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Best Practices for "Google My Business"



MEDIAGISTIC
ADVERTISING.MARKETING.RESULTS

*GOOGLE MY
BUSINESS.*

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***DID YOU
KNOW?***

60%

Of adults use their mobile devices and their tablets to search for local products and services.

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS.

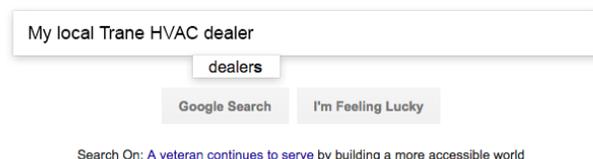
The first step in any Small and Medium-Sized Business' (SMB) local search engine optimization (SEO) strategy is to claim and verify your local dealership's **Google My Business (GMB)** listing. Getting on **Google My Business** will likely increase your chances of showing up in Google's Local Pack, Local Finder, Google Maps, and organic rankings in general.

GMB is a free tool that lets you manage how your HVAC dealership appears on Google Search and Maps. That includes adding your dealership name, location, and hours; monitoring and replying to customer reviews; adding photos; learning where and how people are searching for you, and more. The only requirement for using it is that you have a physical location where you can receive mail and have some face-to-face interaction with your customers — in other words, you can't operate 100% online.

If you're just getting started with local Search Engine Optimization (SEO), your **GMB** listing is a great place to focus your early efforts. When consumers search for an air conditioner contractor or are in need of an AC repair near them, they're usually in the purchase phase of their journey. Did you know that more than 50% of consumers who conduct a local search ("AC repair near me") call a dealership that day? It's very important the information about your dealership that shows up when people search Google is as accurate, complete, and optimized as possible.

Here are some easy steps to create your **Google My Business** account, verify your dealership, and make it work for you:

1. **Create your account and claim your business**
2. **Verify your business**
3. **Optimize your listing**
4. **Download the GMB app**
5. **Start encouraging reviews from customers.**



Search On: [A veteran continues to serve](#) by building a more accessible world

DID YOU KNOW?



Even if you've never heard the term ZMOT—coined by Google, for “zero moment of truth”—chances are it's already changing the way you interact with customers. While previous generations of shoppers experienced their first “moment of truth” by examining a product inside a store, today's consumers have pushed that moment forward by searching their options online long before they interact with your company. This ZMOT yields valuable signals that can help you better target your marketing efforts.

CREATE A GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING.

#1

Go to google.com/business and select "Start Now"

Make the most of your free Google listing.

Show up when customers search for your business or businesses like yours on Google Search and Maps. Google My Business lets you post updates to showcase what's new, respond to reviews to build loyalty and add photos to highlight what makes your business special.

START NOW

#2

Enter your dealership name.

What's the name of your business?



Business name

By continuing you agree to the following [Terms of Service](#)

Next

#3

Enter your dealership address.

Where are you located?

Country / Region



United States



Street address

City

Enter the full city name

State

ZIP code

Please select



I deliver goods and services to my customers. [Learn more](#)

Next

**DID YOU
KNOW?**



Of people with smartphones use a search engine at least once a day.

CREATE A GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING. {CONT.}

#4 Select your business location.

Where are you located?

Drag and zoom the map and position the marker on the exact spot where your business is located.



Next

#5 Choose your business category.

What kind of business do you run?

Correct category selection helps you attract customers who are searching for businesses like yours in your area. Select a category that best matches your business. [Learn more](#)

Business category

Next

Choose your business category. Try to choose the most accurate category possible -- you're essentially telling Google which type of customers should see your business listing. You can go back in afterward and update some of those other categories as secondary categories. Following are examples of HVAC contractor categories:

Air Conditioning Repair Service, Air Conditioning Contractor, Heating Equipment Supplier, HVAC Contractor, Furnace Repair Service, Furnace Parts Supplier, Furnace Store, Air Conditioning System Supplier, Air Duct Cleaning Service, Insulation Contractor.

#6 Add your dealership phone number and website.

Connect with customers (optional)

Help customers get in touch by providing current info.

Contact phone number

Current website URL

No website? Get a free website based on your info. [See details](#)

Next

#7 Choose a verification option.

Verify your connection to this business

Let's confirm that you're authorized to manage this business listing. Once verified, you'll be able to make the most of your listing on Google.

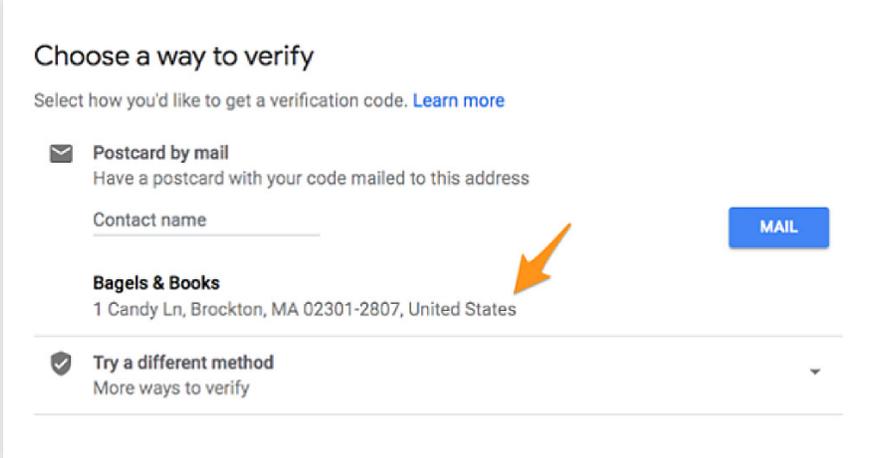
- ✓ Get your business found on Google Search & Maps
- ✓ Respond to customer reviews
- ✓ Create promotional posts and upload photos
- ✓ Track business analytics

Continue

HOW TO VERIFY YOUR BUSINESS ON GOOGLE.

You'll be asked to verify your **GMB** listing and given several options. Depending on a number of factors, these options can include the following:

- **By postcard**
- **By phone**
- **By email**
- **Instant verification**
- **Bulk verification**



The screenshot shows a 'Choose a way to verify' dialog box. It has a title 'Choose a way to verify' and a subtitle 'Select how you'd like to get a verification code. [Learn more](#)'. There are two main options: 'Postcard by mail' (selected with a checkmark) and 'Try a different method' (with a checkmark). The 'Postcard by mail' option includes a text input field for 'Contact name' and a 'MAIL' button. Below this, the business name 'Bagels & Books' and address '1 Candy Ln, Brockton, MA 02301-2807, United States' are displayed. An orange arrow points to the address line. The 'Try a different method' option has a dropdown arrow.

In all cases, Google will require that you have a physical address that is capable of receiving mail in order to verify your business. Google will not verify businesses that operate using a post office box as their primary address.



**DID YOU
KNOW?**



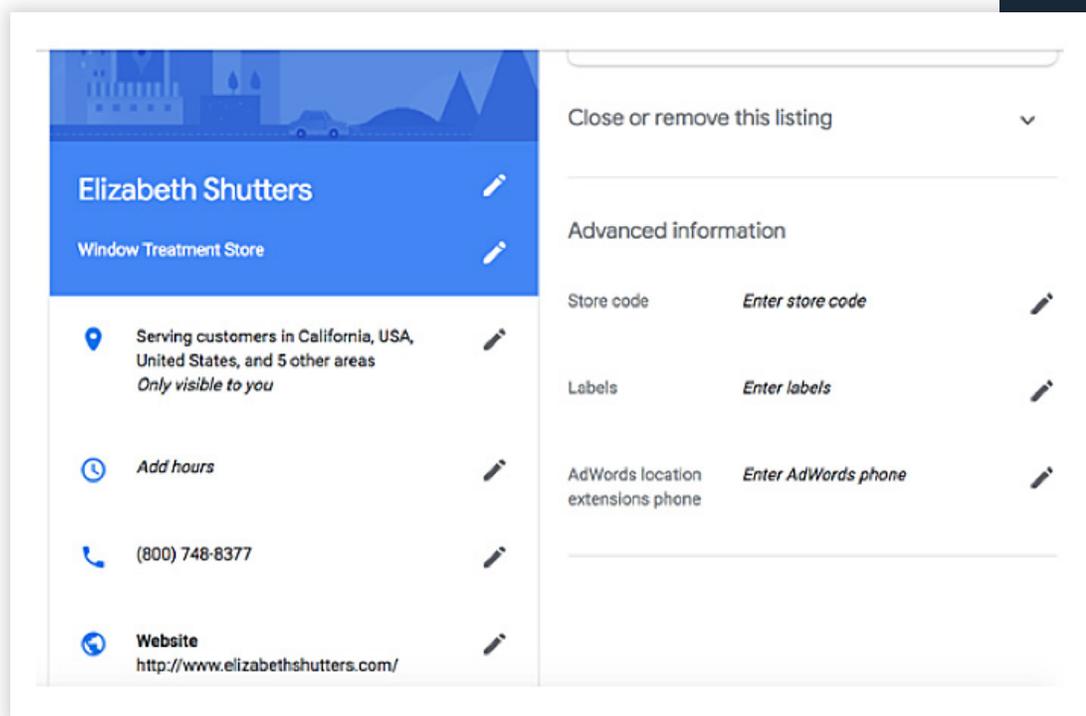
15%

Of in-store actions involve people searching for information on a product or price

HOW TO OPTIMIZE YOUR GMB LISTING.

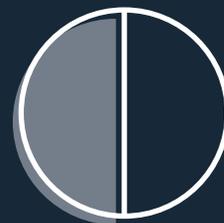
Once you've verified your business, it's time to work on your profile.

Go to the **Google My Business** dashboard, click the listing you'd like to work on, select "Info," and then choose a section to fill out or update.



Add as much information and media as you can, including a business profile photo, the areas you serve, your hours, attributes (e.g. "free delivery within 25 miles"), the day and year you opened, and a public phone number and website URL.

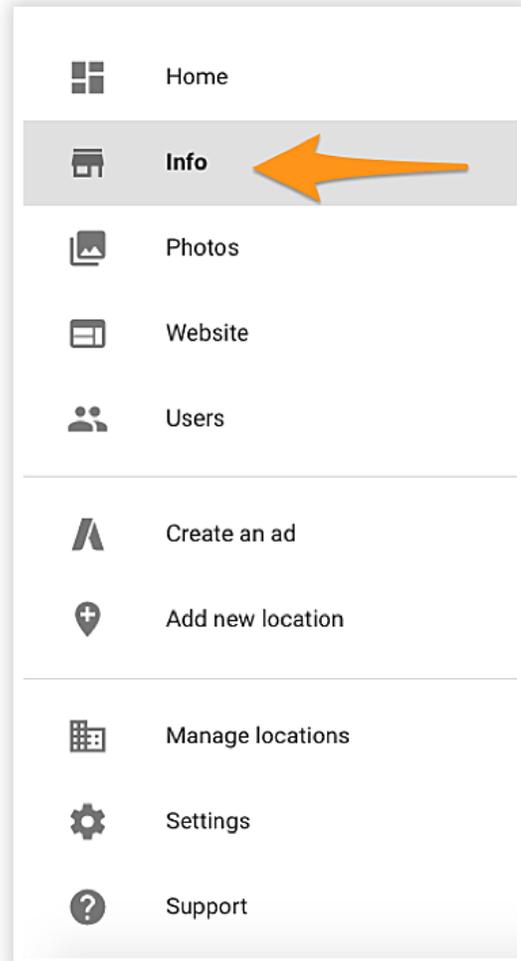
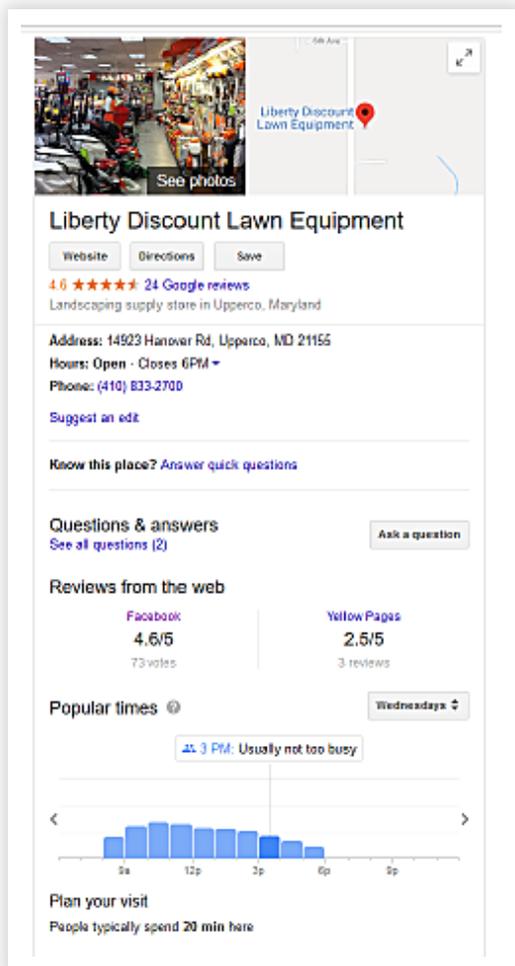
DID YOU KNOW?



Almost half of all Google searches are for local businesses.

HOW TO OPTIMIZE YOUR GMB LISTING. {CONT.}

Anyone can “suggest an edit” to your listing, so it’s important to get everything right and login into your **GMB** dashboard from time to time and make sure all the information is right. If you’re managing multiple locations in your **GMB** dashboard, be sure to check the ‘Google Updates’ section at least once a month and verify that all updates are correct



At any point in time, you can edit your business profile by logging into your **GMB** dashboard, clicking on “Info,” clicking the pencil next to the field you’d like to edit, making your change, and then choosing “Apply.”

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS PHOTOS.

According to Google, businesses with photos see 35% more clicks to their website and 42% higher requests for driving directions in Google Maps.

Photos should be at least 720 pixels wide by 720 pixels high and JPG or PNG files.

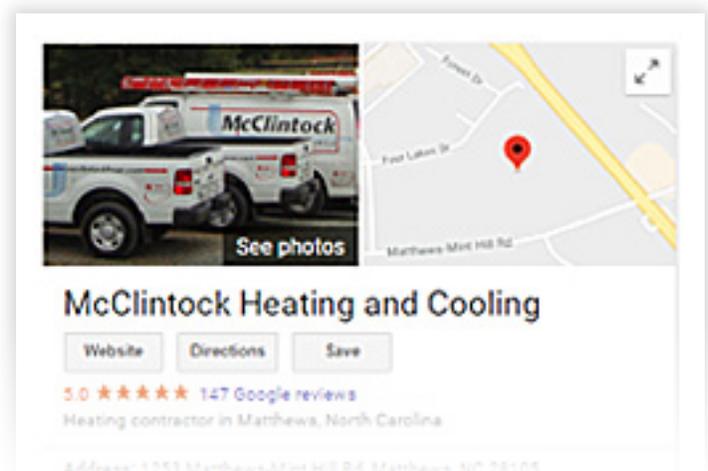
So the specs are pretty straightforward. But are you not sure how many pictures to add – or what they should include? Read on.

■ COVER PHOTO

Your **Google My Business** cover photo is one of the most important, as it tends to show up front and center on your listing. Google chooses the photo automatically from a number of available sources, so it might not always display your cover photo in your **GMB** listing over other photos.

■ PROFILE PHOTO

Your profile photo is what appears when you upload new photos, videos, or review responses.



 <p>Profile</p> <p>Your profile photo is used to show your identity when you post a photo or reply to a review.</p> <p>Choose photo</p>	 <p>Cover</p> <p>Your cover photo should showcase the personality of your business. It is your preferred photo to be shown on your listing in Search and Maps.</p> <p>Choose photo</p>	 <p>Video</p> <p>Use a video to tell the story of your business and what makes it unique.</p> <p>Add videos</p>
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DID YOU KNOW?

50% of people using their mobile devices as a search tool are looking for business information like a phone number or address

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS PHOTOS. {CONT.}

Along with your profile and cover photos, you can and should upload other pictures to make your listing more informative and engaging.

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	GOOGLE-RECOMMENDED MINIMUM	SUGGESTIONS
Store Front	The outside of your business from different directions.	Three photos	Use pictures from different times of day (morning, afternoon, evening) so customers always recognize your business.
Showroom	The inside of your business, with a focus on decor and ambiance.	Three photos	Give customers an accurate idea of what it will look like to stand or sit inside your business.
Product	A representation of the types of products or services you offer.	One photo per product type or service	Show the products you're known for and make sure the photos are lit well.
Employees at work	"Action" shots of your employees delivering the types of services you offer.	Three	Try to capture your employees with satisfied customers.
Team	A shot of your management team and staff.	Three	Use pictures that show your unique culture and team personality.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**



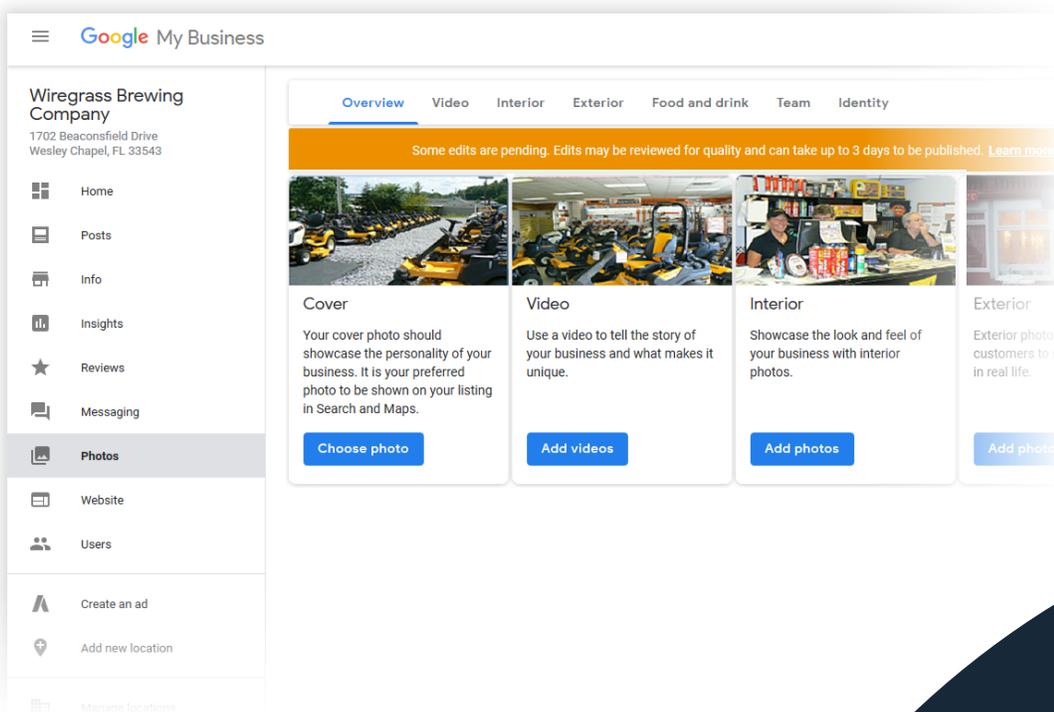
91% of internet users consult search engines.

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS VIDEOS.

You can also add videos. Videos must be:

- **30 seconds or shorter**
- **100 MB or smaller**
- **720p resolution or higher**

Videos can add some variety to your profile and make you stand out among other businesses in your category; however, don't worry if you don't have any – unlike photos, they're not a “must have.” A simple video shot on your smartphone will do just fine, however.



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

1 IN 3

mobile searches take place right before someone goes to a store.

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS REVIEWS.

One of the best ways to encourage future customers to leave positive reviews? Respond to current ones. Not only does leaving an appreciative response show the original reviewer you're thankful for their support, it also makes that positive review stand out on your listing and influences people to leave their own reviews. From an SEO standpoint, businesses who respond to their **GMB** reviews consistently also are more likely to enjoy increased visibility in the local map pack.

Here's a sample reply to a satisfied customer:

Thank you for your business, [name]! We're so glad you enjoyed [product or service] -- our team strives to make sure every service call is a good one. We hope you call [business name] the next time you need us!

You should also respond to negative reviews to show you take them seriously and placate the unhappy buyer. But make sure you're extremely courteous -- attacking them back will only make you look unprofessional and their review more credible. A good review response won't discuss specific details of the complaint; rather, it will express empathy, a willingness to learn from the complaint, and it will seek to move the conversation offline.

[name], we'd like to extend our deepest apologies that your experience wasn't up to your standards. We certainly hold our company to a higher standard as well, so this feedback is very valuable to us. We'll be doing a deep review of what can be improved in the coming days. In the meantime, our management would welcome the opportunity to speak directly to you about this matter. Please call [XXX-XXX-XXXX] and ask for our Customer Service Manager, [name]. Your input will be shared with our staff as part of our ongoing efforts at improvement.

DID YOU KNOW?

78%

Of local smartphone or tablet searches will result in an online purchase.

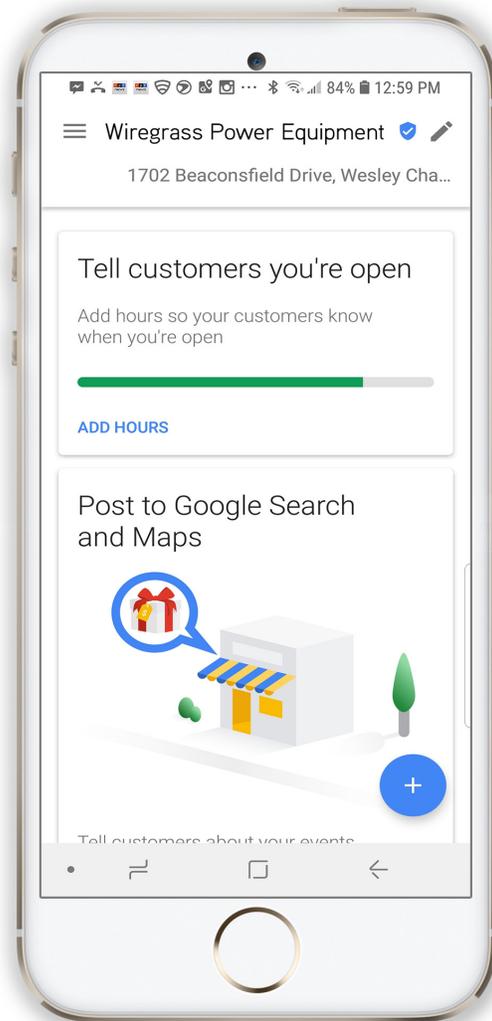


GOOGLE MY BUSINESS APP.

Google My Business is also available in app form for both iOS and Android.

You can use the app to:

- **Update your business hours, location, contact information, and description**
- **Post statuses and pictures**
- **View search insights**



**DID YOU
KNOW?**



A little over 70% of people feel the need to search for local businesses online before actually going to them.

MAKING THE MOST OF GMB: MONITOR, MAINTAIN, MAXIMIZE.

Ultimately, vigilance and consistency are crucial to realizing the full potential of your **Google My Business** listing. A “set it and forget it” mentality just won’t cut it when it comes to managing your location data.

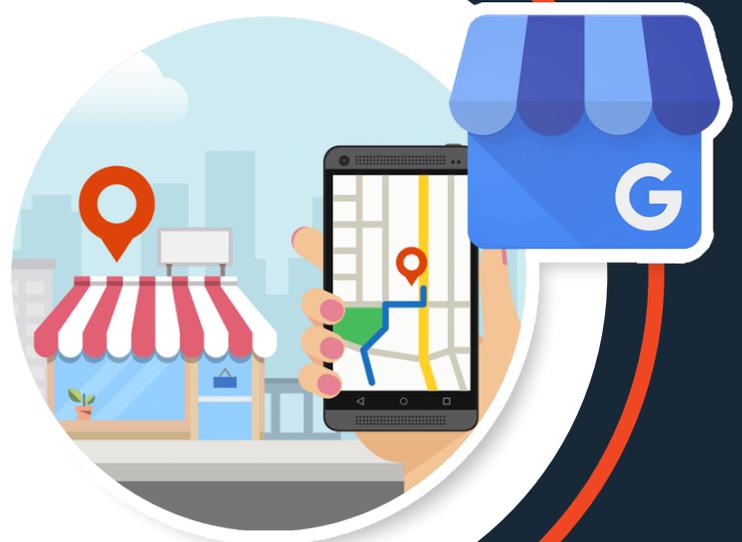
Make a habit of logging into your **Google My Business** account proactively to respond to all reviews, check for updates and changes on a minimum monthly basis, and upload new photos at least once a quarter. Also, take measures offline to ensure a superior customer experience, and train your staff to encourage customers to leave good reviews at the point of sale.

Following these principles will translate into better overall local search visibility, which ultimately means more phone calls and form fills, and increased revenue for your HVAC dealership. And at the end of the day, that’s what every dealer is really looking for, isn’t it?

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

18%

of local searches on smartphones lead to a sale within a day.



START ENCOURAGING REVIEWS FROM CUSTOMERS.

DID YOU KNOW?

In an era where Google not only is a noun but a verb, since searching on the website is so universal — “just Google it!” — improving how your business appears on Google can have a big impact!

Once you’ve set up your listing and are actively managing it via the **GMB** app, encouraging reviews is perhaps the highest-value thing you can do for your local search presence. Here’s how to get started.

THE POWER OF GOOGLE REVIEWS

The most powerful reviews you can receive are the ones you get on Google. And users are increasingly likely to leave reviews on your **GMB** listing. From time to time, you may find a customer who does not want to keep track of a new gmail account just to leave you a review; although Google no longer allows users to leave anonymous reviews, it is possible to create a gmail account using another email address which then can be used to leave the review.

Otherwise, you can encourage the customer to leave a review on another platform. Any online review can indirectly help to boost the visibility and authority of your own **GMB** listing. This is true whether a review happens on Angie’s List, BBB, Facebook, Yellowbook, Home Advisor or any other major business directory.

ACQUIRING NEW CUSTOMER REVIEWS

As you may already be aware, customer reviews are not easily acquired. They have to be earned and lobbied for. Ranging from easiest to most difficult, here are some techniques that can help:

- Put a “review us on Google” button on your company’s website (ideally somewhere on the home page)
- Train your technicians and comfort advisors to recognize when a good customer experience has occurred and encourage them to ask customers for reviews.
- Use physical leave-behind collateral to reinforce the ask and make it easy for customers to find your **GMB** listing.
- Implement customer experience management and review solicitation software like Podium, Birdeye or Review Trackers (for example) to further encourage users to leave reviews via SMS.
- Set up automated email marketing campaigns and target segments of your database who have not yet left reviews of your business.

START ENCOURAGING REVIEWS FROM CUSTOMERS. {CONT.}

STAYING ON GOOGLE'S GOOD SIDE WITH REVIEW MANAGEMENT

It's important to note that Google no longer allows anonymous reviews and that any form of "review gating" (i.e. discouraging or prohibiting negative reviews or selectively soliciting positive reviews from customers) also is expressly prohibited. It's also against Google's policy to "cherry-pick" only good reviews and display them on your website; you either have to integrate a feed of unfiltered Google reviews onto your site, or you cannot use any of them.

Violating any of these policies can get your **Google My Business** account suspended and your listing will be removed from the local search pack and the local finder.

DID YOU KNOW?

68% are people searching for businesses use the directions or phone number provided by the website.



It's Hard To Stop A Trane.®

Best Practices for
Google My Business