



# GETTING STARTED WITH GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

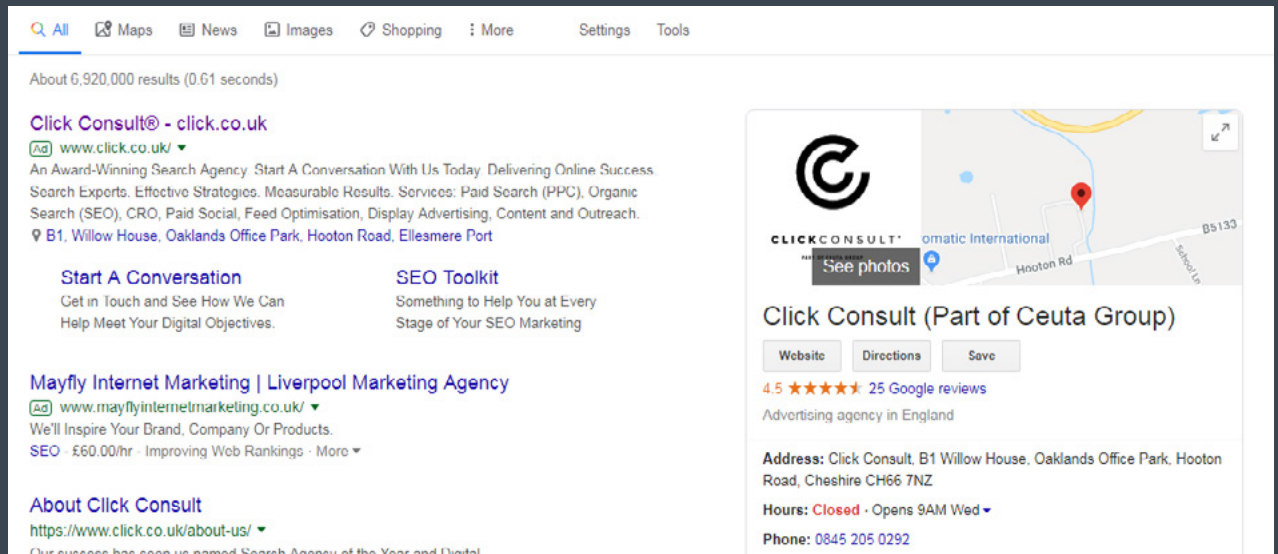


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## INTRODUCTION

Google will make you work for your SERP space – not even an ad budget is a guarantee of page one – except in the case of Google My Business, a free resource for brands to lay claim to the presentation of their business information in a prominent position in the SERP.



While the GMB rich result appears only for brand searches, the wealth of information you can offer prospective consumers directly on the results page should not be underestimated – if they're searching for your brand, this is the exact information that could lead them from the consideration to purchase level of your sales funnel.

So, while it represents minimal effort to set up, it does offer a great boost to visibility in branded searches.

## WHAT IS GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

With a log in/sign-up page that promises to help you ‘Manage’, ‘Connect’ and ‘Understand’, [Google My Business](#) seeks to be a hub for a number of Google’s small business products including (but not limited to) local listing info for maps, Google reviews, ‘Insights’ and the latest addition ‘Website’. The platform (not to be confused with [Google Business Solutions](#)) is a good starting point for any start-up looking to hit the ground running.

## WHY IS GOOGLE MAKING A BIG DEAL OF MY BUSINESS?

The answer to this (if we overlook the not entirely implausible idea Google just wants to help SMEs out of the goodness of its heart) is summed up by the title of a [VentureBeat article from 2016](#) – ‘Facebook: 60 million businesses have ‘Pages’, 4 million actively advertise’. In fact, as long ago as October 2014, The Guardian was reporting an increase in small businesses using Facebook as their primary (or only) online presence.

The long running battle between two of the big five digital giants (Apple, Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Facebook) has been raging since a proposed Google investment in Facebook was usurped by Microsoft, and this has led to a number of failed entries into social media by Google and retaliatory strikes into the heart of search by Facebook.

Deep Text (no relation to Google owned DeepMind) was announced a few years ago now, with Quartz reporting (via Vanity Fair) that [Facebook was the ‘new Google’](#). Facebook seemed to be bringing the challenge to Google, and this is especially true in earning the trust of small businesses.

With Deep Text, Facebook returns local business results for most searches, meaning that businesses are now readily available and easily discoverable on a social platform that consistently sits at the top of tables ranking platforms by share of our screen time.

This, along with the surge in ‘product searches’ that begin on [Amazon](#), means that Google needs to prevent its audience moving into the leafy enclosures of walled gardens. Businesses will go where the money is, and Facebook and Amazon represent a threat to the size of the audience it charges brands to reach – hence Google’s push to improve the scope of its small business offering, its responsiveness to criticism about ‘fake news’, and so on.

Google has outlived many of its early competitors (how many times have you ‘Jeevesed’ what that actor was in or ‘Yahooed’ a piece of general knowledge that refuses to dislodge itself from the tip of your tongue?) partially as a result of its dynamic approach to business – it has seldom stayed still and, in many ways, has been a driving force behind a lot of progress on the web.

It can come as no surprise, therefore, that we are seeing Google pushing forward into artificial intelligence (AI), into voice search, into automated vehicles and more – but its core business remains search and, for that reason, it cannot permit the loss of its audience to platforms that offer businesses easier routes to market and consumers an easier path to purchase – so Google My Business is not only here to stay, you can expect its offering to expand.

## CREATING YOUR ACCOUNT

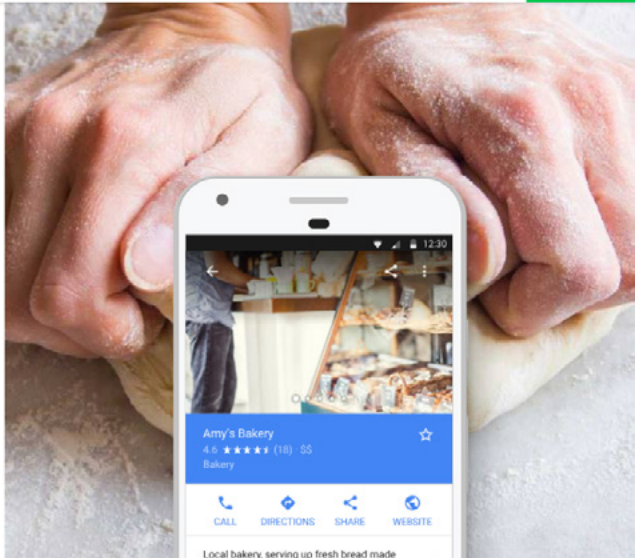
Provided you have (a) previously used a computer, and (b) own a business, then the sign-up process is well within your ability – and mercifully short, starting [here](#).

[Home](#) [How It Works](#) [FAQs & Support](#) [Success Stories](#) [START NOW](#)

### Attract new customers with your free Business Profile on Google.

Your Business Profile appears right when people are searching for your business or businesses like yours on Google Search or Maps. Google My Business makes it easy to create and update your Business Profile—so you can stand out, and bring customers in.

[START NOW](#)




Upon clicking or tapping the 'start now' button, you'll be asked to confirm the name of your business:

What's the name of your business?

Business name

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

Next



This is followed by confirming whether you want to add its location:


← Do you want to add a location customers can visit, like a store or office?

This location will show up on Google Maps and Search when customers are looking for your business

☒ Yes


☐ No

Next



Before adding its location:

← What's the address?

 United Kingdom ▼

Street address

Post Town

Postcode


Next

The next step asks you 'where you serve your customers' and can be as local as a borough of New York City, or as broad as the UK as a whole.

← Where do you serve your customers? (optional)

You can list your service areas below. They will show up on your listing and help bring relevant customers.


[Search and select areas](#)

 Manhattan, New York

You can change and add more later

United Kingdom ✕

Next



You'll then need to add your contact details and website address:

← What contact details do you want to show to customers?

Help customers get in touch by including this info on your listing

  Contact phone number

 ☒ Current website URL

☐ I don't need a website

☐ Get a free website based on your info.  
[See details](#)

Next

Probably the trickiest part of the process is selecting your 'business type' from a predefined list:

← Choose the category that fits your business best

This helps customers find you if they are looking for a business like yours. [Learn more](#)

 Business category  
Marketing agency

Next



Before confirming whether or not you'll want to hear from Google with updates/offers etc.:

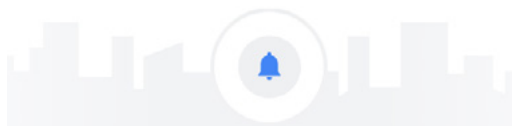
← Stay in the know

Would you like to receive communications with personalized tips and recommendations to improve your business's presence on Google?

☒ Yes

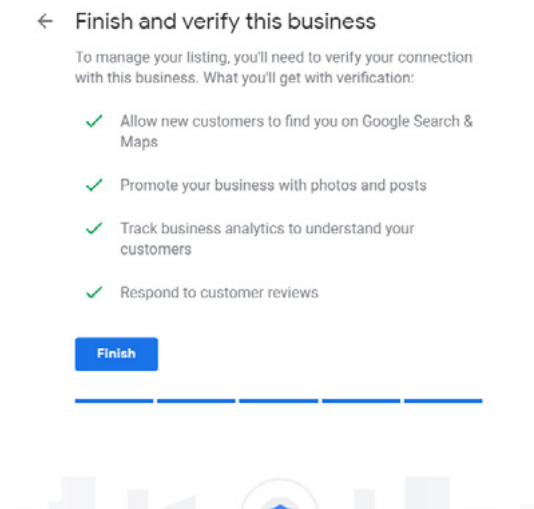
☐ No

Next

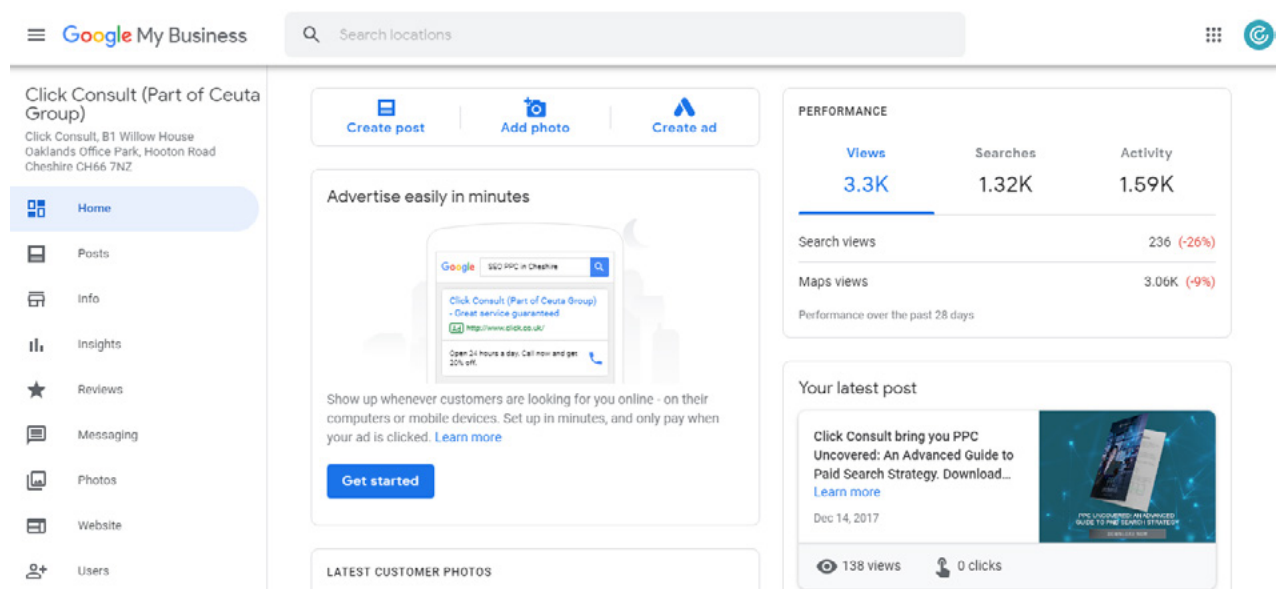




You can then choose to verify your business (which will involve the sending of a postcard to the business' physical location):



That's it – you have a Google My Business listing, and can begin using the various features:



## FUNCTIONS AND USES

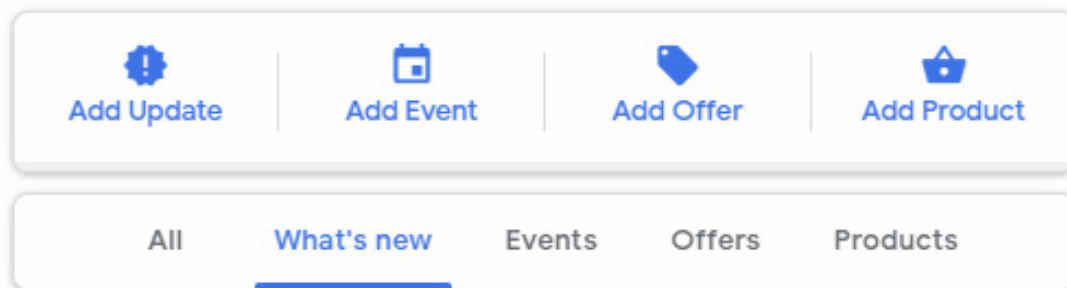
### WEBSITE

Allowing brands to enter the marketplace using a simple site customisation tool (or '[complement \[their\] existing website](#)') means Google is, they are able to offer a similarly low bar to business owners without the budget or skill to design and build a site as a Facebook Page does – while exceeding the competition in terms of integration with other search properties and in customisation options (which are virtually non-existent with other platforms).

In addition to this, the Website option is Mobile-First-proof from the ground up, improving user experience (UX) and potentially placing brands with a Google Website in a priority position versus competition when it comes to search engine results pages (SERPs).

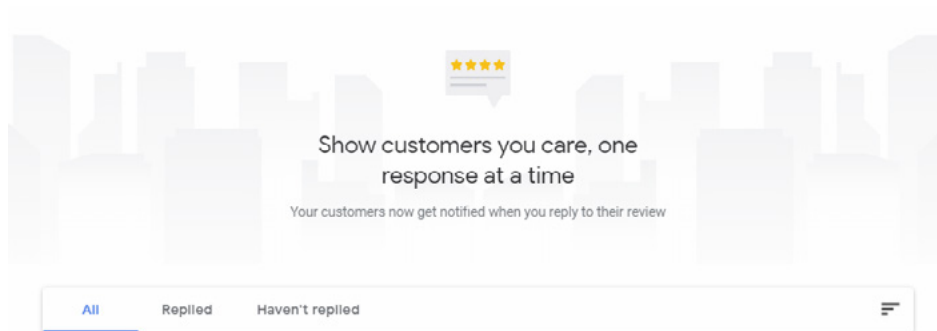
### GOOGLE POSTS

Allowing business to create content directly on Google (which then ranks highly in brand name SERPs), Google Posts can serve as SERPs ranked 'business cards' ([as Search engine Land called them](#)). In addition to this, there have been sightings of them featuring above the SERP for various branded searches – indicating that Google will begin pushing these posts more firmly in the coming months, making them a content platform with growing importance for brands.



## REVIEWS

As with Amazon and Facebook, Google My Business allows brands to interact with their reviews – both for the purpose of building relationships and for complaint handling. While Google reviews are still [vulnerable to manipulation](#), interaction with consumers is a major part of a modern digital presence so, while it does require improvement, the option to engage in conversation with consumers is an important one to have.



## INSIGHTS

A more visual, Google Analytics-lite tool, Insights gives brands the ability to view and compare key performance metrics – again, much like Amazon and Facebook’s own on-platform analytics offering.

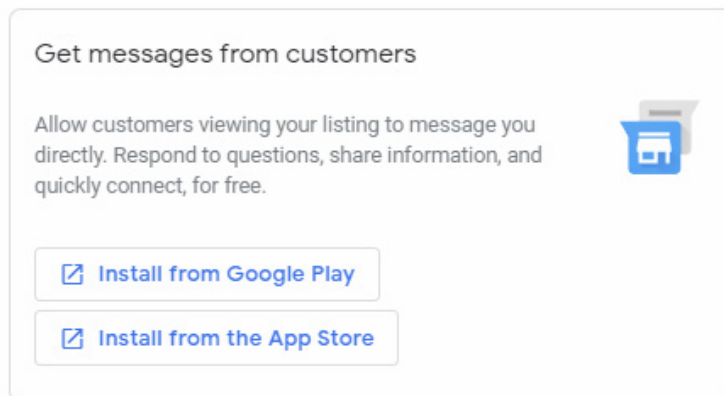


## BOOK AN APPOINTMENT

Appropriate businesses can funnel users directly to a landing page to book an appointment - these appointment URLs are available for any local business, they will also play a part in your business receiving automated calls from [Google Duplex](#) – the Google Assistant’s automated booking system, which will, doubtless, begin to crop up more frequently in the coming years.

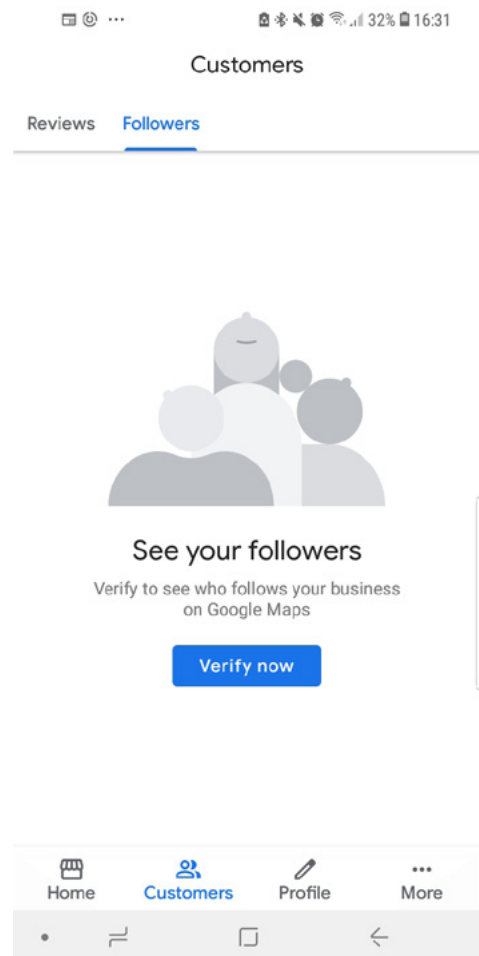
## MESSAGES FROM CUSTOMERS

An under-utilised feature, the messages function allows users to send a text message to your business straight from the GMB listing on mobile search. The messaging option is available on your GMB dashboard. Set up correctly, and this function allows mobile searcher to message you from the local panel.



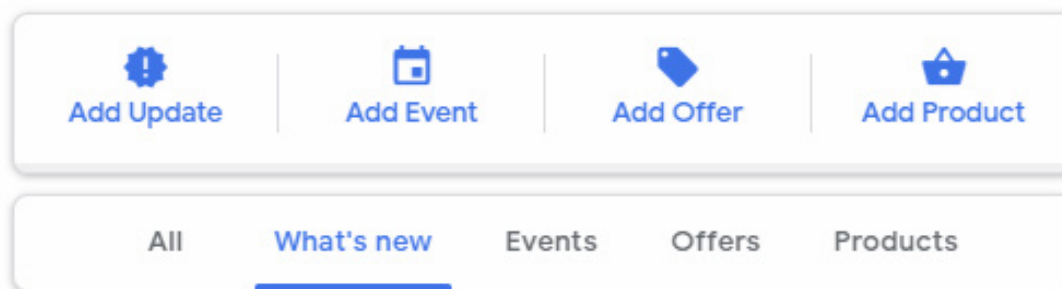
## FOLLOWERS

The latest addition to the feature list, followers allows your consumers to follow your brand directly from the GMB panel. The tracking of this is an app only function as things stand, but It looks like it could be worth getting the app for – especially as it represents another feature added that Facebook pages had and GMB didn't.



## OPTIMISING YOUR PROFILE

While the main advice is ‘fill in anything you can fill in and double check it’s correct’, there are several areas where a little effort can go a long way.



### DESCRIPTION

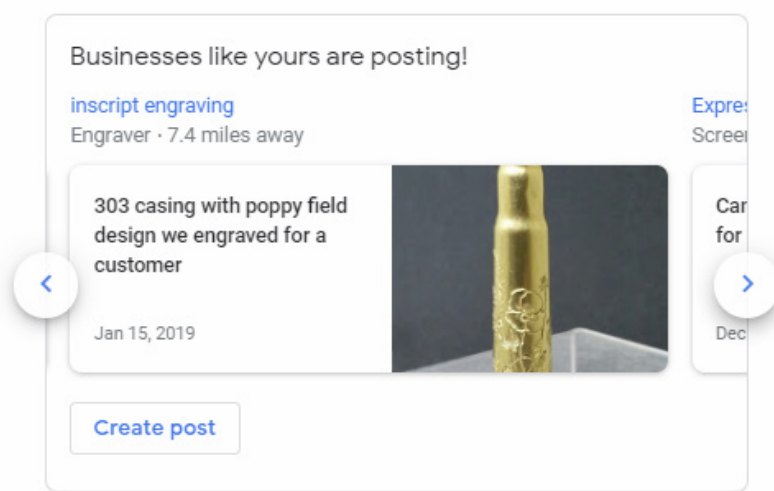
With 750 characters to play with, there’s little reason to worry about your word count, but do consider that only 250 (approximately) of these will be shown without the need for expansion. You’ll need to make sure that you communicate your USP early in the description – with the rest a condensed ‘about us’ or ‘mission statement’.

### SERVICES

If applicable, you can add services, service descriptions and even a price list – all of which will show up as part of your GMB listing.

### POSTS

While there’s no hard and fast rule on these, it’s fair to say that they’ve been set up to compete with similar business page posts on Facebook – and they’re set to increase in prominence. So, if you’re posting something to Facebook – be it an award win or special offer – you should probably start using GMP posts too.



## REVIEWS

While reviews are great to have (the more the merrier, in fact), you should look to respond in a professional manner to all reviews - not only is complaint handling in GMB considered a trust building exercise with consumers, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that such responses can improve rankings, as the activity suggests trustworthiness to Google (all the more important as authority and trust drive search forward).

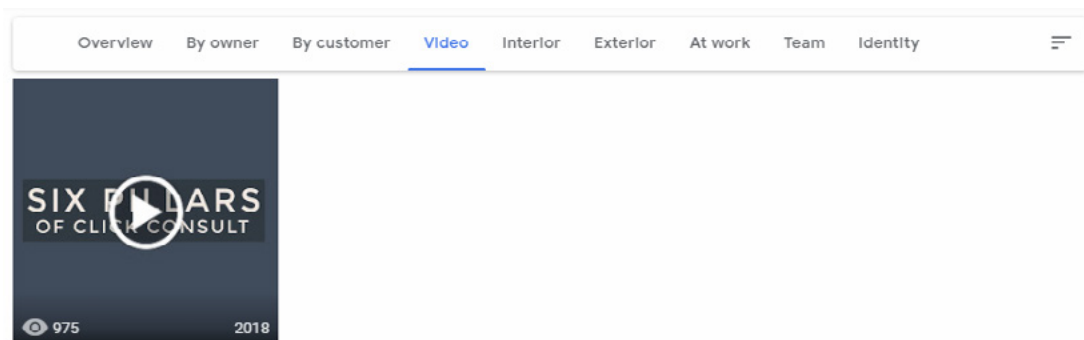
## PHOTOS

There are plenty of reasons to add photos to your GMB listing – but we'll let Google do the talking here (taken from their [support.google blog](#)):

*Your listing is a great place to showcase the photos that capture your business. Businesses with photos receive 42% more requests for driving directions to their location from users on Google, and 35% more clicks through to their websites than businesses that don't have photos.*

## VIDEO

While you've only got 30 seconds to play with, you can say a lot about your business in that short time. The video – which can be uploaded in the 'Photos' section of your GMB dashboard – should, however, be done properly. Think of it like any other piece of video marketing – the better it is, the better it reflects on your brand.



## FUTURE OF GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

While there are rumours that GMB may see a freemium model implemented at some stage (thanks to a survey circulated by Google that implied the possibility of paying for certain features), at this point there have been no officially stated plans and it's unlikely that Google will require premium accounts for all businesses – instead, there are likely to be optional extras.



Over the next two screens we are going to show you a list of features we think may enhance your business' presence on Google Search. We'd like you to review before continuing to the next exercise. Please read each carefully; this will help you answer the questions throughout the rest of the survey.

**Verified reviews:** Google verifies your reviews and shows an indication to consumers that your reviews are verified to help build trust in your business.

**Google Guarantee:** Get a badge of trust on your business profile. If a customer isn't satisfied, Google will give them their money back.

**Offers:** Promote a special offer or discount on your Business Profile.

**Get leads from competitor profiles:** When a customer messages a business that offers the same services as you, Google will show your business to the customer so they can message you too. This will help you get more leads from Google.

**"Book" button on your Business Profile:** Get an extra button on your business profile titled 'Book'. Google shows customers your availability (synced with your calendar system if you have one). Customers can either confirm a booking or request a timeslot.

**Promote your "Book" button:** Get a "Book" button on the Google.com search results, in addition to your Business Profile.

**Request quote:** Get a "Request quote" button on your Business Profile. Customers will enter details about their job. Requests come to you as messages in the Google My Business app.

**Automated message responses:** Answer some frequently asked questions (hours, services offered) so Google can respond automatically to customers on your behalf. This saves you time.

**Automated response for reviews:** Create messages so Google can automatically respond on your behalf to customers who leave a review.

**Google search results placement:** Show up in a section near the top of the list on the Google.com search results.

However, what the survey does suggest is that Google is committed to expanding the offering available to GMB customers – and while some may require payment, it's likely that some features will filter down to non-paying customers.

In addition to this, GMB appears central to Google's plans for both local search and also the brand/Google Assistant interactions, meaning that mobile, local and voice interaction are all tied up in the future of GMB.

While Google+ sought to compete with Facebook and other social media platforms on their turf (unsuccessfully), GMB is predominately and intrinsically linked to their core business of search – an area they are, or at least should be, able to compete far more ably and competitively with the competition.

## CONCLUSION

Google My Business may not represent the finished article in terms of a one stop shop for brands looking to succeed online, but (as previously stated) Google gives away precious little first page real-estate for free, so it would be well worth taking even if its importance level remained the same as at the time of writing.

However, its importance is unlikely to remain static – with local search increasingly important to brands of all sizes (more than 80% if smartphone shoppers have conducted a ‘near me’ search, for example – according to Uberall) and Google’s ongoing campaign to become an answer engine rather than a search engine (with larger numbers of searches answered without the need for a second click) – it is only going to grow in importance.

With that, will come an expanding list of features to tempt your loyalty away from one or another platform – and while you shouldn’t place all of your eggs in the Google basket, you should definitely enjoy the temptations they offer in the meantime.





# GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

## ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named Search Agency of the Year and Digital Agency of the Year 2018, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

## YOUR BESPOKE ORGANIC SEARCH (SEO) ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

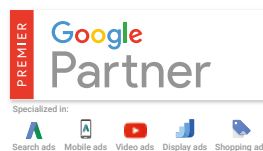
REQUEST NOW



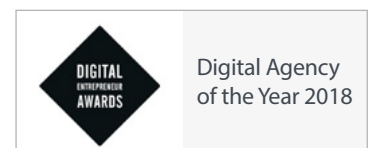
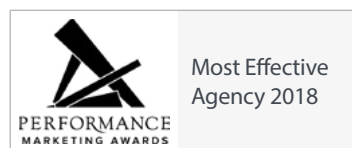
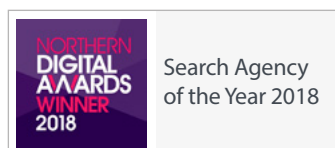
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## OUR AWARDS



## OUR TECHNOLOGIES

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