

By Wayne Marshall
Kaizen Marketing

The Art and Science of Continuous Improvement

www.kaizen-marketing.com

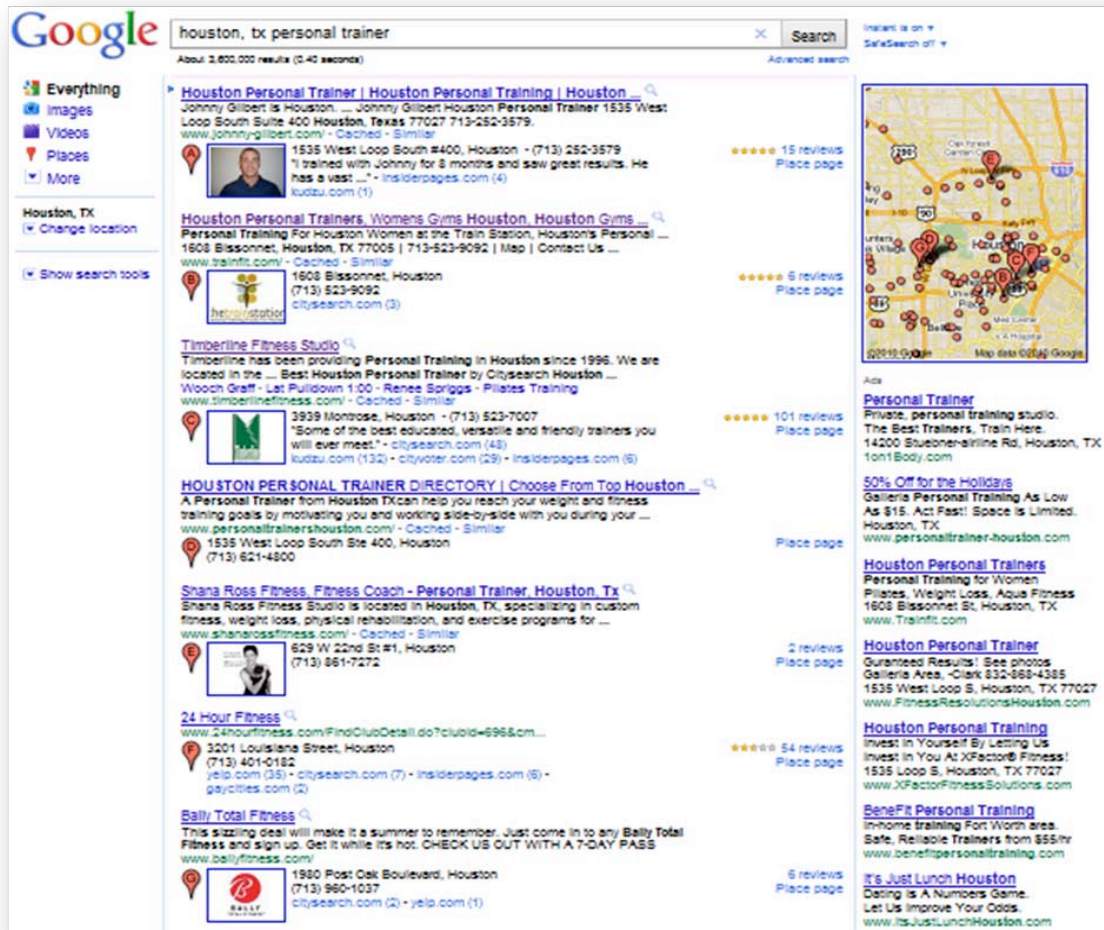
Introduction

As a business owner, you may have been hearing about this internet thing called Google Places. There's a lot of buzz about it but you may not really know what it is or why you should worry about it.



In this report, you will learn:

- Some internet history that has led to the creation of Google Places
- What Google Places is
- Why you should be concerned about using Google Places
- What the benefits and features are that Google Places offers to you
- How to correctly claim your Google Places listing.



The Internet: Changing the Way Consumers Find Local Businesses

In the beginning, the internet was used primarily to connect people, to share information and to improve communication – all in a global sense. As internet use became more prevalent, big businesses realized the potential the internet gave them for reaching a global customer base and they embraced the internet with a vengeance.

Before long, every major corporation had an online presence and the impact this had on a company's growth in sales and customer acquisition could not be ignored by other businesses. With millions of people on the web every day, and the internet now a trillion dollar

industry, it would be foolish not to try and harness this new technology to your advantage, no matter the size of your business.

Smaller business owners used to think that the internet could only be used properly by those large companies with huge advertising budgets. In the year 2000, millions of dollars were spent on both online advertising and offline advertising by companies trying to drive people to their company websites.

Well, we're very happy to report to you that this has changed and it is now possible for *you* to market *your business* on the internet and compete with those giant companies – using a much smaller marketing budget.

Being Findable Online Is More Affordable Than You Might Think

The Playing Field Has Been Levelled

The internet has been instrumental in leveling the playing field and allowing small businesses to compete with larger corporations, **using the right strategies.**

Over time, it's been found that people use the internet to research a product or a service. After they've learned about the product or service they want, those same customers are looking on the internet again – only this time to find a **local business** where they can buy that product or use that service.

Right now, people are looking on the internet for **your** local services and products instead of using the Yellow Pages phone book or newspapers. **If they're not finding your business** when they search, ***you have a problem!*** **Your competitors are getting your customers and your profit!**

You already know having an internet presence is important. You've probably even gotten a website made for your business.

But now what do you do with it?

And does your business get found by those local consumers using the internet, looking for your product or service?

Or do you have a...

"Billboard In The Desert"?



Being Findable Online

Searches done on the internet are typically done on search engines, such as Google, Yahoo or Bing. It's generally acknowledged that Google is the most popular search engine, being used by about 65–70% of searchers. It would make sense, therefore, to pay attention to Google and learn how to be found on Google.

Here are some interesting statistics about search engines that you may not know:

- 43% of all searches on Google are related to searches for **local** services or businesses – (comScore Networks).
- 97% of consumers use the Internet to find and research products or services in their local area – (The Kelsey Group).
- 82% of people performing an online local search follow-up via an online inquiry, phone call or visit to an offline local business. This means these searchers decide which local business to spend their money at by the businesses they find on the Internet – (Local Marketing Source).

Google, the largest collector of data, recognized the upward trending of local searches and made the decision to place an increased focus on local searches.

As a result, Google created **Google Places** – a strategy for giving searchers what they're looking for in their own local towns or cities – whether it is a restaurant, dry cleaner or attorney.

When you do an online search, Google will show local results first from local businesses, along with a map at the top of the page. Google Places listings are among those local results.

If you learn to optimize your Google Places properly and can be found by local consumers, you've won a major battle and can look forward to a profitable future as your business grows with online visibility.

Businesses that can get one of the top Google Places spots have a jumpstart on their competition.

The bottom line is... If you're not findable online, you have competitors that are – and they're being found by your potential customers.

Local Internet Searches

Initially, people would use short “keywords” when looking for a website relevant to their needs. People would type things like “Furniture” into a search engine, check out the first few results and then make a decision. The difficulty with this was that the results would usually be global and not relevant enough.

Consumers now know that by adding geographical terms, such as city name, zip code etc... the search results provided will include local businesses.

In addition, since consumers are better at searching with Google, their keywords progressively became longer in order to return more specific, relevant results.

For example, instead of just “New York Furniture,” they might type “New York discount office furniture.” This would eliminate useless results such as, “home furnishing stores.” These longer keywords are called “long tail keywords” and will result in more relevant search results.

This sort of mentality has revitalized the world of small businesses online. Instead of just searching for a product or service, people now search for a niche product or service in a particular location.

When people search in this way, **they are ready to buy**. This means that, instead of just massive chains dominating the search results, **local small business listings are flourishing**.

Why You Need an Optimized Google Places Listing

Being findable by local consumers online is known as **Local Internet Marketing** and requires a great deal of experience and expertise. Without applying Local Internet Marketing for your business, you won't be able to get your business findable online when local customers search for your product or service.

With more people moving towards local searches, you're going to need to target your Internet Marketing to services, product offerings and areas. If you fail to do this, you'll be competing with the major players in your industry nationally, and it's a battle you almost certainly won't win.



Google Places is the future of local consumer marketing – In fact, it's the “now” of local consumer marketing.

If you want to grow your business, you absolutely have to take advantage of this trend. Google has again confirmed, as they have over and over again for the last five years, that local search results are only going to get more important over time. By capitalizing on internet traffic now, you'll be able to get a strong foothold in your local marketplace.

Be Found – Get More Customers – isn't that the goal?

A Google Places listing allows you to show up on the first page of Google quicker than traditional SEO methods do. More customers finding your local business in a few weeks is much better than a few months or years.

With Google Places, your local business is easier for customers to find when you have an optimized Google Places listing. If you're not involved with Places, you're missing the boat on a very wide, very social demographic.

A growing number of consumers are looking at reviews of restaurants, business hours, locations, telephone numbers, and ideas about where to visit on their next trip or vacation, reviews of doctors, mechanics, schools, and countless other bits of information from Google searches.

“Google it” has become synonymous with performing an internet search. What's more – if you're not included, then you're overlooked.

Fortunately, driving traffic to your business has never been more attainable. Getting included on all of these search results can be as hands-on as you'd like.

You can submit your site yourself with minimal effort, often with less-than-optimal results, or you can hire an Internet Marketing Expert that knows the ins and outs of getting your business featured on search engines.

Stand Out.

Google Places' FREE services are quickly replacing the expensive ads local businesses have been paying for in the paper phone directories. Local consumers are using Google Search more than ever.

Your website, physical address, and your phone number are displayed **FREE** for your business, allowing new customers to find you quickly and sending you more traffic!

You are able to add photos, videos, hours of operation, and much more information to show customers what makes your business different – for FREE.

Get Insights.

Google provides you with a personalized dashboard where you can access data on number of visitors, popular keywords and where people traveled from to visit your business. You can use this information to make future decisions to make your marketing more effective.

Geo-Tagging and SmartPhone use

This is a growing market around the world. According to a report released in November of 2010, mobile Web traffic is expected to increase by 700% over the next five years.



In fact, at this time, 86% of all mobile data usage comes from Internet-ready SmartPhones.

Nielsen projections show SmartPhone use overtaking all other phones by 2011 Q3, when they will achieve 51% market penetration.

Geo-Tagging, the use of SmartPhones to send location information along with data, is more widely accepted than one might believe.

Google tracks the locations of millions of phones while they deliver search results, and this allows your business to market to home PC users as well as SmartPhone users who are walking down the Avenue that your business occupies.

Customized QR codes:

From the dashboard page of Google Places, businesses in the U.S. can download a [QR code](#) that's unique to their business, directly from their dashboard page.

QR codes can be placed on business cards or other marketing materials, and customers can scan them with certain SmartPhones to be taken directly to the mobile version of the Place Page for that business.



Beating your competitors to the punch is the goal of any marketing effort. Right now, in most areas, local internet marketing efforts are applied inefficiently or are completely ignored.

So What Does All This Mean?

With just a small marketing budget and/or a bit of work, you have an opportunity to become findable when local consumers are looking for your product or service.

Unlike other Internet marketing strategies which your competitors may have caught on to, (such as a website with strong Search Engine Optimization techniques), right now, emerging strategies like Local Search Marketing are relatively uncompetitive and more affordable.

By taking advantage of this untapped opportunity, your marketing budget can go much further than with traditional marketing alone. Google has had a history of rewarding early adopters.

Until your competitors adopt a local search marketing campaign, not only will you be listed on the first page of Google, you might also be the primary listing in your area, and net all the traffic.

The bottom line is: **if you're findable on the internet** – you're more likely to get more customers and this translates into **more profits for your business**.

YOU NEED A Google Places Listing!

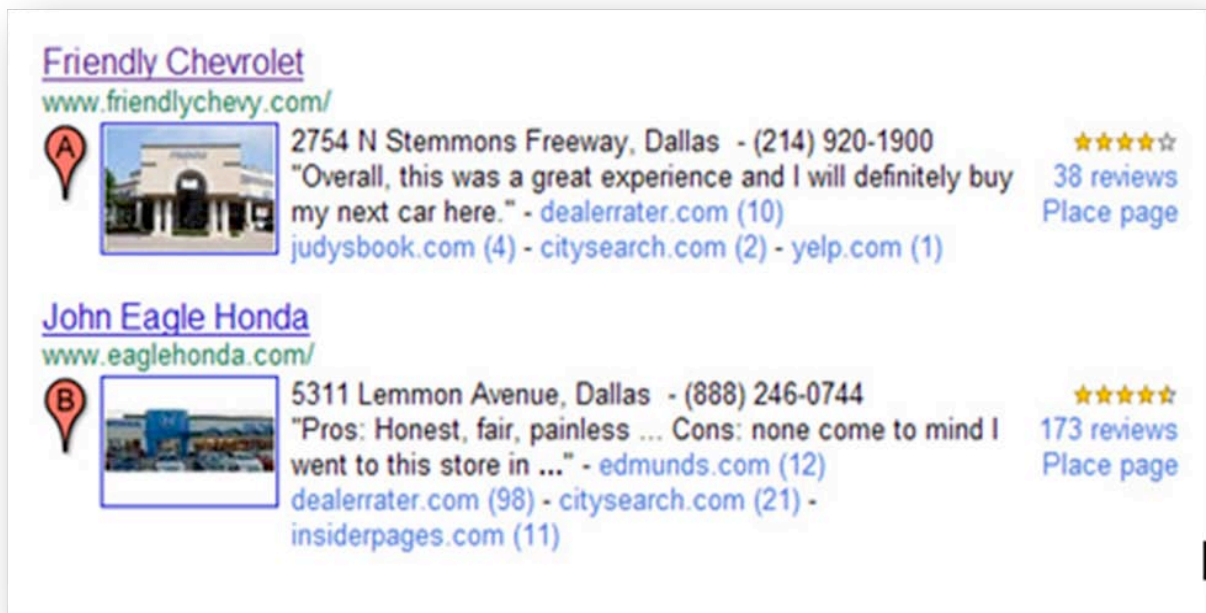
Keep reading and we'll show you how to claim your own Google Places listing.

Information You Need For Your Listing

Company/Organization Name

It's important to list your business just as it is anywhere else that you advertise. Your real business name as you would list it in the phonebook.

If Google detects a discrepancy between your business name, your Website, other online advertising and Google Places listings, you could potentially be penalized. Hiring a Local Internet Marketing Expert can help you avoid being penalized for errors in your listings.



The image shows two Google Places listings. The first listing, labeled 'A', is for 'Friendly Chevrolet' with the website www.friendlychevy.com/. It features a photo of a building and provides the address '2754 N Stemmons Freeway, Dallas - (214) 920-1900'. A review snippet reads: "Overall, this was a great experience and I will definitely buy my next car here." - dealerrater.com (10). Other review sources listed are judysbook.com (4), citysearch.com (2), and yelp.com (1). It has a 4.5-star rating and 38 reviews. The second listing, labeled 'B', is for 'John Eagle Honda' with the website www.eaglehonda.com/. It features a photo of a car lot and provides the address '5311 Lemmon Avenue, Dallas - (888) 246-0744'. A review snippet reads: "Pros: Honest, fair, painless ... Cons: none come to mind I went to this store in ..." - edmunds.com (12). Other review sources listed are dealerrater.com (98), citysearch.com (21), and insiderpages.com (11). It has a 4.5-star rating and 173 reviews.

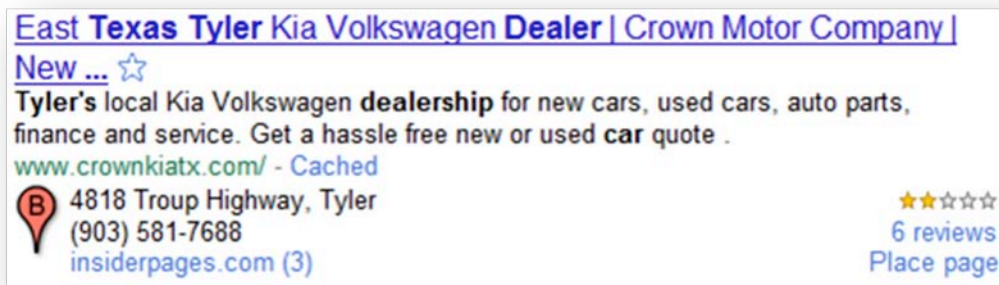
In this example, Friendly Chevrolet is the real business name of this car dealership. Both of these businesses are showing only their real business.

Business Address and Website Address

Your business address is very important. You want to be very consistent with your address when creating listings. Google looks for discrepancies when it sees your address on your listings, your website and other internet sources and you would not want your account to get suspended (just a possibility).

If you are a business where the client always comes to you to do business, then you are going to want to list your storefront address. If you are in a business where you go to your customers' houses or workplaces or if you work from home, Google allows you to hide your address.

Google has also implemented a "Service Area" feature which allows you to designate a service area radius, up to 60 miles or 100 kilometers, or list specific cities/towns you want to target.



Phone Number

You'll want to use a local phone number instead of an out-of-state or toll free number. You want your customers (and Google) to recognize the number as a local number they can trust.

Description

Including a strong description is necessary for achieving a high ranking in Google Places. Your description is the first thing Google Places looks at to see who you are and what you do. It's *also the first place that potential customers look to see if you offer the goods and services they're looking for.*

An appropriate, keyword-rich, well-targeted description is necessary for ensuring the success of your marketing results. You want to use as much of the 200 characters allowed when writing your description. Make sure you always write for humans while including the most important search terms for your business.

This is where a marketing consultant can help you understand how to optimize your listing. Selecting keywords with high search traffic is something that a marketing consultant knows how to do.

Category

Picking the right category is really a task for a marketing professional, which is why a consultant is critical if you want this listing to be optimized. Google checks categories to make sure that they're consistent with the content on your Website and the keywords in your Google Places description.

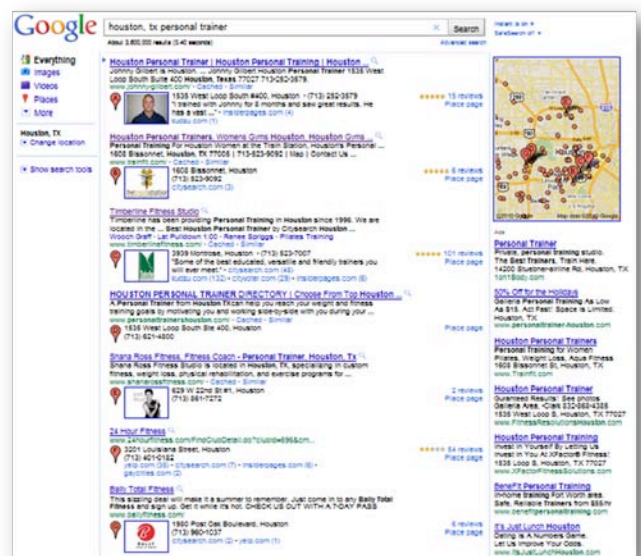
Far too much goes into selecting categories (you can have up to five) to discuss in this guide, but I will mention the most important information that an industry professional would consider before selecting a category for your Google Places listing.

- The first category that you choose should be one of Google's categories. As you start typing your category, you'll see a drop down list of possible categories. You must select one of these for your primary category if you hope to rank highly in Google Places.
- Your other four categories should ideally be categories in Google's category list, but this is not a requirement. You should create your own category only if you think Google would approve, or if they have approved similar categories in the past. You can always change this later.
- Google will look at the five categories in the order that you place them. The most important category goes at the top, and the least important category goes in the fifth slot. This is a vital decision to ensure you're ranked highly for terms that users search for. The decisions you make will depend on your marketing goals.

Becoming highly visible for keywords you care about...

Is becoming more critical by the day. If you use Google Search, you'll notice the Google Search Results feature a map prominently on the right side of the page.

The map lists several businesses that are near the city you live in or the city you searched for.



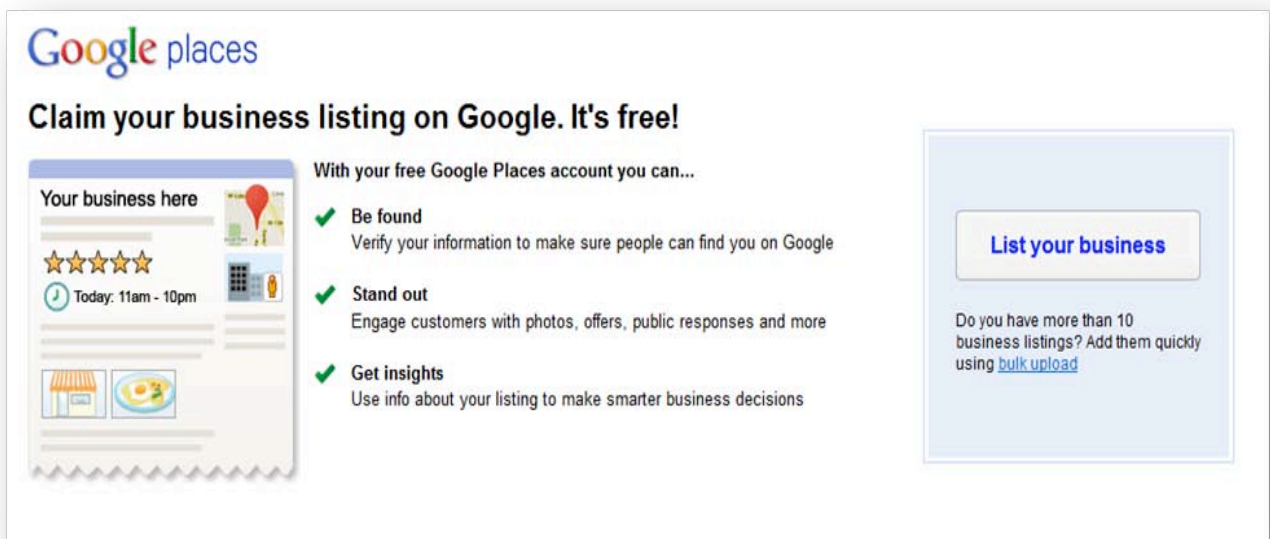
Your goal is to become one of the top businesses through proper optimization of your Google Places listing, because front page ranking in the search engines can translate into more customers finding you.

Being findable online is critical for creating increased traffic to your business, and one of the ways you can achieve it is through an optimized Google Places listing.

How to Add Your Business to Google Places

Here are some basic steps to follow if you want to add your local business to Google Places:

- If you don't already have one, you'll need to create a Google Gmail account. Go to <http://www.google.com/gmail> and then click on "Create an account." Remember, this is for a business account so you won't want to use your personal email address.



The image is a screenshot of the Google Places website's landing page for claiming a business listing. At the top left is the 'Google places' logo. Below it is the headline 'Claim your business listing on Google. It's free!'. To the left of the main text is a preview of a business listing, showing a map, a star rating of five stars, and business hours for 'Today: 11am - 10pm'. To the right of the preview is a list of benefits under the heading 'With your free Google Places account you can...'. The benefits are: 'Be found' (Verify your information to make sure people can find you on Google), 'Stand out' (Engage customers with photos, offers, public responses and more), and 'Get insights' (Use info about your listing to make smarter business decisions). On the far right, there is a large blue button that says 'List your business'. Below the button, there is a note: 'Do you have more than 10 business listings? Add them quickly using [bulk upload](#)'.

- Go to the following URL: <http://www.google.com/places> & login using your Gmail username & password. Click on “Add a New Business” as shown below.
- Select your Country and enter your local business phone number. Then select “Find business information”. Your business may already be on Google Maps, but if it isn’t, then click the button that says, “Add a new listing.”

Google places

Tip: Before you create a business listing, think about which [Google Account](#) you are using.

Enter your business's main phone number to see if Google Maps already has some information details, including photos and videos. [About Google Places](#)

Country: United States

Phone number: ex: (212) 234-5678

Find business information >

- Enter your Basic information such as Business Name, Address, Phone Number, Email Address, Website & Category.

Basic Information

Please note that changing your address or business name will require additional verification via mail or phone.

Country: * United States

Company/Organization: *

Street Address: *

City/Town: *

State: * Select state

ZIP: * [?]

Main phone: *

Email address: Example: (201) 234-5678 [Add more phone numbers](#)

Website: Example: myname@example.com
Example: http://www.example.com
 I don't have a website.

Description: 200 characters max, 200 characters left.

- Add the optional information like business hours, photos, videos, payment options and service areas to your listing too.

Not only does Google use these additional details about your business to rank your listing higher, it also provides valuable information for your customers.

▼ Service Areas and Location Settings

Does your business provide services, such as delivery or home repair, to locations in a certain area?

No, all customers come to the business location
 Yes, this business serves customers at their locations

▼ Hours of operations

Make sure your customers know when you're open!

I prefer not to specify operating hours.
 My operating hours are:

Mon	12:00 AM	-	12:00 AM		<input type="checkbox"/>	Closed	
							Apply to all
Tue	12:00 AM	-	12:00 AM		<input type="checkbox"/>	Closed	
Wed	12:00 AM	-	12:00 AM		<input type="checkbox"/>	Closed	
Thu	12:00 AM	-	12:00 AM		<input type="checkbox"/>	Closed	
Fri	12:00 AM	-	12:00 AM		<input type="checkbox"/>	Closed	
Sat	12:00 AM	-	12:00 AM		<input type="checkbox"/>	Closed	
Sun	12:00 AM	-	12:00 AM		<input type="checkbox"/>	Closed	

Are your hours split during a single day, such as 9-11am and 7-10pm?
 I'd like to enter two sets of hours for a single day.

- After you fill in this information, click “Submit” which will take you to the validation step.

▼ Additional Details

Please enter in any other details you want customers to know about your business, for example:

Parking available : Yes.


Brands carried : Sony, Panasonic and Toshiba.


:

[Add another](#)

- Validate your listing. You will need to validate your listing with either a phone call to your local number, which is fast and easy, or they can send a postcard to the business address, which can take several weeks.

How would you like to validate your listing?
For your protection, we need to verify the information you've just given us. This can be done in one of 2 ways:

 **By phone**
We'll call you at this phone number

 **By postcard (2-3 weeks)**
We'll send you a postcard in the mail to this address

If necessary, you may specify another recipient or enter a mailstop/mailbox number below. *This information won't appear on Google Maps.*



Contact name:

By clicking 'Finish,' you're authorizing Google to create or update your business listing for use in Google Maps or other Google services. You are also affirming that you have the right to create this listing and that you have read and agree to Google's [terms of service](#). There is currently no charge for creating or displaying listings. If this is a new listing or has a new address, you must verify the address via regular mail or telephone before the listing is activated. See next page for instructions.

- PIN number. Google will either give you the PIN over the phone or mail it to you on the postcard. This PIN number will activate your listing.

Status ↓

Needs Action

 **Not yet published** 

Enter your PIN:

[Request another PIN](#)

Google Places Offers & Reviews

Offers

Another key element of Google Places is the Offers section. Filling out an offer can drive tremendous amounts of traffic to your front door. Google likes to see you fill out the offers and keep the information updated and relevant.

For every user who walks through your front door, coupon in hand, you have a customer likely to purchase. Customers can either print the coupon offers or use a mobile coupon.

With mobile coupons, customers find your offer in your Google Places listing and show you the coupon on their mobile phone to get the discount without printing it out.



Reviews

Getting your company reviewed on Google Places will also improve your business' chances of ranking well. Some businesses have hundreds of reviews on Google. If you really want new customers to show up at your business, get several hundred positive reviews on Google.

Here are some ideas for soliciting reviews from your customers.

Call your best customers and ask.

Append the request to e-mail newsletters.

Ask for a review during follow-up calls.

Review the results of a satisfaction survey, and e-mail a review request to happy customers.

The Ideal Google Places Listing

Searching in some of the most competitive markets in the world, you can see some of the greatest Google Places listings on the planet. Those listings were probably written by Internet marketing professionals. They use all of the techniques that we have discussed in this guide.

Examples of good Google Places listings are shown below. You should try to emulate them when formulating your own listings. Be sure to take advantage of everything Google Places allows you to share with potential customers.

Being Found On The Internet

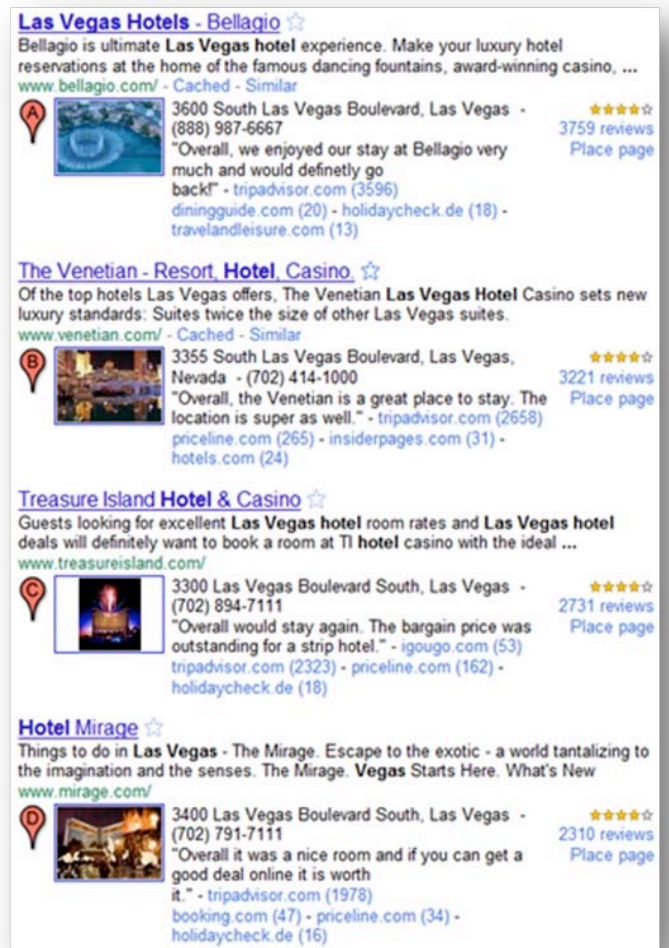
People use the internet in very different ways, and you can't possibly hope to capture every single person who might be looking for a product or service like yours.

However, you can make it extremely easy for people to find your business by being prominent in multiple places online.

With so many different types of content, and various ways of receiving information, there are limitless possibilities for marketing your website on the internet. Whether in the form of local business directories, online classifieds or videos about your product posted on popular websites, the opportunities for local consumers to find your business are endless.

Internet marketing is essentially about being “found” online by the people who will become your customers. They are looking for what you are selling, and you have to make it as easy as possible for them to find you.

Your business should be listed all over the internet: in classifieds, directories, videos, search engines, and, of course, Google Places. Once this has been done, there will be a flood of eager customers wanting to do business with you.



The screenshot displays a list of four hotel listings from Google Places. Each listing includes a title, a brief description, a website URL, a location and phone number, a star rating, and a link to reviews. The listings are: 1. **Las Vegas Hotels - Bellagio** (4.5 stars, 3759 reviews), 2. **The Venetian - Resort, Hotel, Casino** (4.5 stars, 3221 reviews), 3. **Treasure Island Hotel & Casino** (4.5 stars, 2731 reviews), and 4. **Hotel Mirage** (4.5 stars, 2310 reviews). Each listing also features a small thumbnail image of the hotel's interior or exterior.

Las Vegas Hotels - Bellagio ☆
Bellagio is ultimate Las Vegas hotel experience. Make your luxury hotel reservations at the home of the famous dancing fountains, award-winning casino, ...
www.bellagio.com/ - Cached - Similar
3600 South Las Vegas Boulevard, Las Vegas - (888) 987-6667
★★★★☆ 3759 reviews
Place page
"Overall, we enjoyed our stay at Bellagio very much and would definitely go back!" - tripadvisor.com (3596)
diningguide.com (20) - holidaycheck.de (18) - travelandleisure.com (13)

The Venetian - Resort, Hotel, Casino ☆
Of the top hotels Las Vegas offers, The Venetian Las Vegas Hotel Casino sets new luxury standards: Suites twice the size of other Las Vegas suites.
www.venetian.com/ - Cached - Similar
3355 South Las Vegas Boulevard, Las Vegas, Nevada - (702) 414-1000
★★★★☆ 3221 reviews
Place page
"Overall, the Venetian is a great place to stay. The location is super as well." - tripadvisor.com (2658)
priceline.com (265) - insiderpages.com (31) - hotels.com (24)

Treasure Island Hotel & Casino ☆
Guests looking for excellent Las Vegas hotel room rates and Las Vegas hotel deals will definitely want to book a room at TI hotel casino with the ideal ...
www.treasureisland.com/
3300 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas - (702) 894-7111
★★★★☆ 2731 reviews
Place page
"Overall would stay again. The bargain price was outstanding for a strip hotel." - igougo.com (53)
tripadvisor.com (2323) - priceline.com (162) - holidaycheck.de (18)

Hotel Mirage ☆
Things to do in Las Vegas - The Mirage. Escape to the exotic - a world tantalizing to the imagination and the senses. The Mirage. Vegas Starts Here. What's New
www.mirage.com/
3400 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas - (702) 791-7111
★★★★☆ 2310 reviews
Place page
"Overall it was a nice room and if you can get a good deal online it is worth it." - tripadvisor.com (1978)
booking.com (47) - priceline.com (34) - holidaycheck.de (16)

An Internet Marketing Consultant is familiar with all these strategies and will be happy to help you market your business for optimum results.

You need an optimized Google Places listing

Google Places is an extremely valuable tool, especially since Google seems to be continuing the trend of making local listings even more prominent in Google Search Results.

Google is the new Yellow Pages

Your customers are searching on Google through their SmartPhone or from their home computer and throwing out their phone books.

Benefits of hiring a professional

Hiring a Local Internet Marketing Expert to provide valuable services is extremely important in competitive markets when it comes to being findable in multiple places when consumers are looking for your product or service online.

After all, you do visit a lawyer for legal advice, and you see a doctor for illnesses, so use a Local Internet Marketing Expert for your internet marketing needs.

Just call us at Kaizen Marketing and we'll be happy to help. **The first service is always free.**

Please Note: Google Places is just one strategy for marketing your business on the internet. We'll be happy to explain other ways we can make your business "findable" on the internet.

More Findable = More Customers = More Profits!

This Local Marketing Report is brought to you by:



The Art and Science of Continuous Improvement

Wayne Marshall, Founder

www.kaizen-marketing.com

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