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ERIK SHELLINGER author of *Restaurant & Bar Marketing I, II, and III*

RAISING the DIGITAL BAR

FOR **SMALL BUSINESSES**

Generate New Customers Every Day
with Affordable Digital Marketing
Strategies that WORK!

DAVID RONALD ESAU
AND **JOEL MARK HARRIS**



PRAISE FOR

Raising the Digital Bar

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—**ERIK SHELLENBERGER**, Author of
Restaurant & Bar Marketing I, II, and III

“David’s book is a fantastic resource for small business owners and entrepreneurs who are looking to improve their online presence. His years of experience at Google have given him a unique perspective on effective advertising and marketing, and he shares all of his insights in this book. If you’re looking to compete in today’s digital age, then you need to read David’s book!”

—**GREG PROVANCE**, Author of ***Butts in Seats***
Owner/Principal, GP Hospitality Partners

"Raising the Digital Bar is a practical guide to help any business owner establish a digital presence and grow their brand online. Esau masterfully simplifies topics that have otherwise intimidated small business owners or prevented them from embracing digital. *Raising the Digital Bar* is an enjoyable read; business leaders that read it will likely keep their copy as a handy reference guide for years to come."

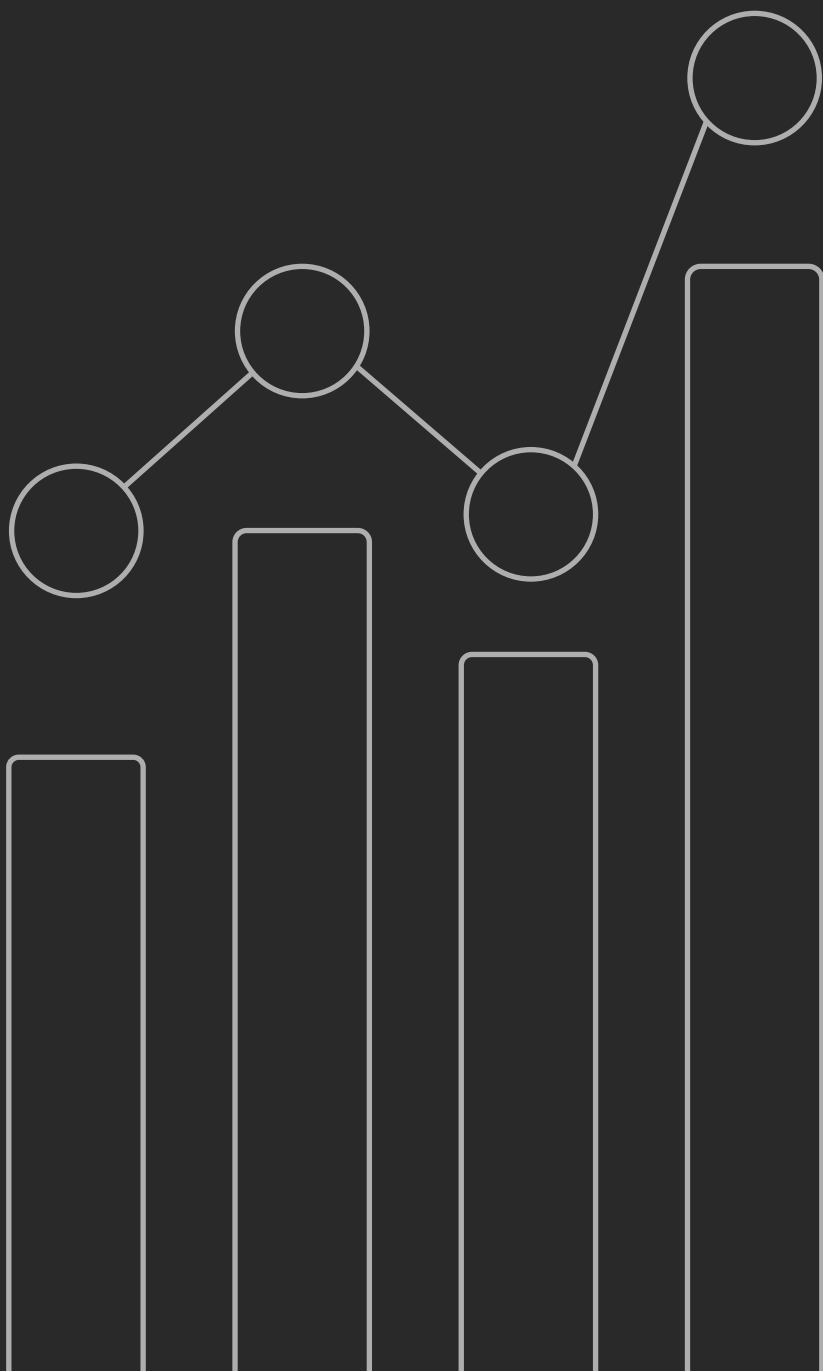
—**PATRICK GILBERT**, Author of
Join or Die, COO of AdVenture Media

"Digital marketing is more complex than ever before. In this book David takes you on a step-by-step journey to understanding and implementing digital marketing in your small business."

—**ALLAN DIB**, Author of
The 1-Page Marketing Plan

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Raising the Digital Bar is dedicated to my father:



Ron Esau (10.09.54–1.24.22)

To my loving father, famous race car driver,
local business owner, and my hero.

May you rest in peace.

*A portion of the proceeds from this
book will be donated to the*

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

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Hey!
Check
this out





Check YOUR Online Visibility Score

Thank you so much for supporting *Raising the Digital Bar*.

Before you start reading, it's important to have a clear understanding of your *current* online visibility. The score will provide you with a baseline to measure your growth after you start implementing the strategies in the following chapters.

Scan this QR code below and enter your business URL and your email address. Then, I will send your **FREE** report.



We are on a mission to help thousands of small businesses leverage affordable and effective marketing strategies without breaking the bank.

As long as you follow the steps outlined in the book, your visibility score will improve over time, which will help you generate more new customers every day.

Now we are ready to start growing your business.

If you have any questions at all, please reach out directly to
david@clicktrackmarketing.com



Introduction

If you want to be successful in business these days, you need to start thinking digital first. Everyone is online using their phones to quickly find products, restaurants, coffee shops, and services. In order to continue to grow your business, you must show up in the search and map results. One effective way to do that is with a Google Business Profile. A Google Business Profile is an essential tool for helping people find businesses like yours, or better yet, actually finding your business. Although essential, your website is often the second point of contact between you and potential customers. In fact, Google displays the Business Profile in the search results before your website even if you search for your own company by name. Your website can look good, but that doesn't mean people will do what you want on it. It's crucial to share a simple one-liner of what you do and include a very clear call-to-action. By ensuring that both your website and your Google Business Profile are up-to-date and informative, you should be able to reach a much wider audience and attract new customers every day.

Google is more than just a search engine—it’s also a powerful tool for finding local businesses and service-based businesses. When my girlfriend and I were visiting my mother in San Diego, the first thing we did when we woke up was start searching on our phones for “coffee shops near me.” We used Google’s Business Profile map feature to find several places in the area that mentioned, “oat milk,” in the reviews. Unfortunately, the first coffee shop we went to was out of oat milk. Within a few minutes, we were able to locate another quaint coffee shop that we fell in love with called Liquid Bean Cafe. It wasn’t the first business listed in the results but the reviews were mostly 5-stars and it was locally owned and operated. That one delicious iced oat milk latte turned into a mutually beneficial partnership after a few words about improving her online presence. Within a few months, I helped Liquid Bean grow their revenue by 80 percent with proven local SEO strategies that you can use too. 80 percent growth doesn’t happen all of the time but you can see below how the requests for directions continues to grow over time.



Being found on Google is paramount for not only local businesses, but also service-based businesses such as book editors, graphic designers, website developers, etc. The process of being more discoverable is called *Search Engine Optimization*, or SEO for short.

People aren't generally going to stumble over your business—at least not in the traditional way. Googling is far too convenient. Do you think they are going to try out your restaurant before reading reviews? Before checking out the menu online? Viewing photos? Thinking digital first is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity.

Most business owners don't understand digital marketing or are simply overwhelmed by it. It can get really complicated quickly, but being found on Google is perhaps the best thing you can do to market your business. So how do you get your business to show up more often in search and map results?

This book is a step-by-step guide on what you can implement today to increase your visibility online without breaking the bank. At the end of each chapter, I'll even give you a small checklist of actionable items that will help you maximize exposure on search results.

You were one of the few who were brave enough to start your own business. It isn't easy. You have to go up against the juggernauts of the world—the Amazons, and Starbucks, which all have millions of dollars to spend on advertising. Small businesses need all the visibility they can get and I'm going to share some of the most effective and cost-efficient ways to grow your new customer base.

I've learned a lot about digital marketing over the last twenty years, especially my three years working onsite at Google. I've seen what works, what I thought would work and didn't, and I'd like to share this knowledge with you in an easy-to-understand way. Learning how Google and SEO function is a bit of a hurdle, to say the least. In this book I will demystify digital marketing for you, so you can start using these strategies to effectively attract new customers beginning today.

Let's get started.





CHAPTER 1

How to Show Up More Often on Search Results

WHEN PEOPLE LOOK for somewhere to eat, grab an oat milk latte, or find dog food, they pick up their phone and just Google it. Just think of your own behavior. How often do you turn to Google to find something? While Google doesn't share its search volume data, according to Hubspot, a popular marketing blog, there are an estimated 63,000 Google searches a second. That's right. I said every second. This calculates about 5.6 billion searches a day for a whopping 2 trillion searches per year. The average person uses Google about four times a day. I probably use it 30-40 times a day. How many of those searches is your business showing up on? And how many of those searches is your business missing out on?

Inevitably, when a person picks up their phone to Google, they are looking for something. It could be that they want to find something out about the movie they just watched, or win an argument with their friends, but often it's to look for something they want to buy, or a restaurant, usually somewhere local, or in need of a service. In fact, around four out of five searches on Google are to find something within a person's local area such as a restaurant, bar, coffee shop, service-based business, or product.

Google is a huge opportunity for local businesses, and yet it's so underutilized—even as we know its value. If you can show up more often on Google search and/or map results, it's easier for you to connect your business with potential new customers. Searching for a product or a service to buy usually starts on Google or Amazon; therefore, your online marketing efforts should also focus there. For any business owner, you need to think about how your business appears online when people are looking for you, similar products, or even a competitor. Think about it. If people are hungry right now and not in a familiar area, they probably use search terms like “restaurant near me,” “best restaurant,” or “best coffee shop.”

A lot of local businesses apply the hope and pray strategy—that is, they will put up their signage, stock up on goods, staff their store, and hope that people will notice and just walk in. And the thing is, depending on where your local business is located and what you sell, this strategy can work. Your business will grow up to a certain point and then likely remain stagnant. Without a steady stream of new customers you'll be stuck working in the business, instead of on it. If you own a restaurant or a café in a decent location, the food and beverage are good, your staff are friendly, and you get your customers what they order in a timely manner, generally, people will come back. But you will miss out on new customers in the area that are using online as a tool to find what they want.

It's never a good idea to rely on the hope and pray strategy as the pandemic proved. In the case of Lisi, the owner of Liquid Bean Cafe in Del Mar, she was at the mercy of the offices around her, which accounted for most of her daily coffee business. This was often the problem for most local businesses where the regulars disappeared almost overnight. When the pandemic forced offices to shut down and people had to stay home, Liquid Bean suddenly found itself without its largest customer base, despite the fact that it was a great

outdoor COVID meetup spot that serves delicious coffee, tea, and tasty bites.

This is why being found on Google is so important. It enables local and service-based businesses to connect with new customers. For the past decade, Google has prioritized local search because they realized that a lot of people—especially those on the go—wanted to find a business, service, or product that was close and convenient. This meant Google pushed local businesses near the top of Google. Have you ever searched for something and found exactly what you wanted, grazed the reviews, and then clicked for directions? I do it every day! Long before mobile phones became as powerful as they are, Google predicted that most searches would be done on mobile devices and people would want to interact with a business that is closer to them. Proximity, review ratings, and how close you show up at the top are crucial elements of winning at search.

So where should you start when you are ready to boost your online presence? Raise the digital bar with digital marketing.

Digital marketing can be overwhelming for the average business owner. Thankfully to win at search, you don't need to know all of the ins and outs of how Google works. In this chapter, we'll go over some of the basic, easy-to-understand principles that can help you beat out the competition and rank higher on Google when people are searching for businesses like yours. It's not that complicated, but just like exercise, it takes consistency. Although online marketing can seem daunting, if you do a few things right, you can have a steady stream of new customers walking through your doors each and every day.

If you do nothing else, you at least need to start with a Google Business Profile which is formally known as Google My Business. This profile is a directory listing that indicates where the business is located, its phone number, driving directions, and even its website. Because

this is Google's own listing, it prioritizes it above other types of listings, even your own website. Try it out right now! Just Google your business name and see if the Business Profile shows up first. . . exactly.

Now you've come across Google Business Profiles before, even if you didn't know it. If you're searching on your desktop, it's the profile that comes up on the right-hand side of your screen with pictures and information about the business. If you are on mobile, the Google Business Profile will likely show with clickable links at the top of the page and as I said before, above your own website.

Why Do You Need a Google Business Profile?

You need to first create your free Google Profile because, for local businesses, it is potentially your most important tool, maybe even more important than your website. I know that's a big claim, so let's break it down. First, did you know that customers are 70 percent more likely to visit a business that has filled out its Google Profile listing? Another study found that businesses with a Google Business Profile listing are twice as likely to earn trust from customers. I started working with a woman-owned pool building company in San Diego and the first thing she said was, "I don't show up much on Google." Within about two seconds after a Google search I told her why. She didn't have a Google Business Profile. Needless to say, creating the profile and getting verified were our first action items completed in the marketing plan. Even if you do not have a local business, I highly recommend creating a profile and start asking your customers or clients for reviews.

Google has figured out that most people searching for a business will want to visit one that is close to them, which is why they created the Google Business Profile tool in the first place. It provides the ability to be shown on Google Maps as well as search results.

One of the attractions a Google Business Profile offers is that it's absolutely FREE. Digital marketing has become increasingly competitive and expensive which is why working with a professional can save you time and money in the long run. Businesses have to keep increasing their spending in order to compete but monitoring and optimizing takes more time than most owners have to give. Social media used to be a good way to drive traffic to your business, but it's very hard to get noticed anymore. With social media, you continually have to feed the algorithm with fresh content and pay to be seen. Although Instagram Reels and TikTok Reels will increase visibility, it doesn't mean someone is coming to visit immediately after watching a video. If you optimize your Google Business Profile well, you only need to update it every week or two with new posts and new photos for it to be highly effective.

When properly optimized, your Google Business Profile will show up toward the top of Google searches when people are near your business and looking for similar products or services. It also makes it easy to learn more about your business, read customer reviews, and contact your business either through your website or by phone. I'm assuming you already have a Google Business Profile, but if not, follow along and set one up right now. What's most important about leveraging Google is the intent behind the search. If I'm searching for it on Google, there is high intent I will come in and spend money or contact you online inquiring about your services.

Setting Up Your Google Business Profile

While setting up your Google Business Profile is straightforward, you need to fully optimize it to have the best chance of reaching the top of search and map results. The most important thing to remember is you need to fill out all the information thoroughly and correctly. An empty or bare-bones Google Business Profile is kind of like having an empty storefront. You wouldn't dream of not putting an open sign

on your door, a sandwich board on the sidewalk, or merchandise in your front window, so why is it okay to not fully fill out your Google Profile? Nowadays, business begins online.

The truth is in today's age, your digital presence is way more important than your physical location. Unless someone already knows about your business, they will use Google first and try to find at least some basic information like hours of operation, where you are located, and review ratings. Many business owners still don't grasp the concept of the importance of a solid digital presence and don't think digital first.

Here are just a few stats shared by one of my favorite websites in 2021: **WordStream**

- Total US advertising and marketing spend in 2021 grew by 21.6% year-over-year to total \$436.3 billion — \$77.4 billion more than the annual spend in 2020.
- 49 percent of businesses say that showing up in organic search results brings them the best marketing ROI.
- 63 percent of businesses have increased their digital marketing budgets just this past year.
- 93 percent of people read online reviews before making a purchase.
- Google holds 91 percent of the total worldwide search engine market share.

How to Create a Google Business Profile?

If you want to use any Google service such as Gmail, Google Drive, Google Photos, or your Google Business Profile, you'll need to first set up your Google account. Thankfully, all of these tools are free and are easy to use. If you don't have a Google account, just go to **www.google.com** and in the top corner is a sign-in button. Click it,

and you'll be redirected to **accounts.google.com** where you'll be prompted to sign in with your Gmail. If you don't have a Gmail address, then click on the "Create Account" link. You'll be asked whether this account is for yourself, your child, or to manage your business. Click on "Manage Your Business" and then just fill in the information and create a password.

Do not use a simple password like: "**businessname2022!**" or expect to be hacked. Fifteen years ago simple passwords were okay, but this is no longer the case. Websites, Facebook, and Instagram accounts are hacked every day. If you use the same password for everything, you are asking for security issues.

Instead, invest in LastPass, a secure password manager and never worry about finding your passwords again. It stores your passwords on multiple devices and works with FaceID.

Here's my referral link and QR code:



<https://lastpass.wo8g.net/6bdNZN>

Once you've made your Google account, go to **google.com/business**. This is where you will need to create, claim, and verify your Google Business Profile.

Here are some of the basic things that you need to fill out on your Business Profile:

Company Name: The first step is to enter your company's name.

As you type, you'll see the autocomplete function suggest those businesses for you. This is to allow you to see if your business listing already exists or is unclaimed, avoiding duplication. If you are adding a new location to an already existing business, you'll need to indicate you have just opened a new location.

Business Category: This will allow Google to categorize your company better. Google offers you a pre-set selection of business categories that you can choose from. If you are an electrician, a car dealership, or a roofer, then it's self-explanatory which category you'll be in. But if you are in a niche product, you might find it difficult to figure out what category you should choose. Simply choose the one that you feel is most appropriate to you. If you are unsure, don't worry too much because you can always change it later. For restaurants and bars, or bars that serve food, you may want the main category to be restaurant, followed by cocktail bar, etc. "Restaurants" is one of the highest searched terms and could help your business show up more often in local searches or in Apple Maps when people are looking to dine out.

Address: Ensuring that you have the correct address is very important, especially if you have customers visiting your physical location. You can change your store location, just like your business category but it is a little bit more challenging. Google will want to verify that your business really is at that location. They'll send a postcard with a code on it and you'll have to enter it into your profile. This usually takes somewhere between two to three weeks, so plan ahead if a new store is opening up soon. Once you verify your listing, it will go live and be visible online. However, if a postcard is impossible, you may be able to verify your business either by email, phone, or even video recording. These services can be faster than waiting for a postcard, but they aren't available in all locations so pay close attention when Google asks you how you'd like to verify your profile. Nine times out of ten, I send the postcard to my clients.

Phone number: Entering your correct phone number is self-evident but you would be surprised at how often I come across businesses that have old or incorrect phone numbers listed on Google. Double-check and make sure this is correct by calling the number or clicking on the CALL button.

Store hours: Your store hours are obviously critical. If someone is searching for a roofer at two a.m. because they have a leak after a huge rainstorm and your business indicates it's closed even though you have emergency after-hours services, you won't rank as high as someone who has indicated they have twenty-four-hour service on their Google Business Profile. Recently, I drove by a restaurant in Oceanside, California, on a Saturday night. There was barely anyone inside, yet I knew first-hand they had great food and cocktails. When I checked its Google Business Profile and Apple Maps, the business hours showed that it closed at twelve pm on Saturdays. It opens at ten a.m. daily and closes at twelve pm on a Saturday? Now that's an honest typo since they close at midnight, but no wonder why it was a ghost town! I reached out the following day with a screenshot from my phone highlighting the incorrect hours and asked to set up a meeting with the owner. He was completely unaware of the typo and his numbers were slower than normal Saturday nights.

Photos: Be sure to add a nice-looking cover photo, your logo and a picture of you and your team. Your photos are extremely important not only to show that your profile is active but that it is also eye-catching and draws people in. This is especially important if you are a restaurant, a bar, or a coffee shop where your business relies on the appeal of your food and drink. If you're a clothing apparel business, you want your customers to imagine what they might look like in your shirts and entice them to come in. However, don't discount the power of good photographs even if you are an auto mechanic, a dentist, or a lawyer. Photos on your Google Profile give

you an opportunity to show who you are and why your customers should choose you.

Once your profile has gone live, you have done the basics, but as noted before, doing the bare minimum won't get you noticed. You need to fill out your profile completely if you want to rank higher than your competition, so what's next? One of the most important aspects of your Google Profile to fill out is your product section.

If you are an electrician, you can add something like "light installation" or "electrical panel upgrade." If you are an auto detailer then add "ceramic coating" or "exterior detailing." This will help you show up for those products when somebody is searching for them on Google. If you sell physical products, add a few per week with a link to your online store product page.

Next, you'll want to add a description of your business. You get 750 characters to tell your customers why they should choose your business, how long you have been around, what other customers say, and more. Try to use as many characters as possible, and like your product description, you want to add words that people are likely searching for. So if you're a coffee shop, then be sure to add "latte," "cappuccino," and "pastries." It can be tempting to just copy and paste something from your website, but it's worth the time to give your business description some serious thought. If you get it right the first time, there won't be any need to change it later and you'll reap the benefits for years.

Your profile also allows you to claim a shortcode and add appointment links. The shortcode link just makes it easier for your customers to find you. If you are someone like a therapist and you offer online appointments then adding a link can make it easier for your clients to book with you. I won't get too technical, but I prefer to add a UTM tracking code to track which appointments and website visits came

directly from the Business Profile. Once owners see the numbers, they realize how important the Google profile really is.

You want to make sure your business is listed in the correct category. This is especially important as there are nearly 4,000 categories to choose from. Google allows you to select one primary one and around nine subcategories. Keep in mind that Google may or may not approve your selections, but do your best to add as many relevant categories as possible.

Business name
Realty ONE Group Integrity - South West

Business category

Your edit is pending. It usually takes up to 10 minutes to be reviewed. [Learn more](#)

CURRENT

- Real estate agency **PRIMARY**
- Real estate agent
- Real estate developer

PENDING

- Real estate agency **PRIMARY**
- Real estate agent
- Real estate developer
- Property investment
- Real estate consultant

**Google will review your categories and profile updates before approving or denying.*

If you select the wrong category, your customers might not be able to find you. Thankfully, if you do put your business in the wrong category, say electrical engineer instead of electrician, Google will often suggest changes and they might even move you over to the correct category automatically.

Lastly, before we move on, you want to put some posts up on your

page. These can be snippets from your blog, or any updates such as a new menu item, beer of the month, a new employee, someone getting promoted, or you are having a special sale. All these things are important to post on your Google Profile because it will help your company get noticed and send signals to Google that your business is active.

With Liquid Bean Cafe, we were able to leverage the power of Google Business Profile and local citations to boost their online presence. We were able to reach new customers at a critical time during the pandemic when all their regulars weren't coming in because of the lockdowns. In just a couple of months, clicks on "driving directions" were up by 44 percent over the past three-month period and we saw a whopping 80 percent increase in revenue compared to the same month in August over the last period prior to COVID. This was phenomenal, especially considering that August is already a busy month. For a small business, I don't have to tell you how impactful this is and it's all due to making some small but significant changes to how Liquid Bean appeared online. It's unfortunate that more small businesses are not taking the time to understand how they can generate new customers from Google. I get it, you don't have the time, but that is why I am here sharing what I know works for small businesses. Another problem is that you know you need help, but don't know who to turn to or who to trust.

Working with small business owners is very rewarding to me especially since I grew up in one. I feel really proud that Liquid Bean was not only able to survive during the pandemic but actually thrive. She's about to have a record year and always tells me she meets new people that found her online every day. Even in October, which is typically a slower month than summer months, her clicks for directions are up 165 percent and photos views have almost doubled. Now let's discuss the strategy and continue optimizing your Google Business Profile.

Google Business Profile: Actions (Overview)

Location: Liquori Bean Cafe (2002 Jimmy Durante Blvd, Del Mar, 92014)

01 Oct - 30 Oct, 2022 vs 01 Oct - 30 Oct, 2021

Website Visits

+55.79%

148 vs 95

Direction requests

+165.75%

582 vs 219

Calls

+71.43%

12 vs 7

Photo Views

+91.11%

93,653 vs 49,006

What to Do If Your Google Business Profile Already Exists?

If you have been in business for a while then it's likely Google has created your listing for you and you'll need to reclaim it. You just have to prove that it's your business in order to start posting on your profile.

There are three options to claim your profile:

Option 1: Sign up for a Google account at google.com/business and just follow the prompts to confirm ownership.

Option 2: Look up the business listing on Google Search. You'll see a small clickable link at the bottom that says: "Own This Business?" Click on it and follow the prompts to verify ownership.

Option 3: Go to Google Maps and locate your business. Click on the pin and the business details will pop up. Close to the bottom of the information will be an option to manage the listing.

What to Do If Someone Else Has Claimed Your Listing?

This happens on occasion, and it's not always intended as malicious.

It could be an old employee or a marketing agency that you once hired created the listing for you and just hadn't bothered to give back control.

You will know somebody else has claimed the listing because you will get an error message when you try to create your Google Business Profile. Unfortunately, it won't give you the name of the person who has verified your listing but it will give you clues with a partially redacted email address. With some good detective work, you should be able to figure out who has access to your Google Business Profile and get it back.

How to Take Full Advantage of Your Google Business Profile

Google should be used as a communication tool for your customers to keep them informed about new offerings. If you have a new drink on the menu, use the post tool on your Google Business Profile to write a short blurb about it. Make sure you update your product section as well with a description and photos!

I understand you have a lot on your plate, but make it a weekly routine to update your profile with new photos or assign the task to someone you can count on. I bet you are already posting on social media, just take it a step further and post the same content on your Google Business Profile. Or if you are really pressed for time, then cut down on your social media time and post more often on Google. One post can be repurposed across multiple channels and should be. You'll know if you haven't posted anything at all because your post section will look like this.

Keep your customers updated by sharing what's new

Share announcements and news to your customers by posting updates to your Business Profile on Google Search and Maps



 Create your first post

Social media is drilled into small business owners as the optimal way to reach their customers. Don't get me wrong, it's a good reminder that you exist and products will sell, but when somebody is looking for something to buy, eat, or drink right now, they go to Google. The intent to visit and/or buy is much higher on Google than social media. This is exactly why I am bullish about leveraging Google to find new customers.

One of the best ways to utilize your Google Profile is by filling out the FAQ section to answer some of the most commonly asked questions you get in your business. This is a little-known feature but can really help fill out your Google Profile. Take some time to think about some of the questions you get asked every day such as: "are you licensed," "do you have outdoor seating," or "do you deliver?" If you have a FAQ section on your website (and if you don't you really should create one) then you can just copy and paste some of those questions over, making it easier.

Avoid These Google Penalties

Google has rules and regulations you need to follow and if you do,

you can prevent your listing from being suspended. Generally, Google penalties are handed out to people who knowingly cross the line. For example, someone experienced in websites might try to create multiple Google Profiles to gain traffic and then redirect those profiles to the central company website, usually masking it through a dummy website. If you are considering doing that, I strongly urge you not to. My advice is to find a long-term strategy that works. Not to try and take shortcuts for short-term gains that aren't ultimately sustainable. You might see a small boost in traffic but Google will eventually catch on.

However, even if you do have the best intentions, you can still unknowingly fall foul of Google's rules. Assuming you aren't doing anything deliberately underhanded, here are a few penalties that you should watch out for.

1. Using a PO box as your address. Your address needs to be the real address of your business.
2. Soliciting fake reviews. Reviews are super important but only if done the right way. If too many fake reviews show up on your profile, it could get you banned altogether.
3. Don't stuff your Google Profile title with keywords. For example, "Pizzarama: San Francisco's Best Pizza Restaurant" This actually goes against Google's policies and likewise will get you banned.

You can appeal these Google penalties and they are usually quick to respond and fix them if they are in error. Sometimes Google makes a mistake and suspends your profile for the wrong reason. You will have to log into your Google Business Profile where there will be a banner message with a button that will lead you to a form where you can state your case. You'll likely need to upload a business document such as your license that includes your name and address

to be reinstated. While we've covered the most common penalties, there are plenty more. If you are worried about other types of penalties, Google has a complete list at support.google.com. I became very familiar with penalties after working with Locksmiths that were advertising on Local Services by Google. Those guys would leave bad reviews on their competitors, call back leads on a different phone to try and avoid being charged, and flag almost every bad review. Speaking of reviews, it's time to focus on them.

Start Collecting Reviews

After you have set up your Google Profile, probably the most important part to concentrate on is getting as many five-star reviews as possible. This not only attracts customers but is a key component for showing up on Google results. If you get one of the first three positions on Google Maps, you will undoubtedly get more calls, website views, and location visits.

In fact, when someone Googles a local business, 90 percent of those searchers read the reviews before making a purchasing decision. Google knows this which is why they'll put a business with more five-star reviews above a business without any reviews.

Now I'm fully aware that trying to get reviews is a huge challenge, but it's worth the effort to focus on it. Thankfully in the age of Walmart, Amazon, and other big companies, most people want to support their local businesses. You just need to be smart about it and devise a plan.

It's important to note that unlike with Facebook, you can't turn this feature off, and you are at the whim of the general public; anyone can post a review of your business, whether they are a legitimate customer or not and it's extremely hard to get Google to take down fake reviews unless they are obvious. Out of about 15 attempts and multiple cases submitted, I have been successful at getting 7 fake reviews removed.

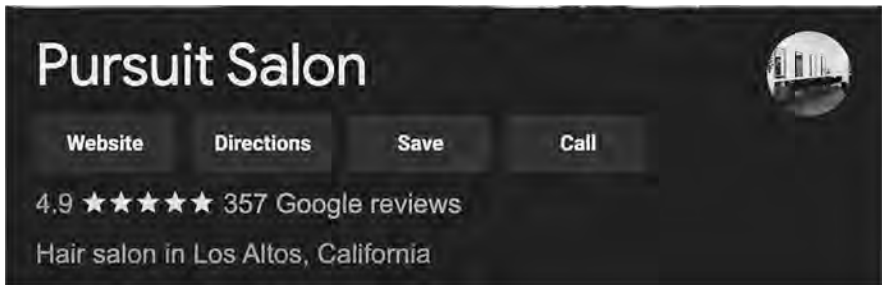
Next, we'll go over some strategies on the best ways to collect reviews. Most people ask for reviews sporadically without any systematic follow-up. And while something is always better than nothing, you need to figure out a way to consistently get reviews from your happy customers. If you don't want to do it manually, there is software such as BirdEye and Podium that can help automate the process with text and email follow-ups. When you consider the reward, it's worth spending a little money and putting some effort toward it.

One of the best and most effective ways to start collecting reviews is to offer an incentive. In other words, give away something for free. For a restaurant, a common tactic is to offer a free appetizer or dessert in exchange for a review. It's effective because an incentive gets people back into your restaurant or bar at a later date. As a result, they spend more money on drinks and entrées and will likely bring a significant other or several friends. It's a win-win.

Another tactic I've had success with is putting a QR code on the receipt which again you can combine with some kind of offer. Following-up with a phone call, an email or even a text message is also a great idea. Your Google Profile makes it incredibly easy to text somebody a review link. Just download the Google My Business app and scroll down to "Share Profile," and you'll have an option to send it through various messaging apps. Choose the one you want and send it to your customers. If you have a texting relationship with any of your customers, send them a message and ask that they leave a positive review for your business.

How many reviews is enough? I wouldn't stop putting consistent effort into it until you are in the top three in your industry with five-star reviews. For most businesses, this is over a hundred. Don't worry if you've only got a couple of reviews. It all starts one review at a time and before you know you'll have hundreds. Take Pursuit Salon, for example, boasting over 350 reviews since they opened. They were

even closed for a year due to COVID from March of 2020 yet stayed consistent asking every client to leave a review with automated emails and texts.



Check Your Google Business Insights

A lot of business owners overlook the importance of monitoring these statistics. But this data is incredibly important and should be viewed at least once a week, if not more. These statistics will tell you if what you are doing is working or not, and by monitoring, you can course correct.

In the famous book written by Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* he tells the well-known story of the two woodcutters. The first woodcutter slaved all day cutting down trees while the second woodcutter seemed to take it easy, barely working at all. But by the end of the day, the first woodcutter was astonished to find the second woodcutter had, in fact, beat him by cutting down more trees. The first woodcutter asked the second how he did it when he barely seemed to be working at all.

“Easy,” the second woodcutter responded. “I spent the first half of the day sharpening my saw.”

With marketing, it's easy to keep doing the wrong thing and work twice as hard as you need to. If you are not measuring your activities with data, it's like trying to cut down a tree with a blunt saw. You

want to ensure that you are doing the right activities and the only way to do that is by measuring and testing.

So how do you measure? You'll find a tab in your Google Business Profile marked 'Google Insights.' These are the stats of who is viewing your Google Business Profile, who is calling your business once they find your profile, who is clicking on your website, and who is asking for directions.

You can see whether customers viewed you on Google Maps or with Google Search. You can see what words your customers searched for which is very powerful because it will help you see what you should focus on improving. You can also see where you rank in relation to others in your industry.

Here are some of the important insights you should track:

How customers search for your business: This tells you what percentage of people are seeing business impressions based on searches for your business directly or discovering it by searching for keywords that led them to you. It also tells you the total number of searches you appeared in. Your goal is to increase this number and show up for more relevant keyword searches.

Where customers view your business on Google: This shows you a graph of views in Google Maps versus Google search. You can use this information to decide whether you want to focus on showing up in Search more or Maps. If you are at the top of the Maps section of Google, maybe your effort is best spent showing up on Google search results.

Customer Actions: You definitely want to pay attention to this section. This is a graph over time of customers who called you, requested directions to you, visited your website, and messaged you. If this isn't trending the right way, you need to figure out why. Take a hard

look from your customers' perspective and try to figure out what's missing. Or ask some of your regular customers to try to search you and see how easy it is for them to find you. Whatever you do, don't ignore this data.

Direction Requests: The "Customer Action" section has this data as well, but this graph dives deeper with more information. With this information, you can find out where most of your customers are coming from which can help you decide if you possibly want to advertise in a particular neighborhood or not.

Popular Times: This section tells you when people are visiting your business most often in person. With Liquid Bean Cafe, we could tell that people were looking for coffee on the weekends and therefore, we made an informed decision to open on Sundays. Likewise, if nobody is going to your location on a Monday, then maybe you should close entirely or open later.

Photo Views: This is the number of times people have seen your photos, whether or not they have clicked on them. For some useful competitive insight, Photo Views graph shows how often your photos have been shown and seen in the search results.

Photo Quantity: This shows how many photos you have compared to similar businesses. With SEO there are an endless number of tasks you can do. The key is to keep one step ahead of the competition and this section helps you do just that.

With all your statistics, the important thing to look for is trends and whether your business is trending in the right or wrong direction. If more people are clicking on your website than last month, what prompted that action? Are fewer people viewing your photos than last month? What can you do to create more engaging photographs?

Business Listings Boost Online Visibility

Now that you've created a Google Profile, the next step is to increase the number of business listings. Business listings or directories are websites that are used to showcase your business information including your website, phone number, and address. These not only help people who are on other websites find you, but they are key indications from Google that your business is popular and should be ranked higher.

There are hundreds of different directories that can help your business rank on Google. Just google "top business directories," and you won't find a shortage of information.

In the early days of Google, web directories were perhaps the most crucial aspect of SEO. If you could get your business into some of the top directories, you could certainly drive traffic to your website and get sales. But these days, Google algorithms are a lot more complex, and there are a lot more ranking factors. However, web directories still play an important role, especially when it comes to local SEO and even national companies.

The first thing is you want to claim all your social media handles on all the platforms regardless of whether you use them or not. That's right, social media platforms are directories too. TikTok might not be your thing, but who knows how important it will be to your business in 5 years. It's better to claim your Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok handle (name) now and park it unused rather than have someone else claim it. Since social media has millions of users and a high-domain authority, any backlink from one of these platforms will help your business in the search results.

Make sure all your information is correct, especially on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Those are probably the most important directory listings. Next in order of importance are Apple, Yelp, and

Yellow Pages. Yelp is important even if you aren't a restaurant or food establishment. Yahoo, while not as prominent as it once was, is still an important place to claim your free listing. Bing Places is Microsoft's search engine. Claim your listing there too. Haven't heard of it? No worries—not many people have, which means not many people use it, but since it's owned by Microsoft, you don't want to ignore it either.

After that, here are some of the most popular listings you should consider:

Best of The Web: This is one of the original directories and a great place to list your business.

About Us: This directory receives over 200,000 visits a month.

MapQuest: Another directory listing that has lost dominance over the years due to the rise of Google Maps, but it's still beneficial to fill out.

Blogger: If you have any blog posts, you definitely need to post them here as this property is owned by Google. Remember anything Google-related will get an added visibility boost simply by being a Google property.

Hotfrog: This directory operates in forty-four countries and has over 70 million businesses listed on its website.

Foursquare: Just as MapQuest used to be popular before Google Maps, Foursquare used to be the place to go to find your local coffee shop or restaurant. But just because nobody does it anymore doesn't mean having a listing there isn't important. Google still uses it which means you should claim it.

2findlocal: While the layout of this website leaves much to be desired—it looks like it hasn't been updated since the early 90s—it's still a popular listing for local businesses.

Best Business Local: As the name suggests, this is a website for the best local businesses.

There are, of course, a lot more listings, but these are a good start. Just as you've made updating your Google Business Profile part of your routine, also make it part of your routine to keep finding and adding your business to directory listings. It's never a bad thing to keep creating directory listings so keep at it, but not all directories are created equal.

Now I understand this work can be tedious and can be easily put off or skipped. My advice? Don't procrastinate! If you find yourself avoiding this task, there is software available that will automate this task for you. Does this seem overwhelming? It can be. There are so many different directories I haven't even mentioned, and some industry-specific ones. Thankfully, I invest in software that lets me create, manage, and make bulk changes to over sixty to seventy-five directories at once for my clients. Changing business hours? No problem, just send me a text or email.

If you want to save yourself hours of boring, tedious work, then get in touch. I can help you save time and make you money by properly claiming, locking, and submitting your business information to only the highest-quality directories approved by Google. I'll even use my proven 3-step system to help you increase your online visibility and grow your new customer base.

Don't Forget About Apple Maps

There are roughly 113 million iPhone users in the United States and many of those users love the Apple ecosystem and use Apple Maps. This is often an overlooked listing because it does require a couple of extra steps but it can be really powerful for your business. By the time this book comes out, you might be able to start paying for ads on Apple Maps. If you own a local business, I would highly recommend

becoming an early adopter. I will definitely be offering this service as part of my Local SEO strategy to drive new customers to your business and am surprised Apple hasn't launched Map ads years ago.

Here is how to list your business on Apple Maps:

Step 1: Go to mapsconnect.apple.com and log in with your Apple ID and password. If you're not an Apple person and don't have an Apple ID, you'll have to get one. There's no way around it. Fortunately, it's easy to set one up at applied.apple.com and just follow the steps.

Step 2: Next, select your relationship with your business. You'll be prompted to do this on the "Add a New Business Page," which you'll be automatically directed to after you log in. You can either select "I'm the business owner" or "I'm authorized by the business owner."

Step 3: Enter your basic business details. This is where you key in your business name, primary business phone number, and business address just as you did on your Google Profile.

Step 4: Verify your business phone number. You will be prompted to allow Apple to call the number you supply which will provide you with a PIN code.

Step 5: You then want to add your business. There are three categories to choose from, each with several business types within, from "Electrician" to "Marketing agency" and just about every imaginable company type in between. If you don't see a category that fits, you can suggest one.

Step 6: Confirm your hours of business. Demarcate the hours you're open from Apple's list of seven days and you're set. If you're open twenty-four hours, there are checkboxes for that, too.

Step 7: Fill out all the information. It can be tempting to cut corners here. Don't. You'll be prompted to fill out your website address and all your social media links. Fill these all out, even if you don't use Twitter, put in your handle anyway. You only have to do it once.

Step 8: Lastly, review your business information. To confirm that everything is filled out exactly, click "OK" and you're done. Your new listings should appear within Apple's Maps app within a week at most. If additional verification is required, expect to hear from Apple soon.

The Importance of Local SEO

As a small business owner, you need all the edge you can get to compete against companies like Amazon, Starbucks, and McDonald's. These companies have millions of dollars to spend on advertising. As a small business, you don't have that luxury, so why not at least reach some of the low-hanging fruit that is available to you.

It's so good to see local businesses succeed. I started doing some local search optimization for a restaurant called The Bier Garden of Encinitas, located on Highway 101 right along the beach in Northern San Diego. One time I visited their restaurant to have some drinks with a couple of friends. It was a lively, sunny weekend afternoon with a solid crowd enjoying the San Diego weather. There were plenty of beers on tap and delicious food. The owner, who also happens to be named Dave, spotted me and said, "Hey David, I don't know what you're doing with Google and Local SEO stuff, but it's working; there are a lot of new faces in here." Bier Garden is typically a busy restaurant but that doesn't mean a few new faces coming in daily isn't appreciated.

I first met Dave when I was selling payment processing to restaurants. However, funny enough, our history goes back further. When I was

in a band back in 2001, I actually played in a live music bar that he previously owned in Pacific Beach called 710 Beach Club. Dave and I hit it off and he really liked my approach to sales and business. I sold him a payment processor system years ago, but more importantly, we formed a business partnership that has since then led to a real friendship.

When I finally started my own company, Click Track Marketing, I approached him about doing some local search optimization for his restaurants. In less than a 5-minute spiel about why showing up online is important to growing his new customer base, he hired me on the spot. I realize that mostly happened because of the relationship we had previously built, but still, it felt great to gain two new clients with a short and meaningful conversation about growing his new customer base.

If you follow the steps I've outlined in this chapter, you'll already be further ahead than most other businesses. People will find you more often and visit your business which, of course, means more revenue. Learning about search engine optimization can be daunting with a very steep learning curve, but hopefully this chapter helped you understand the importance of Local SEO and how to get started.

LOCAL SEO CHECKLIST

- Create Your Google Business Profile
- Ensure all sections of your Google Business Profile are filled out properly and entirely
- Create business directory listings or hire a Local SEO specialist that handles directories for you
- Create an Apple account for Apple Maps
- Consistently reach out to your customers asking for reviews
- Post updates and photos on your Google Business Profile every week
- Familiarize yourself with your Google Business Profile insights and analytics



CHAPTER 2

How to Start Advertising Online on a Budget

NOW THAT YOU'VE set up your Google Profile and are driving traffic to your website through directory listings, you should consider how you want to promote your business online. People are scared of spending money on advertising because they believe that you need to spend thousands of dollars with no guarantee of results.

It's true that there is some risk in advertising—but that's the case in all types of marketing. If you start off slow and deliberate, you will have a greater chance of success. We'll talk about testing ads later, but for now, you can start off slow by spending as little as five dollars a day. Once you've figured out that the ads are working, you can increase your budget and keep improving the results.

Mover & Shaker Co. is a perfect example of a company that grew their ad spend over time. They make barware, apparel, and pins with all types of unique collections with great designs aimed at hospitality professionals. Nick, the owner, is a highly acclaimed bartender that first started off marketing his brand personally on Instagram. The Mover & Shaker Instagram is a must-follow, especially

if you ever worked in the industry before. Check his account out at: <https://www.instagram.com/moverandshakerco>

But he knew that as good as his Instagram account is, his organic reach was limited. Nick decided his next strategic move would be to start paying for advertising. He started off with a small advertising budget, but since then has grown his company and ships products all over the country, spending thousands of dollars and getting a great return on ad spend.

See the example below:

Campaign	Imp.	Clicks	Avg. CPC	CTR	Conversion	Cost	Conv. value	Conv. value / cost	Cost / conv.
Call BBQ Spring Valley	13,698	357	\$0.47	2.61%	77.00	\$167.25	77.00	0.46	\$2.17
Business profile - Tracked call	-	-	-	-	1.00	-	1.00	-	-
Calls from ads	-	-	-	-	4.00	-	4.00	-	-
Clicks to call	-	-	-	-	17.00	-	17.00	-	-
Local actions - Directions	-	-	-	-	45.00	-	45.00	-	-
Smart campaign ad clicks to call	-	-	-	-	10.00	-	10.00	-	-
Call BBQ Haino Logan	13,125	241	\$0.60	1.84%	34.00	\$144.59	34.00	0.24	\$4.25
Clicks to call	-	-	-	-	4.00	-	4.00	-	-
Local actions - Directions	-	-	-	-	30.00	-	30.00	-	-

**Screenshot above shows that for every dollar spent online delivered a 3.68 return. Conversion value is our sales numbers.*

I first met Nick back when he was bartending at a pop-up bar at the La Zebra Hotel called the Mulberry Project in Tulum, Mexico. Back then, Mover & Shaker Co. was just a side hustle he did for fun, but sales were growing enough to start getting serious. I had so much fun in Tulum and somehow found myself back at La Zebra and the bar almost every night. I started to talk more with Nick and we became fast friends. After only a couple of nights getting to know him at the bar, we started hanging out after his shift and would go bar hopping.

When vacation came to an end, I stayed connected with Nick on social media. His interesting pins and t-shirts always popped up on my feed and the memes are to die for. I watched as his company continued to grow, and eventually he reached out to me to start doing some advertising.

First, we did the steps I outlined in the first chapter. We made sure his Google Profile was optimized and he had all the correct listings. Since he is not a local company and could sell anywhere, I knew that we could do more. We started Google Ads and Social Media ads around the same time and are now working on launching his products on Amazon.

What Is Google Ads?

Even if you don't know what Google Ads are, you've seen them whenever you search on Google. They are paid advertisements offered by Google as noted by the little 'Ad' next to the top of search results. Essentially, these companies are paying to be seen on Google at the top of the search results. Google advertising is one of the best ways to get noticed, increase your customers, and grow your bottom-line. With that said, digital marketing is a unique combination of art, science, and arithmetic and there is always something new to learn and test.

Most of the marketing alternatives, including social media, billboards, mail, and email, create brand awareness rather than direct sales. These types of marketing put you in front of customers, making them aware of your product. If you're lucky you can interest a few and make them buy on the spot. But for the majority, they will go about their business until they are actually looking for your type of product or service. Hopefully, by this time, your ads were sticky enough that your potential customers will recall your company name and go with you and not your competition.

Google Ads aren't really like that unless you are running a brand awareness campaign on YouTube or Display ads. Google Search ads target people who are already in the buying mindset and are looking for your company's services. In fact, Google Ads are unique because it puts you in front of your customers at exactly the right time, when they are searching for your product or service—which is why they are so effective. No other type of traditional ads do that.

Why Advertise On Google?

Google Ads was launched over two decades ago and since then have refined the way companies advertise. Despite the fact Google has many different departments, they still make the bulk of their money through search advertising, meaning they are motivated to keep improving Google Ads and partnering with businesses like yours. In other words, they succeed if you succeed. Be wary of some of the recommendations from the support team though as they are incentivized to increase your spend, which doesn't always lead to better performance for your business.

As I have hoped to have drilled into you by now, Google is the place people go when they are searching for a product or service like yours. According to Google's statistics, on average those who use Google Ads make \$8 for every \$1 they spend on Google Ads—not a bad return. You might think that stat is just Google trying to entice small businesses to spend money on their platform, but I've seen those types of returns with the companies I've worked with. One is called Cove Water & Fire and they sell outdoor tabletop fire bowls. We only spent a few hundred dollars on Google Ads and managed to do thousands of dollars in sales, a healthy return on investment. In short, Google Ads can work. Like anything else, it takes some time, knowledge, and financial investment to get it right, but once you do, it can mean a constant flow of new customers or product sales for your business.

When you pay for an ad, Google will give you preferential treatment, meaning that you'll show up in a prominent spot—usually first, second, or third spot on Google. However, depending on your budget and competition, you might show up at the bottom of the page. Take a moment to Google something you want to buy: it can be a coffee maker, a shirt, or something you need to fix at home. Likely the first couple of results will be paid spots. Google knows that people will generally take the path of least resistance—the quicker and easier someone can get something they want the more likely they are to buy it.



Google has done studies that found the top search result on Google gets 30 percent of all clicks. Let that sink in for a moment. . . That means if you are first on Google you get 30 percent of the traffic for that search term to your website. This leaves the other thousand or so results to fight over the remaining 70 percent of traffic. And if that isn't enough, 90 percent of searchers won't go past the first page. As I'm sure you're aware from your own Google searching, you are more likely to click on the first few search results than scroll down the page, especially if the first few Google results are what you are looking for.

Setting Business Goals and Objectives

Before you dive into Google Ads you need to think about your goals

and your business objectives. If you haven't figured out exactly what you want and don't have a systematic approach to digital advertising, then Google Ads may not produce the results you want.

Even with successful campaigns, the cost to acquire a client isn't that cheap. Just ask lawyers where the cost per click could be upwards of \$60 dollars. You need to make sure that you maximize your chances by having a great offer and turn your customers into lifelong raving fans.

The first question you need to ask when calculating your budget is: how much can I spend to acquire a sale or new customer and still be profitable? You must know your numbers if you really want to scale your ad spend like a pro.

The answer will largely depend on your margins and/or lifetime customer value. If you are a restaurant, then your margins will be slim. If you put out an ad and you spend \$6 to acquire that customer to come into your restaurant to order a burger—yet you only make a \$3 profit, then you've actually lost \$3. Obviously, that isn't sustainable.

But if you have trained your staff to upsell so that the same customer orders a beer with the burger—a product that you make \$5 on, then you've now made a profit of \$2. Not great, but at least you're in the black! Next, you've trained your staff to offer the customer a free dessert or appetizer in exchange for an email. Now you have an avenue of marketing to your clients that doesn't cost you \$6 every time. You can bring that customer back. But this time you didn't spend the \$6 to acquire him so you made \$8 on him. And of course, your food is so good, next time he brings a friend and you make even more money. But none of that would have been possible if you hadn't spent that initial \$6 on advertising. If your staff does their part and provides good food and service, that \$6 investment can turn into a customer with a lifetime value of \$1,000 or more.

Why is Starbucks willing to spend \$300 to acquire a single customer with an average ticket of \$10? It all comes down to lifetime customer value, which in Starbucks' case is around \$14,099. That's why the numbers make sense. Calculate your lifetime customer value and figure out how much you can afford to spend to grow and maintain profitability.

Google Ads is a great way to get new customers in the door but it's your customer service, attention to detail, and customer experience that will increase your return on investment from your marketing dollars.

While making sales and ensuring profitability are important, what you really want to do is turn people into customers and build long-term relationships with them so they continue to use your product and service over and over again.

I started to work with a company called pk24 that sells skincare products. Before I started working with them, their marketing was unfocused and scattered. They were trying several different channels that targeted their distributors. But they weren't optimizing their online presence. They hadn't done any Google optimizing or tried to gather any online reviews which, as you know, are critical to the success of selling any online product. Still, they were doing a decent number of sales but I thought with the right strategy, they could do a lot better.

I helped improve their organic Google presence and helped get them more reviews. By showing the owners keyword volume and search data, I managed to convince them to target directly to consumers. We started running ads on Google for around \$10/day then quickly bumped up to \$30/day after seeing immediate sales. We increased the daily budget, drove customers to the email list, added remarketing audiences, and continued to optimize to lower our cost per sale. Google Ads proved to be so effective we started to run ads on

Amazon as well. Within 3 months, pk24 was selling \$16,000 a month on Amazon. If we hadn't had the right approach, if we hadn't started to gather reviews, it wouldn't have mattered how much money we spent on advertising; it would have likely been wasted, or, at least not as effective. Marketing online is a process and I prefer to focus on one type of campaign before moving to the next. Unless you have an unlimited budget, I recommend starting small and slowly increasing your ad spend once you review the data and spend time optimizing the campaign.

How Do Google Ads Work?

So now you understand the power of Google Ads, you'll probably want to know how to start. The first step is to figure out what terms people are searching for when they are looking for a business like yours. This is called keyword research because you're trying to figure out what words people will type into Google to find what they are looking for. The easiest way to do this is to let autocorrect decide for you. This is a simple hack using Google's powerful database. For example, let's say you're a San Diego restaurant. When I type in "San Diego restaurant" I get:

- San Diego restaurant with a view
- San Diego restaurant by the water
- San Diego restaurant for large groups

If you are a restaurant with either a view or a location by the water, then those would be keywords that you want to show up for and might want to consider running ads for.

The next thing you want to pay attention to is the "People also ask" section which is usually halfway down the search results. These are common questions based on real data that Google has curated. These highlighted questions are important because people want

to know answers related to the search term you just entered into the search bar.

For example, you type in “best San Diego restaurant,” under the “People also ask” section you get:

- What is a must-eat restaurant in San Diego?
- What is the most popular eatery in San Diego?
- Does San Diego have good restaurants?

These are clues of some of the most common search terms and ones you might consider bidding on.

How to Create a Google Ads Account

Step 1: If you’ve followed the steps we outlined in the first chapter, then you have a Google account under your existing Gmail account. If not, then go to <https://accounts.google.com> and create a new account or associate the Google account to an existing email address you own.

Step 2: Next, you’ll want to go to ads.google.com. Here you’ll have to create another account which will be linked to the rest of your Google properties under the “Start Now” button. You’ll need to verify it’s you and put in your Gmail password.

Pro Tip: Instead of running ads to your website, link the campaign to your Google Business Profile. Google will then show your ads on search results but also on Google Maps. For businesses with a physical location, this is my go-to campaign strategy. Part of how I showcase value is tracking the “clicks for directions,” button clicks since there is a high probability that people will come in and spend money if they clicked for directions.

Step 3: A Google Ads dashboard will open up. Here Google will ask you what is the main goal you want to achieve. They will give you four options:

- 1. Get more calls
- 2. Get more website sales or sign-ups
- 3. Get more visits to your physical location
- 4. Get more brand awareness with video reviews

I would recommend that if you’re in a physical location like a bar or restaurant then you want to click the ‘get more visitors to your physical location’ option.

Step 1: You'll be asked to give your business name and your website. Enter it.

☐	Campaign	impr.	Clicks	Avg. CPC	CTR	Conversion	Cost	Conv. value	Conv. value / cost	Cost / conv.
☐	 Call BBQ Spring Valley	13,698	357	\$9.47	2.61%	77.00	\$167.25	77.00	0.46	\$2.17
	Business profile - Tracked call	—	—	—	—	1.00	—	1.00	—	—
	Calls from ads	—	—	—	—	4.00	—	4.00	—	—
	Clicks to call	—	—	—	—	17.00	—	17.00	—	—
	Local actions - Directions	—	—	—	—	45.00	—	45.00	—	—
	Smart campaign ad clicks to call	—	—	—	—	19.00	—	19.00	—	—
☐	 Call BBQ Barrio Logan	13,125	241	\$9.60	1.84%	34.00	\$144.59	34.00	0.24	\$4.25
	Clicks to call	—	—	—	—	4.00	—	4.00	—	—
	Local actions - Directions	—	—	—	—	30.00	—	30.00	—	—

**One of my clients had 45 clicks for directions to their original location and 30 clicks for directions to their 2nd location in 30 days with a Smart Campaign linked to the business profiles.*

Step 2: Now you'll have to actually write your ad. You'll be given three

headline variants with two description options. You don't want to be too clever here. Be as direct and straightforward as possible while adding your relevant keywords. Remember that Google is going to match what keywords are inputted into Google into what is written in the ad. For example, let's take the San Diego restaurant example again. You know that you want "San Diego" and "Restaurant" and "View" or "By the water." The headline might be "San Diego Restaurant With A View." It may not be the most exciting headline, but remember your goal isn't to be clever.

Step 3: Now you need to decide what keywords you want to actually show up for. I'll give you a hint here: most of them will be the same keywords that you wrote in your headline and description.

Step 4: Enter your store address and the surrounding area you want to show up in. If you are a restaurant or bar, I would suggest limiting your advertising area since most people won't travel too far to go to your restaurant or bar, unless there is something unique about you. If you're an auto mechanic, a roofer, or an electrician you can expand your advertising area since location isn't as important.

Step 5: Lastly, you'll want to set up your daily budget and your credit card information. As I've already stated in this chapter, I would recommend that you start with \$5 a day. Google will show you how many people they predict will click on your ad based on your ad spend. Usually, it's pretty accurate. The ads work on a bidding system so the more advertisers want the coveted top spot, the more expensive each click will be.

For example, let's say you bid \$10 a day and a competing company bids \$15. Your competitor will likely win out most of the time and their ad will come above yours. Google only has a certain number

of spots it holds for ads before it shows organic results, so the more people who want those spots, the more expensive they will be.

Now being outbid is not necessarily a bad thing. If you're paying for the top spot of Google that means that more people will mindlessly click on your ad not realizing that it's not what they want and therefore, more of your budget is wasted on bad clicks. It might actually be more advantageous to be second or third place. As always, you need to test your ads out and see what works for you.

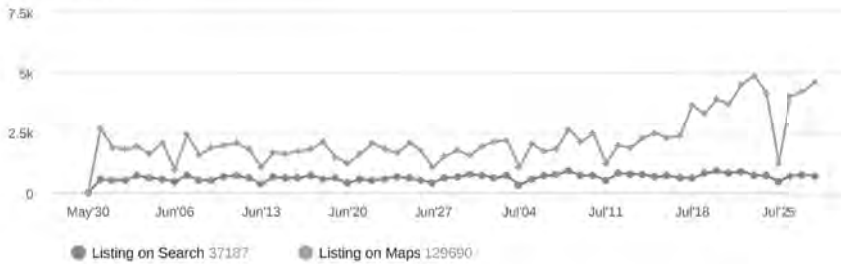
Why Should Small Businesses Use Smart Campaigns?

With Smart Campaigns, Google will test the different headlines and descriptions and, over time, show your ideal customers the ads that tend to work the best. This means that Google will find the best placement for your ad and the best time to show it in front of your most likely audience of potential buyers. You can see what happens on this chart exactly when we started advertising La Puerta's newest location in Mission Hills, San Diego. Right around mid-July is when the Maps views double and the campaign started off with only a \$5/day budget.

Google My Business: Search vs Map Views

Location: La Puerta (4020 Gouldsboro St, San Diego, 92103) | Period: 30 days | 28 Jul 2022

Total views: 166877



You may be tempted to try out “expert mode” which has a lot more features and customizable settings. But unless you are experienced with Google Ads, I highly recommend that you set most of your settings on automatic. Why? Generally, Google is smart enough to know what is going to work and what won’t. Remember, Google wants you to be successful so that you spend more money on their platform. It’s going to use its powerful algorithms that they have spent millions of dollars on and years perfecting to ensure that your ads are successful. Not all Google “Recommendations,” are worth applying though. Make sure you review those first before changing all of your keywords to broad match on a limited budget.

Performance Max Campaigns

One of the newer campaign types is called Performance Max. Eventually, all smart shopping campaigns will be migrated to PMax. This transition does cause a headache for most Google partners as now they need to make API updates and build their solutions differently. I won’t spend a lot of time discussing performance max but I have had some great results recently I wanted to share. I’m always a skeptic when Google first launches something new because some of the testing will happen on your dime. Luckily, for Bucket Truck Parts, the performance max campaign is outperforming all of his other campaigns.

☐	 Campaign	Clicks	Avg. CPC	Conversion	Cost / conv.	↓ Cost	Conv. value	Conv. rate	Conv. value / cost
☐	 PMax Shopping Campaign	1,078	\$0.80	395.00	\$2.18	\$859.43	5,241.00	36.64%	6.10
☐	 Plastic Composites Co	715	\$1.00	581.00	\$1.24	\$717.64	1,640.00	61.26%	2.29

Performance max campaigns show ads across most of Google’s inventory like YouTube, Discovery, Gmail, Maps, and Search. You’ll likely see a lot more impressions but with a lower click-through rate and lower CPC. Remember, your ads are showing up almost everywhere

with available inventory and for eCommerce, it seems to work. I'm not sold on PMax campaigns for businesses that are looking for leads through form fills or calls yet. But for my eCommerce clients, we will be transitioning all campaign types to Performance Max as soon as possible. Even in the Help Center, Google mentions that performance max campaigns complement existing search campaigns and will respect your current keyword targeting. There are still a lot of unknowns about how PMax works, but let the data speak for itself and invest where the campaign types are most beneficial to your company.

Diving Deeper into Google Ads

Depending on your ultimate goal, there are some more sophisticated Google ad campaigns that you can run. However, a word of caution: this is probably the point where you should look for professional help. You want someone who has experience running Google Ads because it can be easy to get lost in the weeds and spend a ton of money without seeing any results.

But even if you do hire a professional, it's never a bad idea to learn more about Google Ads so you can discuss a strategy and have a plan of attack. Although a Google expert might understand the different types of campaigns and can dive deeper into the campaign settings, nobody knows your business like you do. You know who you are best at serving, who you like working with and what opportunities you have for growth. Advertising is a team effort. So ideally, it's best if you work with a Google Ads specialist. But to do that, you need to be able to speak their language and understand what Google and your specialist are capable of providing.

Keyword Planning

This is a critical part of ensuring that your ads are targeting the right type of people. You now know some basic techniques to find

out what people are searching for but in this section, I'll dive a little deeper so you can get real data and be more precise.

You should start with Google's own tool Google Keyword Planner. This is a free tool to help you choose the keywords you should target.

You'll need to set up a Google Ads account but if you've followed the steps above you shouldn't have a problem. You can either search "Google keyword planner" or navigate to this URL: https://ads.google.com/intl/en_ca/home/tools/keyword-planner.

The way it works is simple. Search for words related to your business in the keyword planner. It'll then show you how much these keywords cost-per-click and how often people search for them. You can use this data to find relevant keywords and pick the words that are most effective for your campaign.

From there, you'll be able to make better decisions regarding your Google Ads campaign.

Let's look at an example. Imagine you're running a coffee shop. Some of the keywords might be: "coffee," "coffee shop near me," "coffee shop," "local coffee shop," and "best coffee shop."

Using the keyword planner you can find out:

- Average monthly searches
- Competition
- Ad impression share
- Top of page bid (low range)
- Top of page bid (high range)

Different Types of Google Ads Campaigns

I've introduced you to smart campaigns which are the basic cam-

paings. Now I'm going to show you some campaigns that are a little more customized.

The ads we will cover in this section are:

- Search
- Google Map Ads
- Display
- Shopping
- Video
- Banner Ads on YouTube

SEARCH ADS

The search campaign will look similar to a smart campaign, only that you have more control over where and how your ad shows up. This is a great type of campaign if you know exactly who you are targeting and the customer journey they use to get to your company. The downside is that you're not relying so heavily on Google's algorithms to figure out which headline and description should be shown to your potential clients or where your ads show up.

You'll follow the same instructions as the smart campaign. Google will suggest keywords for you. Here you'll also be able to add what are called negative keywords. These are important because there might be keywords that you don't want to show up for.

Let's say you're a roofer. If your goal is to find more customers, you don't want to place your advertisements in front of people looking for a job as a roofer. Those aren't your customers. So a negative keyword might be "roofing jobs."

One of the other key differences between a search campaign and a smart campaign is you have more control in the settings tab such

as which networks you use and the type of bidding. These are ways you can optimize your ads but I would recommend you only touch these settings if you are familiar with how they work, otherwise let Google's algorithms and years of data collection do their work. Unless you are a unique business or have a very specific goal in mind, Google will likely do a better job of understanding where and how to show your ad.

GOOGLE MAP ADS

Google Map Ads are incredibly important for local businesses because map results show up at the top of Google search. This is where you pay to be at the top of the Map results. This is a powerful tool because so many use Google maps to help them find locations for local stores.

When it comes to Google Map Ads, there are actually several ways that they can appear. They are:

- Google Map Ads
- Promoted pins
- In-store promotions

PROMOTED PINS

Promoted pins are a type of paid ad listing and a great way to get noticed when users are browsing areas on the Google Maps app. Unlike the search results ads, these bolded pins pop out on the map without the user having to search for anything.

This is great for getting the attention of people who might not necessarily be searching for a business or service but are driving or walking past the area. Not only can this lead to an increase in visibility, but also to more store visits.

IN-STORE PROMOTIONS

This type of advertising is exactly what it sounds like. When someone is in Google Maps, you can promote a special your company is having like a “Buy One Get One Free,” or a discount on a special item. It appears at the very bottom of the screen under the maps and highlights your business.

How to Advertise on Google Maps

In order to create ads on Google Maps, you'll need to have some search ads running because you'll need to take advantage of location searches or connect your Google Business Profile.

Once you've set up search ads, you'll need to set up ad extensions. These Google ad extensions generally allow advertisers to manually and automatically set different features on their ads.

There are a lot of different types of ad extensions you can use including adding a phone number, links to testimonials, case studies, about page, or reviews. Extensions are important because they increase the visibility of your ad. By taking up valuable ad real estate, your clickthrough rate will likely increase, which can also lead to more conversions. Google will actually place your ad higher if you've filled out the extensions because Google knows ads with more information convert better. If you had to choose between an ad that had testimonials and one that didn't, which would you choose?

However, the extension we are most concerned about here is called the “location extension.” Once you've got the location extension set up, you'll need to add the specific location targeting for your ads. To do this, you'll need to click on the locations section on the left-hand menu and then click the blue circle at the top.

You'll then have to select your search campaign from the list and enter the specific area you want to target. I suggest targeting the

same zip code as your business and using radius targeting to target people within the area. This means that people within that area will be shown your ad.

When your ads are approved and running, you can always check how people are interacting with your local ads by segmenting what “type” of conversions they receive. This will separate the conversion types into location details, mobile clicks to call, and driving directions interactions. Segmenting by conversion action or type will give you a better idea of how well the campaign is performing and exactly which type of actions people are taking from your ads.

DISPLAY ADS

While you might be unfamiliar with the term ‘display ad,’ you’ve probably seen them on websites. They’re a visual-based ad that you see on one of Google’s network partners—usually a news or blog site. Google has millions of affiliate partners that have advertising spots where Google can put their display ads. For example, if you are a veterinarian, you might want to advertise your services on a local pet blog.

Your ideal customer might not be looking for your service at this time, but display ads keep your business at the top of their mind. These types of ads are good for branding or if you are remarketing which we’ll dive into in greater detail later in this book. Because display ads don’t have as high of a conversion rate as other types of advertising, they are generally cheaper to run.

SHOPPING ADS

These types of ads are great if you run an e-commerce store. These are the ads I used for Mover & Shaker Co. with great success. Why do they work so well? Partly because they are so visible and contain both a headline and a picture. Like other types of ads, they appear at the top of search results.

The setup and management of Shopping ads is quite a bit different from the setup of traditional search ads. With search ads, you create campaigns and ads focused on chosen keywords. With the Shopping campaign, Google uses your feed, your site, product titles, descriptions, bids, and keywords to determine what search queries will trigger your ads.

The success of a shopping campaign comes down to a couple of key ingredients:

- Detailed product descriptions and keyword-rich titles
- Sufficient budget to maintain ad visibility
- Product reviews on Google Shopping
- A simplified checkout process

Creating a Google Merchant Center Account

To start shopping ads, you'll need to create a Google Merchant Center Account.

Step 1: Go to www.google.com/retail/solutions/merchant-center and click on the button that says "Get Started" in the upper right-hand corner. You'll be asked to sign in with your Google account and then you'll be taken to a dashboard.

Step 2: Verify your website. To do this you'll have to access your domain to claim your Merchant Center. The easiest way to do this is to log into your domain registrar and give Google access. If you're unsure of how to do this, contact your webmaster and they should be able to set this up for you.

Step 3: Link your Merchant Center to your Google Ads account. Under settings (the gear on the top of the page) click “Link Account.” You’ll be asked to input your ten-digit Google Ads ID which you can find in your Google Ads account (again under settings.) Lastly, make sure that you’re logged into the Gmail account that you created your Google Ads account under.

Step 4: Start adding products under the products tab. You can either do this one at a time or a bulk upload. If you have hundreds of products then obviously the bulk upload is best. You can do this using several methods:

- Google Sheets
- Scheduled fetch
- Uploads
- Content API

Of all these, probably the easiest is using Google Sheets. You’ll need to download the template and just follow the instructions to add the products to the sheet. The important thing to remember is you need to fill the Google Sheets out exactly if you want Google Merchant to read the data. If you own a Shopify store and sell products online, you can use the Google Channel app and most of the work of uploading products will be done for you.



Google channel

by Shopify

Sell where people search on Google
and YouTube

★ 3.4 (5571)

Installed

IMAGE

This is the most important part of your ad. You need a well-lit, attractive photo of your product. Google prefers product images with plain white backgrounds because it makes the product stand out, but products in a setting work too. Remember that your image will appear as a thumbnail so the viewer may not see much detail, especially as he or she is likely viewing the image on their mobile phone. Before creating this ad, it's important to read Google's best practices to figure out the formats you can use and the best size.

PRODUCT TITLE

This is yet another important aspect of your ad because it will, along with the image, tell the viewer exactly what your product is about and its intended use. Is it a man's winter coat? A woman's summer jacket? A coffee maker? Take some time to give this some thought. Google will also use the product title as keywords when a potential customer is searching for a particular product so make sure that you include specific keywords related to the product. For example, if your product title is "winter coat" but it is in fact a "man's winter coat" then your ad won't be reaching the right demographic.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

This field is mainly visible to shoppers on the Shopping tab. However, Google scans it to make sense of your product and what it's about. Make your product description relevant by adding a couple of keywords. One way of doing this is to think about what features and benefits are most important to mention here. You could add that a jacket is rainproof or that a pair of headphones are noise canceling. You'll just need to keep this pretty short and to the point.

PRODUCT CATEGORY

For your product category, you are picking from Google's list. You should pick the closest fit to your product to help guide Google in

understanding what your product is so it knows when to show it to shoppers. It helps Google understand what your product is about and to whom it should show your ad.

VIDEO ADS

These are the pre-roll ads that you see at the beginning or in the middle of YouTube videos. In a world of instant gratification, it's hard to use interrupt ads effectively, but these types of ads do have a time and a place.

There are two types: ads that allow you to skip after the first few seconds or ones that force you to watch all the way through. The ones that force you to watch all the way through are, not surprisingly, more expensive, and more at risk of annoying your audience.

As with social media ads, you need to catch the attention of your viewer in the first five seconds otherwise they will skip your ad or tune out. You need a well-crafted ad and good production value if you are to succeed.

YOUTUBE BANNER ADS (OVERLAY ADS)

These are probably the least effective type of advertising, in my opinion, because hardly anybody reads them. Banner ads are where you have a text overlay that appears at the very bottom of the video. You will need a well-designed ad with captivating copy to get people's attention.

How to Set Up a Remarketing Campaign

If you've managed to set up and run a couple of Google ad campaigns—that's amazing. Great job! Now I'm going to show you what is called a remarketing campaign. This is exactly as it sounds: you remarket to either your existing clients or site visitors who have become leads but haven't converted to paying customers. This is one

of the most difficult types of advertising and takes a while to set up. If you need help get in touch with a professional.

Remarketing campaigns are effective because you've overcome the first and hardest hurdle which is you've gained awareness and consideration from your audience. Now you either need to turn them into more consistent customers or just need to nudge them one step further to actually buy from you.

As with any other advertising campaign, you need to understand your goals. Here are a few:

- Campaigns that bring customers back more frequently to your website or physical location.
- Campaigns targeting people who did not take a certain action on a web page.
- Campaigns aimed at people who reached a certain page within your checkout process, but did not complete their purchase.

It's important to understand exactly what action you want your web visitors to take, then segment your potential customers by actions or non-action. Do you want them to sign up for your newsletter? Do you want them to order a product online? Did they make it to the add to cart page but not purchase? Did they make it to the contact page but never filled out the form? More technical marketers always segment their lists and then send email campaigns or ads that are thoughtfully speaking directly to those people.

First you will need to create a remarketing tag which is sometimes called a remarketing pixel. This is simply just a piece of code that Google uses to tag your potential customers and is used to track them through their online journey. If you don't know how to do this, it's simpler to email your webmaster and get them to set it up for

you. Remarketing is beneficial because it can help you significantly lower your cost per customer. If you're looking for a professional to help you manage your site, set up proper conversion tracking, install the remarketing code, and grow your business with online marketing, we'd love to chat with you.

Otherwise, navigate to your Google Ads account to: Tools & Settings > Audience Manager > Audience Sources. A code will be generated which you'll need to copy and paste into the head of the conversion page of your website.

Next, you'll need to create a remarketing list. Again, what type of list you create depends on your goals. A customer list allows you to upload your existing email list to Google and target those people or build a similar audience list. This is an incredibly powerful tool as it allows you to market to people who already want to hear from you or find similar in-market buyers. Examples of customer lists could be previous purchasers or email list subscribers.

If you want to simply target people most likely to buy, you should find the people who have spent the most time on your website with the help of Google Analytics. Or if you have a checkout page, maybe you just want to remarket to those who have visited the add to cart page but didn't convert. This is where email can really help move the needle and remind/nudge people to finalize their purchase.

To do that, go back to "Audience Builder" and navigate to "Advanced" and then set your conditions.

There are five different types of remarketing lists available to create:

- Website visitors
- App users
- YouTube users
- Customer list
- Custom combinations

For the purpose of this book, I will ignore app users and YouTube users and focus on either website visitors or a customer list. Once you've selected one of these, you should see the parameters of the campaign just as you would in a "smart" or a "search" campaign such as your budget, bid strategy, and location.

One type of remarketing campaign that has flourished during the pandemic is using a QR code. With a contactless menu, it gives businesses a unique opportunity to drive traffic to their website. This is how it works. Instead of giving out menus, put a QR code on the table. Your patrons will scan it when they take a seat. The QR code will take them to a page on your website which will fire the remarketing pixel. You then have that pixel to retarget them with ads. If you provide them with a good experience, a retargeting ad will remind them about your business, and there is a high probability that they will come back. A lot of businesses make the mistake of putting their menu on a separate server than their website which doesn't allow them to control the data. But remember, capturing customer data is key. At the minimum, you want people to visit your website to be able to be remarketed to.

Optimizing and Testing Your Ads

The key to being successful with Google Ads is to keep refining and testing. The biggest mistake I see is that business owners try one or two ads and after a couple of weeks, when they don't see results, they throw up their hands and declare that digital advertising doesn't work.

In my experience and with smaller budgets, you need to give Google Ads at least two to three months to fully optimize. Remember: it's in Google's best interest to ensure that you are happy with the results, otherwise, you will stop spending or take your money elsewhere.

Marketing is not an exact science, but it is a unique combination of art, science, and math. Even successful campaigns need to be

refined. Marketers call this A/B testing. All it means is that you let two ads duel it out, and then after a week or so you declare the winner. You need to look at what made the winning ad a winner in the first place, and then test that against a new ad using what you learned, using different wording, different images, or maybe even a different location. The businesses that keep learning about their market, about Google, and their customers are the ones who will keep seeing better performance. Luckily, most of the heavy lifting is done by Google these days which is why the initial research and setup are pivotal to your success.

Final Thoughts on Google Ads

I know we covered a lot in this chapter. Thankfully, we've gotten past some of the most difficult concepts. If you want to dive deeper into advertising, then I recommend that you hire a professional to help you. You should spend your time running your business, focusing on your employees, and providing the best customer service possible. Let someone who has experience handle the advertising for you. If you don't closely follow the steps in this chapter, then it's really easy to burn money, get frustrated, and not see any results. If you really want to learn more about Google Ads, then there are plenty of YouTube videos and courses on different campaign types, but I warn you that you will only really learn by doing. And for that, I recommend you find a professional who is willing to teach you and walk you through the steps.

GOOGLE ADS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Create a Google Ads account
- ☐ Decide on advertising goals and objectives
- ☐ Do extensive keyword research before launching a campaign
- ☐ Test Google Smart Campaigns and link the campaign to your Business Profile
- ☐ Learn the different types of campaigns depending on goals or promotions
- ☐ Create a remarketing campaign or add a remarketing list to an existing campaign



About the Author

DAVID ESAU is a holistic marketing strategist with over 15+ years of sales and marketing experience. An expert in Google Ads, David spent three years working at Google helping hundreds of service-based and local businesses generate new customers online. He now has made his best tips and tricks available for every small business owner in this book with easy step-by-step instructions.

JOEL MARK HARRIS is an award-winning author, ghostwriter and marketer. After he graduated from the Langara School of Journalism, he worked as a newspaper reporter, PR specialist before diving headfirst into marketing. He founded several marketing companies to help businesses grow and scale their business before he started Ghostwriters & Co, a premier content agency.

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A portion of the proceeds from this book will be donated to the
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