

The Guide to Google My Business



Introduction

With the launch of its Google My Business (GMB) API, Google introduced the biggest change to location search since the launch of Google My Business itself in 2014. The new API creates a completely new way for businesses and platforms to get information about their locations into Google Search, Google Maps, and ads. Location owners now have more control over how they appear to customers in search, which improves the consumer experience by delivering more accurate, more comprehensive information.

Our three-part guide will teach you:

- 1. How to claim your business on Google**
- 2. Why the GMB API matters**
- 3. How to manage your business listings on Google with the Location Management Platform**

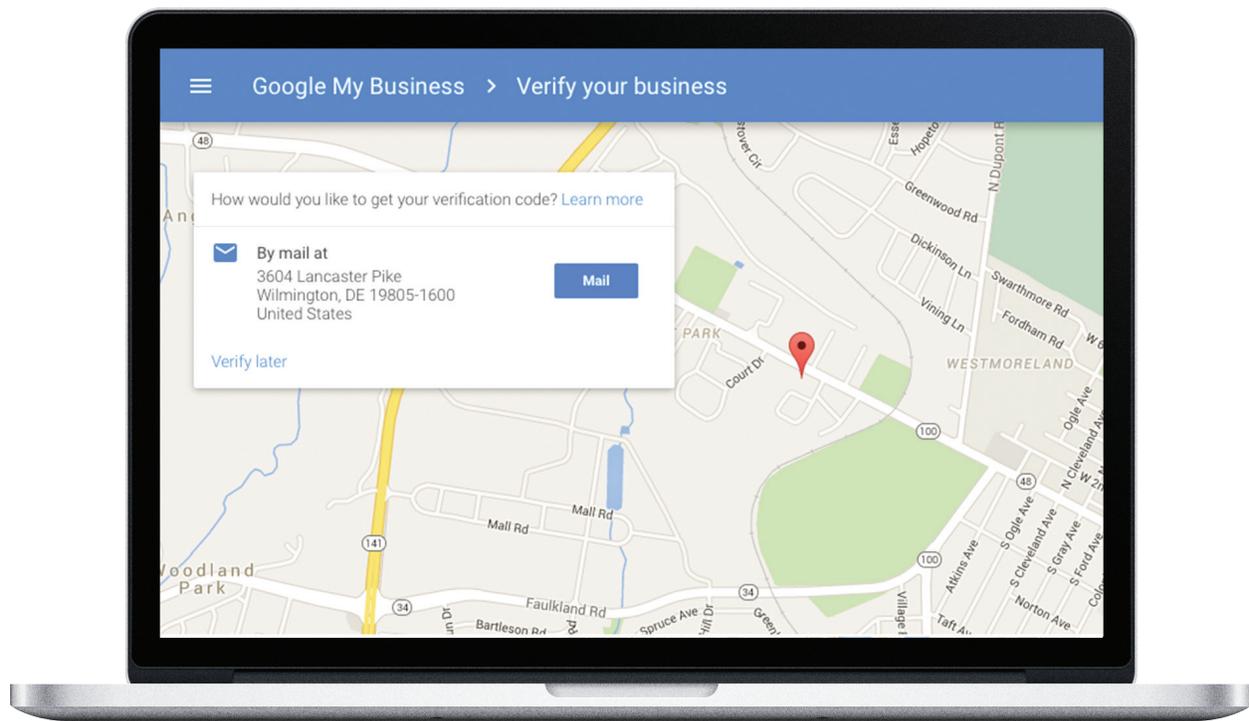
As the world's preeminent search engine, Google maintains a 69% share of search in the U.S. and in excess of 90% across Europe. Google also operates Google Maps, the world's most popular local search and mapping app. For businesses increasingly dependent on mobile consumers, the accuracy of location data on Google can often be the difference between thriving and struggling to stay in business.

Since 2014, GMB has provided a manual means through which companies can manage their location data across Google Search, Maps, and ads. With GMB, businesses can add and claim locations, edit listing information such as opening hours, clean up closed and duplicate locations, and more.

How to Claim Your Business on Google

The first step to managing your location data on Google is claiming your business via GMB. You do this in three simple steps:

1. Set up your Google account
2. Add/Claim your business
3. Verify your business



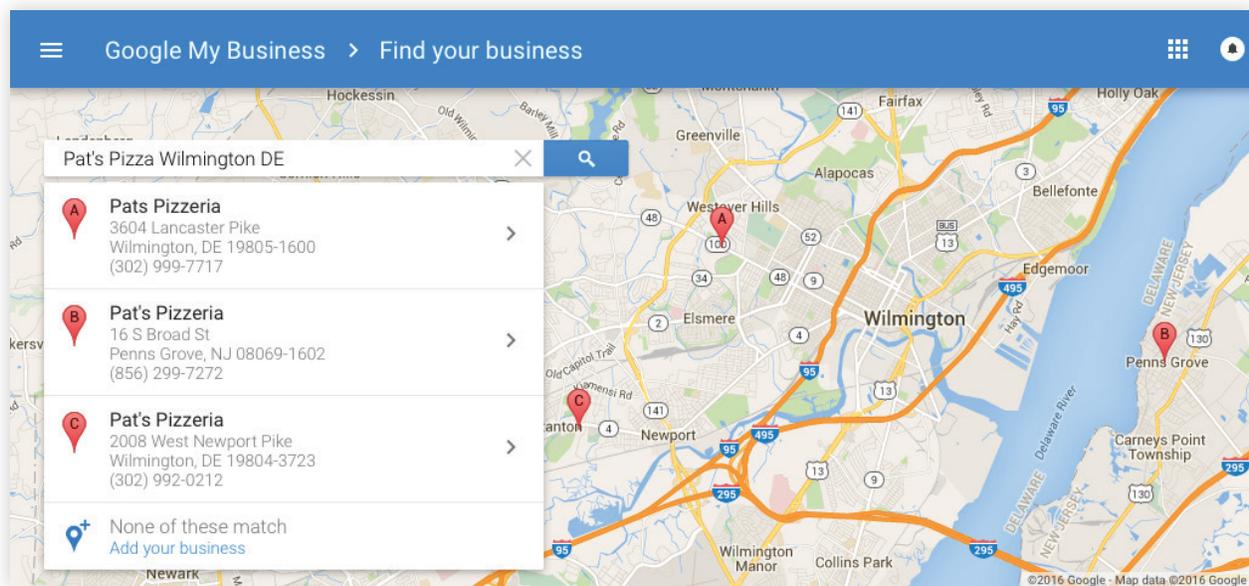
Set Up Your Google Account

In order to log into the GMB dashboard, you must first have a Google account. If you have an existing account for Gmail or Google+, you can use that account to log in, or you can create a new account. Whatever account you choose, it should be one that your business controls.

1. Add/Claim Your Business

To claim your business on GMB, visit the GMB dashboard and:

- Search for your business using its name and address
- If your business is displayed in the menu, click on its listing. If your business is not listed, click NONE OF THESE MATCH and enter your business information



Address Entry Guidelines*

Enter the complete and exact street address for your location. Ex: "1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA, 94043".

Only include information that is part of the official address. Including information like crossstreets or nearby landmarks, when they are not part of your official address, may make it more difficult to determine your location on Google Maps.

Suite or office numbers may be added separately from the street name and number in Address Line 2.

The screenshot shows the Google My Business interface for adding a new business. The form is overlaid on a map of North America. The form fields are as follows:

- Business name:** A text input field.
- Country / Region:** A dropdown menu currently set to "United States".
- Street address:** A text input field.
- City:** A text input field with the placeholder "Enter the full city name".
- State:** A dropdown menu with "Please select" as the current selection.
- ZIP code:** A text input field.
- Main business phone:** A text input field with a country code dropdown set to the United States.
- Category:** A text input field with the placeholder "Enter a category" and a search icon.
- Delivery:** A checkbox labeled "I deliver goods and services to my customers at their location" with a link to "Important information".
- Navigation:** "Back" and "Continue" buttons at the bottom of the form.

*Source: Google

2. Verify Your Business

Now that you have identified or entered your business information, you need to verify its accuracy with Google and confirm that you are the owner. You may have up to three options for verification. Not all options are available for all businesses.

To verify your business: Select the location you would like to verify and click **VERIFY NOW**.

A. Verify By Mail

- Click **MAIL** to have a verification postcard mailed to your business
- Assign at least one person at your place of business to be on the look out for the postcard. Most failed verifications are the result of either bad phone numbers, missed phone calls, or lost or misplaced postcards
- When your postcard arrives enter the code on the postcard in your GMB dashboard

B. Verify By Phone

- Make sure that you have access to the business phone number that you provided to receive your verification code
- Click **VERIFY BY PHONE** to have the code sent to your phone
- Enter the code from the message in your GMB dashboard

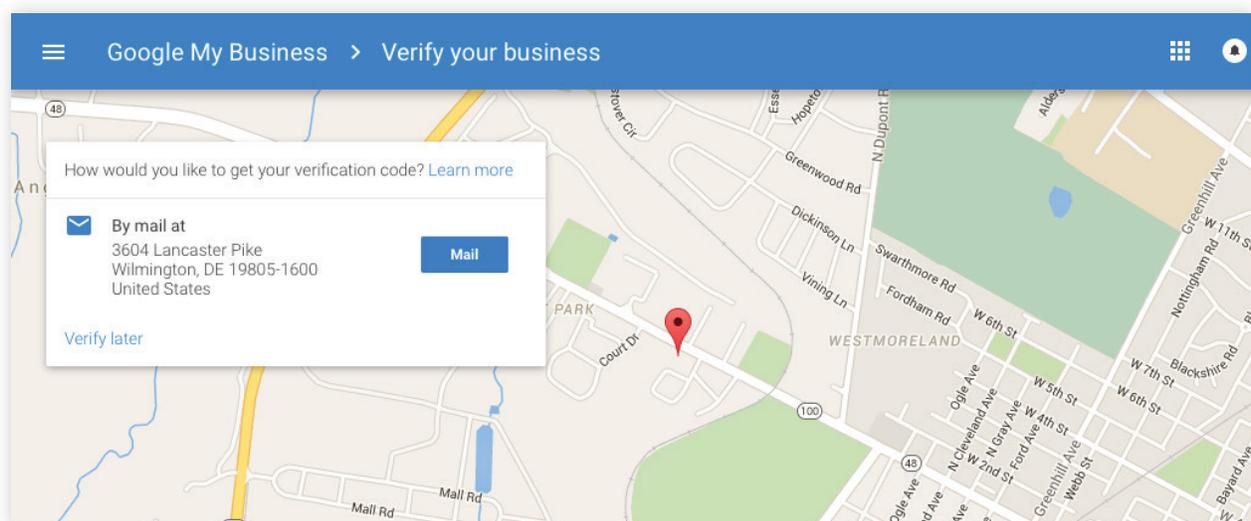
C. Instant Verification

- If your business's website is verified with Google Search Console you may be instantly verified
- Make sure you are signed in to GMB with the same account you used to verify your website

Troubleshooting:

What if someone else verified my business? If you know the owner of the page, you can ask them to transfer ownership. If you do not know the owner, click **REQUEST ADMIN RIGHTS**, and Google will attempt to contact the current owner.

What if I do not receive my verification postcard? Log in to the GMB dashboard and click **REQUEST ANOTHER CODE**.



Why the GMB API Matters

In December 2015, Google launched the GMB API, which enables approved location data providers to feed information directly into Google. Prior to the GMB API, verified business owners could only update their location data on Google manually or via bulk upload using a spreadsheet. This process was not only time consuming and inefficient but also served to undermine the accuracy of location data due to the lag between submitted and published changes.

With the launch of the GMB API, Google created a means for more frequent location content updates that reflect the real-time realities of business. Today's mobile consumers rely on Google to help them go places, and they expect the information to be current, correct, and comprehensive. With the GMB API, Google makes it as easy as possible for businesses to meet consumers' high expectations.

The GMB API also relies on businesses as the source of truth for their own location data. Until now, Google relied on a mix of crawling, third-party data, and manually submitted location data to populate business listings. The GMB API shifts the approach. By enabling businesses to provide real-time location data directly to Google, verified business owners take control of their location information, thereby reducing the likelihood that conflicting data from data aggregators, crawlers, and other third parties will confuse consumers.

Accurate, real-time location data is a big win for businesses, Google, and consumers. Moreover, it highlights the central importance of location as a data element across Google's entire ecosystem of search, maps, and ads.

How to Manage Your Business Listings on Google with the Location Management Platform

The GMB API replaces the manual work with an automated feed; however, given the complexity of collecting, storing, and managing location information, many businesses will choose to leverage the API through a location management partner.

The Location Management Platform (LMP) enables companies of all sizes to manage location data across their websites, mobile apps, and internal systems. In addition, the LMP lets you publish your location data to the industry's largest network of maps, apps, social networks, directories, and search engines, which includes not only to Google but also Apple Maps, Facebook, Foursquare, Bing, Yahoo, and Yelp. As an approved Google API data provider, updates in the LMP push to GMB in real time. From there, Google syncs that information with Google Maps, Search and ads—in some cases, within minutes.

This means less time spent managing your business's online presence, faster updates for your customers when your hours or other key business details change, and greater ability to ensure that your location information is always consistent and up to date everywhere consumers are searching. Syncing the LMP with your GMB account takes just minutes and instantly unlocks the power of the GMB API to boost brand awareness, drive foot traffic, and increase sales.

A best-in-class integration with the GMB API means that the LMP lets you:

- Create new locations
- Update name, address, phone, categories, website, photos, G+ cover and profile photos, hours and special hours in real time
- View listing status in the Yext dashboard to verify that locations are Published on Google properties (Maps, Search, Google+) or require additional action
- Manage locations globally
- Link multiple Google accounts or business accounts for multi-location clients
- Set service area radius or places (cities/zips) and fully suppress address
- Mark permanently closed locations

The GMB API integration extends the LMP's position as the market leader—with the largest network of ecosystem partners and the most robust feature set. Now, for the first time, businesses can control all of their listings on all of the most important location search engines and apps from one powerful platform.

Next Steps

The launch of the GMB API is a historic moment in the quest for accurate, real-time location data. As we look to a future of drone delivery, self-driving cars, and increasingly mobile consumers, Google has rightfully placed the power of location data where it belongs—in the hands of verified business owners. This shift gives businesses of all sizes the opportunity to improve their consumer experience, reduce navigational frustrations, and deliver more traffic to their front door.