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## Mandatory Google My Business Guide for Custom Shops

Knowing that Google is Master of the Universe when it comes to search engine use and new customers finding your custom shop, it is vital to understand how important your Google My Business custom shop listings are to ranking higher in Google search results.

Claiming and verifying a separate Google My Business listing for each location of your custom shop is the first and most basic step to local search engine optimization (SEO).

If you want an easy way to make sure that your custom shop gets seen and ranks high on local search engine results, then Google My Business is the way to go.

Google likes to keep things in-house as much as possible, so it favors its own accurate and current business listings when giving local search results to search users.



Complete and accurate Google My Business listings that keep their information up to date and get custom shop service reviews on their listings are rewarded with higher rankings.

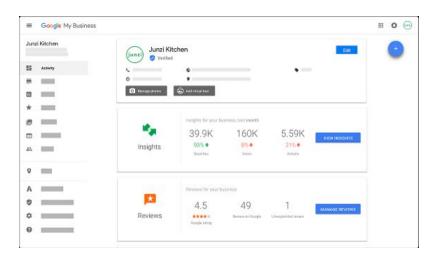


## #1 Ensure Business Name, Address and Phone (NAP) is Correct on All Listings

Google wants your name on Google My Business to reflect your custom shop' real-world name as it is used on your storefront and is known by your customers.

Take note that they do not permit you to add extra information to your custom shop name in this field such as location (Custom Shop Motors - New Jersey), taglines, special characters or URLs. Additionally, you can't use P.O. Boxes for your address and you should use your local phone number for each location as opposed to a call center toll-free number.

Remember that it is critical that your NAP not only be correct on Google My Business but consistent across the Web, so make sure you are monitoring and managing your custom shop listings.





# **#2**Google My Business Descriptions ARE BACK on GMB Listings!

Google My Business had descriptions used to be attached to your required Google account and then all a sudden they were gone, and your Google My Business custom shop listings didn't have descriptions anymore. Well... they are back!

#### **How to Optimize Google My Business Descriptions**

With the return of Google My Business descriptions, submit content describing what separates you from the competition. So think about your custom shop's USP. Mention if you have added value services like 24-hour fast service or free quotations within the area.

Links are not allowed, but Google My Business gives you 750 characters to get your message across and optimize your Google My Business custom shop listings.

- Add what makes your custom shop brand unique in an overcrowded market.
  - Get your keywords in there, but don't overstuff!
  - Describe your services, especially when it isn't clear exactly what you do from your custom shop name.
    - Talk up local ties to your area to entice nearby customers.



#### **Guidelines for Google My Business Descriptions**

Published content should highlight what makes your custom shop services unique. You can use this field to provide useful information on services and if you have additional offers, as well as the mission and history of your custom shop.

You should be upfront and honest about the information provided, focusing on content that is relevant and useful to your customers to understand your custom shop.

#### Content published in this field should NOT:

- Be misleading to users. Do not provide inaccurate or false information about your custom shop.
  - Display low-quality, irrelevant, or distracting content. For example, misspellings, gimmicky character use, gibberish, etc.
- Focus on special promotions, prices, and offer sale. Examples of content not allowed include, "Everything on sale, -50%" and "Best bagels in town for \$5!"
  - Display links. No links of any type are allowed.
    - Display offensive or inappropriate content



# #3Get More and More Reviews to Your Google My Business Listings

Encourage customers to review your custom shop by clicking "Write a Review" on your Google My Business page. The facts are clear: The more reviews on your Google business page and the better the rating of those reviews, the higher you are going to rank in local search results.

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This is especially essential for those in the custom shop industry. Companies in this space tend to rely on word of mouth. Reviews are going to be huge for your marketing!

Review Management is a real thing, it is vital to the success of your custom shop, and you need to be doing it yesterday. Have a plan and process in place to ask customers for

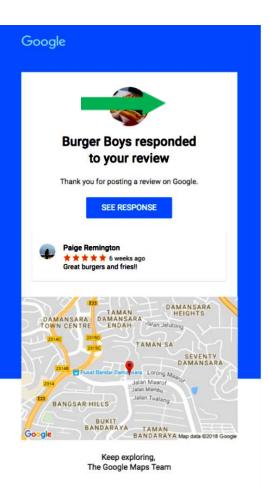
reviews and make it easy for them to post the best of your reviews on Google.

On May 11, 2018, Google announced that they are sending email notifications to consumers when a business has posted a response to a review the consumer left, encouraging them to view the review response.

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Not only does this up the expectations of consumers to hear back from businesses they have reviewed as word spreads of these new review response notification. It also makes leaving reviews a more interactive experience, enriching the experience for people who put in the time to leave reviews.

Think about it, if a customer has started bonding with your brand, who will they think of first the next time they have some issues with their vehicles? Or the next time their vehicle needs better customization? The obvious answer would be you!



Review responses will be immediately visible on Google Search and Maps, and the reviewer will be emailed a notification like the image shown,

Schedule time to be an active presence on Google and respond appropriately to reviews to show future customers that high value you place on your customers' experiences with your custom shop. You can only respond to reviews on "verified" Google My Business pages, so if you haven't done this yet, go now to Verify a Local Business on Google.



## #4Update Your Business Hours with Every Permanent, Holiday and Seasonal Change

Many businesses change their hours seasonally or year to year. If your custom shop does this, then you need to look at the hours on your listing and make sure they are up-to-date.

Navigating with Google Maps, and selecting a business that Google believes is closed or closing soon, you will be asked if you still want to go to this location even though it is closed or closing within the hour.

#### Don't lose customers because you have incorrect hours listed.

While you are at it, update your payment options if they have changed to avoid disappointing all of those Apple Pay© or Discover Card© paying customers.





## #5Pay Attention to Map Location and Where Your Local Pin is Positioned

You've verified your address is correct. Now take a look at your location on the map and make sure the marker is in the right place. If the marker placement doesn't make sense or it is on the wrong side of the road, you can drag the marker on that map to your exact business location.

While logged into your Google My Business Account, use the sidebar to find and click the "Info," and you'll see an option to view your listing on either Google

Search or Google Maps. Click on the button next to your address and you can move the location pin to the correct place.

# Providing an accurate business address is important so your business shows up in the right place on Google. Country / Region United States Street address YOUR ADDRESS State ZIP code Texas 75071 CANCEL APPLY

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



## #6Pick ALL the Best Google My Business Categories for Your Business

Categories on Google My Business are one of those instances where "more is more." Select all the categories from their list that applies for your custom shop, and don't be afraid to get specific. "All around custom shop service" is more relevant than "custom shop service" in search results.

#### Category

Categories describe what your business is, not what it does or sells.

Primary category

Business to Business Service

Additional categories

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ADD ANOTHER CATEGORY

CANCEL APPLY

X

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

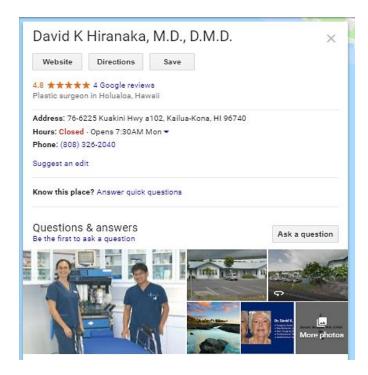
This helps Google consider your custom shop as a relevant result for local searches in that category. Don't over-reach or misrepresent your custom shop. Google is sure to notice and won't be happy. But choose all the categories that represent the services or products your custom shop provides.

You can find a complete listing of Google My Business categories by clicking this link and selecting the "en" (for English) tab at the bottom of the spreadsheet: Google My

**Business Locations Categories** 



# **#7**Optimizing Individual Listings For Custom Shops



If your custom shop is a one man show but with your own customer base, your name is your custom shop name for Google My Business.

If you work with clients and customers and they can directly contact you at the verified location during business hours then that is good enough for Google.



## **#8**Add Photos, Photos, and More Photos

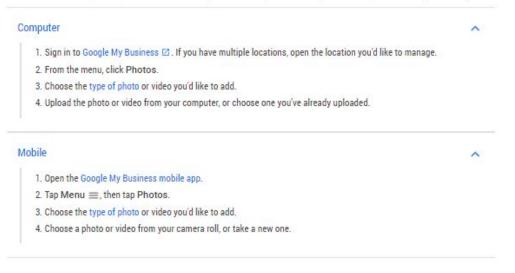
Adding quality, story-telling photos to your Google My Business custom shop listings can go a long way in selling your custom shop services and products, but no photo is speaking volumes as well.

Multiple surveys have shown that photos, reviews, and opening hours all have a substantial, positive relationship with consumer engagement.

Showing photos of your custom shop location (interior and exterior) not only help customers find your custom shop, it helps build the trust customers need to overcome the fear of the unknown and try a new business.

### Add photos or videos

After you select the photos or videos you want to add to your Google My Business listing, make sure photos are in either JPG or PNG format and the right size, and videos follow our guidelines. Then, follow the steps below to upload them to your listing:



With photos, customer reviews, and accurate location and contact information consumers are more likely to take a chance on your custom shop.



#### Here are the basic photo guidelines for Google My Business:

- Photos must be in one of these formats: JPG, GIF, PNG, TIFF, BMP.
  - Each photo must be smaller than 5MB.
- We recommend adding photos that are larger than 720 x 720 pixels and smaller than 3000 x 3000 pixels.
  - The longer dimension of the photo should be no more than twice the shorter dimension. Landscape photos look better than portrait photos on Google products.
    - Each location can have no more than 25 additional photos.
  - The photo should be in focus, well-lit, have no photoshop alterations, and no excessive use of filters. The image should represent reality.

If your photos don't fit these standards, we may not be able to display them on Google ads.

#### **Types of Photos on Google My Business**

There are several types of photos you can add to your custom shop listing:

- **Profile photo:** Help your customers recognize your custom shop.
- **Cover photo:** Showcase your page's personality. Adding a cover photo automatically sets it as your listing's preferred photo. This action doesn't guarantee

 Additional photos: Add different photos to spotlight features of your custom shop that customers consider when making purchasing decisions. Learn more about <u>business photos</u>.

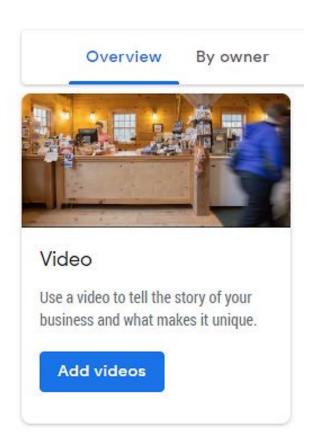
#### Types of business-specific photos

	Description	Minimum number to add	Tips
Exterior photos	Exterior photos help customers recognize your business as they approach from different directions.	Add at least three great exterior photos to help customers recognize your business.	Capture a photo from each direction that customers might approach your business.      Try uploading photos that show your business at different times of day.
Interior photos	Interior photos help your customers get a feel for the ambiance and decor of your business.	Add at least three great interior photos to show customers what your business feels like inside.	Capture photos that truthfully show what it's like to stand inside your business as a customer.      Capture the atmosphere of your business in your photos.
Product photos	Great photos of representative or popular products give customers a better understanding of the kinds of goods you offer.	Add at least three photos of products that you sell.	Showcase the items that are most popular for your business.      Try taking evenly lit photos of your products.
Photos at work	Photos help customers quickly understand the type of work you do.	Add at least three photos that are representative of the services you offer.	Capture photos of your team providing different types of service to customers.      Capture photos of the speciality services you deliver.
Food & drink photos	Food & drink photos add color and detail to your menu and help customers plan where to eat.	Add at least three photos of the food or drinks you serve.	Showcase the food items that are most popular for your business.      Try taking evenly lit photos of your food items.



## #9Google My Business Now Includes Videos with Photos in Search Results

Now you can post videos to your Google My Business custom shop listings in addition to photos to give search users a richer view of your custom shop. Videos can be up to 30 seconds long, and it's worth noting that videos can be added by owners AND customers.



Adding video is as easy as adding photos.

Log into your Google My Business account and go to the photo section to upload the latest photos and video. While you're in there, select the best "Cover," "Profile" and "Logo" images for your profile. Videos uploaded by you will appear under the "By owner" tab and customer uploaded videos will appear under the "By customer" tab. All videos will appear under the "Video" tab where you can delete any videos. For search and map users, videos will show up the same as photos. If you have two or more videos, you could have a video subtab show up on mobile searches.



#### **Optimizing Google My Business Videos**

Creating a video for your locations is neither complicated nor expensive and doesn't require extra equipment or video editing software. Start out simple taking videos of your location's interior, exterior, employees working, and customers enjoying your services.

All you need is a smartphone to take and share or save videos. These Google My Business videos are not and cannot be commercials or advertising and must be taken by users at your location. If video content isn't relevant to each specific location, Google will probably remove it.



#### Here are the Google My Business Format and Style Guidelines:

#### **Basic Guidelines**

Video Max Duration: 30 seconds

Video Max File size: 100 MB

Video Min Resolution: 720p

#### **Stylistic Adjustments**

- Stylistic adjustments (such as applied filters) are acceptable, provided that these stylistic changes are minimal and are not appended elements such as borders, text, collaged images, etc.
  - Content that makes it difficult for others to understand the environment you're sharing may be rejected.
- Screenshots, drawings, posters and other non-photos, other than videos, should not be uploaded.
- For videos, only upload content that is stable and has good visual quality.
   Content that is out of focus, shaky, or has bad exposure should not be uploaded. Distorted or corrupted videos are not allowed.



#### **Superimposed Text or Graphics on Videos**

Superimposed text or graphics, including promotional content such as logos, are subject to the following requirements:

- For 360 photos, superimposed content must be limited to either the zenith or nadir (top or bottom 25% of the equirectangular image) but cannot be present in both.
- For traditional digital photos and videos, superimposed content cannot take up more than 10% of the image or video and must be limited to a single edge.



## #10Use Google Posts to Promote Your Events, Products, and Services

Google Posts were introduced to store fresh content with people who found your custom shop through Google Search. This Google My Business feature lets you create posts with content you want to be displayed to customers when they see your custom shop listing on Google search results. Publish your events, products, and services directly to Google Search in the Knowledge Panel and Maps.

What's new
CREATE AN OFFER POST

1. Feature a special offer
Attract customers with a limited-time deal or discount.

2. Set dates
Make it clear when the promotion starts and ends.

3. Make it easy to redeem
Add a coupon code, terms and conditions, and link to redeem the offer.

Try it now

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They are meant to be used to show search user what is going on with your custom shop right now.

Each post you create is removed from search results after seven days, or after the event date. Enhance the search and comparison parts of the buyer's journey with these quick and simple updates.

Google Posts give you the opportunity to promote your latest and greatest content, deals, events, product updates, and service specials appear with your listing in search.

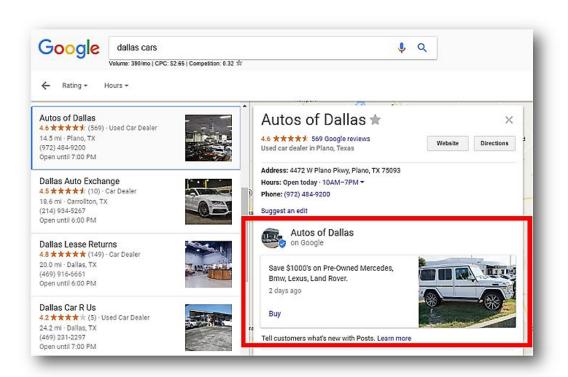
**NEW to Google My Business:** You can now create OFFER POST to feature exclusive offers and limited-time deals and discounts.



#### How a Google Post Shows on Search and Maps

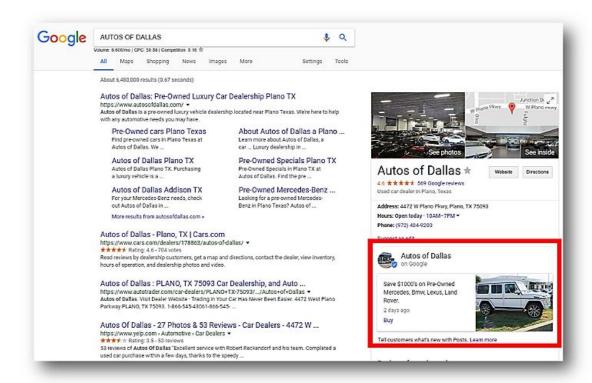
Google Posts are part of your Google My Business account and only show as part of your custom shop listing as it appears in search results. If a Google Search user is looking for "best custom shop in Boston" they are not going to see your posts in search results.

For a service or product, your local SEO and Google My Business optimization will need to have your custom shop ranking high in the local pack and maps where your custom shop can be clicked, and then they will see your Google Post.



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If Google users search for Honest Al's Custom Car Works, and that's your Google My Business verified and optimized business account, then the Knowledge Panel for your custom shop will display to the right of search results where customers will see your Google Posts.





#### **Optimizing Google Post to Promote Your Business**

**Character Limits:** Only the first 80-100 characters will show in the Post so make those characters count and preview the Post to make sure your sentence isn't cut off.

**Headlines:** Write headlines that make the reader want to click. Think of it as an ad to inspire action.

**Call to Action:** Tell the viewer what to do next. "Free Download" or "Learn How to" or "Order Now" are clear CTA's that minimize the decisions the audience needs to make.

**Image Size:** The best image size is  $750 \times 750$ . Anything smaller than  $250 \times 250$  won't be accepted. Preview the post to make sure the image appears as intended.

**Post Often:** Share daily specials and current promotions to keep customers up-to-date on your offers.

**Multiple Post:** If you have more than one post, the newest one will display first and older post show in a carousel format. Users can scroll through up to 10 posts, but only the first two can be fully seen without scrolling.



#### Do's and Don'ts for Writing a Google Post directly from Google

There is a right and wrong way to leverage Google Post. To get the do's and don'ts we went directly to the source.

This is what Google tells us about Google Post:

#### **Google's Suggestions for Writing the Perfect Google Post**

- 1. **Be precise**: What are the 3 things your customer needs to know? What do you want them to remember, for how much, and when?

  "Custom Shop Promo! Half-price on all services this coming Labor day."
  - 2. **Be personal**: Show what your custom shop values: "We care about our loyal fans, half price on all custom shop services for repeat customers"
  - 3. **Tell your customers what they can do**. Are you selling a service? Tell them how they can avail of your services.

"Call us to get a quote for your custom shop needs. Absolutely Free."



- 4. **Highlight what makes your custom shop, product, or offer unique**. Large selection, free shipping? Tell people: "We have a 24 hour emergency custom shop service. Free of charge!"
- 5. **Be timely** use a key selling point or popular item as the hook for your post: "Winter is here. As a special promo, we are offering 20% off on all custom shop services for this season."
  - 6. Be sure to include any redemption instructions, unique codes, or restrictions on offers or sales:

"\$10 off purchase of \$50 or more. 50% off select services."

- 7. **Use abbreviations** for days and months, and don't use periods, to allow more space for your post, and abbreviate hours:

  Jan, Feb, Mar... Mon, Tue, Wed... 9 AM, 5 PM, 12 PM
- 8. Avoid the commercial slang and excessive exclamation marks or all caps that make your post look like an advertisement:

"ONE TIME SALE: 50% off any machine & radiator works." or "Crazy SALE today!!!"

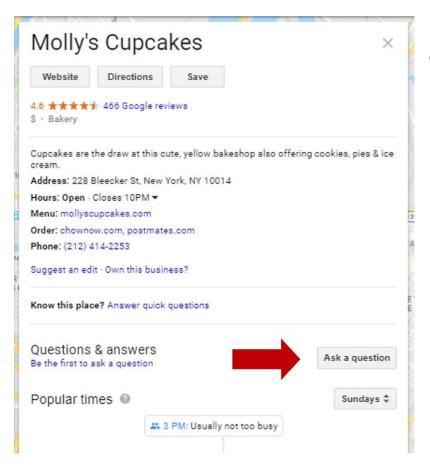
9. **Don't include more than one offer or too many exclusions** in one communication:NO▶ "Half price on any custom shop work from 3-6 PM on Fridays, and the next service you avail you get one free Honest Al's cap."



## #11Google My Business Q & A

Google Questions & Answers (Q&A) allows local custom shop owners and the public to answer consumer questions asked by search engine users.

Google's Questions & Answers feature can be helpful in keeping your customers informed, but just like review monitoring this feature can't be ignored and will require a little maintenance on your end to protect your reputation.



The good news is that most local custom shops are not yet using this feature. By being proactive and taking the time to optimize your Questions & Answers, you'll be ahead of the competition.

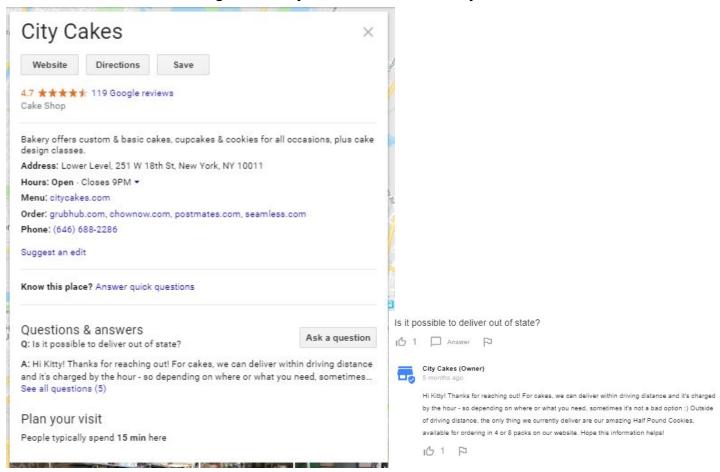
Ask and answer questions from your listing in search results.



#### **Google Questions & Answers Pros and Cons**

#### Pros:

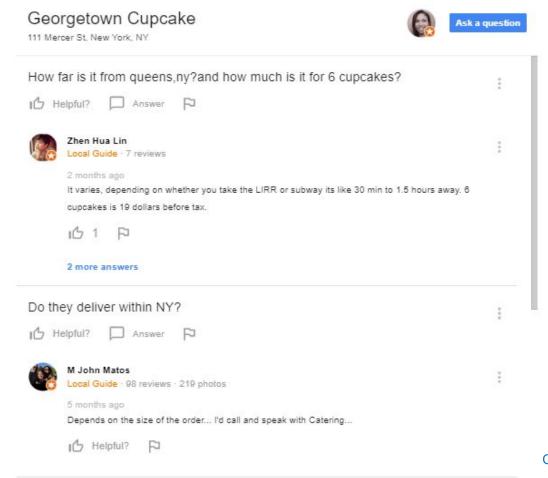
You as the business owner and other people can ask and answer questions giving Google Maps and Google Search users more customer-relevant information about your custom shop. Here is another level of customer-centric data available to future customers through an easy to use FAQ format you can contribute to.





#### Cons:

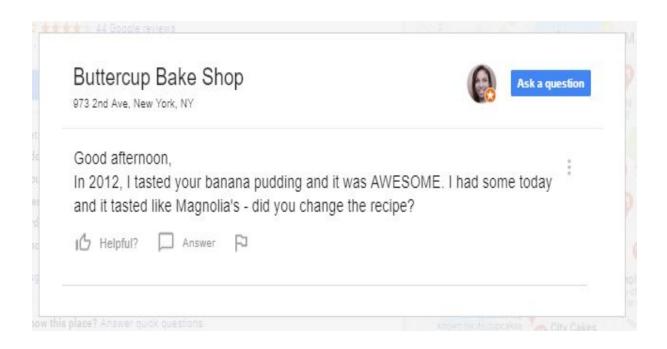
You can't opt out of or turn off the Question & Answer feature. Users can leave answers/comments without the restrictions of review, approval or monitoring. This unfiltered instant publishing leaves room for user-generated content that could be harmful to your reputation to appear with your Google business listing. This could be bad news at a time when reputation management is vital to the success of local and small businesses.



OR CUSTOM SHOPS

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If you aren't answering questions, there's a chance Google Search and Maps users will do it for you. Or the questions being asked will just sit there unanswered which is a lost opportunity to highlight what's special about your custom shop for free.





#### 5 Steps to Optimizing Google Questions & Answers

User-generated content on Google such as reviews and Questions & Answers have the potential to impact your online reputation. Business owners and reputation/marketing managers should monitor this feature as part of a plan for monitoring reviews.

Some business such as entertainment locations, restaurants and hotels will see more traffic in their Q&A section, but all businesses should take the opportunity to populate this feature, providing answers to the questions that customers frequently ask.

However, just because you are in the custom shop industry means that you won't be getting any questions. So answer this one with care and knowledge as to not affect your reputation.



## Optimizing Google's Questions & Answers

- 1. Be proactive and start using this feature now.
- 2. Be helpful and concise when answering questions.
- 3. Install Google Maps app to get new question notifications.
- 4. Answer all questions promptly to protect reputation.
- 5. Report false or malicious answers to Google.

#### 1. BE PROACTIVE AND START NOW.

Stay ahead of the competition and on top of anyone who's visited your location and been asked by Google to answer a question. Come up with a list of questions that answer the issues your customers are asking and answer them populate this section. Think about the actual questions customers call and ask before visiting your location.



#### 2. BE HELPFUL AND CONCISE.

Answer questions with only the needed information to be helpful. Note that you shouldn't answer just yes or no to a question because the question asker can edit their question and then your "yes" might not make sense anymore. If they ask if you take Sunday appoints, then a good answer is "Yes, we do work on Sundays but only by appointment with limited services."

#### 3. INSTALL THE GOOGLE MAPS APP ON YOUR PHONE.

Log into Google Maps with the account you use to manage Google My Business, and make sure that notifications are turned on. Stay on top of your Q&A section with push notifications you'll receive when you are logged in. Currently, there is no Google My Business dashboard section to monitor the Q&A feature.



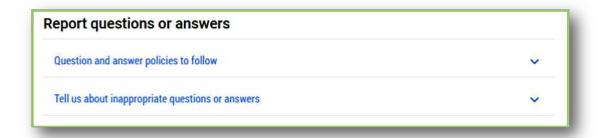
#### 4. ANSWER CUSTOMER QUESTIONS PROMPTLY.

Make sure you are checking in at least weekly on this section and answering any questions as soon as they pop up. If left unanswered or ignored for any period of time you risk having random previous customers (or competitors) answer the questions for you.

#### 5. REPORT FALSE OR MALICIOUS ANSWERS.

You can't hide spam or malicious postings, but you can <u>report fake content to Google</u>. I've seen where past customers have used this feature as yet another platform to complain about a negative experience, completely irrelevant to the "Do they have single point heaters?" question they posted under. If the comment shouldn't be there, let Google know.





## Optimize Google My Business Listings to Amplify Google Search Rankings and Traffic

By optimizing your Google My Business listing you can expect higher ranking in local search, an increased click-through-rate to your custom shop website, and a better search (and find) experience for the user.

A search user, looking to do business now is likely to become your next customer if you can optimize your Google presence to show at the top of search engine and maps results pages.



## Learn More About How We Can Help You Grow Your Custom Shops' Online Reputation



Phone number: 303-993-0911

Email: info@customshopsmarketing.com

Website: <a href="https://www.customshopsmarketing.com">www.customshopsmarketing.com</a>

