

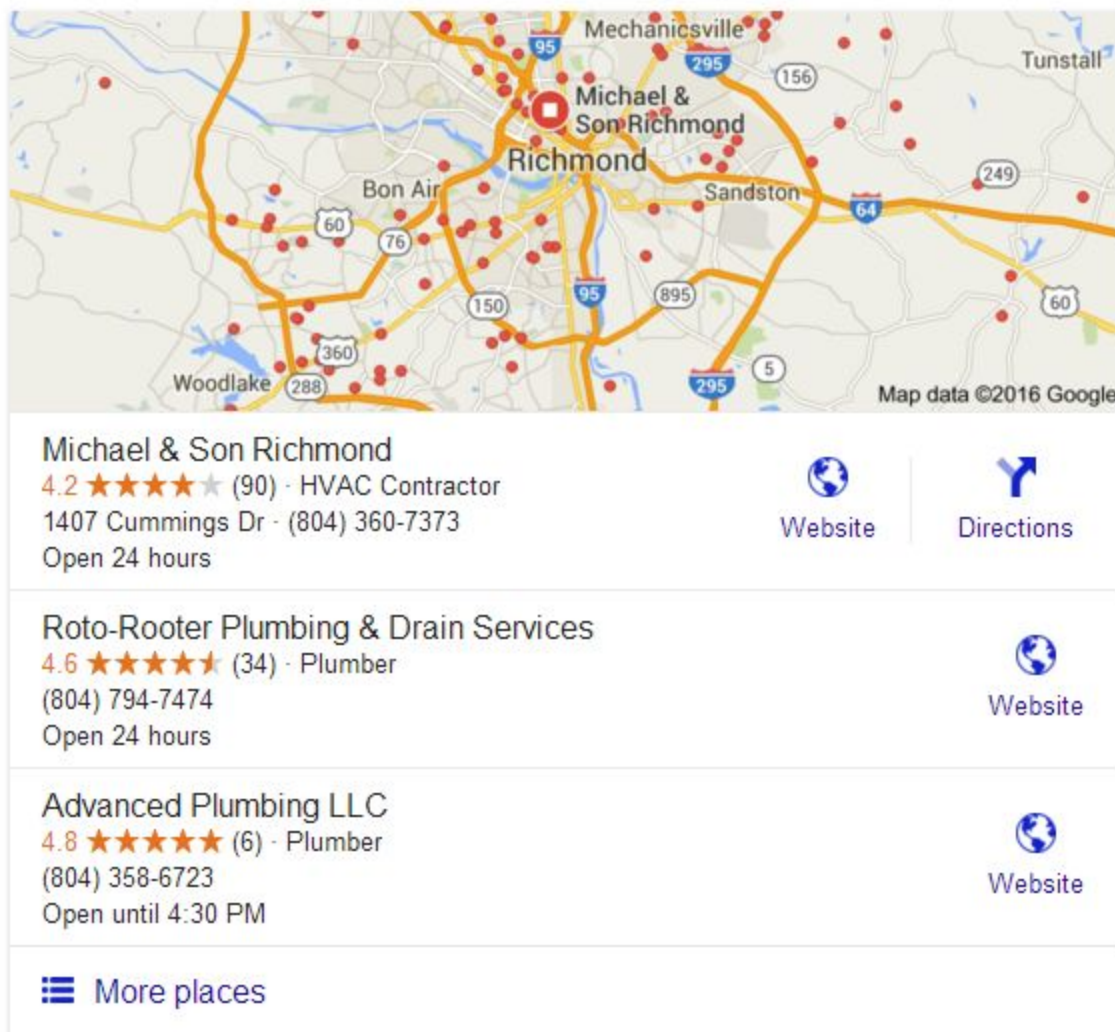


# Small Business Guide to “Google My Business”

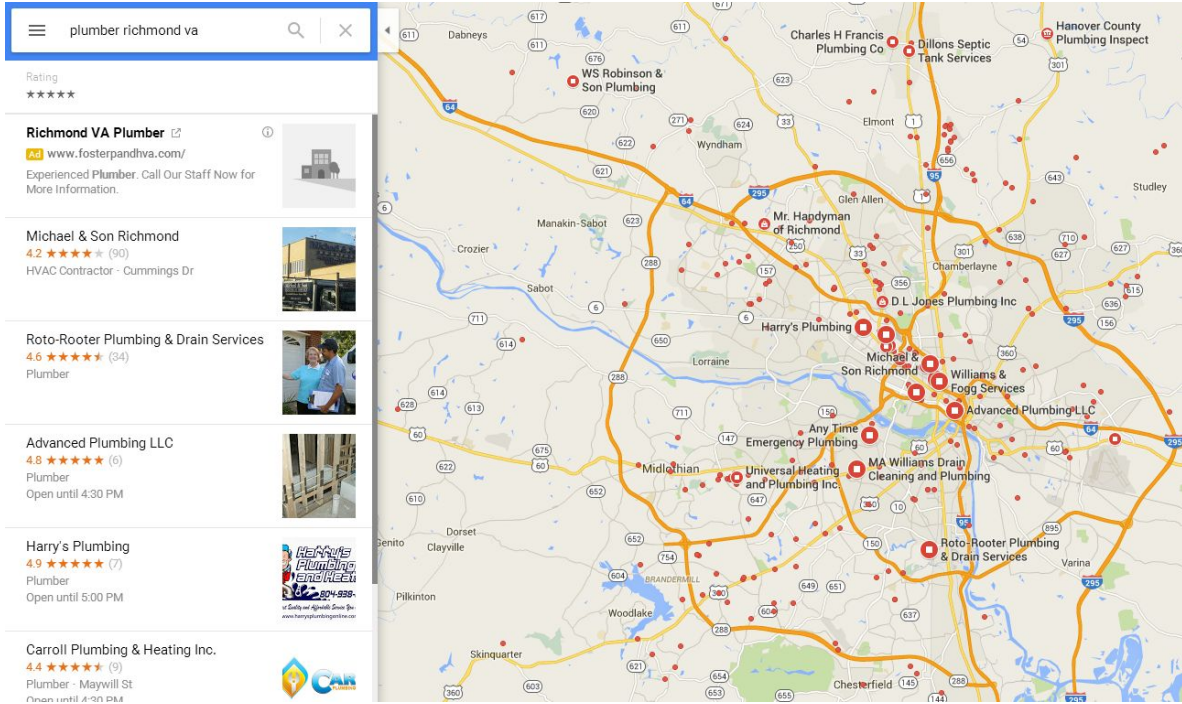
# What is Google My Business?

Simply put, “Google My Business” is how Google puts your business on their Search Results Pages, Google Maps and Google+ for free. By filling out the simple Google My Business form, you can quickly get your business’s contact information in front of new customers.

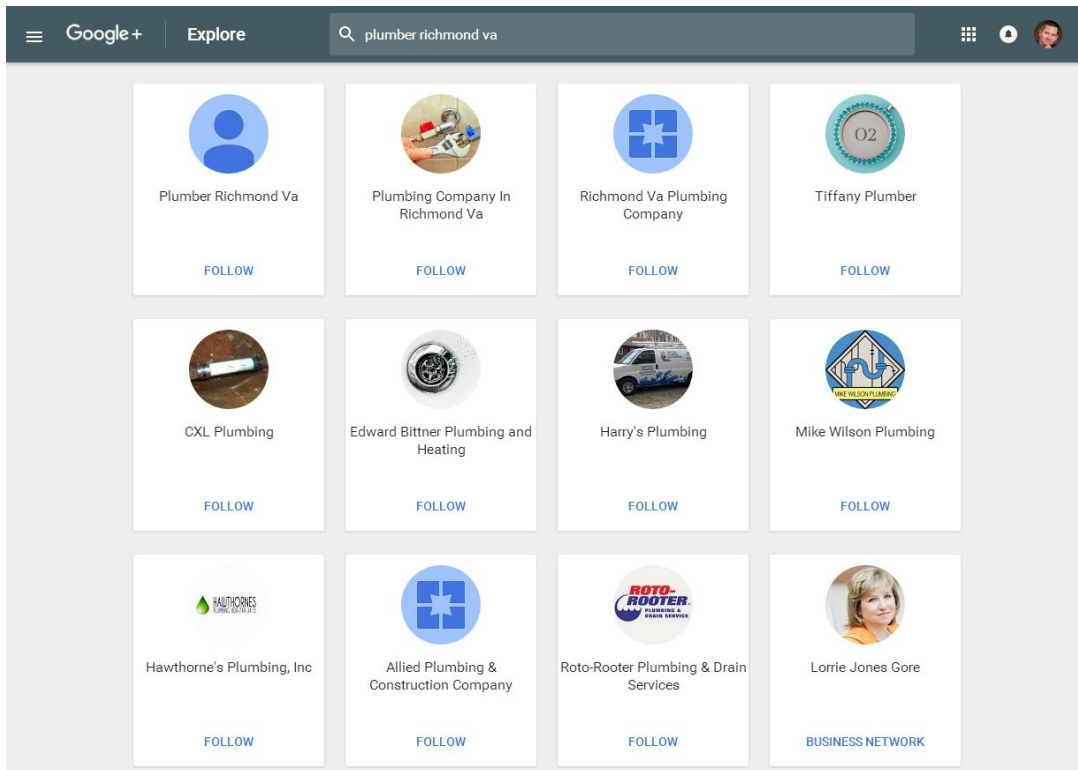
Google My Business has changed names several times. It used to be called Google Business, Google Places and Google+ My Business. It has evolved from several years ago, but it’s purpose is the same - allow local businesses to be found by Google Users.



An example of My Business information on the Google Search Results Page.



An example of the My Business information on Google Maps.



An example of how My Business information appears on Google+.

# “How Much Does Google My Business Cost?”

Nothing. It is absolutely free.

However, the cost of not setting up your Google My Business information correctly, or not following Google’s terms and conditions, can cost you hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost opportunities.

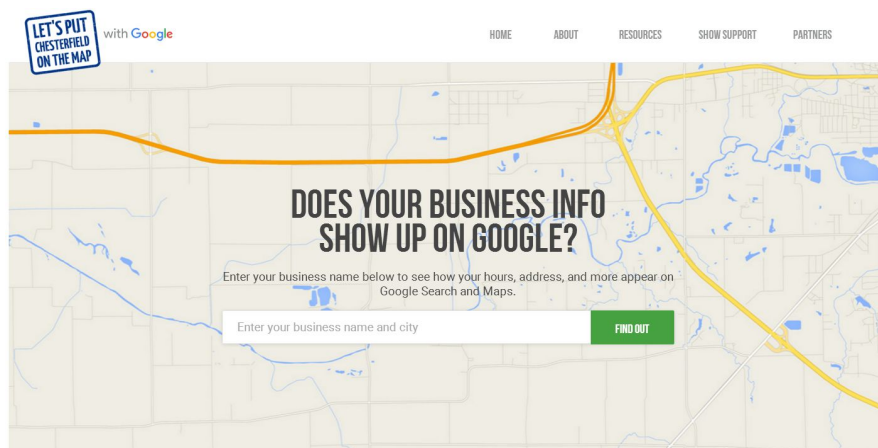
We work with a lot of small business owners. In almost all cases, even when the My Business information isn’t claimed or completely filled-out, the My Business info will be seen by more than 10 times the number of people that visit that company’s website.

For example, a small pizza restaurant near Richmond, VA gets over 95,000 views on their Google My Business page every year. They only get about 3,000 visitors to their website each year. Think about it.

# “I Don’t Have My Business Page Yet. What Do I Do?”

If you haven’t claimed your page yet, the process is fairly simple. Google has set-up a program called “Get Your Business Online” to help small business owners claim and manage their page. Simply go to <https://gybo.com>.

This is the Google-owned website that is designed to make the process of claiming your page easy. Click on the “Check My Business” button to get started. You should see a page similar to this:



Enter your business name followed by the city where your business is physically located, then follow the instructions.

## “What If Someone Else Claimed My Business?”

If your page has been claimed by someone else, then you’ll need to contact that person and ask them to either 1) add you as a manager to that page, or 2) transfer ownership to you. A Google My Business can have only 1 owner.

If you don’t know who owns your page, relax. Google understands that businesses get sold, or that a former employee may have set-up a page and can no longer be contacted, or you simply don’t know your log-in. However, the process can take several weeks, so do not expect instant results.

For the latest instructions on how to claim your My Business from another person, please see Google’s support document:

<https://support.google.com/business/answer/4566671?hl=en>

## How Do I Get More From Google My Business?

1. Make sure all the information is current, correct and 100% complete.
2. Make sure your website has a link to your Google Maps page and your Google+ page. We suggest adding links to the header or footer of your website so every page is linked to your My Business Pages.
3. Use your Google+ Business Page like you would your business’s Facebook or LinkedIn page. Post to the page regularly with stories, pictures, coupons, specials, etc. Google likes it when you use their products.
4. Get reviews. See the “How Do I Get Good Reviews” section below for more on this.
5. Reply to all your reviews to show people that you appreciate their feedback and their business.
6. Invite people to “+1” and “Follow” your website on Google+.

## Why Reviews Are So Important...

Let’s face it. Everyone reads reviews. If you’ve ever bought anything from Amazon or booked a hotel on a travel website, one of the first things you do is read the reviews - the good ones and the bad ones.

You want to know what you’re buying is a good value. You want to know what to expect before you make your purchase. These reviews help establish confidence in a consumer’s purchase.

Here's what most small business owners need to understand about reviews:

### **MORE PEOPLE WILL SEE YOUR REVIEWS ON GOOGLE THAN SEE YOUR WEBSITE.**

And these reviews are so powerful, that they can be your most productive marketing strategy. In fact, we have a few clients with 40+ reviews and a 4.8-star or better rating that tell us over 30% of their phone calls start with something like "I just read your reviews on Google and decided to call you." This is the ideal situation. When Google sees these plentiful, positive reviews, they increase the page position of that business. This means more people are seeing these excellent reviews and you get more phone calls.

Not convinced? Let's put this into perspective. There are two types of people that will search for your business:

**"Andy"** is looking for your products or services, and was not referred to you by anyone. He is probably looking for "value" - ie. quality work at a fair price. Andy will Google something like "painter Little Rock Arkansas" or "pizza restaurant Washington DC"

**"Bob"** was referred to you by another person and is looking specifically for information about your business. He will usually search for the name of your business, something like "Bill Clinton's Painting" or "Hillary's Pizza in Washington DC".

#### Situation #1:

**You don't have any reviews and most of your competitors have at least 10 reviews on Google.**

Both Andy and Bob will see a search results page that shows your business with no reviews and a few of your local competitors with 10+ reviews. Perhaps some have 4.8 star ratings, perhaps some have 2.3 star ratings.

What will both Andy and Bob assume? Probably that you're either not very good at what you do, or you went out of business, or no one has anything nice to say about you. Regardless, they're skeptical and you'll have to convince them that you're the right company to buy from without the social proof that online reviews provide.

#### Situation #2:

**You have a poor overall rating which is significantly (or even slightly) worse than your competitors.**

Again, Andy and Bob will see roughly the same thing - that you're probably not a very good value especially when compared to your competition. Andy will probably not click on any of your

links and Bob will second guess his referral. If they read your reviews, human nature tells us they will read the worst reviews first. They're looking for the reason not to buy from you.

They may visit your website, again probably looking for more reasons not to hire you. If they call your business at all, both will probably call a few of your competitors as well. This puts you in a bidding war.

If they call, you'll notice their skepticism and they'll probably ask several questions about the quality of your work. They'll have their guards up making sure you don't do or say anything that they read about in your bad reviews. This can make the sales process more difficult and decrease your close rate, which means more appointments and less closed business.

### Situation #3:

**You have the highest rating and the most reviews of all your competitors.**

Andy will call you and maybe a few of your competitors. Chances are, he's put you at the top of his list. When he visits your website, he's there for informational purposes only. He's looking for pictures and ideas.

Bob will not call anyone else. Between a friend referring your business and the great online reviews, he has no reason to call anyone else. He may not even look at your website. Bob is sold before he calls you.

Both of them are now only worried about getting a reasonable price. Your sales process becomes much easier and the deals close faster and close for more money.

Again, think back to the last time you bought from Amazon and compared a few different products. Did you buy the one with mixed reviews, or the one with the best reviews? Do you go to the movies that have awful online reviews or the ones with great reviews?

## “How Do I Get Good Reviews?”

There is no easy way to do this, but this method has helped several of our clients. Before you start a “Google review strategy”, you must understand a few things that make getting reviews on Google difficult:

1. Most people do not have a Google log-in, so they will not be able to leave a review unless they create a Google log-in. Most people will not go that extra step for you.
2. If a person has a Google log-in and never uses Google services or has never left a review, or just created a Google profile minutes before leaving a single review, Google may not publish their review. Why? Google will assume it's not a real review.
3. Most people do not feel comfortable leaving their opinions in a public place.

Why do we mention this? Because we want you to understand that you may have to ask 50 people to leave a review for every review you get on Google.

Yes, that means that getting good, quality reviews is a lot of work. But think about it like this - If you were the highest rated business with the most reviews (Situation #3), then you would have to do less selling and spend less on advertising to close new customers. Plus, this makes it difficult for your competitor to get reviews.

## Step #1 - Capture Positive Comments

Train your staff to listen for positive comments about your work and write down those comments. If possible, ask the customer if they would be willing to help your business by telling others about your business. Ask if they would be willing to post comments about their experience online for others to read.

## Step #2 - Ask for the Google Review in an Email (or letter)

That day, email that customer something like this:

Dear Charlie:

Thank you for your kind words about our business. If you recall, you said:

“Company XYZ did a great job of fixing my HVAC system. I called one of your competitors and they tried to force me to buy a whole new system. Your technician was on-time and was able to fix my system for only \$450. He said the system was in good shape and could run well for years to come. You company just saved me \$6000. Thank you for being honest. You have a customer for life.”

It would mean a lot to our business if you would post those kind words to our Google Maps page so that others homeowners can read about your experience. Here is a link to our Google page. Just scroll down and click on the “Write a Review” link and paste your comments. Obviously, feel free to edit what I quoted as needed:

{copy and paste the link to your Google Maps page here}

Thank You In Advance for Helping Us!

Joe Owner

To get the Google Maps link in the { }’s, simply go to Google Maps and search for your business name and city, like “George Bush Bail Bonds Richmond, VA”.



You should see your Google My Business information and a map of your location. Simply copy and paste the link for that page in to the email. It should look something like this:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Third+Marble+Marketing/@37.4219962,-77.6395987,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x89b1771b21574067:0x45a01567ac0285e6>

### Why does this work?

It works for one simple reason - you made it as simple as possible. You've done all the work for the customer. By writing the review for them (using mostly their words), you get exactly what you wanted the review to say and they don't have to think about anything.

### Step #3 - Follow-up

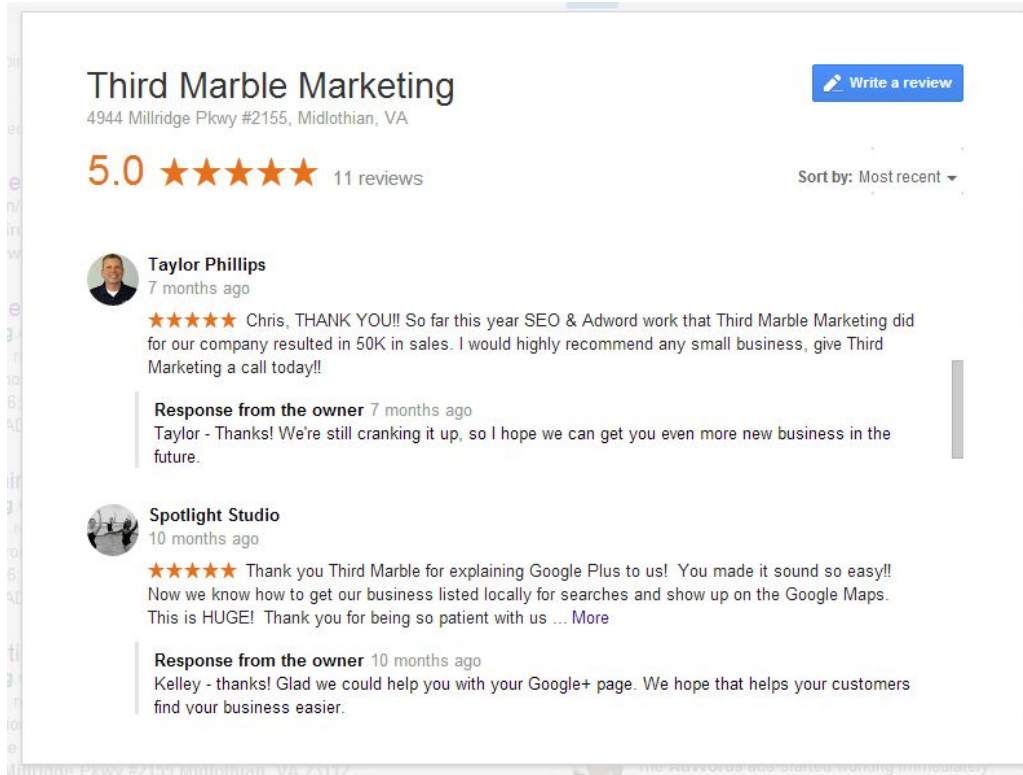
If the person does not leave a review in the next week or two and does not say that they will not do so, send them a reminder email to try again. This time ask them if they would rather leave their review on your Facebook, Yelp or other review website instead. Include links to those pages to make it easy for them to find.

### Step #4 - Reply to the Review

Once they leave the review, respond to the review online. To do this, you'll have to log-in to your Google My Business Page as the owner or a manager and respond to the review. It doesn't have to be long winded. A simple "We're glad we could help!" or "Thank you for your review!" will do.

TIP: When you respond to reviews, this adds more content to your Google My Business pages. Try to add your important keywords to your replies, if possible. Example: "Bob, thank you so much for your kind words. We're glad we could help you with your lawn care needs."

Here's an example of reviews with the owner comments to each review:



The replies tell your readers that you appreciate their business and their reviews, which may help you get more reviews and even more customers. If they see that you reply to your reviews, but your competitor does not, it may even help convince a potential customer to call you, even if you have a few negative reviews.

## “How Do I Get Rid of Bad Reviews?”

**You cannot remove another person’s review from your My Business Page.**

You can try to contact the customer that left the bad review and get them to remove it. This may not be an easy task. You might want to try a very apologetic approach. When someone leaves a bad review, they usually feel like they’ve been disrespected. Diffusing that disrespect will probably help.

If the review is slanderous, consult a lawyer.

If you’re stuck with a bad review on Google, simply reply to the review in a professional manner and try to explain to people reading that review what happened.

In general, the best defense against a bad review is a large number of good reviews, so make getting 5-star reviews part of your marketing strategy.

# Warnings and Pitfalls

## #1 - No Fake Reviews.

If you try to write your own reviews, or if you have employees or relatives write reviews, and Google figures it out, YOU MAY GET BLACKLISTED FROM GOOGLE.

We've seen this happen and the only way to recover from it is to change your address, change the name of your business, change your phone number and change your website domain. So do not try to write fake reviews. The risk is not worth it.

## #2 - Constant "Review Velocity"

Make sure that you get reviews in a natural manner. By this we mean don't try to get 10 reviews in a week if you only have 1 or 2 reviews in the last 3 years. That doesn't look natural to Google and they'll probably delete those reviews, or blacklist your page as spam.

So whatever review collection strategy you implement, make sure you don't send out 200 requests in one day. Send the review requests out evenly over time - 1 or 2 a day, or 5 every Monday, or every time you finish a job.

## #3 - Always Respond to Reviews Professionally

You're going to get a bad review. It happens. Employees make mistakes and things go wrong. The worst thing you can do to that review is write a scathing rant about how bad that customer was and make idle threats. It will scare away the 1000's of people that read it.

Instead, reply in a professional manner and offer a simple explanation as to what happened. If you explain that your manufacturer sent you the wrong part, or the truck broke down, or three employees called in sick that day, etc. - people will understand.

# We Hope This Helped!

If you have any questions about this, feel free to email us at [info@thirdmarblemarketing.com](mailto:info@thirdmarblemarketing.com).

We also offer a simple online system that some of our customers use to help acquire and manage your online reviews. The cost is only \$29 per month and more information can be found here if you're interested:

<http://thirdmarblemarketing.com/search-engine-optimization-richmond-va/review-management-system/>