

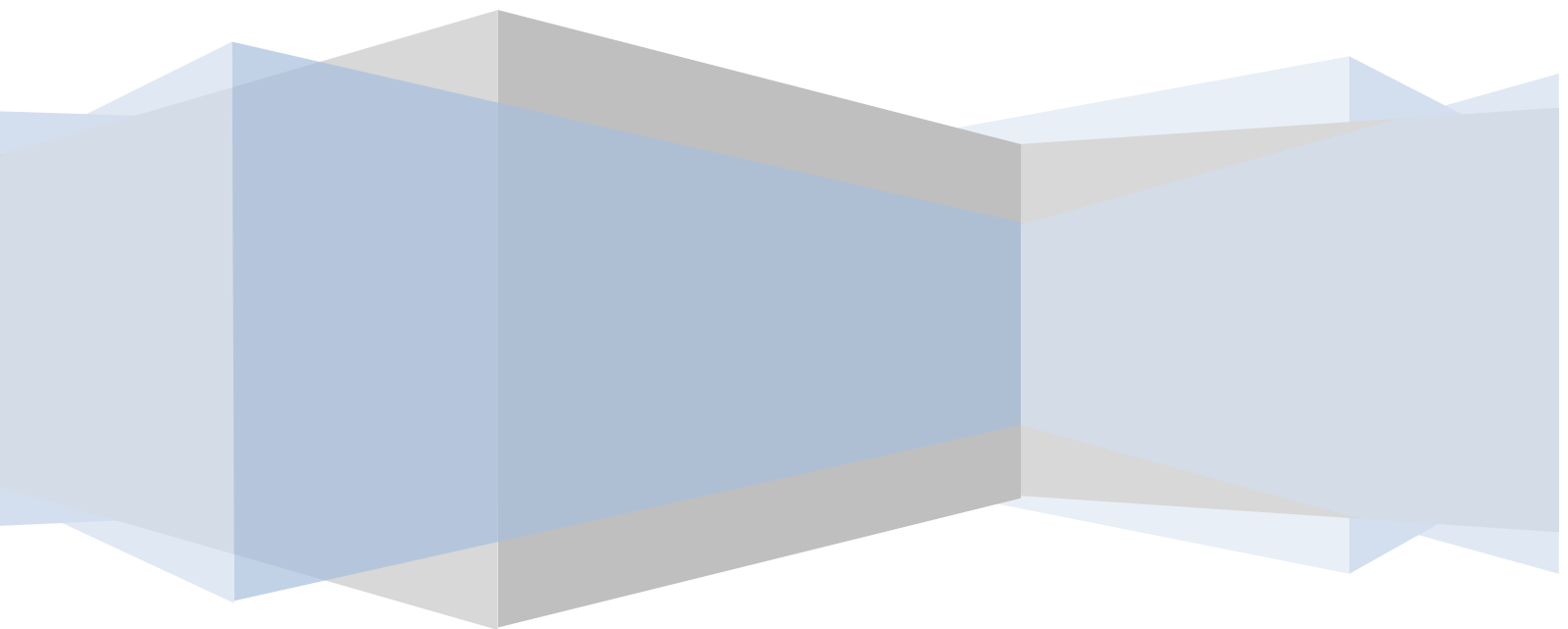
Nika Bleu Marketing

Marketing solutions “out of the bleu!”



Google Places for Businesses

Easy Ways to Get More Traffic, Even Without a Website!





Google Places: Best Practices to Improve Your Free

Listing

When you do a search online, Google will almost always show local results first, from local business listings. What determines which listings are on top? You want **your** listing in those results. Here is how to improve your listing in Google Places to beat your competition.

It is surprising to see how many businesses have not claimed their free Google business listing (now known as Google Places). It may be because people see their listing is active and think that is all there is to do. They do not realize how much more they can do to increase visibility, and in a few minutes. But YOU will, if you follow these simple steps.

Why Use Google Places?

- **Reach thousands of customers fast. And free.**
- **Personalize your listing and reach out to YOUR customers**
- **Add coupons, edit your map listing, and more**
- **Track statistics easily, and even see what words people type in to find you**

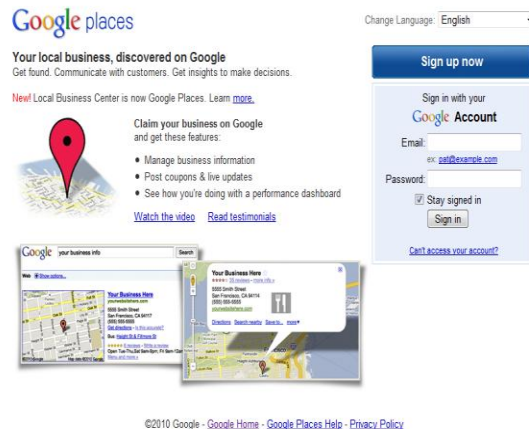
How Do I Get Started?

First, I recommend that you sign up for a [free gmail account](#). After you have a gmail account, it is easy to access all Google's products which include (among several tools) Google Maps, Google Docs, Webmaster Central, Google Analytics, and of course, **Google Places**.

Note: It is not mandatory to use gmail, but from experience I can tell you it makes things much simpler. A good thing.



Below is a screenshot from Google Places. There is a helpful link to [YouTube](#) there if you need more information about Google Places.



There are several great tutorials in Google about adding your listing, selecting categories, payment methods from customers, hours of operation, etc. Following are what I have found to be best practices for REALLY getting your listing to work for you!



Google Places Categories

Google Places breaks out into basic categories. What is important here is to **think of your entire listing as a pie**. The more complete your listing, the better it will do. Below I will list what is in the categories, and how to enhance them.

- **Basic Information** (name, address, phone number, website, description, category)

Tips:

Add as many categories as possible, up to 5.

In 'description', use relevant keywords. Google has a [great keyword tool](#) to help you if this is not clear. Also check out [NikaBleu SEO Services](#).



Add an alternative phone number for Google to call if you are employing someone to answer your phones, or instruct them what to do when the verification call comes in.

- **Service Areas**

Tip:

Google is giving service providers a break here; they used to give more weight to geographical locations. If you prefer not to list your place of business, select Yes, this business serves customers at their locations

▼ **Service Areas and Location Settings**

Does your business provide services, such as delivery or home repair, to locations in a certain area?

- No**, all customers come to the business location
- Yes**, this business serves customers at their locations

- **Hours of Operation**

Tip:

Fill out hours, even if you are open all the time. You can even display split hours.

▼ **Hours of operations**

Make sure your customers know when you're open

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

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

Are your hours split during a single day, such as 9-11am and 7-10pm?
 I'd like to enter two sets of hours for a single day.

- **Payments**

Tip:

As above, do not leave blank (remember the pie!)



▼ Payment options

Specify how customers can pay at your business.

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

• Photos and Videos

Tip:

Your chance to dominate! Most businesses do not take advantage of this powerful tool. Too busy for photos and/or video? Please check out NikaBleu's amazingly affordable and incredibly-performing [video marketing](#) and internet marketing services.

▼ Photos

Add flair to your listing: include photos of your products or your storefront. You can upload up to 10 photos. Please be sure they comply with our [photo submission guidelines](#).

Add a photo from your computer

Click "Browse..." to choose a file from your computer.

Add a photo from the web

You have uploaded 0 of up to 10 images for this listing.

▼ Videos

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

Example: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=dFtxv1JdXI>

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



• Additional Details

Tip:

This one's easy; add as many details as you like. You can even add details Google hasn't thought of yet.

▼ Additional Details

Please enter in any other details you want customers to know about your business, for example:

Parking available : Yes.

Brands carried : Sony, Panasonic and Toshiba.

 :

[Add another](#)

You can set up or edit your listing in Google Places usually within minutes, depending on how much information you have. Then you need to let Google verify your listing. The verification process protects you from anyone else interfering with your listing. It is not foolproof so you should check your listing periodically for correctness.

After you edit your listing, the easiest way to get verified is to select the option that has an automated call come to your phone number; you enter the Personal Identification Number (PIN) the automated call gives you, and your listing is live. Alternatively, you can request a postcard, but it is easy to forget about it. Do the phone call!

Congratulations! You have done very well for your online presence. Now, if you REALLY want to turbo-power your listing, after signing up and doing the initial listing, add these simple strategies listed below to stand out from the crowd!

Q: You said “even *without a website*”?

A: Right. Google Places is one of the most powerful listing tools you can have online...people don't say “let's look it up in the Yellow Pages.” They “google it.” With a Google Places business listing you have a good chance of showing at the top of search results, especially with the tips I share.)



Make Your Listing Pop!

These are your money-making tips. It takes a bit of effort, but the payoff is well worth it. Let's get started!

Easy Ways to Get YOUR Listing Higher in Google Places

The first thing you need to know about improving your own listing is to see what is different about the top listings. Google will tell us, and here is how.

1. Go to [Google](#).
2. Type in a keyword, like 'realtor' or 'dentist'. You can use a qualifier if you like (i.e., 'dentist monterey' or 'monterey dentist'), but Google knows your location from your IP address anyway.
3. You will see an ad or 2 at the top like this (They are paying for advertising at around \$3.35/click)

Sponsored links


Dentists in Monterey ✓
www.1800dentist.com/Monterey Find a **Monterey Dentist** You'll Love Operators Available 24 Hours a Day!

Jeanette Kern DDS ?
JKernDDS.com Dr Jeanette Kern-Perfecting Smiles Sedation **Dentistry** -- Watch Video!
+ Show map of 660 Camino Aguajito # 201, Monterey, CA 93940

Dentist in Monterey, CA ✓
www.MontereyDentalCare.com Sleep and sedation **dentistry**. Free cosmetic **dentistry** exam.

Next, you will almost always see Google Places Listings (free listings; sounds better!).

Local business results for **dentist** near **Monterey, CA**



A map of Monterey, CA, showing several dentist locations marked with red pins labeled A through G. The map includes labels for Pacific Grove, Sand City, Monterey Peninsula Airport, and Seaside. Major roads like Highway 68 and Highway 1 are also visible.

- A** [Perio and Implant Center of the Monterey Bay](#) ?
www.drpechak.com - (831) 648-8800 - 36 reviews
- B** [Dr. Sasha Alexander, DDS](#) ✓
maps.google.com - (831) 333-9111 - 11 reviews
- C** [Dr Richard Bianco](#) ✓
www.montereydentalcare.com - (831) 372-3985 - 3 reviews
- D** [Decker Tami DDS](#) ?
www.pacificendo.com - (831) 375-4750 - 5 reviews
- E** [Dr. Daniel J. Pierre DDS MS Inc.](#) ?
www.centralcoastendodontics.com - (831) 373-2128 - 5 reviews
- F** [Dr. Rajneesh K. Dail, DDS](#) ?
www.babydds.com - (831) 373-2055 - 4 reviews
- G** [Jeanette M. Kern, DDS](#) ?
www.jkerndds.com - (831) 372-8011 - 5 reviews

More results near **Monterey, CA** »

What jumps out right away are the number of reviews: the top 2 listings have 47 reviews, while the next 5 have 22, total. Interesting, but we need to know a bit more.



What More Do You Need to Know?

In order to get your business noticed, you do not need to re-invent the wheel. Being aware, informed, and applying the right techniques is usually enough.

The reviews: where are they coming from? Pay attention to your industry; are you seeing a lot of reviews from Yelp, or Merchant Circle, or City Search? This information is valuable; you want (good) reviews there as well.

Read the reviews themselves; quantity is not always a positive. Lots of people only get the urge to speak up when they are complaining (oh no; you didn't know?).



This is a biggie for a lot of business owners, seeing a negative review. What to do? First, if you can, contact the reviewer and see if there is a way to remedy the situation. If you are unable to come to an agreement with the reviewer, usually you can still post a comment *someplace* addressing the situation and the steps you took to resolve it. People respect that.

Another powerful tool is to get your positive reviews online in as many places as possible. Of course, they need to be legitimate testimonials attributed to your business or service.

Tips:

- **Use testimonials you already have**

Look around; any plaques, letters, notes, autographed photos, web pages buried in the back of your site?

- **Ask for testimonials**

Seriously. Ask. And I don't mean leaning back in your chair and calling out "Hey! Tell all your friends!" as your customers are walking out the door.

There are even the well-mannered requests ("Please Visit soon!"). A couple of tweaks are all you probably need. Here are some ideas:

Depending on your business and your clients, you can be as predictable or unique as you like. I say, get their attention. And their permission.

Places and Ways to Get Testimonials

- On Invoices
- In Newsletters
- In emails
- On the restaurant check
- Concierge desk
- Checkout desk
- Wall signs
- Sales graphics
- Billboards
- Thank you letters
- Surveys
- Ads
- Displays of pictures of happy clients
- Facebook Page
- Twitter
- Post their photos on your site
- Website comment form/guestbook

Examples of Directories Where You Need Great Testimonials:



Note: You can place testimonials on your website, but using directories is another story.

You cannot post testimonials on the directories yourself; your address is detected and your reviews will not be accepted.

Nika Bleu Publicity Service

If you do not have time to manage your online testimonials, would like your testimonials distributed to get your listing at the top of the search engines, or would like to work on dispelling bad reviews, we are here to help.

We can distribute authentic reviews for you at random times, from different IP addresses. You can be alerted to any negative reviews, which you can handle at your own discretion.

Your online reputation is as much a part of you as it is your business; no matter if you work with Nika Bleu or not, please take the time to monitor your business's feedback online.

[Contact us](#) to get started today; great reviews are GREAT for business!



