

GOOGLE PLACES FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES



com



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Introduction

As a business owner, you understand how important it is to make sure your business can be found whenever someone is searching. This usually means getting your ad in the local yellow pages, advertising on local television and radio, and putting ads in local publications like newspapers and magazines.

However, most business owners feel the internet can't be very beneficial to them, because it's meant solely for worldwide searches. This just isn't true. The internet can still be enormously beneficial even to very small local businesses.

The percentage of people who have internet access is growing at an astonishing rate, and many of those people are using the internet to research companies in their local area. If you don't have an internet presence and your competitors do, you could be losing out on a lot of business!

In this report, I'm going to show you why you need to make your presence known online, and the best way to do it.

Why You Should Use Local Search

All of the major search engines are now using some sort of local search technology to display information about companies that are based in one specific geographic location.

You may have heard it can take months for a website to make it to the top of the search engines. If you're in a highly-competitive niche, you may never be able to make it there. Fortunately, local search makes it easy to grab a top ranking in Google very quickly.

Local search results appear at the top of the results, before the standard results are shown. This means that they get a lot of attention, often more so than the actual search results.

If your business is not listed here, but your competitors are, you will be losing a lot of business. In some areas, thousands of people use Google and other search engines to find local businesses just like yours every single day!

It just makes sense to make use of this technology. It's free to submit your business, and it can make a big difference to your bottom line.

Google Places

Google Places is the new name for their Business Center. Using this service, you can “claim” your business in Google and customize your listing on Google Maps and other important services.

Google is the largest search engine, with an estimated 75-85% market share. Most of your online efforts should be focused on making sure your business has a prominent presence in this search engine.

While this can be accomplished by creating a website for your company and using search engine optimization techniques, it could take several weeks or even months before your site ranks well and starts to see significant amounts of traffic.

The best way to make sure your company has a strong presence is through the use of Google Places. If you have ever done a search for a local business on Google, you’ve probably noticed the Google Places listings at the top of the search results. They appear before the standard results, making them especially lucrative. It is very important to make sure your business has a presence here!

Take a look at this example:

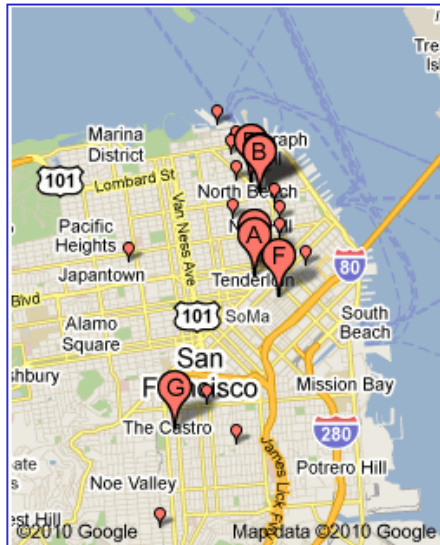
italian restaurant san francisco

Search

About 21,200,000 results (0.17 seconds)

[Advanced search](#)

Local business results for **italian restaurant** near **San Francisco, CA**



- A** [Puccini & Pinetti](#)
www.pucciniandpinetti.com - (415) 392-5500 - 175 reviews
 - B** [The Stinking Rose](#)
www.thestinkingrose.com - (415) 781-7673 - 433 reviews
 - C** [Kuleto's Restaurant](#)
www.kuletos.com - (415) 397-7720 - 226 reviews
 - D** [North Beach Restaurant](#)
www.northbeachrestaurant.com - (415) 392-1587 - 267 reviews
 - E** [Steps of Rome Trattoria](#)
www.stepsofrometrattoria.com - (415) 986-6480 - 289 reviews
 - F** [Buca di Beppo - San Francisco](#)
www.bucadibeppo.com - (415) 543-7673 - 294 reviews
 - G** [Delfina Restaurant](#)
www.delfinasf.com - (415) 552-4055 - 434 reviews
- [More results near San Francisco, CA »](#)

[Top 10 Ten Best Italian Restaurants in San Francisco San Francisco ...](#) ☆

Read GAYOT.com expert reviews to find out which **restaurants** make our list of top ten **Italian restaurants** in San Francisco. Mangia!

www.gayot.com/restaurants/best-sanfrancisco-ca-top10-italianrestaurants_3sf.html -
Cached - Similar

As you can see, the Google Places results appear before the standard listings, making them very prominent. If you were searching for a restaurant in San Francisco, there is a very good chance that you would choose one of those seven restaurants that appear at the top of the results.

As you can see from those results, Google Places shows users a number of different pieces of information about each business. The name of the business, the phone number, the website URL (if there is one available), as well as reviews for the company.

If a user clicks the name of the business or the number of reviews, they are taken to that company's business page. There is a map that shows the company's location, reviews and photos, hours of operation, and more.

This feature is especially helpful to users, because they can quickly and easily find the local businesses that have what they're looking for. It's also helpful for those businesses, because they can get a top listing in Google without spending months pushing their website there the old-fashioned way.

If you're not taking advantage of Google Places, you're missing out on a lot of business. In some cases, a listing in Google Places could even **double** your business!

Bing Local

Google isn't the only search engine that has a local search platform. Bing is a relatively new search engine that was developed by Microsoft to replace its aging MSN technology.

Like other local search systems, listings appear with a map at the top of the listings on Bing.com. While Bing doesn't have the market share that Google has, its innovative algorithms and fresh technologies are causing it to slowly emerge, taking a larger and larger slice of the search engine pie as time goes on.

It's a good idea to get your business listed in Bing now, while more people are focused on Google. If Bing happens to jump ahead in the market, your business will already be positioned to take advantage of the situation, while many of your competitors struggle to keep up.

Listings on Bing Local are free, and they can be updated at any time. You can also add multiple locations if you have several different stores or branches.

Yahoo! Local

Yahoo! also has its own local search platform called Yahoo Local. Yahoo has a significant share of the search engine market, so they definitely should not be ignored.

Yahoo! has two levels of listings for their local search platform. The free listing is very basic and includes the company's name, URL, and a short description. The enhanced listings also include the company's logo and tagline, photos, a longer description, links to coupons, and the addition of the company's listing in up to five categories.

At the moment, enhanced listings cost just \$9.95 per month. This is a very reasonable cost when you consider how much more attention your business will get if you have these added features. Additionally, as a paying customer, you will receive reports that will show you how many times your listing was viewed and how many times it was clicked. This will help you refine your listing in order to maximize its effectiveness.

You can always start out with a standard listing and upgrade at a later date. This might be a good option if you just want to test the water before you are locked into a monthly fee.

Enhancing Local Listings

There are a few things you can do to enhance your local listings, but one of the most important is to have a website. When you have a website, your URL will be displayed in your listing, which will draw attention to the listing. This is very important, because it helps you stand out from the competition.

In most cases, you don't need a complex website. Unless you plan to sell products or services directly online, all you really need is a website listing somewhat like an ad in the Yellow Pages.

Your site should contain:

- Your business location, including a map and directions
- Information about your products and services
- Hours of operation
- Contact information

Most companies don't need much more than this on their website, but you can enhance your site's effectiveness by adding additional features. For example, if you add an opt-in box to your site, visitors can subscribe to your email list, allowing you to send them news about special offers, coupons, sales, and new product offerings. This will help keep your customers reminded to shop with you, and you can offer incentives to keep them coming in.

It costs a lot more to acquire a new customer than it does to get repeat business from existing and former customers. By getting people on your mailing list, you can entice them to buy from you again and again. It just makes sense to do this, because you can turn one-time customers into lifelong buyers.

Why let people drop by your website once and leave, possibly forever, without getting them onto your mailing list? It's an efficient use of your web space to provide a way for customers to be notified about your latest offers.

Claim Your Google Listing

Submitting your business to these three search engines is relatively simple, but it can be time consuming. There is a lot of information required, and it can be a little confusing if you've never done it before.

If you don't have time to go through this yourself, or if you're uncomfortable doing so, I would be happy to help you get your company listed in all of the major local search directories. My fee for claiming your listing for you is **\$75**. If you would like for me to customize your listing by adding pertinent information, photos, videos, etc., my fee is **\$150**. If you're interested in obtaining a top level listing for Google Places, (top 2 or 3 positions), please contact me for pricing. There are several variables involved in making this happen, and we would need to agree on the specific achievable results before we discuss pricing.

One thing you absolutely must do if you have a listing in Google but it has not been claimed by you, **GO CLAIM IT NOW!!!**

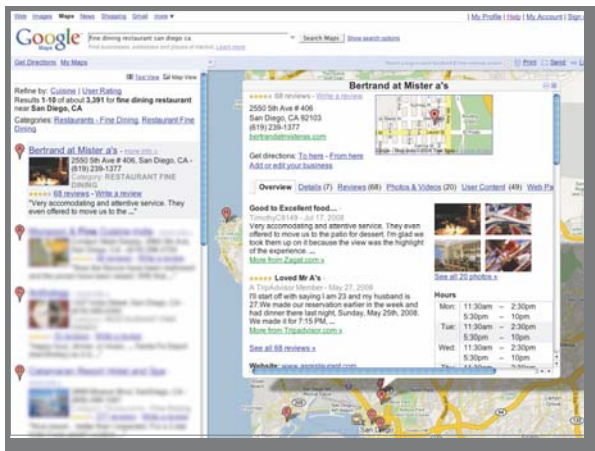
The following pages provided by Google show how to do it. If you need help or wish to talk about how we can get your local business on the first page of Google results for not only the local listings but sponsored search and organic listings as well, please contact me at:

HT Net Ventures – Chris Hoyt
Mobile 501-269-4215
email info@htnetventures.com



Reach millions of Google.com and Google Maps™ users, quickly and for free, with Local Business Center.

More people search for businesses online than anywhere else,¹ so it's important to make sure your business listing can be easily found on Google.com and Google Maps. With Local Business Center, creating a great listing takes just a few minutes and doesn't cost a thing.

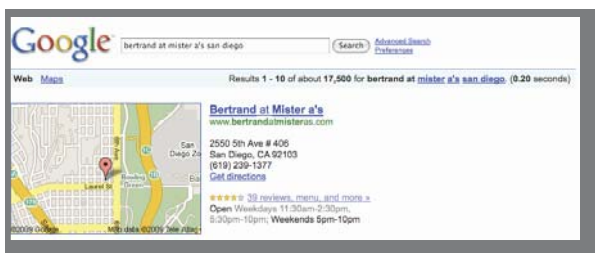


Google Maps

Businesses are listed along the left. Click on the listing for details.

Make sure Google shows accurate information about your business.

- Add photos, videos, coupons, and more to attract more attention.
- Edit business details like address, phone, hours of operation and website.



Google.com Search

Basic business details show up at the top of the results for some searches.

Control your listing and speak for yourself

Your business probably already shows up on Google Maps and Google.com, but you should still claim your listing and make sure its details are accurate and thorough. Your improvements will start appearing as soon as you verify them through the Local Business Center.

Practical and easy to manage

Your Google listing is an easy way to maintain an online presence even if you don't have a website. You can visit the Local Business Center anytime to edit your information or see how many people have seen and clicked on your listing.

¹ Local Search Usage Study, comScore/TMP Directional Marketing, October 2008.

Premium options, all for free

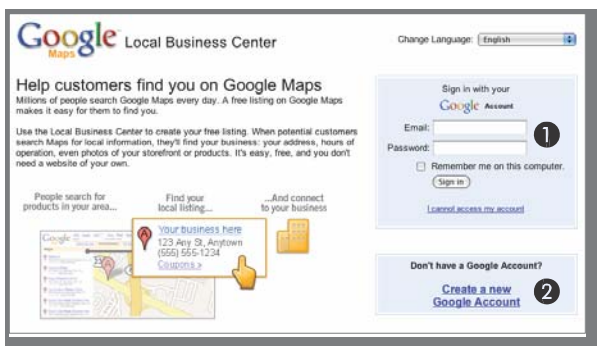
Make your listing really shine with photos and videos; custom categories like your service area, brands you sell and how to find parking; and coupons to encourage customers to make a first-time or repeat purchase.

Signing up for Local Business Center is easy.

If you own a business, you probably know the basics. You can add extras like photos and descriptions if you have them handy, or come back to add them later.

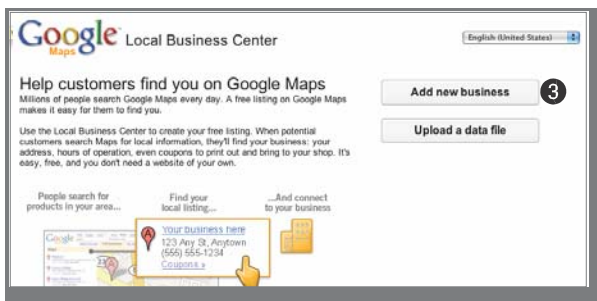
At the end of the sign-up, we'll ask you to verify your info via phone or postcard. We do this to make sure that only the right people are able to change any public data about your business.

Okay, let's get started!

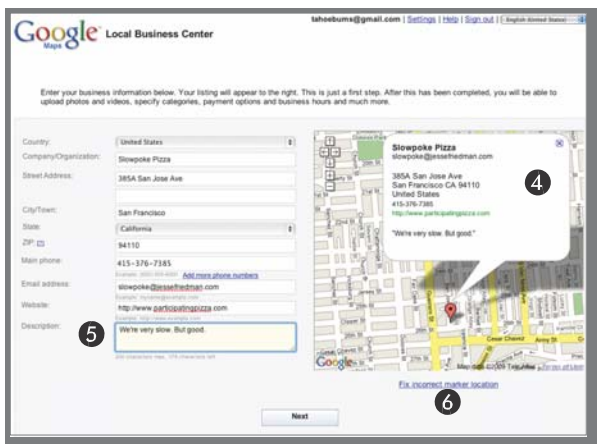


Go to www.google.com/localbusinesscenter

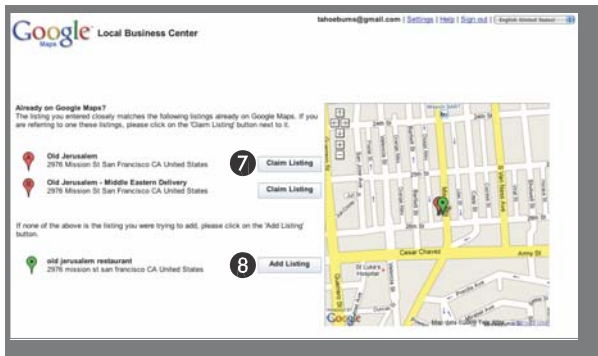
- 1 Sign in with your Google Account
- 2 Create a new Google Account if you don't have one already. Make sure to go back to your email and click the link to verify your new account.



- 3 Click "Add new business" once you're logged in, and add your basic business details as you'd like them to appear.



- 4 The map on the left will zoom into your location as you type in your address. You can move the marker if our best guess isn't quite right.
- 5 Write a business description that emphasizes the qualities that make your business unique.
- 6 Move the marker if our best guess isn't quite right.



Select the listing to claim, or add a new one (if your business doesn't match any listings, skip to Step 9.)

- 7 From the list of options, click the “Claim Listing” button next to the one that’s most similar to your business.
- 8 If your business isn’t there, click the “Add Listing” button at the bottom to create a new listing.

Note: In the list of close matches, if the business name on a given listing is wrong but the address is right, click “Claim Listing” and Google Maps will use your preferred name. However, if the address is wrong and you can’t receive mail sent to that address, you won’t be able to verify your claim. In that case, you should click “Add Listing” at the bottom of the list to create a new listing.

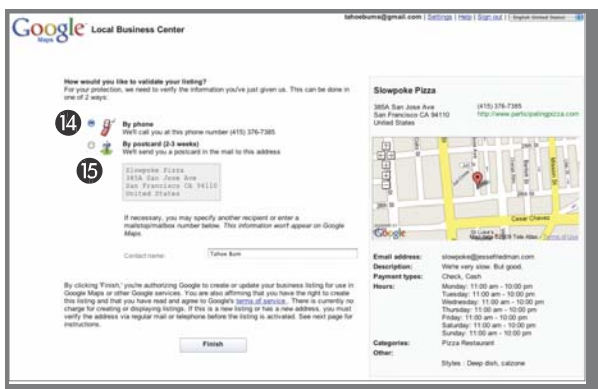


Add details to help your business stand out.

- 9 Select from the category listings that appear as you type.
- 10 Add your hours of operation—this is useful info for repeat and potential customers alike.
- 11 Add an image to help your listing stand out in Google Maps search results. You can use both snapshots and logos.
- 12 If you have videos on YouTube, you can place them directly in your listing.
- 13 You can also add relevant info that doesn’t fit anywhere else, such as delivery zone, house specialties, return policy, or whatever else you’d like to share.

Verify your listing, by phone if possible.

- 14 If you have easy access to the phone number on your listing, choose phone verification. Google will call you and, once you enter a PIN, your listing will immediately be verified.
- 15 If you aren't near the phone or have a voicemail system, choose postcard verification. Google will send you a card with a PIN for you to enter before mailing it back.



Pay regular visits to www.google.com/localbusinesscenter

You can add coupons to your listing, see how many clicks your listing is getting, and stay up on new features that you might want to use.

Frequently asked questions about listing your business on Google.com and Google Maps:

How will people find my business?

Millions of people search for businesses on Google Maps and on Google.com. Your listing will also be available through Google Maps for Mobile, 1-800-GOOG-411 voice directory search, and Google Earth.

On any of these services, if someone searches directly for your business name and city, your listing will most likely show up. We also may show your listing for searches for your business category or other related terms.

How can I make the most of my listing on Google?

A rich listing which features a description, several photos, business hours and a link to your website will help encourage potential customers to choose your service. This extra information can also help us match your listing to more searches, which might increase the number of views your listing gets.

We also recommend that you mention your Google listing to current and potential customers. Remind them that they can use Google Maps to find your phone number and address and get driving directions to your store.

Why does other information show up in my listing?

Google collects data such as reviews, business hours, photos and more from trusted partners and various websites, and combines this information with what you enter in Local Business Center.

Why do you have an inaccurate listing for my business? How can I remove it?

Some of our listings inevitably will contain incorrect or outdated information. You can easily correct such errors. In Google Maps, click on the listing, then click the "Edit" button at the bottom of the bubble. If you have access to either the phone number or the mailing address in that incorrect listing, click "Claim your business" to claim and then suppress the listing. Otherwise, click the "Remove place" link to suggest that we remove it from the map.

What else does Google offer for local businesses like mine?

Google offers a variety of tools designed to help businesses like yours, including AdWords, Google Analytics and our Google Apps suite of communications and collaboration products. You can learn more about these products and sign up to use them at www.google.com/services.

Create your listing today at www.google.com/localbusinesscenter.

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