

Put *Your* Business ON THE MAP

I still come across business owners who have not even verified their GMB listing never mind populate, then optimise it.



I'm going to assume that you're one of the smart ones — someone who has taken the time to populate your GMB listing fully. A partially filled listing is just not good enough in Google's eyes.

However, a fully populated and actively managed GMB listing is not the full picture. There's more to ranking well in local searches than just the GMB listing itself.

I'm referring to what's known as the Three-Pack, Google Local-Pack or Map-Pack.

When you're searching for a local business online, Google will often show you a map.

Google Maps also happens to be the most popular online navigation map, with almost 70% of online map users using this service.

According to recent research, this Map-Pack appears in about 30% of all first-page search results.

This pack consists of a map and details of three local businesses which are relevant to the search query.

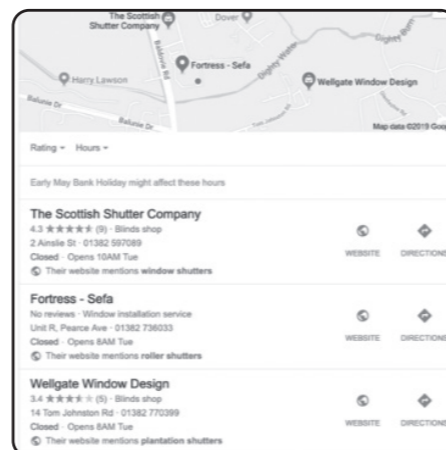
Each of these three businesses not only enjoys a handy map marker on the map. They also get to present to the searcher their name, address and phone number (known as NAP). Plus, their review score, hours of business and a call button.

Many business owners assume that all they have to do to be listed in the 3-Pack and to appear on the map is to have a fully populated GMB.

Unfortunately, it's not quite as simple as that.

Yes, having a fully optimised GMB listing is a prerequisite, but there are other elements that Google is looking for in a business that thinks its eligible for inclusion.

One of the first things that happen when you ask Google to verify your business location in GMB is that Google sends you a postcard to the physical address that you've listed. That's to ensure that the address is valid. That postcard contains a verification code which, when entered into your GMB account, confirms to Google that you do physically exist.



However, there's more to it. It's vital that you check with Royal Mail what your correct postal address is. Their address and postcode service is useful for this.

Google wants to check that your name, address and phone number (NAP) is consistent across all of your online presence. So, it's an excellent plan to start by finding out the correct form of your address.

Google is very fussy in this respect. If your proper address is:

**The Widget Company Limited
32 High Street
Anywhere
AB1 2CD**

Then make sure you have exactly this in your GMB listing and everywhere else you appear online, including your website, and not like this:

**The Widget Co. Ltd.
32 High St.
Anywhere
AB12CD**

Either address form is correct - but they need to be consistent.

St. is not the same as Street.

Co. is not the same as Company, and a lack of the space in the postcode could cause you some challenges with your map listing.

Royal Mail makes it easy to correct by providing an online form to update your address details. Make sure that these details are precisely the ones you use on all your online listings.

Google uses the Category section of your GMB listing to decide which search query to match with your business - so choose carefully. Your category selections

have a bearing on whether you appear in the Three-Pack.

Photos are an essential part of your listing. It's crucial that each photograph you put in your listing is tagged with your geolocation and description with some relevant keywords. Again, a significant factor for your local map listing.

One area that is often missed is Business Citations. Simply, your entries in online directories. These play a big part in local ranking.

Make sure that your listing is on reputable sites and directories. Being in good business directories is important. Not only so visitors to those directories can find you but also getting that link from the business directory to your site helps your ranking.

Besides, it helps to link your directory listing with your website and your local address (NAP). This is what local search is all about - linking a local searcher with a local business that provides the most relevant, up to date and consistent information about their business.

Directories such as:

- Yelp
- Yell
- Thomson Local
- Scoot
- Free Index

Most are free, but one that's often worth paying for is to become a member of your local chamber of commerce. This is an authoritative

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source to which Google pays a lot of attention.

Make sure that your NAP is consistent in every listing. So, it's worthwhile searching out your listings and making sure that the NAP information is correct.

Another good plan is to embed a Google Map on your website. Your web guy can easily do this for you.

Finally, remember to check your Google Maps performance. You can do this by looking at the Insights inside your GMB Dashboard.

Navigate your way to the top with Google Maps.



Mike Glynn is a retail specialist who works with businesses to help them crack the rhythmic acquisition of customers. His implementation of the Entrepreneurs Marketing & Sales System into businesses boosts revenue and profit.



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