

The Best Guide to Google My Business

INCLUDES SEPTEMBER 2016 GMB API UPDATE

The Google logo is centered on the page. It consists of the word "Google" in its signature multi-colored font: a blue 'G', a red 'o', a yellow 'o', a blue 'g', a green 'l', and a red 'e'.

Google



Introduction

With the launch of its Google My Business (GMB) API, Google introduced the biggest change to location search since Yext launched PowerListings® in 2011. The Google My Business API creates a completely new way for businesses and platforms to get information about their locations into Google Search, Google Maps, and ads. Location owners now have more control over how they appear to customers in search, which improves the consumer experience by delivering more accurate, more comprehensive information.

Our three-part guide will teach you:

1. How to claim your business on Google
2. Everything you need to know about the Google My Business API, including the latest updates in September 2016's V3.1 release
3. Why managing your business listings on Google with Yext is a winning bet

As the world's preeminent search engine, Google maintains a 69% share of search in the U.S. and in excess of 90% across Europe. Google also operates Google Maps, the world's most popular local search and mapping app. For businesses increasingly dependent on mobile consumers, the accuracy of location data on Google can often be the difference between thriving and struggling to stay in business.

"This release is the biggest development in location data management since the launch of our PowerListings Network nearly six years ago. Our integration eliminates the inefficiencies of manual submission, delivers a better consumer experience, and gives business owners unprecedented control over their business listings across Google Search, Maps, and ads. We couldn't be more excited about working with Google to deliver more customers to the front door of businesses around the globe."

—Howard Lerman

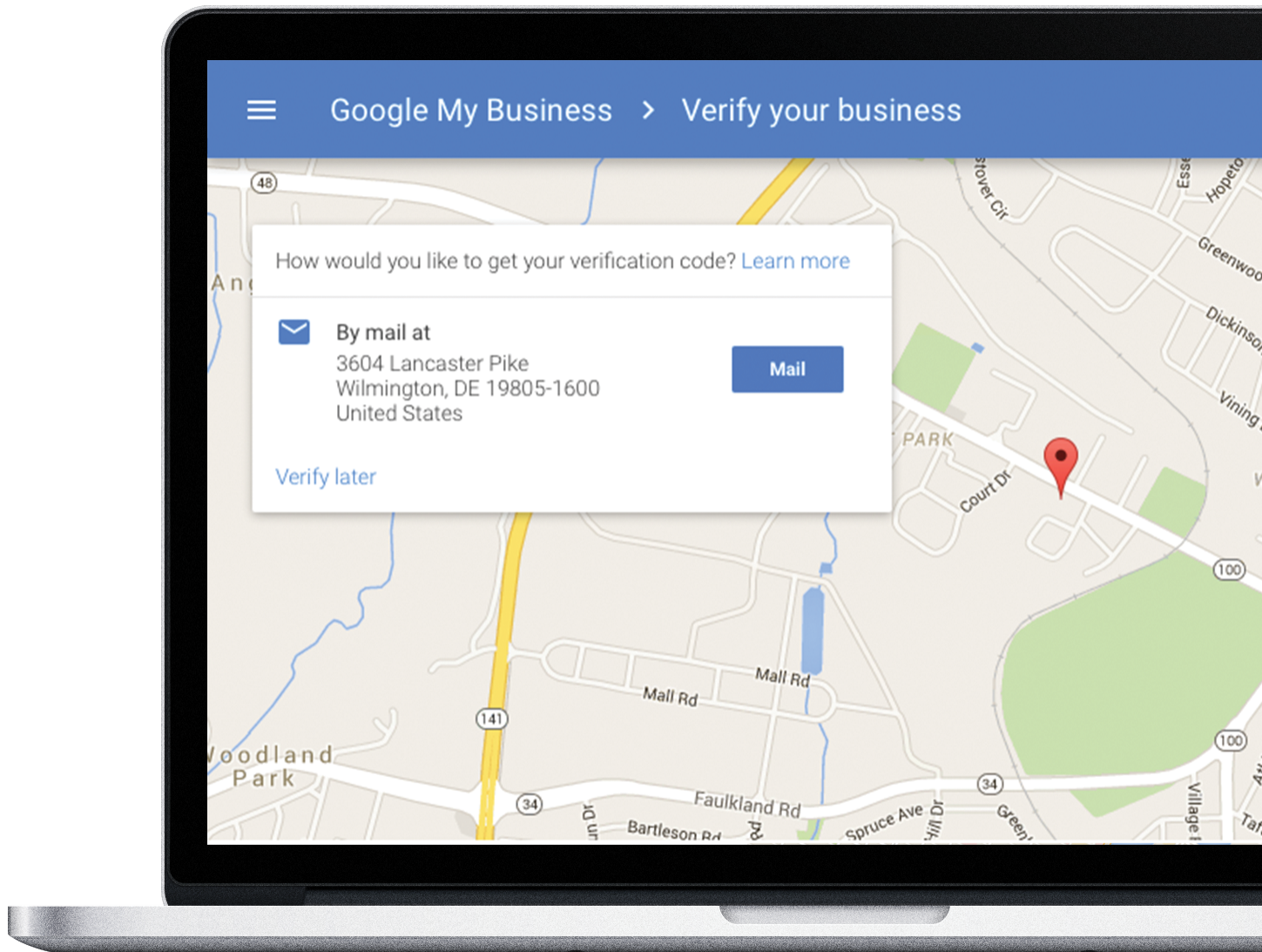
Yext Co-Founder & CEO



Since 2014, GMB has provided a manual means through which companies can manage their location data across Google Search, Google Maps, and ads. With GMB, businesses can add and claim locations, edit listing information such as opening hours, clean up closed and duplicate locations, and more.

How to Claim Your Business on Google

The first step to managing your location data on Google is claiming your business via GMB. You will need a Google account in order to access GMB. If you have an existing account for Gmail or Google+, you can use that account to log in, or you can create a new account. Whatever account you choose, it should be one that your business controls. The claiming process differs slightly depending on whether your business has fewer than 10 locations, or 10 or more locations.

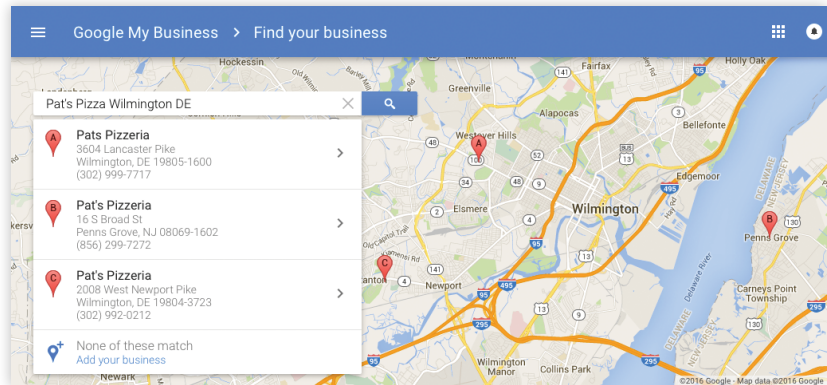


Businesses with Fewer than 10 Locations

1. Add/Claim Your Business

To claim your business on GMB, visit the GMB dashboard and:

- Search for your business using its name and address
- If your business is displayed in the menu, click on its listing. If your business is not listed, click NONE OF THESE MATCH and enter your business information

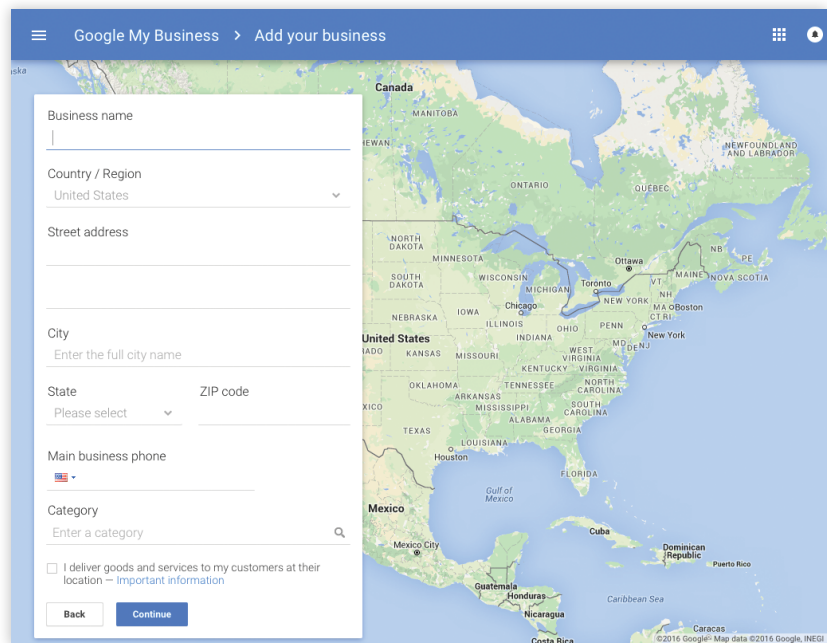


Address Entry Guidelines*

Enter the complete and exact street address for your location.
Ex: "1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA, 94043"

Only include information that is part of the official address. Including information like cross-streets or nearby landmarks, when they are not part of your official address, may make it more difficult to determine your location on Google Maps.

Suite or office numbers may be added separately from the street name and number in Address Line 2.



*Source: Google

2. Verify Your Business

Now that you have identified or entered your business information, you need to verify its accuracy with Google and confirm that you are the owner. You may have up to three options for verification. Not all options are available for all businesses.

To verify your business: Select the location you would like to verify and click **VERIFY NOW**.

a. Verify By Mail

- Click **MAIL** to have a verification postcard mailed to your business
- Assign at least one person at your place of business to be on the look out for the postcard. Most failed verifications are the result of either bad phone numbers, missed phone calls, or lost or misplaced postcards
- When your postcard arrives enter the code on the postcard in your GMB dashboard

b. Verify By Phone

- Make sure that you have access to the business phone number that you provided to receive your verification code
- Click **VERIFY BY PHONE** to have the code sent to your phone
- Enter the code from the message in your GMB dashboard

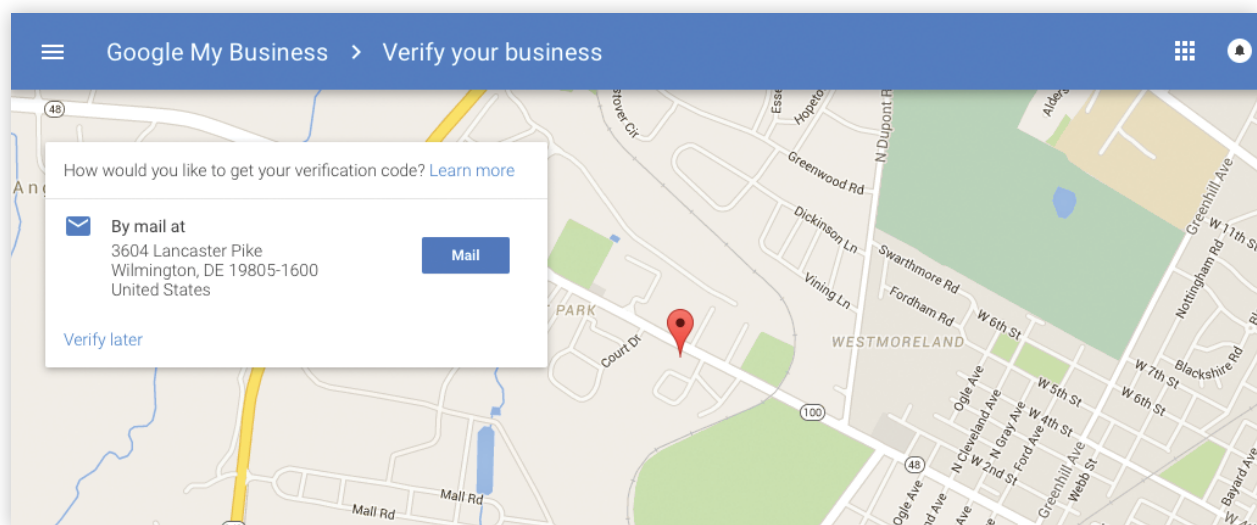
c. Instant Verification

- If your business's website is verified with Google Search Console you may be instantly verified
- Make sure you are signed into GMB with the same account you used to verify your website

Troubleshooting:

What if someone else verified my business? If you know the owner of the page, you can ask them to transfer ownership. If you do not know the owner, click **REQUEST ADMIN RIGHTS** and Google will attempt to contact the current owner.

What if I do not receive my verification postcard? Log in to the GMB dashboard and click **REQUEST ANOTHER CODE**.




Businesses with 10 or More Locations

Businesses with 10 or more locations are eligible for bulk verification. Bulk verification is the process through which a business is deemed eligible to make updates and add new locations without undergoing additional manual verification (i.e., postcard/phone verification). This means that some new locations or updates will be live on Google within hours.

To become bulk-verified, a business must have at least 10 locations in their account of the same business only and must fill out a six-field form, which includes:

- Contact name
- Contact phone
- Contact email (on domain)
- Business brand name(s)
- Business countries
- Google AdWords account manager, if applicable

To request bulk verification:

- Visit the GMB Locations dashboard
- Click the verification icon  in the top right corner
- Complete the verification form with the contact information
- To expedite approval, use a contact email with the same domain as the business website

Once you submit the form, a team of people at Google will review the information provided and the data in the account to make sure that the business is eligible for bulk verification and that the contact person is a legitimate representative of the company. They will also verify that all or a subset of your locations exist at the address and phone provided. This can take anywhere from one to several weeks.

Everything You Need to Know About The Google My Business API

In December 2015, Google launched the GMB API, which enables approved location data providers to feed information directly into Google. Prior to the GMB API, verified business owners could only update their location data on Google manually or via bulk upload using a spreadsheet. This process was not only time consuming and inefficient, but also served to undermine the accuracy of location data due to the lag between submitted and published changes.

With the launch of the GMB API and the subsequent V3.1 update in September 2016, Google continues to make it easy and fast for businesses to update their location data in a way that reflects the real-time realities of how they operate. Today's mobile consumers rely on Google to help them go places, and they expect the information to be current, correct, and comprehensive. With the GMB API, Google makes it as easy as possible for businesses to meet consumers' high expectations.

The GMB API also allows businesses to provide Google with their own location data directly. Until now, Google relied on a mix of crawling, third-party data, and manually submitted location data to populate business listings. The GMB API shifts the approach. By enabling businesses to provide real-time location data directly, Google puts verified business owners in control to act as a first-party source of their location data information, thereby reducing the likelihood that conflicting data from data aggregators, crawlers, and other third parties will confuse consumers.

Accurate, real-time location data is a big win for businesses, Google, and consumers. Moreover, it highlights the central importance of location as a data element across Google's entire ecosystem of search, maps, and ads.

Managing Your Business Listings on Google with the Yext Location Cloud

The GMB API replaces the manual work with an automated feed; however given the complexity of collecting, storing, and managing location information, many businesses will choose to leverage the API through a location data management partner.

The Yext Location Cloud enables companies of all sizes to manage location data across their websites, mobile apps, and internal systems. In addition, the Yext Location Cloud lets you publish your location data to our PowerListings® Network, the industry's largest network of maps, apps, social networks, directories, and search engines, which includes not only Google but also Apple Maps, Facebook, Foursquare, Bing, Yahoo, and Yelp. Updates in the Yext Location Cloud push to GMB in real time. From there, Google syncs that information with Google Search, Maps, and ads—in some cases, within minutes.

This means less time spent managing your business's online presence, faster updates for your customers when your hours or other key business details change, and greater ability to ensure that your location data is always consistent and up to date everywhere consumers search. Syncing the Yext Location Cloud with your GMB account takes just minutes and instantly unlocks the power of our integration to boost brand awareness, drive foot traffic, and increase sales.

“Without Yext, we wouldn't have had any way to update our store hours across Google, which we now rely on to serve our community of customers with transparent, real-time updates specific to their neighborhood stores. And the addition of Google to the PowerListings® Network enables us to enter new communities with all of the critical location and contact information, so we can connect with the local neighborhood the moment our doors open.”

— **Farryn Weiner**

VP of Marketing & Brand Strategy, Sweetgreen

The Sweetgreen logo is displayed in a bold, lowercase, green sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the word "green".

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Yext's best-in-class integration with the GMB API enables you to:

- Create new locations
- Update name, address, phone, categories, website, photos, G+ cover and profile photos, hours and special hours in real time
- Add additional location attributes, including the new attribute types released in V3.1, like whether you take reservations or sell organic products, to your Google listings
- Select whether your G+ profile or cover photo appears first in Google search results
- View listing status in the Yext dashboard to verify that locations are published on Google properties (Maps, Search, Google+) or require additional action
- View and respond to all your Google Reviews directly from the Location Cloud, and get notified in real time when you receive a new review
- View consumer-suggested edits to your Google listings and choose to accept or reject them, which protects your listings from being overwritten by unauthorized "Google updates"
- Manage locations globally
- Link multiple Google accounts or business accounts for multi-location clients
- Set service area radius or places (cities/zips) and fully suppress address
- Mark permanently closed locations

Yext built the industry's first Location Cloud and the GMB API integration further extends its position as the market leader—with the largest network of ecosystem partners and the most robust feature set. Now, for the first time, businesses can control all of their listings on all of the most important location search engines and apps from one powerful platform.

Next Steps

As we look to a future of drone delivery, self-driving cars, and increasingly mobile consumers, Google has rightfully placed the power over location data where it belongs—in the hands of verified business owners. This shift gives businesses of all sizes the opportunity to improve their consumer experience, reduce navigational frustrations, and deliver more traffic to their front door.

