The Buzz on Google Business Profiles

A Practical Guide for Small Business Owners

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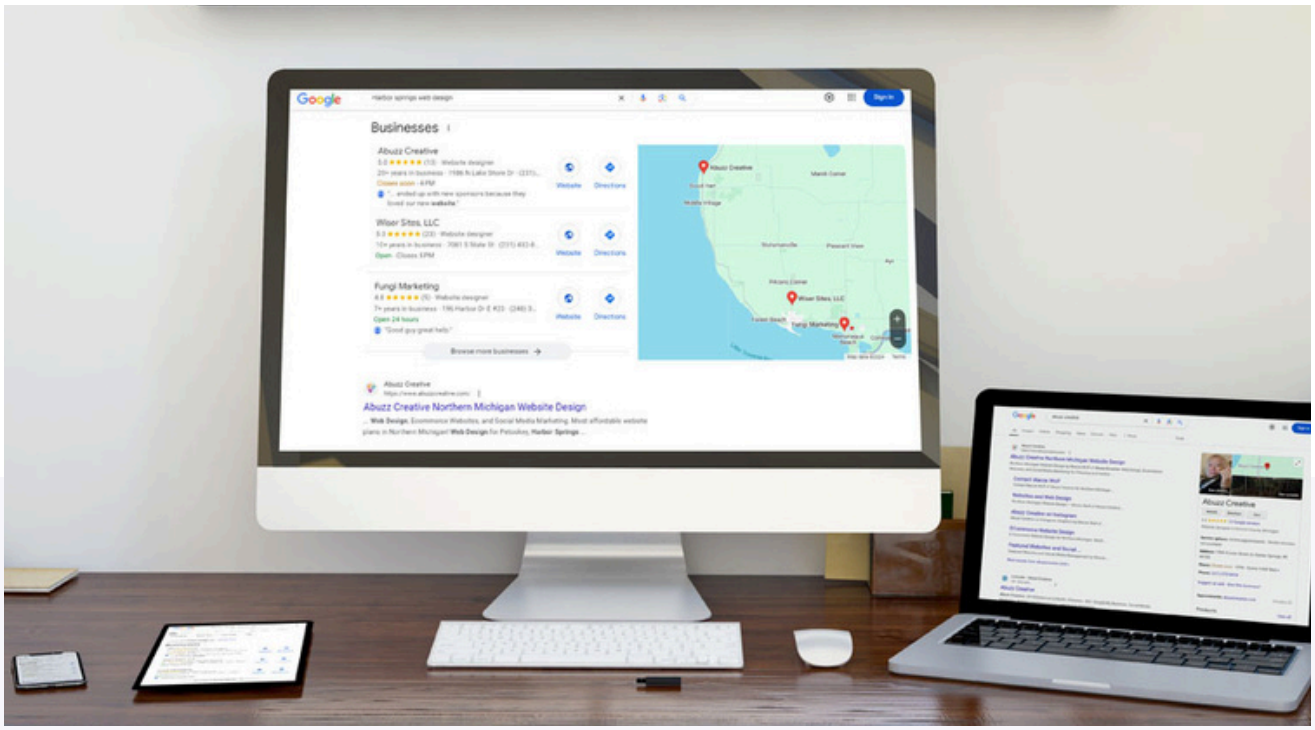


Google Busines Profile

Make sure your business shows up where it matters most and that's on Google Search and Google Maps!

Why You Need a Complete and Optimized Profile

Your Google Business Profile (GBP) is often the first impression people get of your business, even before they visit your website.

When someone searches for my name, my service, or a phrase like *harbor springs website design*, Google shows my profile on the right side of search results (desktop) or near the top (mobile).

WHAT IS AN OPTIMIZED Google Business Profile?

Your Google Business Profile is one of the most powerful (and free!) marketing tools available. When your profile is complete, accurate, and active, your business shows up where people are searching on Google Maps and local results

A well-optimized GBP can:

- Help your business appear in the local 3-Pack Map at the top of local searches.
- Build trust through reviews, photos, and accurate details.
- Drive more calls, website visits, and direction requests directly from Google Search or Maps.
- Increase your visibility even if you don’t have a large advertising budget.

KEY BENEFITS OF
Keeping Profile Active

By managing your GBP the same way you consistently maintain your website, you'll stay visible to local customers all year long.

- Customers find your hours, location, and services instantly.
- Posting updates keeps your profile looking fresh.
- Every new photo, review, or post signals to Google that you're open and active.

Pro Google Business Tip

Even if your website ranks well, an optimized GBP helps you stand out visually. People click on listings that look complete and current.

Consistency keeps your business in Google's **active** category. This will help your business appear more often in search and maps..

GETTING STARTED

Create, Claim, Verify

1. Sign In or Create an Account

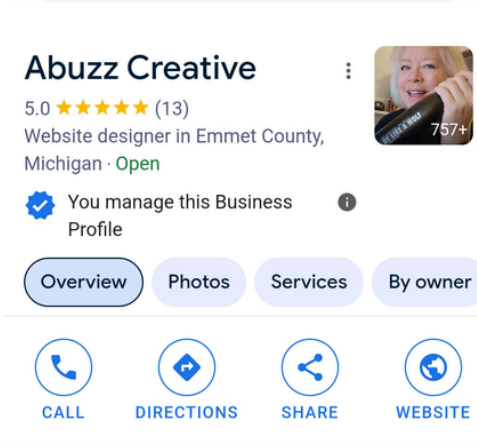
Go to [google.com/business].
You'll be prompted to sign in with your Google account (use your business email if you have one).

2. Add Your Business Information

Use your real Business Name, add the Address and Phone that appears on your website, and choose a primary category (Web Designer).

3. Verification by Google

Google needs to verify that you own this business. The most common verification method is a postcard by mail to your business address.



Be sure to fill out all profile fields carefully.

Consistency of your information is key!

Once verified, your profile is visible on Search and Maps.

Optimizing Your Google Business Profile: Stand Out in Local Search!

1. Add Accurate, Consistent Information

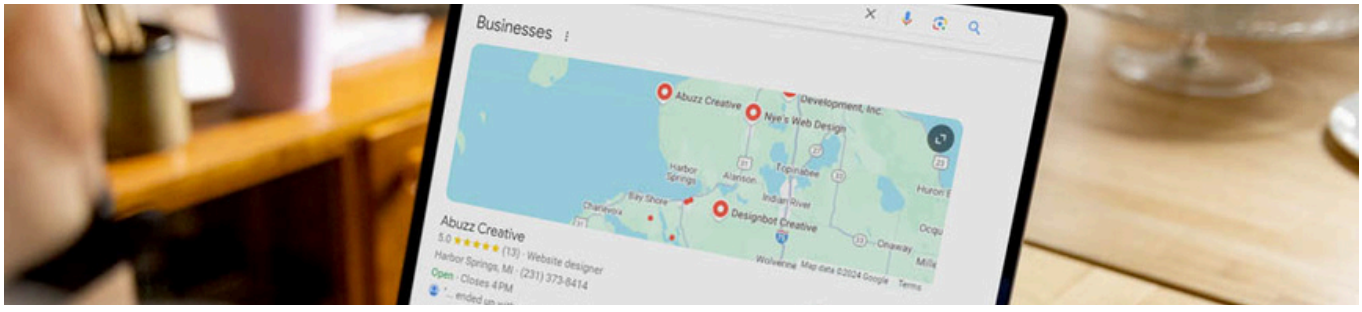
Keep your name, address, and phone (NAP) identical everywhere (your website, social media). Double-check hours and holiday closings regularly.

2. Choose the Right Categories

Select one primary category that fits what you do best (example: Web Design). Add a few secondary categories if you find any that are relevant.

3. Define Your Service Areas

If you visit clients or deliver products, you can add specific towns or zip codes where you operate (example: Serving Harbor Springs, Petoskey, and Charlevoix).



Optimizing Your Google Business Profile: Stand Out in Local Search!

4. Write a Great Business Description

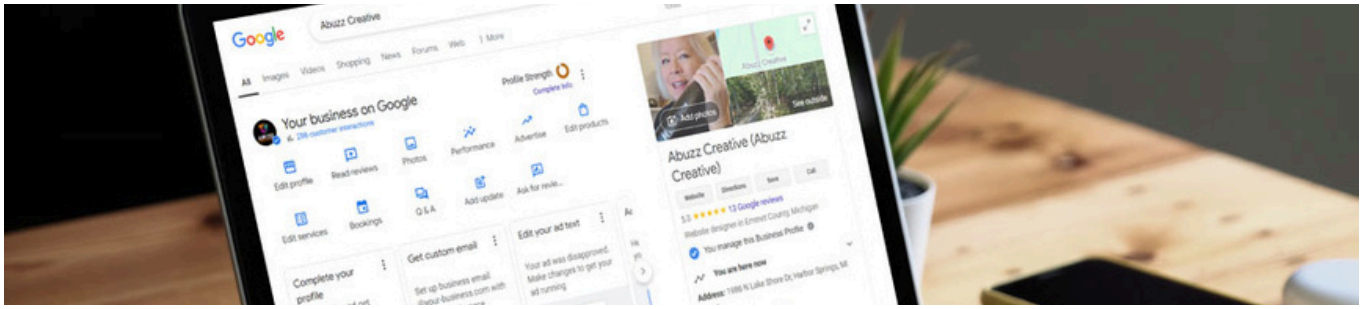
Tell people what you do, who you serve, and what makes you special in two or three short paragraphs (750 characters max). Avoid salesy language, and **never** use this section for keyword stuffing.

5. Upload High-Quality Photos & Videos

Visuals build credibility and trust. Add your logo, a cover photo, and lots of business photos like interiors, exteriors, staff, and products. You can also upload short-form videos (30 seconds).

6. List Products and Services

Add your business services and any products individually with short descriptions and pricing. Your product and service listings are great for better search visibility.



PROFILE MANAGEMENT

Keep It Active & Visible

Add Posts Often

Google rewards profiles that are regularly updated with better ranking. To add weekly updates, use the Posts feature to share:

- New products and services with great photos
- Special offers or promotions
- Upcoming events or links to your blog posts

Posts with great graphics help you stand out from your competitors.

Encourage and Manage Reviews

People read reviews, and positive reviews build trust. Great reviews on your profile also help with your ranking on Google.

It's OK to encourage your customers to leave you a Google review. Send them a link by email that takes them right to your Google Profile.

Make sure you respond to **every** review (good or bad) in a polite, professional way.

QUICK REFERENCE

Google Profile Checklist

Google Business Profile Setup

[ ] Claimed and verified on Google
[ ] Correct business name, address, phone
[ ] Chosen the best primary and secondary categories

Profile Optimization

[ ] Complete business description
[ ] Added photos and videos
[ ] Listed products and services
[ ] Accurate hours and service areas

Management & Updates

[ ] Posting weekly updates
[ ] Responding to all reviews
[ ] Updating photos and hours seasonally

Final Thoughts

Your Google Business Profile is one of the most powerful (and free!) marketing tools available to small businesses.

By managing your GBP the same way you maintain your website and your social media profiles, your business will stay visible to local customers all year long.

Remember, stay active and authentic to keep your business buzzing on Google!

Do You Need More Help?

Email marcie@abuzzcreative.com

Abuzz Creative provides affordable, responsive website design and digital marketing for small businesses across Northern Michigan. Marcie Wolf specializes in helping local entrepreneurs grow online with simple, effective strategies.