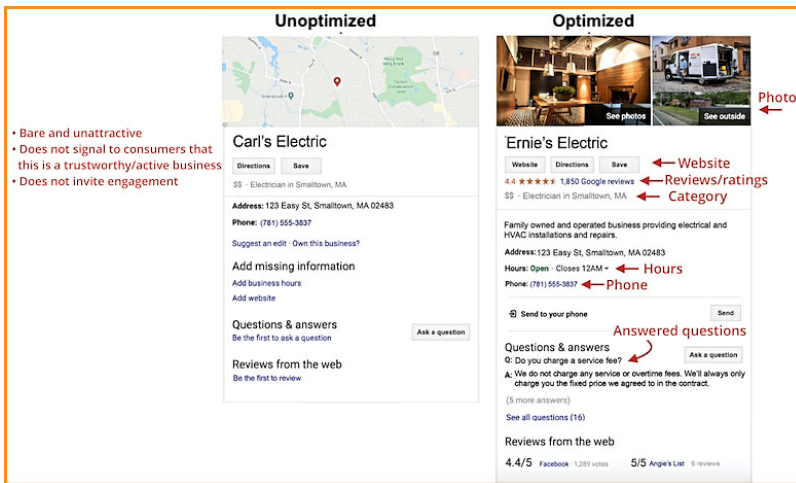


## 6 Essential Google My Business Optimizations

Most businesses today need targeted visibility on Google. Companies realize that this requires optimizing their website and Google Ads, but what most don't know is that there is a third entity that also needs optimizing: their Google business listing. Formally known as your Business Profile, this powerful listing is a dynamic snapshot of your business that highlights your best features and enables potential customers to quickly find, learn about, and engage with you, all from the search engine results page. The best part is that it's completely free. Here is an example of an incomplete Google business listing versus a complete and optimized listing.



The above image gives you an idea of how much more attractive and engaging an optimized profile is. The following are 10 steps to help you start and optimize your Google business listing.

### 1. Create a Google My Business Account

First and foremost, it's important to note here that a Google business listing is a separate entity from a Google My Business account. The latter is used to gain access to and optimize the former. Which means that in order to make the optimizations laid out in this guide, you need to have a Google My Business account and then tell Google to connect it with your Google listing. To create an account, head to [Google.com/business](https://www.google.com/business) and sign in with the regular Google/Gmail account you use for your business (as opposed to your personal Gmail, if you have one).

### 2. Complete All The Sections

The completeness of your Google listing not only helps Google to rank you higher in local search results, but it also increases the number of actions customers take when they find your listing. There's a lot of information to provide, so here are some guidelines for prioritizing.

- These aspects of your listing should be completed right away: Name/Address/Phone/Website/Hours
- These sections take a bit more time and thought: Category and Attributes/Products and services/From the business/Questions and answers (Owner-generated queries)
- These sections are ongoing: Posts/Reviews/Questions and answers (Consumer-generated)

### 3. Be Meticulous With Contact Information

Here are the steps for optimizing the contact information in your Google business listing:

- Make sure your business name is identical to the one you use on your store signage. In other words, exactly as it appears in the real world. Adding location name (unless it's in your brand name) or keywords is considered spam by Google and you could be penalized.

- Make sure that both your business name and address exactly match your other listings across the web. This means using “st” vs “street” or “co” vs “company” consistently. Google’s algorithm takes these inconsistencies into account when assessing your credibility.
- Indicate both regular and holiday hours. This encourages customers to visit you and avoids the potential of a negative review left by someone who tried contacting you only to find you’re closed.

#### 4. Write Your “From The Business” Description

The first thing to note is that the brief description that appears just below your business name in your business listing is not actually in your control. This is the editorial summary that Google writes to ensure consistency across the platform. To optimize the “from the business” section of your Google listing:

- Use all 750 characters, with key information in the first 250 characters.
- Repurpose content from your “About Us” page or mission statement.
- Use keywords your audience uses to find businesses like yours.
- Don’t repeat any information already visible in the other sections of your profile. Use this space to talk about what sets you apart from competitors and what customers like most about your business.
- Don’t include links or HTML.

#### 5. Choose A Category

Choosing a category is a must for optimizing your Google business listing in order to both get found in discovery searches and to highlight category specific features. Google offers a set number of categories, so it’s important to choose the correct ones. Here’s how to optimize your Google business listing using categories:

- Be specific. A drop-down list of categories will appear once you start typing, but you can also see a full list of GMB categories here to ensure you find the most specific one for your business (there are over 3,000 categories so it’s worth the look).
- Choose secondary categories. Many businesses fall into multiple categories. Set your primary category to your chief offering (for example, “Grocery Store”) and then choose additional categories that apply, such as “Grocery Delivery Service” or “Gourmet Grocery Store.”
- Don’t overdo it. You want Google to connect you with consumers who need your service, so choose only categories that match your offering. For example, if you’re an appliance repair business, select “Appliance Repair” only, not “Appliance Parts Supplier.” Technically you do supply service parts, but this is not a standalone offering of your business.

#### 6. Add Photos

Uploading photos to your Google listing through your Google My Business account dashboard is important. It helps ensure quality, get your images into results and it increases engagement. This doesn’t mean you should go crazy and add a hundred images to your profile at once. Here are some tips:

- Add at least one new photo every seven days.
- For your thumbnail photo, upload your logo.
- For your cover photo, use something that best represents your brand—but don’t fuss over this because Google will display different feature photos depending on the search query.
- For other general photos, refer to Google’s photo guidelines for specifications, but be sure to include happy customers, interior and exterior views, and team photos.
- No stock photos, and no photos with special effects or branding. Google is trying to represent your business as it appears in the real world.
- Geo-tag your photos to further indicate to Google your prominence in your area.
- Add videos, too!
- Use Google’s Street View app to add a 360° photo to your listing.

