

Cristian & Adrian
PRESENTS

GMB Optimizer Guide

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Hey there!

Any local SEO strategy needs to have a good **GMB (Google My Business)** listing as the backbone. It doesn't matter if you're creating a location-based strategy for your own business or you're helping other businesses as a consultant - One of the first things to do is to create and optimize the GMB listing.

We know that some of you are actively using GMB as part of your local marketing strategy, but it turns out that a lot of you aren't. This is precisely why we decided to create a one-stop guide that will hold your hand throughout the whole process of creating and optimizing a GMB listing.

What is Google My Business (GMB)?

Just in case you didn't know anything about it (doubtful), **GMB** is a free tool provided by Google that business owners can use to manage their online presence across the whole Google-controlled realm.

Think of GMB as Google's equivalent of services like **Yelp!**, **Facebook Places** or **Bing Places**. But given the fact that Google has by far the biggest market share when it comes to internet-related services, it's basically the only thing that is absolutely essential.

The bottom line is, you absolutely need to tend to the Google My Business listing of a business if you fancy the idea of dominating the local rankings. A GMB listing is critical if you want your business (or the businesses in your client list) to appear in Google Maps and in the local pack listings returned for local queries.

Besides this, the review section of GMB is one of the most trusted sources used by prospecting clients - Keep in mind that online reviews are among the most important local SEO ranking factors.

Just to make it easier for you guys to see the ramifications of creating a solid GMB listing, here's a shortlist with some opportunities that this tool provides:

- The business has an increased chance of showing up in Google's **Local Pack**
- The business has a chance of being featured inside the **Local Finder**.
- The business will appear inside **Google Maps**.
- The business will receive a slight organic search ranking boost.

Setting Up and Optimizing a Google My Business listing

Now that we've established how important it is for you guys to create and tend to your GMB listing, it's time to get to the actual work.

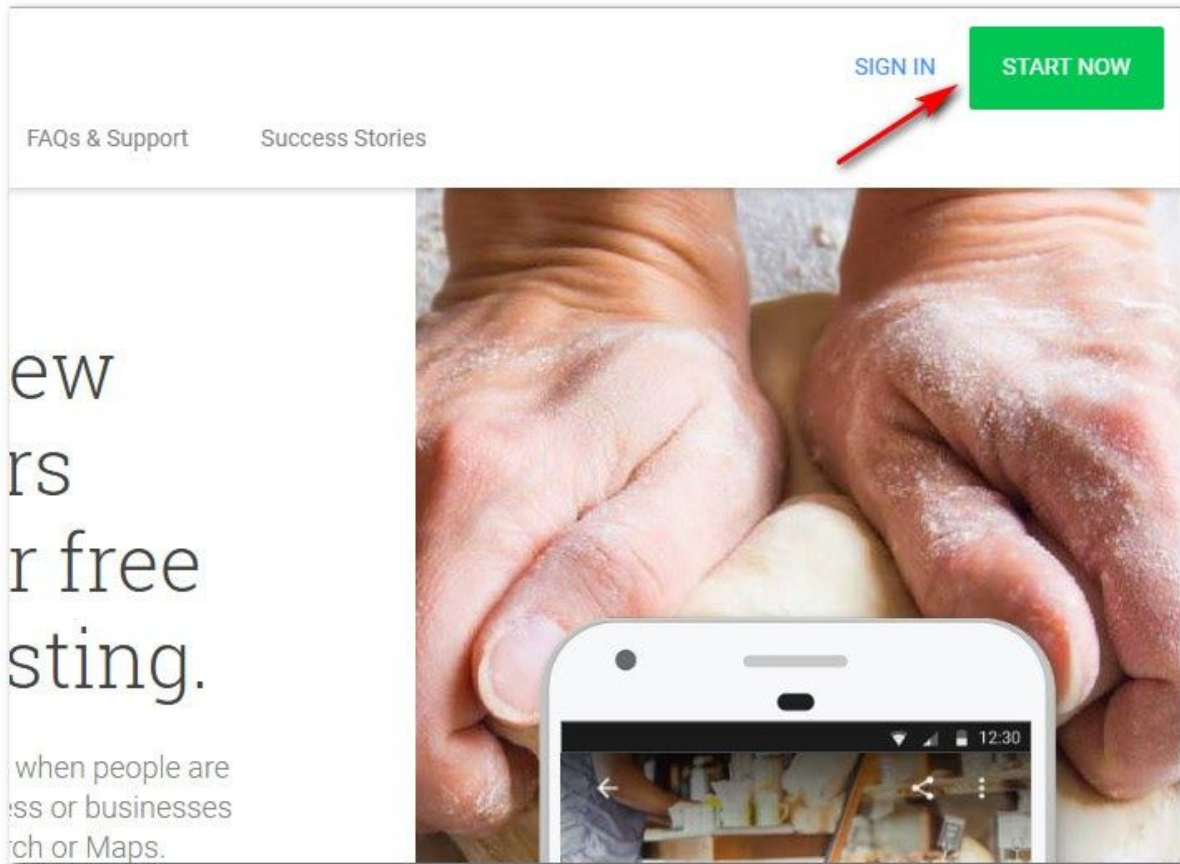
Since we promised you we'll take you through the whole process, we will create a new GMB listing from scratch (a real one, for one of our local clients) and show you the steps taken to optimize it.

We are also going to show you how to use some new features that Google has added in the past couple of months.

Follow the steps below in the order that they are presented. If you already have a GMB listing and you're only looking to optimize it, skip straight to Step 2.

Step 1: Claiming and verifying the GMB page

So, the very first step to any local SEO strategy is to claim and verify the **Google My Business (GMB)** listing of the business you're targeting. To do this, you'll need to head over to [Google's My Business](#) page and click the **Start Now** button in the top-right corner.



Next, you will be taken to a series of steps in which you'll need to insert various information about your business: name, address, postal code, type of business, contact details, etc.

I know this is a tedious process (and it really is) but please, take the time to input the required data correctly.

The information that you're providing now will serve as the backbone of the GMB listing, making it easier for potential customers to find online information about the business.


Pro Tip: If the targeted business is delivering goods, make sure that you check the **I deliver goods and services to my customers** checkbox, but make sure that you leave the box associated with **Hide my address** unchecked - otherwise the physical address will not appear in the Local Pack listings.


Country / Region
📍 Romania

Street address
lonel Perlea nr.11

Postal code [add line](#)
300673

City
Timisoara

 I deliver goods and services to my customers.
[Learn more](#)

 Hide my address (it's not a store)
Only show region – Timisoara, RO

[Next](#)


Now, before the GMB listing will become operational, it will need to get verified. This process is mainly automated and will take up to 3 days to complete. Keep in mind that unless you complete the verification process, your listing will not show up in Google Search or Google Maps.

To complete this first step, click on **Finish** to gain entry into your **GMB** listing.

← **Finish and verify this business**

To manage your listing, you'll need to verify your connection with this business. What you'll get with verification:

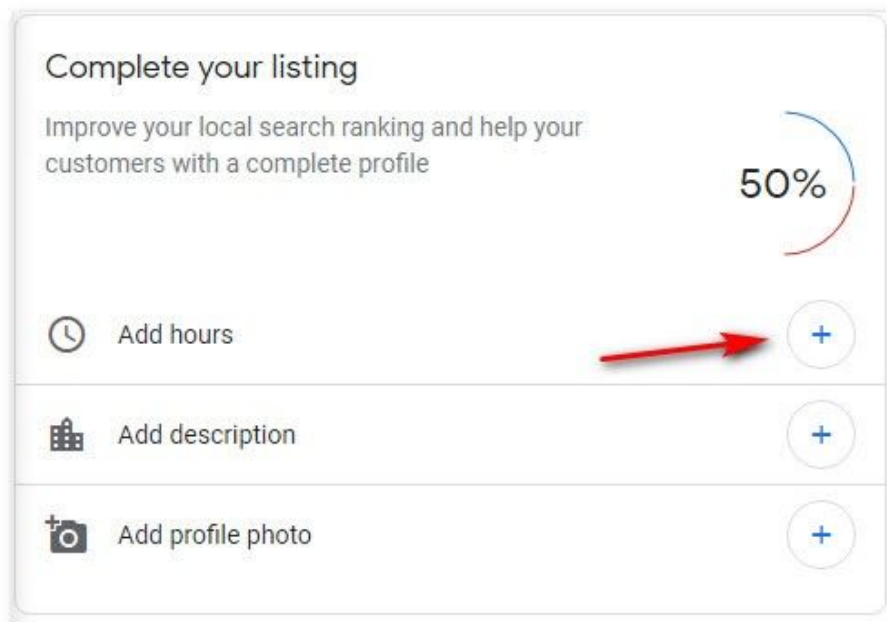
- ✓ Allow new customers to find you on Google Search & Maps
- ✓ Promote your business with photos and posts
- ✓ Track business analytics to understand your customers
- ✓ Respond to customer reviews

[Finish](#) 

Step 2: Adding the business hours

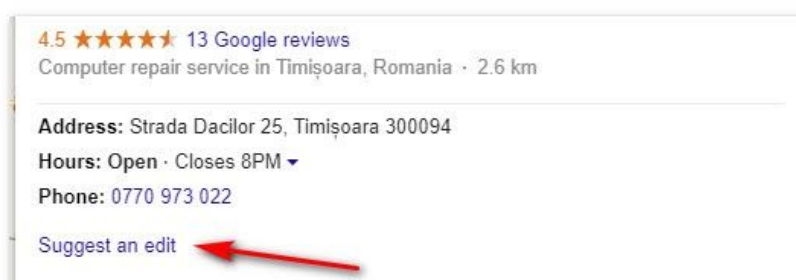
Now that you have access to the dashboard of your GMB listing, it's time to get to work. Keep in mind that Google will allow you to complete the optimization process before the listing goes live. We found this strategy to be preferred instead of starting to optimize after the GMB listing becomes visible.

With this in mind, click on **Add hours** (under **Complete your listing**) to set up the hours in which the business is open to clients.



We found this step to be quite impacting, so make sure you set the hours in exact accordance to how the business operates. We've had clients who have been negatively reviewed by customers because their business hours were incorrect.

Important: Keep in mind that anyone else can suggest a change or edit to your business listing - so if you don't set the business hours right, someone else might do it for you in a detrimental manner.



Once you've set your business hours accordingly, hit the **Apply** button (top-right) corner and move down to the next step below.

Hours CANCEL APPLY

Please note: Edits may be reviewed for quality and can take up to 3 days to be published. [Learn more](#)

Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/> Closed			
Monday	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open	9:00 am	–	6:30 pm ADD HOURS
Tuesday	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open	9:00 am	–	6:30 pm ADD HOURS
Wednesday	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open	9:00 am	–	6:30 pm ADD HOURS
Thursday	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open	9:00 am	–	6:30 pm ADD HOURS
Friday	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open	9:00 am	–	6:30 pm ADD HOURS
Saturday	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open	11:00 am	–	4:00 am ADD HOURS




Step 3: Completing the business description

Once the business hours have been set up, let's move forward by completing the business description. You can do this by going back to the main dashboard menu and clicking the **Add description** button.

Complete your listing

Improve your local search ranking and help your customers with a complete profile

65%

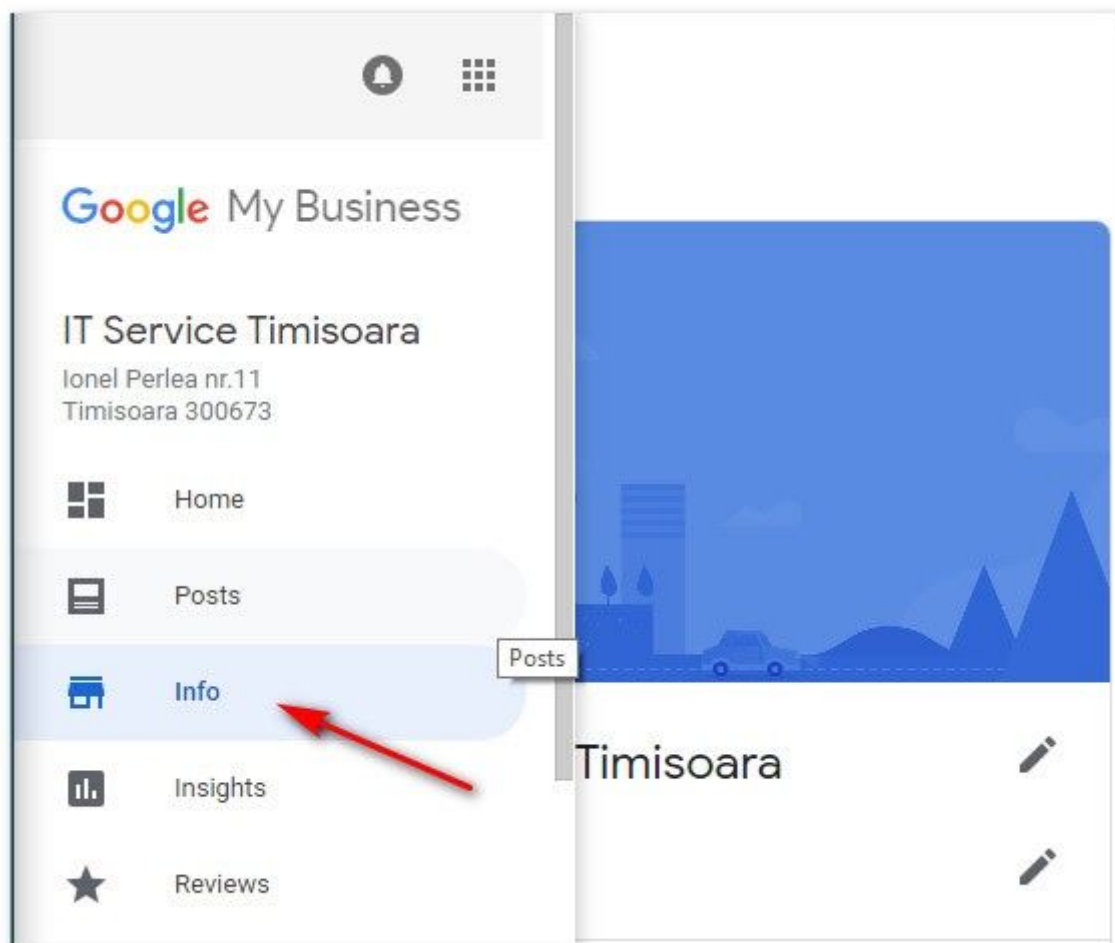
 Add description		<input data-bbox="1157 1758 1236 1825" type="button" value="+"/>
 Add profile photo		<input data-bbox="1157 1870 1236 1937" type="button" value="+"/>

A description is not only good for letting people know what the business is all about, but it also **helps Google to place your business into the appropriate search bracket.**

With this in mind, when you create the description for your business, include some keywords related to your business niche. But do it naturally without making the whole thing seem forced. Oh, and stay away from keyword stuffing!

For your reference, let's say you create a GMB listing for a computer service. In this case, make sure your business description includes a couple of niche related keywords like 'IT', 'computer repair' or 'PC service'. For the best results, **pair them up with regional keywords** ("We've been voted the best computer repair shop in Tampa").

The initial configuration part is almost finished, but you still have a few additional pieces of information that you can add (and we encourage you to do so). If you click on the action button (top-left corner) and click on **Info**.



Here you can let Google know about the service area of the business, special hours programs and an **Attributes** section. Again, we encourage you to fill out all this information because it really helps with the optimization effort.

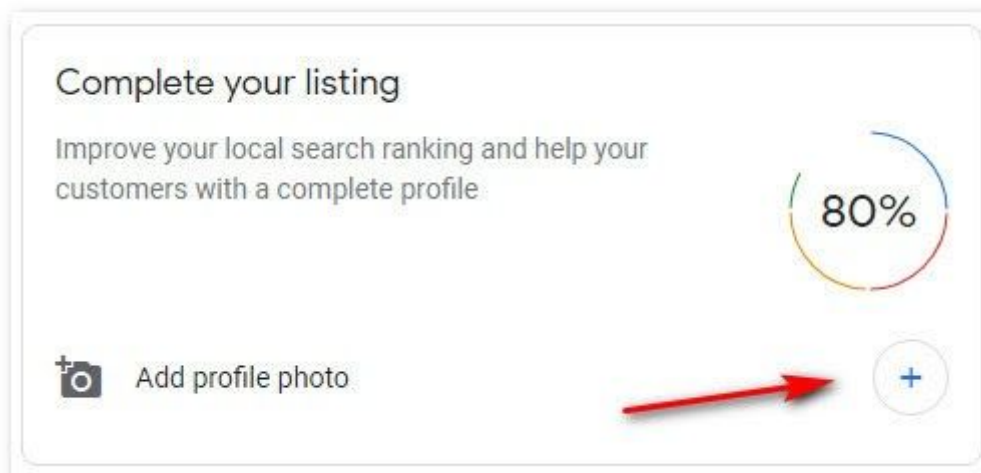
Based on what we observed, Google will prioritize a complete GMB listing that has correct hours, descriptions and attributes over a GMB listing that has superior reviews but lacks optimization.

Step 4: Adding rich media

Once you get this far, the next step is to add as much rich media as you can to your GMB listing. This is arguably the most important part of the whole GMB optimization strategy.

Since the whole world is moving towards visual content, it's understandable why photos and videos are so important for a GMB listing. In fact, a recent study showed that businesses with photos in their listings receive **42% more requests for driving directions** inside Google Maps. The same study also found a 35% increase in the number of click-throughs to the business website.

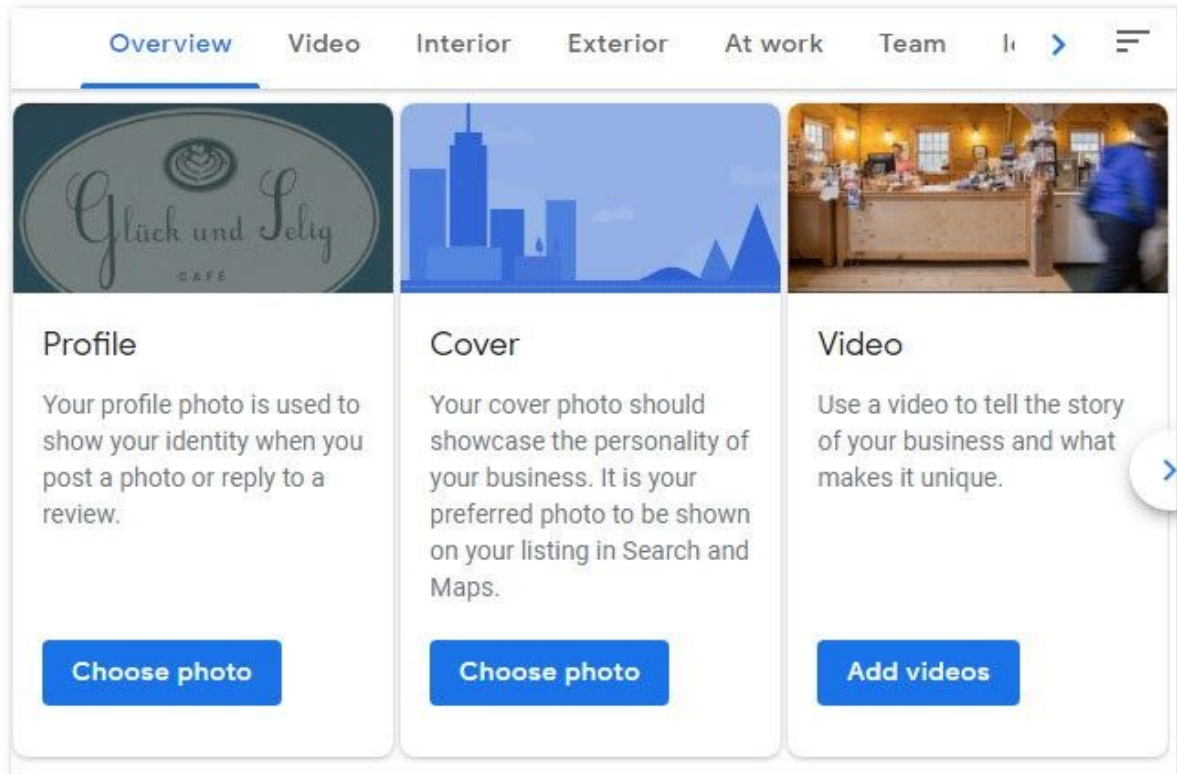
With this in mind, return to the dashboard of your GMB listing and click on the button associated with **Add profile photo**.



In the **Photos** menu, start by adding the business logo in the **Profile** menu. Then, upload a custom Cover - use intriguing imagery that will draw the customer in. Do not include business-related information (like contact number or address) in the cover since the space is quite small and that information is directly available below.

Try to include as many pictures as possible to your listing. Use the various categories to organize your photos accordingly. If you have a presentation video, that's even better - upload it to your listing by using the **Video** category.

But perhaps the most important aspect when it comes to visual optimization of your GMB is to make sure that you include photos with both the **Exterior** and the **Interior**.



Aside from making it easier for the customers to find the business, it's proven that doing this will increase the conversion rate of your GMB listing.

Step 5: Start posting

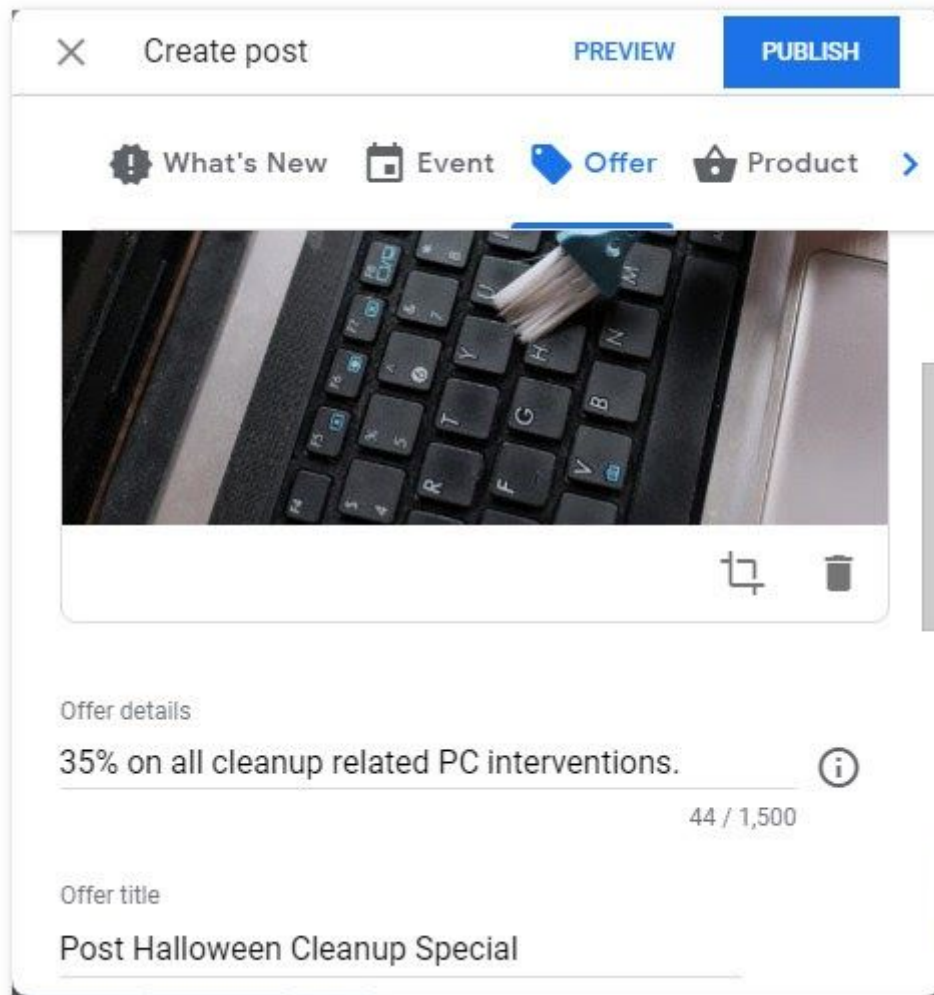
Now that the initial optimization part is over, it's time to get used to giving people updates from your GMB listing about the business. This is a fairly new feature of GMB and a lot of business owners are not using this. This is good for you!

We actually tested this for quite some time and it looks like Google will boost the local rankings of a GMB listing if it sees that it posts regular updates through Google My business.

You can post regular updates by going to the action menu (top-left corner) and clicking on **Posts**.

Think of GMB posts as mini-ads that you can run inside Google search for free. Sure, they don't reach nearly as many people as a paid ad does, but it lets the customers visiting the listing of your current promotions, boosting the conversion rate.

Even more, you're also showing Google that you maintain your GMB listing, boosting your chances of being featured in the 3 Local business pack.



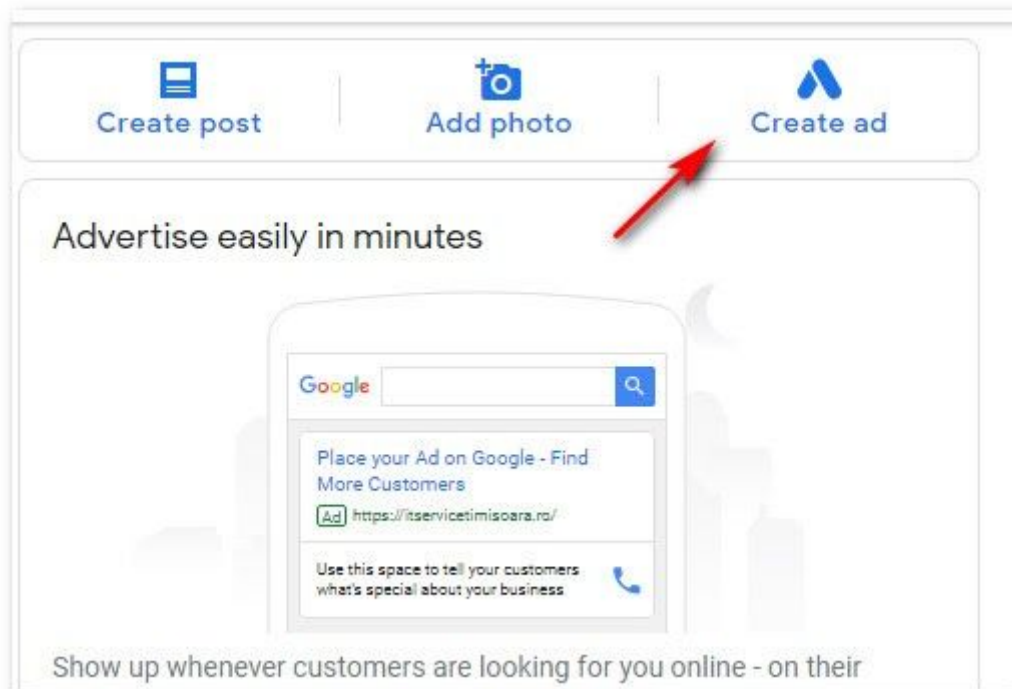
You can post anything from offers, events or updates about new products or services that have just hit the shelves. The key is to maintain consistency and post regularly.

Step 6: Create an ad

Although Google says that paid advertising has nothing to do with the organic results, we found that a GMB listing is a lot more likely to remain in the Local Pack after it was boosted by a paid advertising campaign.

This is not a required step, but you if you can afford to allocate a around \$50 dollars on a 3-4 day campaign, we recommend that you do so. But only after you make sure that your profile is complete and you have at least 3-4 Posts (**Step 5**).

You can create an ad campaign for your GMB listing by going to the dashboard and clicking on **Create ad**. You'll then be redirected to AdSense to customize and deploy the campaign.



Bonus Tip: Manage your business on the go

It's very important to check on your GMB listing frequently in order to make sure that troublesome users have not submitted detrimental updates to your listing. For example, a user might change a listing's business category from Computer service to IT Technician - this will automatically impact the search rankings in a matter that you don't agree with.

This is why we encourage you to use the [mobile GMB app](#) to stay updated with the latest changes to your listings. This way, you'll get notifications whenever a user submits a suggestion. On top of getting various Insight statistics related to your listing, you'll be able to respond swiftly to any review or user suggestion.



Speaking of reviews, we encourage you to respond to every review (good or bad). On top of showing the clients that you care, you're also sending positive social signals to Google that will contribute to the local ranking position of the business.

Wrap-up

We really hope that this article will help those of you unaware of the benefits of creating and maintaining a solid GMB listing optimization strategy.

We tried to cover the generic aspects that can be applied to every business, but Google My Business has a lot of niche specific customization options that are only applicable to certain types of businesses.

In any case, this material should serve you as a one-stop guide whenever you need to create and optimize a new GMB listing.