it is good information to know.

If people are spreading information that is not true, it could damage your influence in the community. If you do not even know about it then you cannot respond proactively. You cannot do anything about what you do not know. You may not be able to fix it, but it is good to know what is being written or said about you.

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We Googled our church one time and found that a blogger had a picture of our highway sign on his website. We were doing a giveaway one Sunday and had put that on the sign.

We do not know how he received the picture since he did not live anywhere near our church or even in the state, but he had it on his site and was not happy about our sign. He was a self-appointed Christian basher claiming to be Christian himself. He took it upon himself as one blogger to point out all of the fails of the church.

Now, this was not really a huge problem for our church.

This was not a negative campaign blanketing our community and turning people away from our church. It was just some guy who needed a hobby and picked Christian bashing.

I passed it on to a couple of people in our church who would think it was funny. A couple of them began posting comments on the blog post and getting him a little angry.

They even began creating fictitious people and emails to create new comments so they could gang up on the guy. There were actually only a couple of guys commenting, but through a few fake people.

I know, just because it is funny does not make it right. But what they did was still funny to me regardless.

The point though is that we found out that it was there, and responded. If we had not Googled ourselves, we would probably never have known.

You may also be surprised at the positive information being spread about your business. Finding this out could help you connect with new people interested in what you have to offer. Or, highlight and thank your customers who are taking steps to share openly online and spread the word about your business.

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What does the Internet say about you?

There is probably a lot of misinformation online about your business. This can happen for many reasons, but here are four main issues you are dealing with.

1. **Old information** that was entered somewhere online, but it was never changed when it became outdated.
2. **Individuals inside and outside your business** who put information online, but do not have correct facts and details.
3. **Websites that pull information from other sites.** You may have put information on a site that was correct at the time and another site pulled that info onto their own. Now that info is outdated and you have changed it on the sites you knew about, but the other site still has the old info on it.
4. **Local and National Business Directories** that have outdated information. This is especially true of your website address and business leaders and employees.

When I Googled our church recently there were listings that had completely incorrect staff information and our website was outdated.

The problem with these large business directory sites is that unless you intentionally fill in the information, they will automatically search and fill in whatever info they can find. It may not reflect the current situation of your business if you rely on their search to be correct.

So, Google yourself.
Then maybe Yahoo and Bing yourself too.

Google variations of your business name. Your old business names. Your website. Your old websites. Your staff names. Recent previous staff. Your address, phone number and primary church email.

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Just see what is out there. There is much more than you might imagine.

Make a list with links to the website addresses of all the bad information and put it in your Local Business Promotion Document.

This simple step of finding and clearing up this information can make a positive impact in the findability of your business in your area.

After all of the wrong information is found, it is time to clean it up.

Step #7

Correct & Simplify Incorrect Information

The previous steps were designed to help us get to this point of actually changing and entering our correct information. We finally get to begin promoting our business online for free.

At this point we are going to work through the two lists we created earlier – the incorrect information list and the list we created of opportunities to enter our business information.

You will probably find that some of the websites on these lists are the same site. You may also find that you stumbled on additional sites from your incorrect info list, that you could add to your opportunities list.

I would still work with through these two lists separately.

Just because you create a new profile and put new and updated information on a site that has incorrect information does not mean the incorrect section will fix itself.

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You have to fix incorrect information individually. This is most likely going to involve emailing the website editor or owner directly to resolve the issue.

Make the process simple and easy.

1. Add additional promotional opportunity websites from your incorrect information list to your opportunities list in your Local Business Promotion Document. You will create accounts and profiles with correct info on these sites in the next step.
2. Work through your incorrect information list top to bottom. Start with the first on the list and begin the process of dealing with it. Email the owner or website editor. Call or whatever you have to do to begin fixing the issue.

Under each listing it is a good idea to add who you called or emailed and their contact info so you know what and who you are waiting on.

Once the listing is fixed, delete it from your list and move on. No need to keep that old list once the issue is resolved. Work through the list completely until all wrong information that you know about is corrected.

Step #8

Submit Simplified Information to Local Channels

At this point in the process you should...

1. Have chosen your website landing page.
2. Have written a title, description and keywords for your business.
3. Be in the process of fixing wrong information and...
4. Have created a list of local websites and print publications that give you opportunity to submit free info about your business.

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In the previous step you worked through your wrong information list. In this step we want to work through our opportunities list and submit all of the information the site will allow.

At the least you should have the website address link in your Local Business Promotion Document. If you worked extra hard you will have the direct link to the submission page under each listing as well.

Either way you have to find the content submission page or the contact info for the person or department who updates the website. I have found that most sites that want you to post are going to have some sort of submission page.

There are a couple of things you are going to want to post on these sites.

First, there will most likely be section for a business profile that you can fill in and complete. Do it. Do not be half-hearted about this part.

I am not so concerned about filling out a private profile that goes along with the account as I am with the public profile that everyone would see. The reason? If the public can see it, the search engines can see it and it will make you more findable.

Remember, the profiles are not the place to be extremely specific. Unless you are locked in to business hours for eternity, I would not even put those in. Unless, of course, you are willing to keep track and go back and change everything anytime something changes in your business.

I would use the title, description and keywords you have written earlier to describe your business in the profile, then lead everything directly back to your website landing page. Keep that page current and up to date.

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The benefit of this strategy is that you only have to do profile and account setup once. If you do not change your business name or your website landing page you are set for a long time.

You still want to keep track of all the places where you filled out your profile in case a change is needed. But, most people will not have to change the business name or landing page website very often.

Second, depending on the site features, many will offer a section or a calendar for upcoming community events. This is especially true for radio & TV stations and community specific websites.

Again, you want to put your upcoming event information on these sites regularly so keep a detailed list of each place that you can submit info.

This is easier than you would think.

Just make a section in your Local Business Promotion Document titled something like "Promotional Event Submission Links" and copy and paste the links in that section. Make it simple and easy for you or the employee handling these submissions.

The challenge with event submissions is choosing what events to submit. The key is creating a system that keeps you knowing what these events will be far enough ahead to post them on these sites.

Whatever you decide and whatever your system, consistently enter upcoming event information on these sites and get your event information out to the community. It is FREE promotion.

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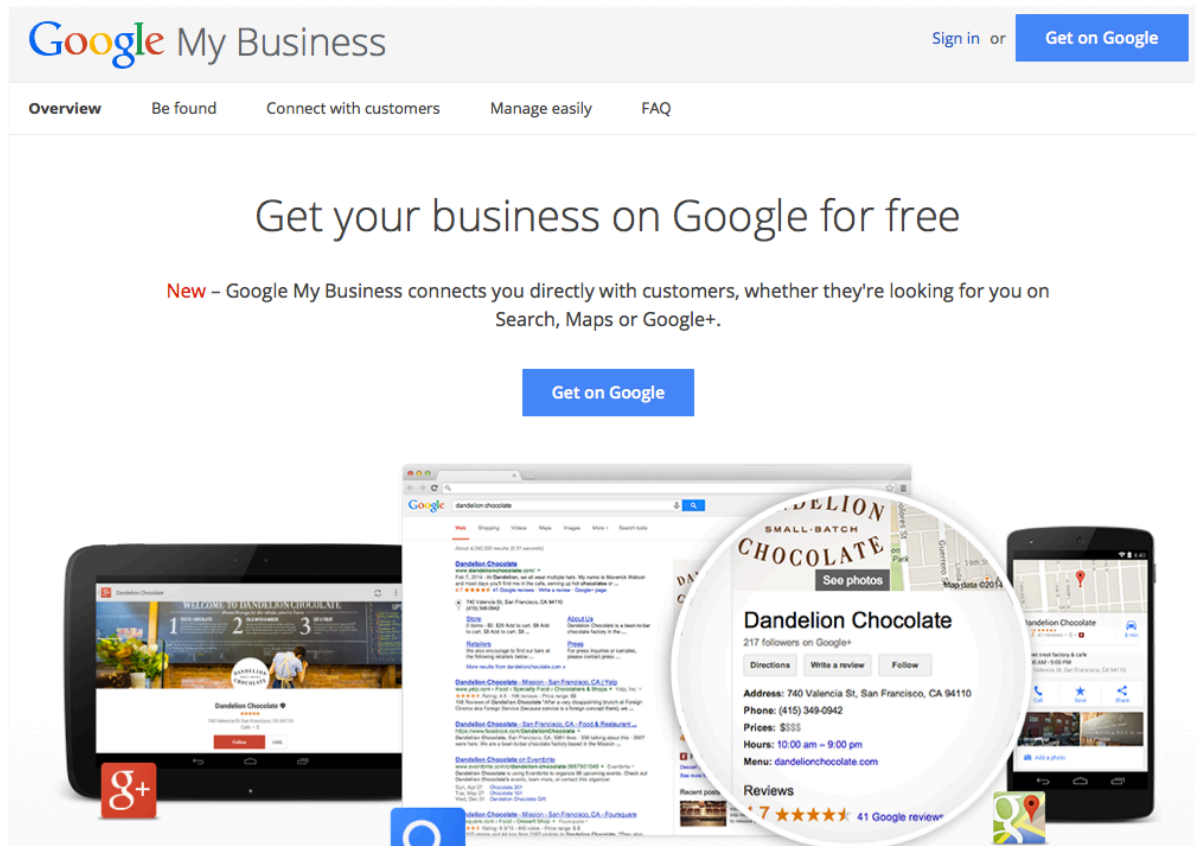
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Step #9

Claim & Setup Google Business and Maps

Google has done you a huge favor in the promotion of your business. In addition to creating a system for people all over the world to search for you and find you, they have created Google Business and Maps.



Google has developed millions of free web pages and at least one of them probably already has your business name on it. These pages are designed to be found and viewed by people using both mobile phones and computers.

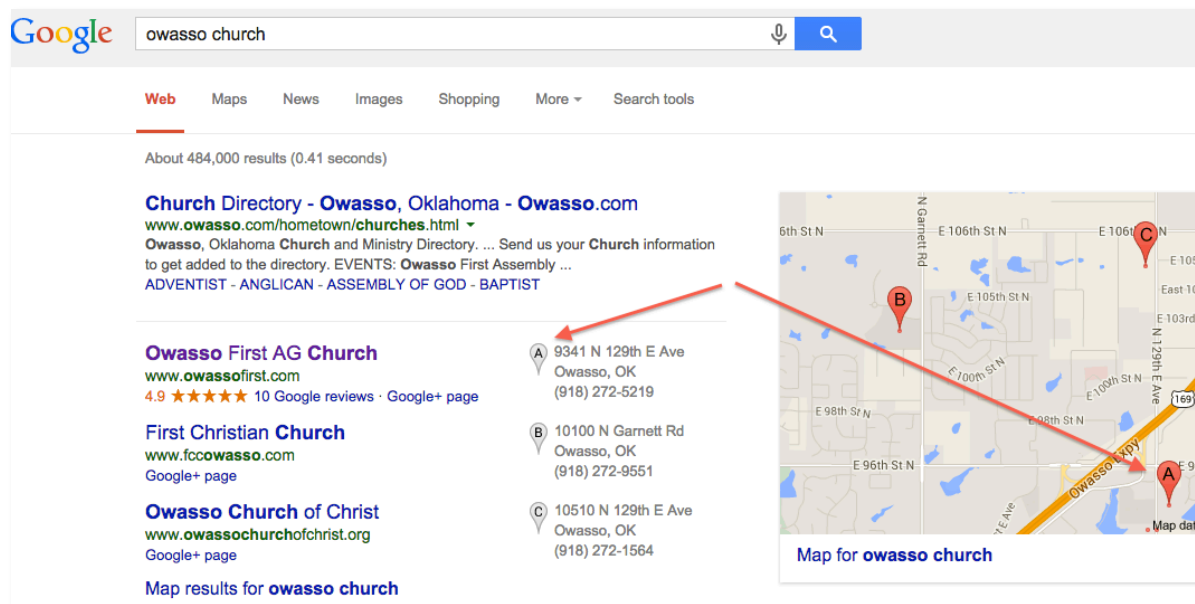
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Plus, Google likes Google.

Your actual website may not be that high in search rankings when someone searches for your type of business in your city or area. But, if you have claimed and setup your Google Business and Maps pages, you are much more likely to appear above other organizations that have not taken this step.



Google Business is displayed in search listings as the red marker that is pointed out in the graphic above.

Even if you have not claimed your Business page, it will probably already have information about you on a page that Google created.

Google has searched the web for information about your business and your location and preloaded it with what they have found. Your listing may already have an address, phone number, website and even your logo and pictures it retrieved from your website or somewhere online.

This may not be 100% correct, but something will probably already be in there that you will want to change and correct.

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Google has set these pages up for their own purposes first, but you still get the benefits.

They have created all of these pages so that Google can have their own landing page for your business instead of just sending people to your actual website.

Google inserts ads on these pages just like they have AdSense ads [www.google.com/adsense] in all of their other search listing pages. Your business could actually purchase ads and put them on Google Business if that was part of your strategy. Google is in business to make money for themselves, not just promote your business. But, you still get the benefit.

What are we getting with Google Business for our business?

We get a free landing page that is already optimized for mobile phones and maps leading people to our businesses. Your Business page will rank well in Google search because Google likes themselves.

So, we know we want our Google Business page completed and working for us. But, how do we get access to it?

First, you need to claim your Google Business page.

Until you verify your listing with Google as the owner of that business it does not do you much good. You cannot change content on the site or add anything to it. It will also suffer in the search engines because Google has no confirmation that it is a real business or if it is just their assumption because of other information they found online.

To claim your Google Business page...

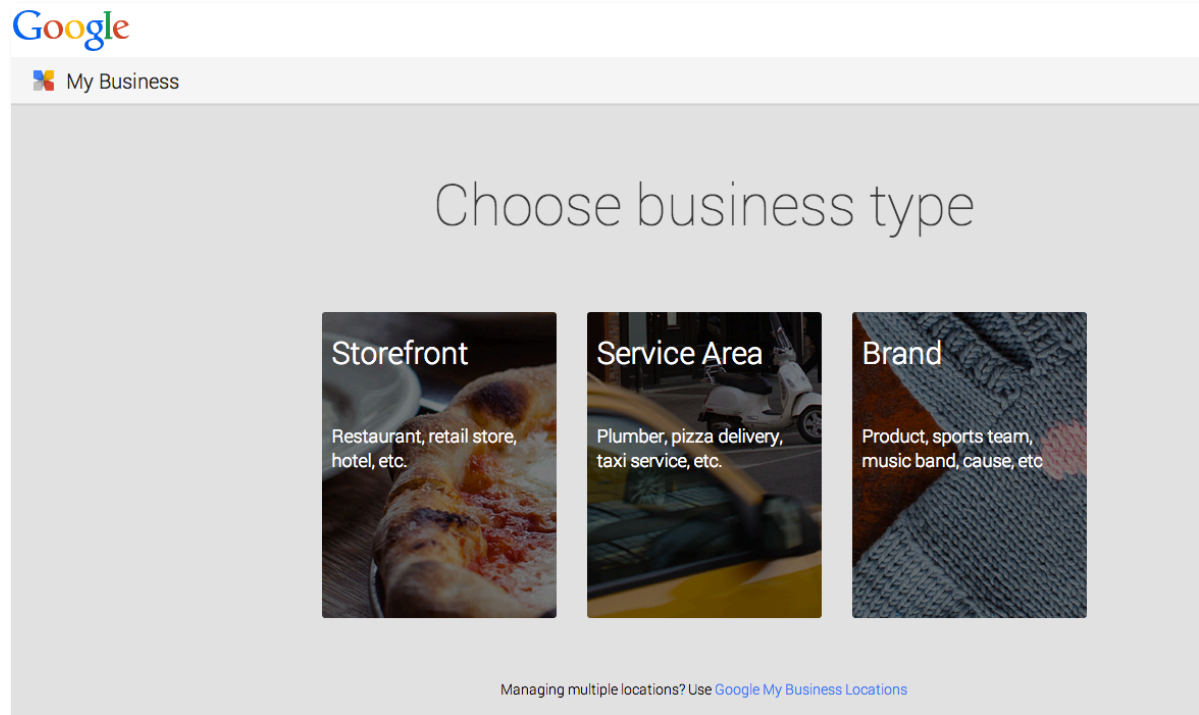
1. Go to www.google.com/business
2. Click on the "Sign In" text next to the "Get on Google" button and sign in using your Business Gmail address that you created earlier.

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3. Choose whether your business is a Storefront, reaches a Service Area, or is a Brand. It is important to note that these pages are also connected to and the same as Google+ pages, but for local businesses and brands.

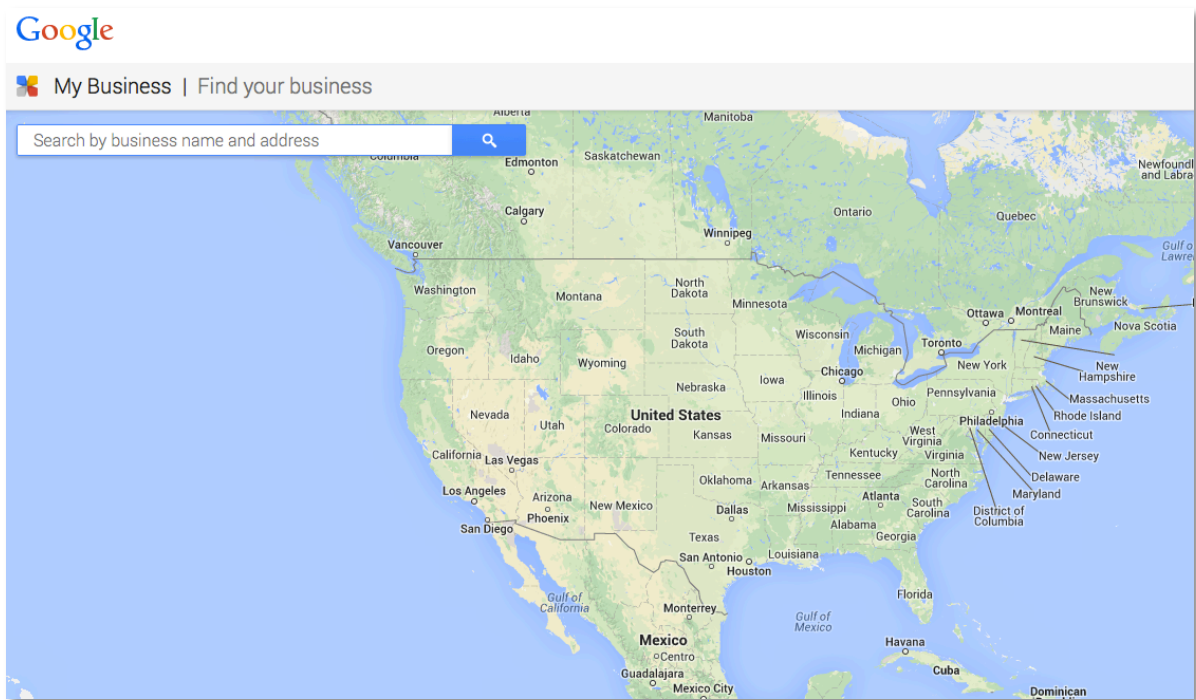


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4. Search for your business, then follow the instructions to claim it as yours.



After you enter the main phone number of your business or contact info, Google will pull up all of the businesses that it thinks is using your phone number. Most likely there will only be one listing. Your business.

It is possible that there are multiple listings for your business. Claim them all, then delete all but one.

You only want one listing as Google does not like duplicate listings. Google views multiple listings as scamming and spamming.

Please note that if you have already claimed a Google Business page on this Google account you will not be taken through this exact process. You will most likely be taken to the dashboard of whatever Business page you have claimed if you have already claimed it in the past.

If you have created a brand new Gmail account for your business, there will not be a Google Business page associated with it yet.

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Even if you have claimed another Business page on this account in the past, you will still find a link there to add another listing somewhere in the Google Business dashboard.

Remember, even if you have never claimed your Google Business page, your business should show up here unless it is a completely new business or an extremely new phone number.

When you find your business pages and click on them it will take you through a process of adding information to the listing before verification. Verification involves either waiting for Google to send you a code on a postcard in the mail, or being near your business phone for phone verification.

The order of this process is a very smart move for Google. They know that if you have to wait for the code first before entering your information you may give up on the process.

They have you fill out all of your detailed info as a first step so that even if you give up they still have an updated listing for the search engine.

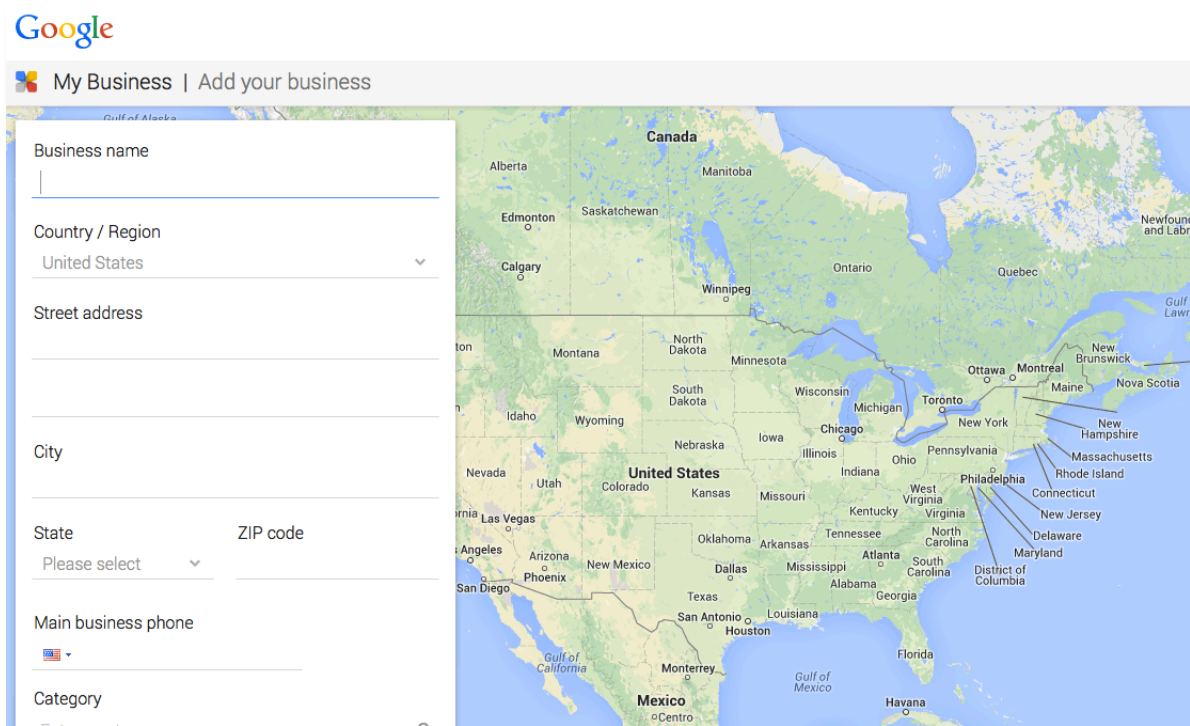
Smart for them, but it is good for you too. If something happens and you do not finish your verification process I believe Google may use that information to update your listing. So even though you will still not have control, your listing still end up with good information.

You still want to complete the verification process, but at least your new information may be working for you from the start instead of having to wait. They say they will not use it until it is verified, but this is Google. I think they are using it to make your listing more accurate.

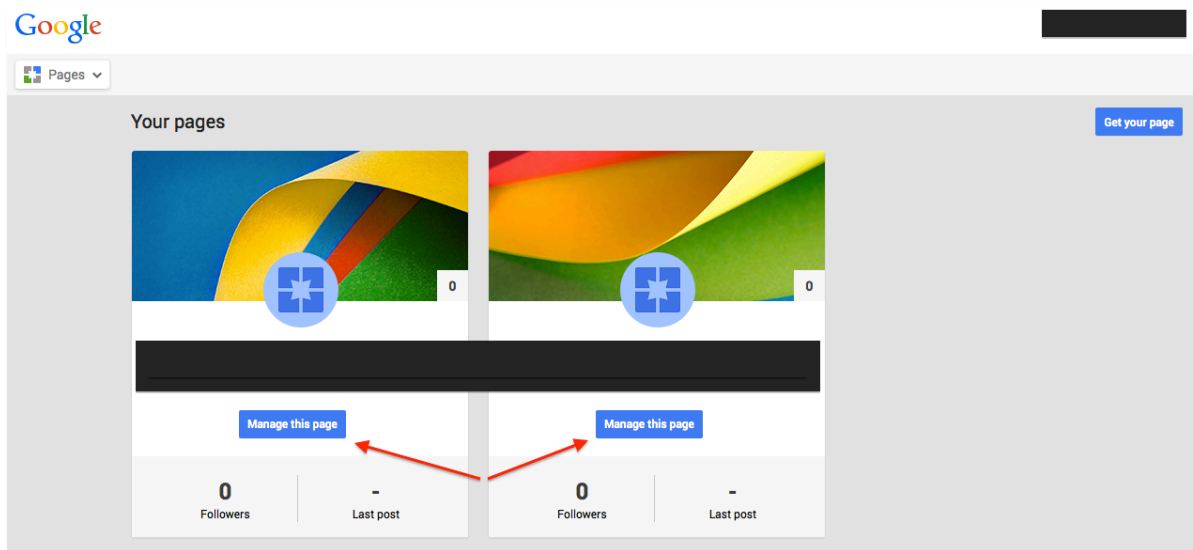
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5. Verify your listing either by phone or mailed postcard. The account in this example had two listings that needed to be claimed. Even though it allowed them to be added to the account they still need to be verified.



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Click on the "Manage this page" button for all listings and follow the instructions through the verification process. If you are near the main business phone, use this options as it is a nearly immediate verification. If not, have them send to postcard.

Verify your Google Business listing

Once you have entered the verification code, you can update the information, add pictures, video and more. Be sure to fully complete the listing as much as possible so that both Google and potential customers have as much information about your business as they can.

There is one thing to consider when adding information and updates. Even after you fully verify and have the ability to update the listing, your future changes will still have to be approved by Google and may take some time to actually show up on your actual listing.

Remember, this is also a Google+ page for your business. So you can use it as a blog or website landing page link if you want.

After you are setup, login to your account every once in awhile and click to see stats of what is happening with your account.

You can see how many people requested driving directions through Google Maps to your business, how many people visited your page and even how many clicked through to your website link.

What if there is not a phone number associated with my location or my business shares a location with a business?

If your business is not completely settled and moves locations regularly, you may have to work a little more to claim and keep your Google Business page and other online listings up to date.

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You will need to change your location each time you move and reset your Google Business page. But, you may also have to claim your page differently than a business that has a definite location and phone number.

If your business does not have a phone number associated with your location, you will need to search for your address on Google Business to see if you can claim the page as the business owner. An example of this is if you are a business using your cell phone as the primary phone number and it does not show up in Google as connected.

If you are sharing a location with another business, it gets a little more involved. Google verifies your listing by sending you a postcard in the mail or calling the phone number. It is also verifying listings based on the physical address or phone number of the business at that address.

There are many situations where businesses share addresses and locations. A lot of churches for instance are meeting inside of other businesses and organizations like schools.

You should still be able to claim a Google Business page even if you share locations. However, you may have to work with the business or organization you are sharing with to get the Google PIN code to verify the listing when they send it in the mail or call.

Businesses with their own physical location should not have these issues.

Step #10

Recruit Google Business Page Reviews

Claiming and setting up your Google Business listing is a very important step toward improving your findability. But there is something you can do to improve the ranking of your Google Business page in Google when people search for your type of business in your area.

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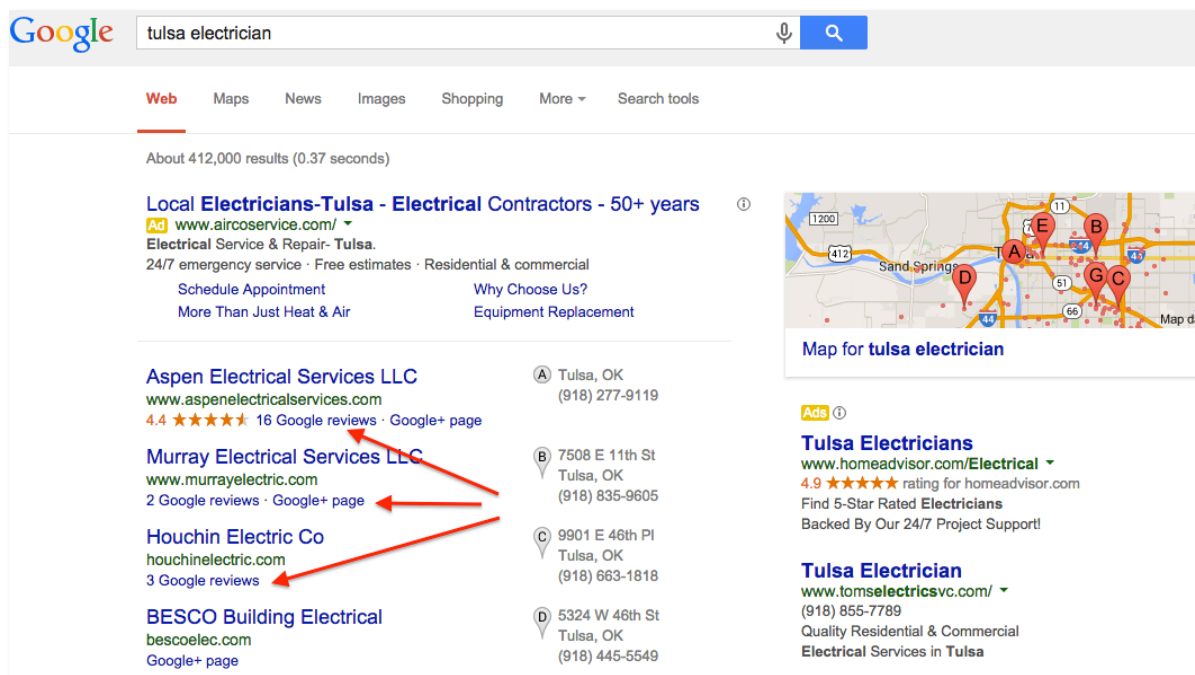
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People can write reviews of your business directly on your Google Business page. The down side of this is they can write negative reviews as well. I have seen some restaurant reviews on pages that were very harsh.

The upside is that you can encourage people to write a review who you know will give you a good one.

The next example screenshot shows the Google Business listings for a specific Google search "tulsa electrician". This is an example of how powerful reviews are. None of them have very many, but the company with top number of reviews is definitely at the top.

Of course you have to do a good job creating your Google Business page to get to the top too. But, reviews definitely help.



Even if reviews do not matter to listing placement, positive reviews definitely have the potential to impact the decision of someone looking to utilize your business. The written review could help someone decide if they want to trust your business or not. Even if positive reviews do not help your search rankings, they are worth recruiting.

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There are many ways to recruit reviews.

Google does not care who these people are. They just want to know that the reviews are coming from different real people, not just some geek writing multiple reviews from separate accounts that he or she created.

As long as someone has a Gmail account they can post a review. You can ask your staff, leadership, and employees to post a review, and people who you know have benefitted from your business.

People who have just started using your business would be good reviewers. Make instructions for posting reviews clear and available. Give people the opportunity to do something simple and free that can produce real results in your business findability.

Have them post a review. It will provide positive proof to potential people checking out your business that others have used you and like your products and services.

This makes a real difference. Recruit Google Google Business page reviews. In addition, you may also want to recruit reviews for Yahoo and Bing Local directories. We will look at how to setup those account in the next steps.

Step #11

Setup Yahoo Small Business

Not everyone uses Google as their primary search engine. Yahoo and Bing are two of the largest Google alternatives and both have huge resources dedicated to Local Business Search.

You want to have correct information in both of these search engines. This step will show you how to setup Yahoo, and next we will setup Bing.

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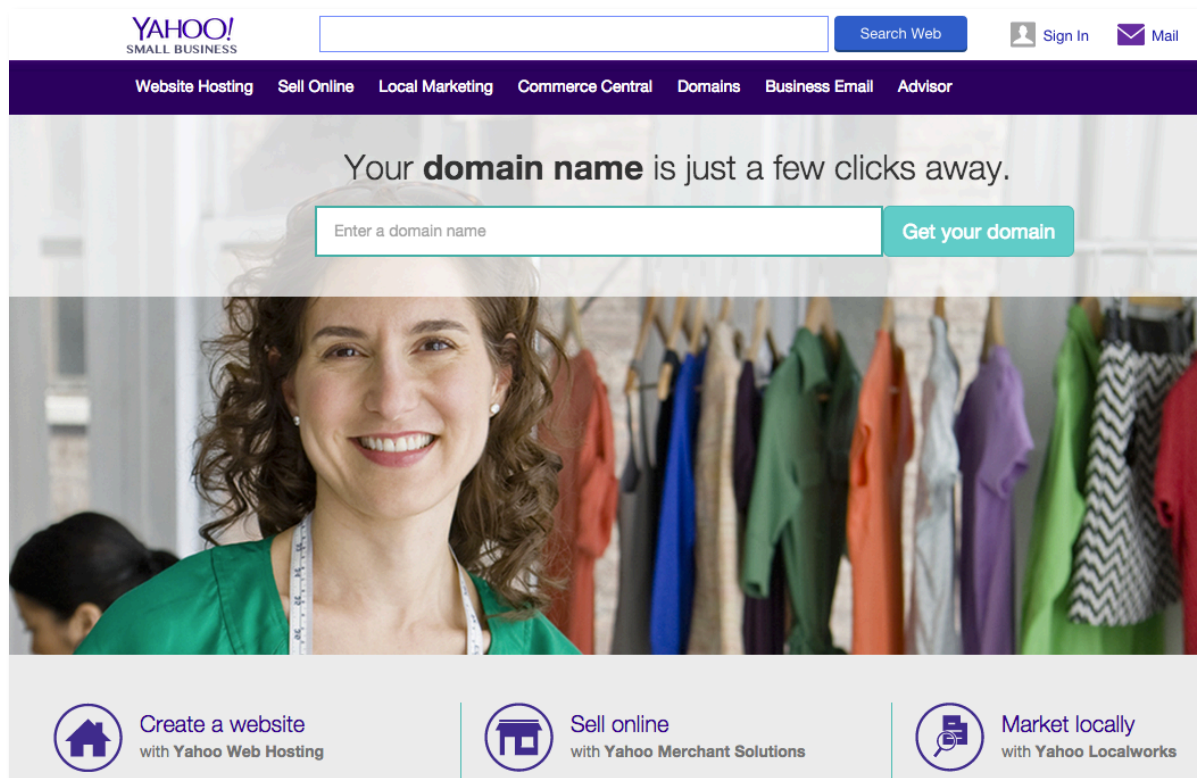
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The process for claiming and setting up your listing is very similar to Google Business. Yahoo has setup a specific website for small businesses to claim and manage their listings. They have a huge focus on small business, and you can benefit from being setup correctly in their directory.

Yahoo Small Business Setup

1. Go to www.yahoo.com/smallbusiness - Click "Sign In". For this step you will actually need to create a Yahoo email address to get access to your account. Click "Create New Account" and setup your new email address. I would make it the same name as your Gmail address if possible to keep it simple.



2. After setting up your Yahoo email address – login. Then go back to the Yahoo website at <https://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/local-listings>. Remember, Yahoo can change the layout and links of their site at any time. Just search for a place to market locally or claim your business listing if the site has changed the look or layout.

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YAHOO! SMALL BUSINESS

Search Web

Brown Mail

Website Hosting Sell Online **Local Marketing** Commerce Central Domains Business Email Advisor

Are your business listings telling the truth about your business?

Business Name Business Phone

Business Address Zip

Free scan Your info is subject to the [Yahoo Privacy Policy](#). Yahoo may use this information to communicate with you about Yahoo advertising solutions.

Yahoo Localworks

\$49.99/month \$29.99/month

Get your business listing on Yahoo Local, Yelp, WhitePages, Bing, MapQuest, Superpages, and more!

• Guarantee your presence in 40+ local directories

With Yahoo Localworks you can...

Location pin icon, Document icon, Checkmark icon

3. Scroll down to “Try Local Basic Listing for free” and click “Sign Up”.

YAHOO! SMALL BUSINESS

Search Web

Brown Mail

Try Local Basic Listing for free

Help customer on Yahoo get your business contact information including address, phone number, and URL. Simple to create and easy to manage. Take the first step towards being found.

Sign up

Tell more with Local Enhanced Listing

Stand out to potential customers with photos, a more detailed business description, web links, and special offers. Attract new and returning customers with online coupons.

Sign up

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4. Provide Your Business Details. After clicking next follow the instructions to claim, verify and complete all of the listings that are connected to your business.

There are many options for verifying your listing including text, phone, email and postcard so choose whichever works best for you.

Note that you will possibly have multiple listings. In addition to the Yahoo listings, Yahoo also pulls information from other sites like YP.com. To change some of the listings you may have to find the source that is feeding it and claim and change it on the other site. If you run into a listing that you cannot claim, contact support and find out if it is actually being fed by another site then claim it there to fix it.

If you do have multiple listings claim them all, then delete all but one. Remember, it may take some time to get confirmation and control of your listing from Yahoo. Once you do fill it out and optimize it completely with pictures, video and more for maximum effectiveness.

The image shows a screenshot of the Yahoo! Small Business website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Yahoo! Small Business logo, a search bar, and links for Sign In, Mail, and settings. Below the navigation bar, there is a main content area. On the left, there is a sidebar with a map showing local listings like 'Orchid Royal Thai' and 'Voda Spa'. The main content area features a large, white, modal-style form titled 'Please Provide Your Business Details'. The form contains several input fields: 'Business Name', 'Business Phone', 'Business Address', 'Business City', 'Select State' (a dropdown menu), 'Zip', and 'Business Category, Eg: Salons'. A teal 'Next' button is located at the bottom right of the form. The background of the page is a light gray, and the overall layout is clean and professional.

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Step #12

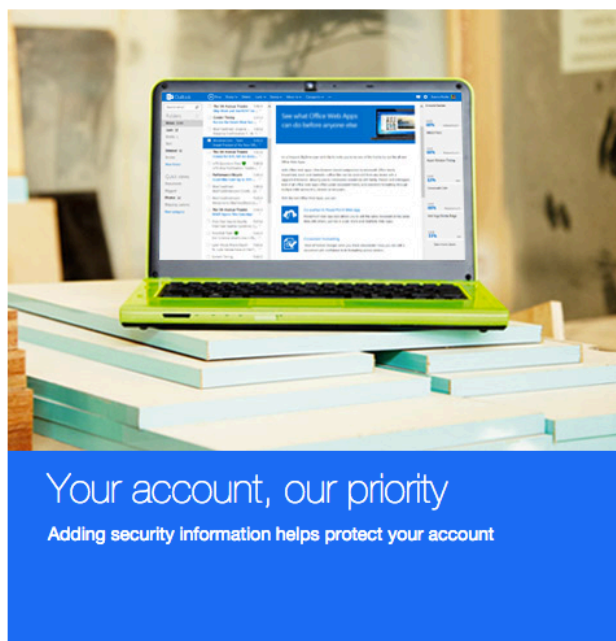
Setup Bing Local

Bing Places Listing Setup

The first thing you will need to do is create a free Windows Live ID. You can use your business Gmail address for this account or setup a brand new one with live.

1. Go to <http://login.live.com> to create your free Windows Live ID.

The first thing you will need to do is create a free Windows Live ID. You can use your business Gmail address for this account or setup a brand new one with Windows Live.



Sign in

Microsoft account [What's this?](#)

☐ Keep me signed in

Sign in

[Can't access your account?](#)

[Sign in with a single-use code](#)

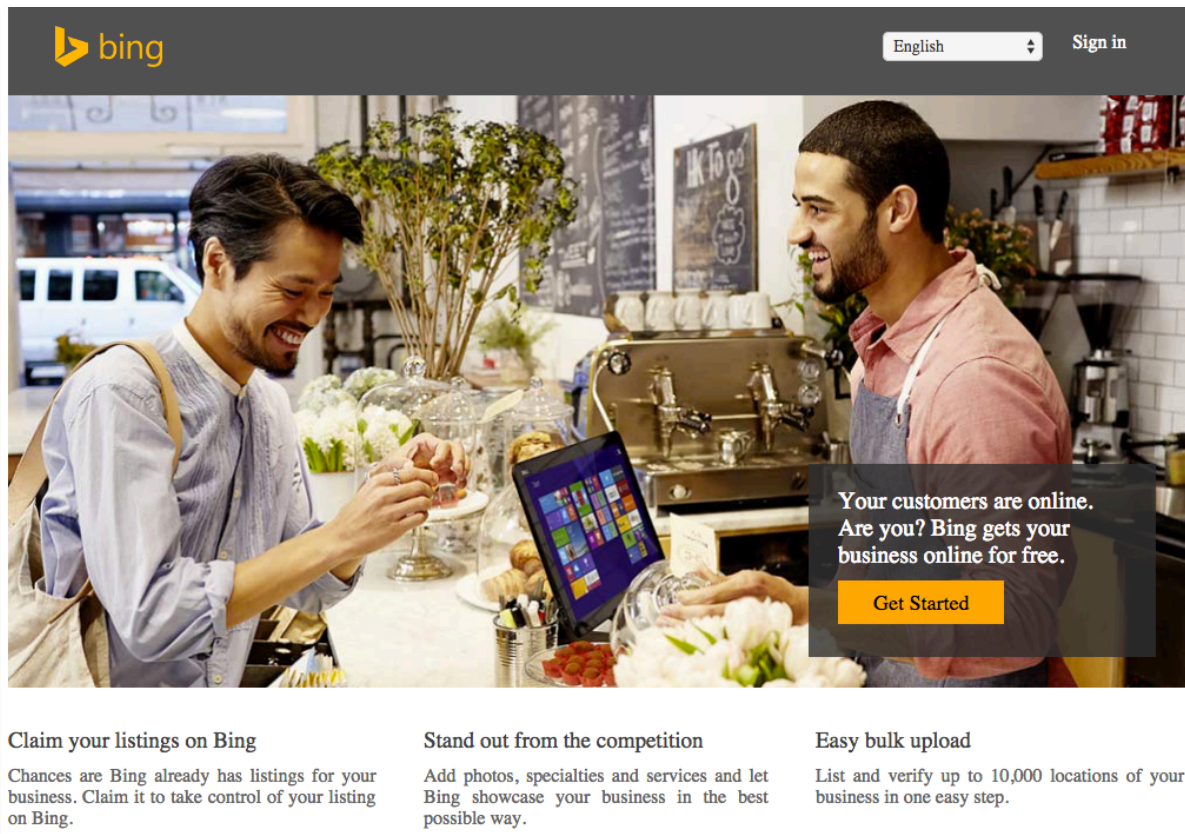
Don't have a Microsoft account? [Sign up now](#)

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2. Go to www.bingplaces.com and sign in with your Windows Live ID. Then on the front page of Bing Places click the "Get Started" button.



bing English Sign in

Your customers are online. Are you? Bing gets your business online for free.

Get Started

Claim your listings on Bing Chances are Bing already has listings for your business. Claim it to take control of your listing on Bing.	Stand out from the competition Add photos, specialties and services and let Bing showcase your business in the best possible way.	Easy bulk upload List and verify up to 10,000 locations of your business in one easy step.
--	---	--

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3. Search for your business and either find or create your Bing business.

bing English Sign in

Listings

Find your business on Bing

Select country/region

Select country/region

If you want to add more than 10 businesses, you can [start here](#).

Business locations

Map showing continents: NORTH AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA, AFRICA, EUROPE, ASIA, AUSTRALIA, ANTARCTICA. Scale: 2500 miles, 5000 km.

Microsoft © 2014 Microsoft Bing Privacy Legal Support Help **Bing Places for Business**

bing English Sign in

Listings

Find your business on Bing

Select country/region

United States

To search for a business, enter either your business phone number or your business name and location.

Phone number

OR

Business name

Location

Please specify a Zip code or a combination of City, State and Zip code

Search

If you want to add more than 10 businesses, you can [start here](#).

Business locations

Map showing continents: NORTH AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA, AFRICA, EUROPE, ASIA, AUSTRALIA, ANTARCTICA. Scale: 2500 miles, 5000 km.

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4. Select your business, or if none is found click "Create new business". Whether you are creating a new business or simply selecting your existing one that shows up in the search, follow the instructions through verification. Once you are verified, be sure to return to your listing dashboard and add more complete information, pictures, and video to maximize listing effectiveness.

Find your business on Bing

▼ Modify your search

Search Results

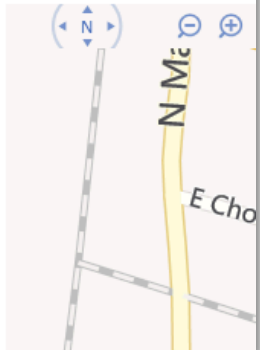
1

Select

If the search results do not show your business, try searching again with different parameters, or click "Create new business" to create a new listing.

Create new business

Business locations



Verify your business

☐ **By Voice**

We will call you at your primary phone number

(918) 423-4606

Extensions if any

☐ **By text messaging (SMS)**

If your primary phone is enabled to receive text messages, you can opt for this option. We will send you a text message with the PIN (to your primary phone number) right away.

(918) 423-4606

☒ **By Email**

We can send the verification PIN over email provided you have an email account that fits one of the patterns below. Note that public domain email accounts (e.g. Gmail, Yahoo, Live...) are not supported.

Email id

@

Select email domain

.

biz

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Step #13

Setup Nationwide Local Directories

It is almost impossible at times to find the actual website of a specific company when you are searching for a restaurant or hotel in a city.

This may be a little easier with larger nationwide companies as they have invested a lot of resources into their website findability.

But, for small local companies and businesses the nationwide search directories seem to have taken over local search. The actual business website can sometimes get bumped at least to page 2 due to these other websites intruding on their search terms.

These websites are designed to pull as much information as they can about businesses and create individual pages for them within their sites. Their goal is to show up in every search for every business. They want to be first. They want to be above your actual website so they spend a lot of money investing in search engine optimization so they can be found.

The positive side of these sites is that a lot of people use them when they are moving, going on vacation, or just looking for a business. Do not look at these as a bad thing, but an opportunity.

You cannot fight what they are doing, but you can make sure that your business has correct information in as many of these directories as possible. And you can make sure that each listing has a direct link back to your website landing page.

Below is a list of some of the nationwide directories that are trying to dominate your local search terms.

Create accounts with each site. These are not the only ones out there. Find more places to submit if you can. Remember the goal is to get as many channels pointing back to your website as you can.

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The sign up process may be similar to Yahoo and Bing as they may ask you to claim and verify your listings. Or, they may just let you submit information without verification.

Add or edit your listings and get control of what is in these listings for people to find about your business. In most cases you will search for your business on the site first to see if you need to claim a listing that is already there. If you are not there at all, then you will want to find the place to add a new business.

Every site is different and can be challenging to claim, but it is worth it. Many of these sites even feed from each other. So, when you claim a few of them your information begins cleaning itself up on many of them.

Improve your information online and your findability by claiming and optimizing your business listings on the sites below. This entire list and more is also available at Yext.com

www.yellowpages.com

www.whitepages.com

[www.expressupdate](http://www.expressupdate.com) {updates whitepages.com}

www.yelp.com

www.mapquest.com

www.citysearch.com

www.superpages.com

www.local.com

www.merchantcircle.com

www.elocal.com

www.ezlocal.com

www.localdatabase.com

www.showmelocal.com

www.topix.com

www.citysquares.com

www.localpages.com

www.mojopages.com

www.yellowise.com

www.yellowmoxie.com

www.tupalo.com

www.avantar.com

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www.copilotgps.com
www.yellowbot.com
www.metro pcs.com
www.chamberofcommerce.com
www.uscity.net
www.yellowpagecity.com
www.american towns.com
www.factual.com
www.expressupdate.com
www.foursquare.com
www.judysbook.com
www.kudzu.com
www.local.com
www.localeze.com
www.magicyellow.com
www.manta.com

Step #14

Engage Local Media

A question that is becoming more relevant is whether or not businesses should spend money on advertising in local print or payment based online publications. With so many FREE ways to get your message out, why waste money on paying for ads.

Many print publications are online, but are still primarily offline newspapers and community magazines.

One of the best examples of this is the Yellow Pages.

You do want your business to be in the Yellow Pages as far as your phone number and address, but in a lot of situations you will not need to spend money on an ad.

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There are a couple of reasons, however, that you might want to pay to put an ad in the Yellow Pages in your specific community.

If, for example, no other businesses of your type in your area have ads then it may be a way for you to stand out.

Also, if you are in a very rural community, the Yellow Pages may still have a purpose. But for the most part, people are moving their phone number and address searches online and on their mobile phones.

They do not want to see an ad. All they want is the phone number or website, and that is what they get with a quick Google search for you.

Should I buy ads in the local newspaper?

I cannot answer that question for you. You have to look at your community, your budget, the quality of your local publication, and the purpose of your ads to make that decision.

The better question to ask is this, "Is there a better way to get your content in these publications?" Is there a FREE way to get much better coverage in your local newspaper, radio and TV stations than paying for an ad.

When you see an ad in a newspaper what are you thinking?

I am thinking these people spent a lot of money to interrupt my newspaper reading experience to try to manipulate me to buy or do something. I feel the same way about commercials on radio and TV.

People want relevant content, not ads.

The only people who can produce this relevant content are the journalists and editors who work at these places.

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If I am reading the newspaper and see an ad, I see an interruption.
If I see an article written by a staff writer, I see something the newspaper felt was important.

Here is the interesting thing. This is the case in my opinion even if it is exactly the same information.

If the ad has exactly the same content as the article or TV news segment, the news is nearly always going to come across as more relevant.

If you see a commercial about an upcoming concert it may influence you to attend or purchase a ticket. But if the local TV station takes the time and effort to do an entire segment about it, that event gains credibility.

You are not risking as much to attend the concert if it is backed up by the staff at the TV or radio station.

Journalists and Reporters need your story.

People who work in churches understand this. Sunday comes around with amazing regularity. The next service and sermon is always just around the corner. Pastors are constantly needing new content, stories, and illustrations on a weekly basis.

For journalists and reporters that problem is magnified many, many times. Imagine that you have their job. You cannot just wing it and play an old news story like a teacher reteaching an old lesson.

TV and newspaper reporters have to find fresh, new content and stories every single day of the week. When you inform them about an upcoming promotional event, unique product or service, or give them a story about something new going on in your business, most of them will appreciate it.

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They need you to contact them with your content for their stories.

Remember, you will have to pay for ads, but if they write a story about you or your promotional event it is free.

There are a few things to keep in mind when submitting stories to newspaper, radio and TV stations.

- 1. Find their submission pages and links.** Most of their websites will have an email link or page where you can submit your story idea. Find those links and put them in your Local Business Promotion Document.
- 2. Submit ideas that have value.** They need your story, but they are professionals and will not print junk. Submit ideas that could actually be news and do not waste their time.
- 3. Submit more ideas than you think they will use.** Just because you submit a story does not mean they have the time or space to use it.

They will probably not use everything you give them. But, keep submitting. This increases your chances of getting free promotion, but also keeps your business at the top of their mind when they are looking for ideas.

- 4. Do as much of their work as possible.** Send them as much information about what you want them to talk about as you can. Attach pictures, graphics, press releases, send videos and do whatever you can to minimize their work load.

If you are a good writer, write the story for them. They can always change whatever they want. But, if it is a good story idea and most of the work is done, you increase your chances that it will get used.

As an example, I submitted information about a concert at our church to our local newspaper. The concert was on a Sunday and I submitted the event information using the newspaper's email form story idea submission page the Monday before the event.

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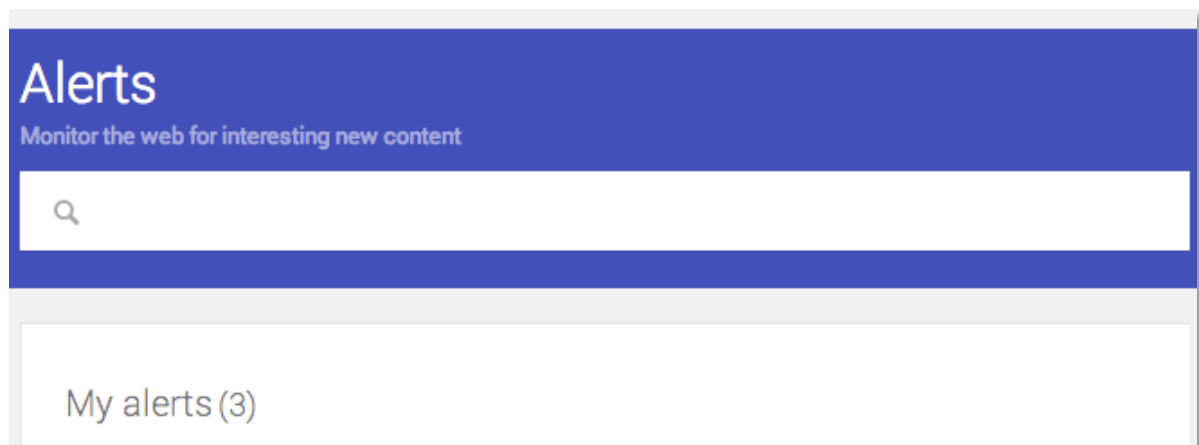
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I had setup Google Alerts with variations of my church name and website as keywords. I received the email alert that it had been published on a Friday.

Google Alerts emails you each time keywords you have submitted are used online. I have submitted keywords for my church name and variations of my church name as well as our website.

It is a huge help to know when you are mentioned online whether positive or negative.

Visit www.google.com/alerts and sign in with your business Gmail account to get started.



The alert linked directly to a page on that newspaper's website with a short article about the concert.

When I sent the email, I uploaded the picture and provided them with all of the information and links that are in the short article.

The screenshot shows the OwassoReporter.com website. At the top, there's a header with the site name and a weather widget showing 58° and clear conditions. Below the header is a banner for P&K Equipment, advertising John Deere equipment and a Santa Day event on December 10th. The main navigation bar includes links for Home, News, Sports, Obituaries, Opinion, Special Sections, and More. A search bar is located on the left, and a 'Welcome! Login | Signup' link is on the right. The featured article is titled 'Free concert hosted by Owasso First Assembly of God'. It includes a photo of The Talleys, a 'Today's Deal' sidebar for Ruby Tuesday, and a '2 for 1 Business and First Class' offer. The article text mentions the concert is on Sunday, Nov. 13, at 6 p.m. at the Owasso First Assembly of God, 9341 N. 129 E. Ave., and is free of charge. It also mentions that The Talleys have traveled extensively with the Gaithers and have been featured on the Gaither Homecoming Concert Video Series.

It is interesting to me that they called what I sent them a Press Release.

When I hear those words I think of it being much more than the simple info that I gave them. But they referred to it as a Press Release.

Do not be scared by the Press Release term. Just release information and evidently you have a Press Release.

You can put a lot of effort and detail into what you submit. But, if you do not have much time just give them the basics and let them run with it.

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They get a story and you get FREE advertising for your event.

Another benefit of a FREE story is a front page listing. On this specific site all of the new stories feed into the front page until they get bumped by newer stories.

So at least for a short period of time our church was listed on the front page absolutely FREE.

The screenshot displays the Owasso Reporter website. The top section features a 'Featured:' banner with a \$100 bill and the text 'Win a Benjamin'. Below this is a 'News & More' section with a date header 'Thursday 11/10/2011' and a list of news items. A red arrow points from the 'Stories' section to the 'Wednesday 11/09/2011' date header. The 'Stories' section lists three items: 'OPD arrestee dies in county lockup (445)', 'Owassons injured in motorcycle wreck in Mayes County (379)', and 'Bryan Spradlin: 'I didn't attack the cops' (250)'. The 'Wednesday 11/09/2011' section lists two items: 'Free concert hosted by Owasso First Assembly of God' and 'Police officer fired'. The right side of the page features a Ruby Tuesday advertisement for 'ENDLESS SOUP • HOUSE SALAD • BISCUITS' and a 'Place Your CLASSIFIED AD Online.' advertisement.

6 Man sentenced in sex crimes case | 13 State superintendent visits Owasso | 14 Owasso, Oklahoma Vol. 45, No. 103

OWASSO REPORTER 50¢

Thursday, November 10, 2011 OwassoReporter.com

Reestablished in 1988 - Serving Owasso and the surrounding community. Member of Oklahoma Press Association serving the region. Including the Reporters Weekly.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Fighting for Trace Night a success

Earthquake shakes, rattles, rolls Owassons, Oklahomans

National Merit Semi-Finalists

Click here for this week's digital paper and these great articles:

Popular Commented Facebook

Stories

OPD arrestee dies in county lockup (445)

Owassons injured in motorcycle wreck in Mayes County (379)

Bryan Spradlin: 'I didn't attack the cops' (250)

More

Photos

Featured:

Win a Benjamin

News & More

News | Sports | Deaths

Thursday 11/10/2011

- This week's digital paper
- City fires Lt. Denton in excessive force case
- Editorial: Say 'thank you' to a veteran today
- Theima L. (Lewis) Sawyer
- Venson Lyle Doyal
- Big numbers has Scheiing ready for wrestling season
- Burd, Marsellis named to all-state volleyball team
- Luana Lee (Woodworth) Lucas
- Rams rout Ponca, will host Norman in first round Friday
- OHS swimmers qualify for in six events in opener
- Dalton Lee Lawson
- 'Chili Dogs' come out in all shapes and sizes
- Police officer fired

Wednesday 11/09/2011

- Free concert hosted by Owasso First Assembly of God

3 Miles East of Vinita on Hwy. 60 • 918-256-5774

Ruby Tuesday

ENDLESS

SOUP • HOUSE SALAD • BISCUITS

MON - FRI • 11 AM - 3 PM

Only \$5.99

the **Owasso** social community.

N2Owasso.com

CLICK HERE

For whatever you're N2.

Place Your **CLASSIFIED AD** Online.

To put a quarter page ad in this newspaper was just under \$250 at the time. We received around that much space and maybe more plus a link on the front page for FREE just for submitting the information.

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The other businesses on the right who have ads are very visible, but they had to pay. Plus, what are people going to consider most relevant to their interests, the ads or the reporter generated content?

I am voting for the content and the price is definitely right. FREE!

What should you do now? Search for as many local community based print, web, TV and radio organizations and paste their story idea submission website links into your Local Business Promotion Document.

Then, submit as many quality ideas as you possibly can. You do not have to limit it to submitting future events either. Tell them about events that have already happened in the past and submit a few great pictures. You never know what they will end up using.

Engage your local media.
Let them work for you to promote your business.

Step #15

Integrate your Website or Landing Page

The last step is short and simple.
Many of you may be doing this already.

The most shareable phrase people in your business and community can use in spreading your business is to tell people to go to your website.

This is the landing page you have been directing people to online. It is also just as effective to consistently direct people to it offline in print or sharing person to person.

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Most businesses have some sort of vision statement or phrase they go along with their name. We have all kinds of information we could share with people about our business.

You need to do everything you can to direct people to your website landing page, both online and in your offline promotions.

Make it easy for your people to tell other people where to find information about your business.

You make it easy by making it memorable. You make it memorable by repetition. Put your website landing page everywhere both online and in print. Even put your website name on your website.

The more people remember your website, the more likely they are to share it with people who may be interested in your business.

The more people share your website, the more of a challenge it will be for people in your community to avoid finding your business. Integrate your website in everything you do and above all, improve your findability.

About the Writer:

Jeremy Phillips is the creator of www.findingyourbusiness.com. Check out the site for more resources and tools to make it a challenge for people in your community to avoid finding your business.

If you have questions about the content or would like to contact him, visit the website or email him directly at getfound@findingyourbusiness.com.

Findability Disclaimer:

Under no circumstances am I saying or implying that if you do these steps people will definitely find your business, become your customers, and buy from you. I am simply saying that the more places you can be found, and the more accurate your online information is, the greater your potential findability.

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