

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE · WW-010

Create and verify a Google Business Profile

Check for an existing listing, create a policy-compliant Google Business Profile owned by the business, complete verification, and finish the core profile details.

GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

VERSION 1.0	EFFECTIVE 5 October 2026
NEXT REVIEW 5 April 2027	TIME 45 minutes, plus verification time
DIFFICULTY Beginner	RELATED WW-011 · WW-012
AUDIENCE Business owners and marketers setting up a business on Google Search and Maps	
TOOLS Google Business Profile · Google Search · Google Maps	

Purpose

A verified Google Business Profile is how a business appears in Google Maps and the local results on Google Search. This procedure creates one profile, owned by a business Google account, that follows Google's guidelines so it is not suspended later. It is finished when the profile is verified and shows the correct name, category, contact details, hours and service area.

Scope

In scope

- Searching for and claiming an existing listing
- Creating a new profile with a compliant name, category and address settings
- Completing verification
- Adding core details and managers

Out of scope

- Ongoing optimisation, posts and photos (see WW-011)
- Reviews (see WW-012)
- Multi-location bulk management and appeals for suspended profiles

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Business owner	Owns the profile and completes verification steps that require them.
Implementer	Prepares details, creates the profile and completes the setup.
Reviewer	Checks the profile against Google's guidelines before verification.

Prerequisites

- A business-owned Google account (not a personal account).
- The business's real-world name exactly as used on signage, stationery and the website.
- The address (if customers visit), or the towns and areas served (if staff travel to customers).
- A local phone number answered by the business, the website URL and opening hours.
- Proof the business is real and operating, such as signage, branded vehicles, tools and a business document, in case video verification is requested.

Procedure

Check for an existing listing

Avoid duplicate profiles, which Google may merge or suspend.

1. Search the business name and town on Google Maps. If a listing exists, open it and click **Own this business?** or **Claim this business**, then follow the prompts.
2. If the listing is already managed by someone else, use the request access option and record the request date. Do not create a duplicate while waiting.

Create the profile

Enter details that match the real world exactly.

1. Go to business.google.com with the business account and choose to add a business.
2. Enter the business name exactly as it appears in the real world. Do not add keywords, locations or taglines.

[!WARNING] Adding keywords to the business name (for example "Smith Plumbing · Emergency Plumber London") breaks Google's guidelines and is a common reason for suspension.

3. Choose the most specific **primary category** that describes what the business is, not everything it does (for example rather than).
4. If customers visit the premises, enter the address. If the business serves customers at their location only, choose not to show an address and add up to 20 service areas instead.
5. Add the local phone number and the website URL, then submit.

Verify the profile

Complete verification promptly using the method Google offers.

1. Open the profile and select **Verify**. Google chooses the available methods, which can include a phone or text code, email, a recorded video or a live video call.
2. For video verification, record one continuous clip showing the street or area outside, the signage or branded vehicle, the inside of the premises or tools of the trade, and proof of management such as unlocking the door or showing a business document.
3. Submit and wait for review. Reviews can take up to five business days.

[!IMPORTANT] Do not edit the business name, address or category while verification is pending. Changes can restart the review.

Complete the core details

Fill in the details customers use most.

1. Add regular opening hours, and any special hours for upcoming bank holidays.
2. Add secondary categories only for services that are a real part of the business.

3. Write a business description of up to 750 characters that explains what the business does, who for and where. Do not include links or promotional claims.
4. Add a logo, a cover photo and at least five real photos of the premises, team or work.

Add managers

Keep control with the business while giving the team access.

1. Open the profile's **Settings**, then **People and access**, and add team members or the agency as **Manager**.
2. Keep **Primary owner** with the business account and add a second owner the business trusts.

Quality checks

- ☐ There is exactly one profile for the business on Google Maps.
- ☐ The business name matches real-world signage with no added keywords.
- ☐ The primary category is the most specific accurate option.
- ☐ Address or service area settings match how customers are served.
- ☐ The profile shows as verified.
- ☐ The business account is the primary owner, with a second owner added.

Troubleshooting

Symptom	Likely cause	Fix
Verification rejected	Video missing location, signage or management proof	Re-record one continuous video that shows all required elements.
Profile suspended after edits	Guideline breach such as keywords in the name	Correct the details to match the real world and request reinstatement.
Listing owned by a former agency	Ownership never transferred	Use the request access process and keep records of the request.
Duplicate listing appears	Old listing or a Google-generated listing exists	Report it as a duplicate from Google Maps.

Records

- Record the profile ID, owners, managers, verification method and date in the client record.
- Save the verification confirmation email.

References

- [Add or claim your Business Profile \(Google Business Profile Help\)](#)

- [Guidelines for representing your business on Google \(Google Business Profile Help\)](#)
- [Verify your business on Google \(Google Business Profile Help\)](#)
- [Manage service areas \(Google Business Profile Help\)](#)

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