

Free Advertising From Google



Small Business Marketing With
Google Places

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Google is fast becoming the world's largest resource for building your online and offline business. The most recent and valuable resource that you can use to your advantage is Google Places. Today I'm going to cover:

- **What is Google Places**
- **How to set up Google local for your business**

What is Google Places?

Google Places is an easy way to find local business on the Internet. This was **previously called Google Local**, but Google has widened the scope of the Google Local Project and renamed it Google Places.

The Internet has become such a common tool to use that many users are turning to the Internet to find information about local businesses instead of the phone book, and Google has made it super easy to do.

Ever searched for a business or a keyword and seen this?

The screenshot shows a Google search for "haircut 83642". The search bar includes the Google logo, the text "haircut 83642", a "Search" button, and links for "Advanced Search" and "Preferences". Below the search bar, there are tabs for "Web" and "Maps". The "Local business results for haircut near Meridian, ID 83642" section features a map of Meridian, ID, with several red location pins labeled A through J. To the right of the map is a list of businesses with their names, websites, phone numbers, and review counts. Below the map and list, there is a link for "More results near Meridian, ID 83642" and a section titled "Meridian, ID, Barber And Hair Cut Yellow Page Listings" with a "Find" and "Close" icon. The text below this section reads: "Find Barber And Hair Cut in Meridian, ID. Top Barber And Hair Cut in Meridian, ID - Panache Hair Studio & Day Spa, ... Meridian, ID 83642. (208) 888-7811 ...".

Google haircut 83642 Search [Advanced Search](#) [Preferences](#)

Web [Maps](#)

Local business results for haircut near Meridian, ID 83642

W Chinden Blvd — E Chinden Blvd 26
N Eagle
Meridian
W Franklin Rd — E Franklin Rd
30 84 55
Map data ©2009 Tele Atlas

A. [Great Clips](#) - [www.greatclips.com](#) - (208) 895-0730 - [2 reviews](#)
B. [Sports Zone Clips-N-Cuts](#) - [maps.google.com](#) - (208) 888-4892 - [3 reviews](#)
C. [Sport Clips](#) - [www.sportclips.com](#) - (208) 893-5187 - [More](#)
D. [Fred's Reel Barber Shop](#) - [maps.google.com](#) - (208) 887-8582 - [1 review](#)
E. [Homedale Men's Hair Shack](#) - [maps.google.com](#) - (208) 337-5335 - [More](#)
F. [Hair Masters](#) - [maps.google.com](#) - (208) 888-5056 - [3 reviews](#)
G. [Desert Fox Barber Center](#) - [maps.google.com](#) - (208) 888-2109 - [1 review](#)
H. [Carol's Barber Shop](#) - [maps.google.com](#) - (208) 884-3954 - [2 reviews](#)
I. [Hair Masters](#) - [maps.google.com](#) - (208) 888-7811 - [More](#)
J. [Colors and cuts by Kim](#) - [maps.google.com](#) - (208) 949-7221 - [More](#)

[More results near Meridian, ID 83642 »](#)

[Meridian, ID, Barber And Hair Cut Yellow Page Listings](#) [↑](#) [×](#)
Find Barber And Hair Cut in Meridian, ID. Top Barber And Hair Cut in Meridian, ID - Panache Hair Studio & Day Spa, ... Meridian, ID 83642. (208) 888-7811 ...

That's the local results for a when people search for "haircut" with their zip code or town name.

What Google has done is started to build an index of businesses based on a location. So, if you were a barber or a pizza shop owner or a massage therapist, you would add your business to Google Places so that when an Internet user searches for "massage in (your city)" your business shows up at the top of the search engine for the local results.

NOTE: the bigger your city and the higher the competition may affect your placement on Google Places Results.

How This Benefits Your Business:

1. With very little setup you can be at the top of the search engines in front of a targeted audience (local people looking for your product/service). In a highly competitive field, top search engine rankings can be difficult to achieve, but with Google Places you skip that step and leap frog to the top of the search engines.
2. From the Google Results, your potential customer can view your location, phone number, website, and any reviews you may have.
3. With absolutely no charge, Google Places can consistently provide you with new leads to your business.

The New Advances for Google Places over Google Local

Along with the name change Google has introduced several new features:

- **Service areas:** If you travel to serve customers, you can now show which geographic areas you serve. And if you run a business without a storefront or office location, you can now make your address private. This is a huge advance for service based businesses run out of your home.
- **A new, simple way to advertise:** For just \$25 per month, businesses in select cities can make their listings stand out on Google.com and Google Maps with Tags. So far google has set this up in a few select cities, that include Austin, Atlanta and Washington, D.C., Houston and San Jose, CA. Chicago, San Diego, Seattle, Boulder and San Francisco are in the planning stages and may be available by the time you read this.
- **Business photo shoots:** In addition to uploading their own photos, businesses in select cities can now request a free photo shoot of the interior of their business, which Google will use to supplement existing photos of businesses on Place Pages. Google has created a site for businesses to learn more and express their interest in participating. Go to the address below to apply.
<http://maps.google.com/help/maps/businessphotos/>
- **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.

- **Favorite Places:** If Google really likes your business, they have started mailing window decals to 50,000 businesses around the U.S. These decals include a QR code that can be scanned with a smartphone to directly view the mobile Place Page for the business to learn more about their great offerings.
- **Real Time Updates:** Over the past few months Google's also added the ability for business owners to post real-time updates to their Place Page. You might want to promote a sale, a special event or anything else that you want customers to know right now, and this feature lets you communicate that directly to your customers. You can also provide extra incentive by adding coupons, including ones specially formatted for mobile phones.

How To Set Up Google Local?

Ok so you see how valuable this simple little tool can be for your business, so lets get started on setting up your Google Local account.

First go to: <http://www.youtube.com/user/GooglePlaces>

Watch the videos that are available to see the possibilities for your business.

Now go to:

<http://www.google.com/places>

You'll see a screen similar to this one.

Google places

Your local business, discovered on Google

Get found. Communicate with customers. Get insights to make decisions.

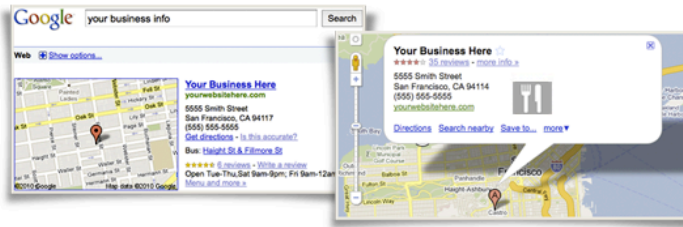
New! Local Business Center is now Google Places. Learn [more](#).



Claim your business on Google and get these features:

- Manage business information
- Post coupons & live updates
- See how you're doing with a performance dashboard

[Watch the video](#) [Read testimonials](#)



Sign up now

Sign in to Google Places with your **Google Account**

Email:

Password:

Stay signed in

[Can't access your account?](#)

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Fill in Your Google gmail account info or go get a gmail address here: <http://www.mail.google.com>

After you've done that you will see this screen. Click on "Add New Business."

New! Now offering a reporting dashboard. Learn how people find your business.



Help customers find you on Google, it's free.



Free listing

Local customers already search Google for the products and services you offer. Create a business listing to be sure they find you.



Free updates

Keep your address, phone number, hours of operation, and more up-to-date. Even create coupons and display photos and videos, all for free.



New! Free insights

Use the power of Google's data to learn where your customers come from and what they search for to find you.

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Your next step is to fill out your business information. Be sure to include as much detail as possible. It is always good to include every possible way to contact you – including by email and your website.

Enter your business information below. Your listing will appear to the right. This is just a first step. After this has been completed, specify categories, payment options and business hours and much more.

The screenshot shows a form for entering business information. The fields are as follows:

- Country: United States (dropdown menu)
- Company/Organization: (empty text box)
- Street Address: (empty text box)
- City/Town: (empty text box)
- State: Select state (dropdown menu)
- ZIP: [?] (empty text box)
- Main phone: (empty text box)
- Email address: (empty text box)
- Website: (empty text box)
- Description: (empty text box)

Examples provided for phone, email, and website fields are: (850) 555-4000, myname@example.com, and http://www.example.com. A link "Add more phone numbers" is also present. To the right of the form is a map of North America with navigation controls (up, down, left, right arrows and zoom in/out buttons).

▼ Categories

Please enter in a few categories related to your business e.g. **Restaurant**, **Dentist**

Category

[Add another category](#)

The next step is to add a category that your business, website, or product is related to. In this section you can add up to 5 categories – I highly suggest adding all that apply.

So for example, if you were a message therapist, think what people would type in to find you, "licensed massage therapist" "massage therapy" "deep tissue massage" etc.

You're next step is to include your hours of operation. This is pretty straight forward...

Now add your payment options. It is always a good idea to have as many of these as possible, but be sure to only check ones that apply to your business.

Hours of operations

Make sure your customers know when you're open!

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

Mon:	9:00 AM	-	5:00 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Closed	Apply to all
Tue:	9:00 AM	-	5:00 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Closed	
Wed:	9:00 AM	-	5:00 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Closed	
Thu:	9:00 AM	-	5:00 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Closed	
Fri:	9:00 AM	-	5:00 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Closed	
Sat:				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed	
Sun:				<input checked="" 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.

Payment options

Specify how customers can pay at your business.

<input type="checkbox"/> Cash	<input type="checkbox"/> American Express	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa
<input type="checkbox"/> Check	<input type="checkbox"/> Diner's Club	<input type="checkbox"/> Financing
<input type="checkbox"/> Traveler's Check	<input type="checkbox"/> Discover	<input type="checkbox"/> Google Checkout
<input type="checkbox"/> Invoice	<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard	<input type="checkbox"/> Paypal

The next section is for pictures and videos. A LOT of people ask if this is really necessary. YES! I can't scream it from the rooftops loud enough. Not only will you entice your web visitors to want to be at your business, you will also be one of the few businesses that will include these details.

▼ Videos

Enhance your listing by associating videos about your business. To do so, upload your video on [YouTube](#) and enter the URL below. You can include up to 5 videos.

Example: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=dFtfv1JdXI>

You have uploaded 0 of up to 5 videos for this listing.

▼ 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.

:

Now that you've added all the details about your business it's now time to verify that you are a real person. All you need to do here is verify that you are who you say you are. Google does this by calling the number you added to your listing. It will give you a code to type in when the phone verification system calls. Once you verify the numerical code your listing will be live within 24-48 hours (and sometimes even sooner than that).

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 (800) 758-2651
-  **By postcard (2-3 weeks)**
We'll send you a postcard in the mail to this address

DotComLifestyle
4318 W. Hearst St
Meridian ID 83642
United States

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

If you opt for the postcard it will take 3-8 weeks before you see your listing in the Google local ads. I highly suggest the phone verification.

How To Help Your Listing in Google Local?

First, it is important to understand that Google Maps will return the businesses that are in closest proximity to the center of the search query location. But there are a few things you can do to possibly boost your listing.

- Get links from other local resources. If you are a member of the Chamber of Commerce make sure that they have linked to your website from theirs. Consider other authoritative local listing sites, but stay away from link farms. Other local sites might include the Yellow Pages, local business associations, and local review sites.
- Make sure to include your street address, and at least your city and state on each page on your website in text versus in an image.
- On your website's contact page repeat your full address with the city and even list the local areas your service by name.
- Add as much information as you can to your Local Business listing such as hours driving directions, areas you serve, also consider adding a local coupon or discount.
- Encourage your current clients to leave you a testimonial or review.

Now that you're all set up, I just want to show you one last thing. Here's a picture of what the listings look like when one of the businesses ads video and/or pictures to their Google Local Listing.

Just so you know, I had to switch my original search because so many businesses have yet to implement this simple, but HIGHLY effective tool. Take a look at this picture. I searched for a restaurant in my zip code.

Only 1 restaurant has a picture and it stands out leaps and bounds over the other restaurants listed in the results. Of these, which do you think is the first to catch someone's eye?

Precisely, by adding something as small as a picture you double the size of your listing in the Google results, plus you stand out over the other competitors.

Here's just one more example, hotels have been jumping on this feature for a while now, uploading desirable pictures of exotic and relaxing images people want to see when they are picking out a hotel. Of 10 results on the front page only 1 listing didn't have a picture – do you know which one I would never get to because all the others shared more information with me?

Google Maps restaurant 83642
Find businesses, addresses and places of interest.

[Get Directions](#) [My Maps](#)

Refine by: [Distance](#) | [Cuisine](#) | [User Rating](#)

Results 1-10 of about 2,878 for restaurant near Meridian, ID 83642

A [Siam Thai Restaurant](#) - [Write a review](#)
2951 E Overland Rd, Meridian, ID - (208) 898-8939
[Website](#) - [Directions](#)





B [Louie's Pizza & Italian Restaurant](#) ★★★★★ 6 reviews - [Write a review](#)
2500 E Fairview Ave, Meridian, ID - (208) 884-5200
"Really liked the decor and casual atmosphere. Wait staff was barely average. I ordered garlic prawns for \$14.99 and ..."
[Website](#) - [Directions](#)

C [IHOP Restaurant](#) 3 reviews - [Write a review](#)
3525 E Fairview Ave, Meridian, ID - (208) 888-1216
"I have tried IHOP twice now, thinking the first time was just a fluke, but again I left disappointed. ..."
[Website](#) - [Directions](#)

D [Wendy's Restaurant](#) - [Write a review](#)
3140 E Florence Dr, Meridian, ID - (208) 884-0497
[Website](#) - [Directions](#)

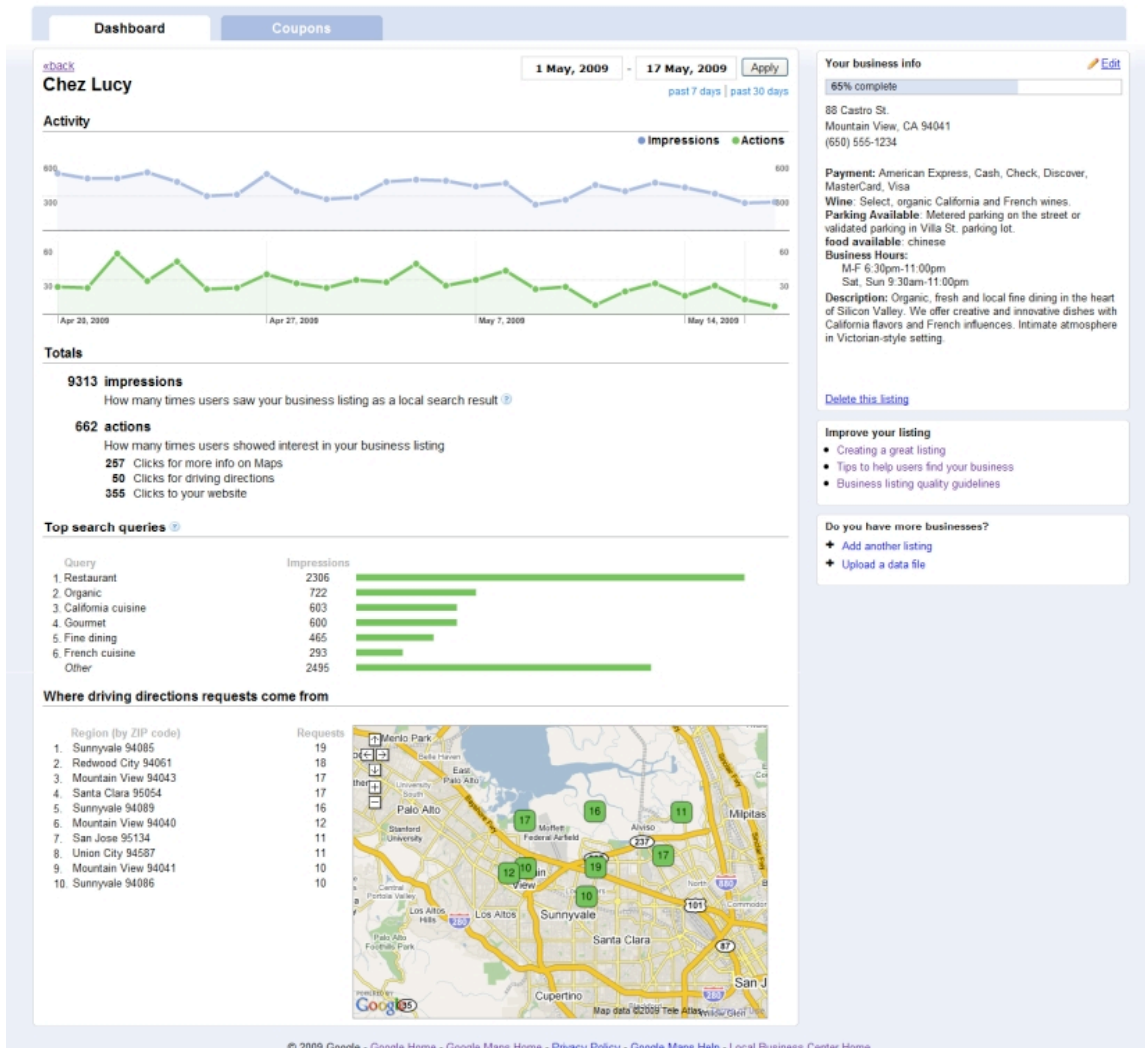
E [Johnny Carino's Italian Restaurant](#) 4 reviews - [Write a review](#)
3551 E Fairview Ave, Meridian, ID - (208) 888-7801

Results 1-10 of about 1,255 for hotels near Meridian, ID 83642

- A** [Courtyard Boise West/Meridian](#) ★★★★★ 17 reviews - [Write a review](#)
 1789 South Eagle Rd., Meridian, ID - (208) 888-0800
Category: Motels & Hotels
"Email: contact@hotelguide.com. Hotel Facilities: Laundry/Valet service, Restaurant, Wellness (Sauna, solarium, ..."
[Website](#) - [Directions](#)
- B** [Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Meridian](#) ★★★★★ 11 reviews - [Write a review](#)
 800 Allen St, Meridian, ID - (877) 863-4780
Category: Motels & Hotels
"Nice clean place close to the freeway with a decent typical breakfast offering recently upgraded from the typical ..."
[Website](#) - [Directions](#)
- C** [Mr Sandman Inn & Suites](#) 15 reviews - [Write a review](#)
 1575 S Meridian Rd, Meridian, ID - (800) 959-2230
Category: Motels & Hotels
"Not clean, dirty towels, small, didn't keep soda machine filled, and could care less when mentioned to desk clerk ..."
[Website](#) - [Directions](#)
- D** [Best Western-Rama Inn](#) ★★★★★ 18 reviews - [Write a review](#)
 1019 S Progress Ave, Meridian, ID - (208) 887-7888
Category: Hotels & Motels
"I only stayed one day, but I would go there again in an instant. Excellent location. Really great king size beds and ..."
[Website](#) - [Directions](#)
- E** [Candlewood Suites Meridian Extended Stay Hotel](#) - [Write a review](#)
1855 S. Silverstone Way, Meridian, ID - (888) 299-2208
Category: Hotels
[Website](#) - [Directions](#)

How Else Does Google Local Help Your Business?

Right now only a few hundred thousand businesses in the U.S. have been claimed out of approximately 20 million. Google wants more small businesses to claim their listing profiles on Google Places. To entice them, google is giving local small businesses with physical addresses, a free status dashboard (see screenshot below).



This dashboard will show stats such as how many times their business comes up as a search result, how often people click through, as well as how many times people generate driving directions to their business on Google Maps and where those people come from.

Do you think this information would be of value to your business? It's a no brainer!

Your Business Found On Mobile Cell Phones

Also so many mobile phones now, including the iPhone, use Google Maps and Google Search when people search for directions or local businesses.

With Google Places, not only will they be able to find you, but you also have the opportunity to create coupons for them to use to entice them to visit YOU...not your competition!



Don't be left out! If you're competitor is the only one a mobile user sees when someone is searching on their phone for a place to eat or for a particular business...YOU LOOSE OUT! Don't be left out...

GO to Google NOW and set up your Google Local listing!