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## **Have You Heard about Google My Business?**

Google My Business is Google's new platform for creating, managing, and monitoring business listings. It is a good first step for companies that are just getting started on the web; but it has also become the main, one-stop-shop dashboard for businesses that previously used Google+ Local and Google Places for Business.

If your brand claimed and verified your listing on one of the previous platforms, the information should have been automatically updated to Google My Business.

However, it's still a good idea to check to make sure everything transferred correctly. If not, fix any inaccuracies or duplicates as soon as possible.

One of the major benefits of the service is that businesses will no longer have to update their information multiple times across different Google properties.

Google My Business will help you connect with more local consumers, whether they're searching for you on organic search, Maps, or Google+. It is a fast way to help your business show up across the board; ultimately giving you more visibility and exposure.

Google My Business is a free service designed to get more business owners under the Google umbrella. Its tools and features make it very convenient for companies to manage their Google-related online properties in a single unified place.

With it, you can:

- Manage your business listings for Google+, Maps, and Search
- Upload pictures and videos of your business
- Interact and share content with followers on Google+
- Monitor and respond to reviews from across the web
- Start and maintain AdWords Express campaigns
- Access Insights reports and analytics for Google+ and YouTube

Google My Business can provide insight into how consumers are discovering your company, what they click on, and other interesting features that will provide you with powerful data that can be used to grow your business.

Businesses can access the Google My Business platform on their desktop computer or through an iOS or Android app from a mobile device. Google+ Local and Google Places were not compatible with mobile devices, so this is a major enhancement – making managing your local listing even more convenient.

If you don't have the time to sign-up or maintain your profile on Google My Business, seek the help of a skilled professional that can ensure your listing is fully completed, claimed, and optimized.

As you know, most consumers today are going online to search for local products and services; so this is one of the most effective ways to put your brand right in front of these active leads.

### **Stay Up-to-Date with Google Alerts**

Are there times when you wish you could be alerted about new content posted on the web about your business or industry? Wish no more - Google Alerts can help you do all of that and more.

Once you set it up, Google Alerts will send email notifications directly to your inbox whenever new web content is posted on your topics of choice. This includes news articles, social media, blogs, web pages, and more – as long as they match the search term you set up, you will be notified.

Google Alerts can help you stay on top of the buzz surrounding your products, services, and company. It's perfect for online reputation management because you will know immediately when bad press is posted about your business so you can address it accordingly.

On the same note, you will know if good press is being published about your business as well. You will quickly be able to see where the praise is coming from and respond to if you choose to do so. Being able to identify good mentions about your business gives you a chance to interact with customers, as well as see what you're doing right. It's also a way to build positive customer reviews and testimonials, which will ultimately help you generate even more new business.

Furthermore, Google Alerts will allow you to get first-hand news and information related to your industry. By targeting keyword phrases that are specific to your type of business, product, or service, you will always be informed about trends and changes that could directly impact your company.

Want to spy on your competitors? Google Alerts can help you do that too. Now it's easier than ever before to see what your competitors are up to. If you want to gain the competitive advantage in your local area, use this information to improve your own processes and product or service lines.

By setting up alerts related to your business, the industry as a whole, and your competitors, you will have a much better idea of how to move forward, invest, and promote your business.

Google Alerts is tried and true. It is proven to work, it's simple to set up, and it's easy for even the newest user to understand. However, don't hesitate to get the help of a professional if you would like some direction on how to use the platform to its full potential.

### **Get More Out of Your Marketing with Google Trends**

Google Trends is an online service that is based on searches performed in the Google search engine; in other words, it is excellent for keyword research and brainstorming possibilities that will take your online presence to the next level.

It will show you how popular certain keywords or keyword phrases are, which is powerful information for any search engine optimization (SEO) campaigns.

The heart of SEO is keyword research. Keyword phrases are what your customers will use to find your company online. Using Google Trends, you can see how popular certain keywords are in your specific area, and you can also get suggestions for more related keywords.

With this completely free tool, you can easily compare the search volume between two or more different terms; as a result, you can build a list of profitable keyword terms based on real information instead of taking a guess at which terms you should target.

Need content ideas? Google Trends is perfect for helping you come up with content ideas for your website, blog, videos, or social media posts. Spending just a few minutes to do some research can give you a whole list of ideas with just a few clicks of the mouse.

You can learn a whole lot about your target audience using Google Trends; information that you may have never learned by reading some industry publication or trade magazine. Instead, you will get the real, raw data about what people are searching for on Google.

Want your main company website or secondary site to sit on a keyword-rich domain name? Google Trends can help you pinpoint the best domain names based on hot keyword terms.

Much like Google Alerts, you can use Google Trends to monitor your competitors too. It may not work for every business, especially those with very few searches for their specific name. However, if there is data available that is specific to one of your competitors, this is an excellent way to see how many people are searching for their company name vs. yours.

Google Trends has numerous features built-in that can take your business to new heights. As a small business owner, you are always in the fight for more local customers or clients. So you need as many tools in your arsenal as possible that will help you improve your online presence and maintain solid visibility.

### **Build a Loyal Social Following with Google+**

Google+ (called "Google Plus") is Google's social networking site. It is currently the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest social networking site (Facebook is #1), which makes it an essential component for online marketing.

With hundreds of millions of user accounts, Google+ is growing quite impressively not only as a social networking site, but as a powerful business tool as well.

A strong Google+ profile can contribute greatly to any successful SEO campaign. As a small business owner, a strong Google+ following and presence can bolster your website's position in Google's search engine results. Ranking well in organic search is crucial to driving targeted eager prospects to your website; and targeted leads usually convert the best.

For local businesses, Google even has a section where you can connect with more local consumers in your area. Your Google+ Business page can be managed by their listing management platform called "Google My Business," (formerly known as Google+ Local and Google Places), which is tied into Google+. Google+ Business pages are intimately linked with Google Web Search; so any time and energy you invest into Google+ can definitely lead to more revenue.

Now is the time for companies across the globe to take advantage of Google+. However, many business owners are not quite sure about how to use this dynamic network to get more attention.

Here are a few tips to help:

- Get more people to follow your Google+ page by asking them to follow you via a call-to-action that is added to any content you share.

- Circle other profiles and pages; this will help to grow your own follower base because many of those you circle will circle you back. This works very well for getting more people in your immediate area to connect with your business.
- Add a Google+ badge to your website or blog; this will let your visitors know you are on Google+ and prompt them to add you to their circles.
- Interact with your followers and build relationships. People like to see a real person behind a business engaging with them. This builds trust and makes them feel more comfortable doing business with you.
- Share your content in Google+ communities; this can expose your business to a wider-range of users. Just be sure to check the guidelines of the communities before sharing. In fact, create your own Google+ community to spark conversation surrounding your niche.

Even though many business owners were skeptical about Google+'s ability to actually increase sales and exposure, it's massive growth over the past few years has proven just how powerful it can be.

### **Share Your Expertise with Google Hangouts**

Google Hangouts is a video chat platform that was released in 2013. Before the launch of Hangouts, Google had promoted many similar, but technologically distinct messaging services and platforms across its many products; most of which are now discontinued with the launch of Hangouts.

A Google Hangout is a tool that lets you have a one-on-one or group conversation via video. This is perfect for businesses that need to meet face-to-face with customers or clients, as well as their staff, coworkers, and business associates.

In the past, business owners flew themselves, and their employees, all over the globe to partake in face-to-face meetings. Not only is frequent travel expensive, but it takes up a lot of time that could be spent on other areas of the business.

Just a few short years ago, travel was the only way to connect face-to-face with business associates and clients in multiple locations.

Google Hangouts provides a solution to help companies still reap the benefits of these important meetings no matter where the two parties may be located physically.

The good thing is that it is not limited to just two people; you can have a group of up to 15 people on any given Hangout. Some of the other benefits include:

- The ability to join a Hangout easily from a desktop, tablet, or laptop
- The ability to share your screen with everyone on the Hangout
- The ability to hold public Hangouts to demo new products or services
- All Hangout streams are encrypted and secure

One convenient feature of Google Hangouts is that they're hosted on YouTube, and that means that you can easily promote your video on your website or your other social media channels.

Another creative way to use Hangouts is to show your customers and prospects that you are an expert in your industry. It's the ideal place to promote your business and yourself while also giving your audience valuable and helpful information.

Last, but not least, Google Hangouts is the perfect tool to help you put a "face" on your business and connect with your target audience in a personal way. Seeing someone's face immediately builds a level of trust that will put potential customers at ease about doing business with you.

Shut down the fear of the "unknown" by having public or private Hangouts with your potential customers as a new way to convert hot leads into paying customers.

### **What Is Google Webmaster Tools?**

Google Webmaster Tools is a free service offered by Google for website owners. Website owners can add their sites to this platform to get regular updates on important information such as indexing status, search queries, and search appearance. There are also tips included inside the interface on how to optimize and increase the visibility of your website.

Chances are that you have never heard of this tool; that's unless you are personally handling your website and SEO operations. In most cases, small business owners are too busy running their day-to-day operations to become involved at this level of website management and monitoring.

However, it's still good for you to have a basic understanding of this platform. Google Webmaster Tools provides a wealth of information about websites, such as a list of

broken links, traffic statistics for individual keywords, links pointing to your site, statistics on how Google indexes your site, any errors on your site, domain preferences, and so much more.

This powerful platform is vital for search engine optimization efforts because it helps you see your website as Google sees it. For instance, you can see trends over time with the viewing data with change feature. You can even add and view sitemaps, remove any URLs, and find issues with your site's title tags and meta descriptions.

If you would like to check out Google Webmaster Tools first-hand (just be sure to let your webmaster know before you do anything), set your site up on it and take a look around. Once you create an account, you can log into the dashboard and add your site.

The platform may seem confusing at first, but once you explore around for a while, it will become more familiar to you overtime. Be sure to read or watch any tutorials in their help section that will teach you some of its specific features and functionalities.

Again, doing this may not be your cup of tea – and that's fine. It's probably best that you leave it in the hands of whoever is handling your website's management and SEO. If you don't currently have anyone and don't think you have the time or skills to dedicate to it, consider hiring a professional online marketing consultant or search engine optimization specialist.

However, if you are a do-it-yourselfer, Google Webmaster Tools is definitely something to pay attention to and become familiar with.

## **Manage Your Day to Day Business with Google Apps for Work**

Managing the day-to-day operations of your business can be overwhelming at times. There are so many different software programs and online portals that we use every day just to complete basic tasks that it's easy to become frustrated and inefficient.

Google Apps for Work is a paid service that offers an affordable suite of web-based apps to help businesses manage their daily tasks. It offers customizable versions of many existing Google products – such as Gmail, Drive, and more - all accessible on your own domain name.

This robust, cloud-based platform can make your company's productivity and workflow more fluid and consistent, which is vital to achieving the levels of success you are

reaching for. Businesses of any size and level can take advantage of the storage, accessibility, and speed of this office suite.

One of the major benefits that Google Apps for Work offers is its low price point. The premier version costs less than \$50 per year, and you'll get access to an unlimited number of user accounts at that price, as well as access to all of Google's apps, 25 GB of e-mail storage space per employee, 24/7/365 customer support, and a nearly 100% network uptime guarantee.

As you can see, Google Apps looks pretty good from a financial standpoint compared to other software of its kind. Think about the cost of buying Microsoft Office for everyone in the company; you're likely to spend several thousand dollars on all those licenses.

Another benefit of Google Apps is that each application can seamlessly integrate with the other ones. You can set up a single primary account for your business – and your website, email, and calendar are all linked together. There might be a better single service out there for email, for example, but no one has learned how to tie it all together like Google has.

Once your account is setup, you can immediately start managing your services from the cloud. This is a huge step towards improving communication and teamwork within your company.

For such a small price to pay, the benefits of using this platform definitely outweigh any disadvantages.

Google Apps can streamline your business in a lot of ways; helping you spend more time on more important matters and remain focused on your primary goals. If you want to learn more about how it works, visit:

<http://www.google.com/enterprise/apps/business/>.

### **Monitor Your Success with Google Analytics**

Google Analytics can be your best friend if you're trying to get detailed statistics about your website's traffic numbers and traffic sources. In fact, it's the most popular analytics tool online.

The basic service is free, but there is a fee for the premium version. For a majority of users, the basic version should be good enough to get the information you need.

Google Analytics can track traffic from all sources, including social networks and search engines, as well as direct visits and links from other sites. It can also keep track of email marketing, pay-per-click campaigns, and display advertising.

If you're already using Google Analytics, you probably log in, look around a little, and then leave with a hazy idea of what is going on with your traffic. In other words, you're hardly scratching the surface of what's possible with this robust platform.

There are probably a ton of features that you're not taking advantage of. Here are some tips that will help you use the platform more effectively.

- Look at long-term trends

Google Analytics will show you results from the last 30 days by default. This is great for looking into what has been working recently.

However, you should extend the graph to show you up to six months' worth of data to look at bigger trends. You will be able to see which pages are sending the most traffic. You can even go back a year or more if you want.

Long-term data is important for helping you identify any patterns and allow you to make smarter decisions about adjusting your marketing plans going forward.

- Look at how visitors are using your site

In addition to the number of visitors or page views, you also want to see how those people are using your site. What content are they finding the most useful? How long are they staying on the most popular pages? Which pages are the users leaving almost immediately?

Google Analytics can help you answer specific questions along these lines as well; giving you a first-hand view of what you need to do to better serve your existing customers, as well as generate new leads.

When you know what you're doing right and what you're doing wrong, you can optimize your content to fully meet the needs of your target audience. Google Analytics is a great place to start to gather the information you need for a solid online marketing presence.

### **Using Google AdWords to Capture Leads**

Google AdWords is an advertising platform that positions ad copy at the top, bottom, or next to, the organic search results for a given search engine query. The placement and

choice of the ads is dependent in part on a proprietary calculation of the relevance of the search string to the ad copy.

Running a successful campaign on AdWords is all about relevance. Click-Through Ratio (CTR) is the primary metric that determines whether or not your ads are relevant (The % of people who are seeing your ad who click on it). If you can learn how to maximize your CTR, you can pay a lower amount per click, have a higher CTR, and get a higher position for a lower price.

The term "Call-To-Action" (CTA) is pretty standard in marketing; and it's very important when working with Google AdWords. A CTA basically tells viewers of the ad exactly what you want them to do. Some studies have shown that adding a CTA to any marketing method has improved results substantially.

Having a clear CTA is important because it moves viewers to literally take action. Your ad copy should be keyword-rich and provide some sense of urgency. When you combine these with a solid CTA, many viewers will be enticed to click to learn more.

In order to convert your leads once they click on your ad, the landing page has to be right and ready. Whether you're sending them to a page on your website, or a stand-alone lead capture page, the success of your Google AdWords campaign is highly dependent upon the landing page.

Having relevance between the search term, the AdWords ad, and the landing page is critical. Otherwise, you'll simply lose money on your campaign in the end; AdWords campaigns can be expensive for some keyword phrases, so you definitely want everything to be intact for the best results.

Instead of trying to do it themselves, many small business owners hire an expert who knows how to do perform keyword research, analyze the target audience, and craft compelling ads. This way, they can get started on the right track without risking their budget.

When it comes to generating new leads online, of course you can always work towards getting your website pages to rank higher in the organic listings. However, this tends to take some time.

If you're looking for a quick way to drive highly-targeted traffic to your website, Google AdWords is a great tool to use.

## **Why Google AdSense May Not be Ideal for Local Business Websites**

Google AdSense is an advertising platform that enables content publishers to display text, video, image, or interactive media ads on their websites or other content hubs (such as blogs and YouTube).

These ads are automatically targeted to the site's audience and content. It's a hands-free advertising program that lets website owners simply place a code into their sites – and these codes will display relevant ads to site visitors. The advertisements are chosen, sorted, and maintained by Google.

When visitors click on these ads, the AdSense account owner (website owner) will earn money on either a per-impression or per-click basis. While this is definitely a hands-free way to generate income for your website, it may not be the best option for local businesses.

### **1. You Could Be Advertising For Your Competitors**

Google AdSense will display ads that match the content of your website. So essentially, if your competitors are running a Google ad based on keyword phrases related to your industry, you could inadvertently be advertising their products and services on YOUR website. This is definitely something you don't want to do.

### **2. You Could Send Away Potential Customers**

You don't want very attractive, very appealing ads to send your customers elsewhere; you want your visitors to stay on your site for as long as possible. Google targets AdSense ads very well, and they will include keyword phrases that your audience is interested in. Instead of sending them away from your site, use that space for other ads directly related to your business in particular.

You're probably starting to see why Google AdSense may not be a good option for your website. Of course, this all depends on the type of business you have and the overall purpose of your site. But for most brands looking to reel in more local customers, it could do more harm than good.

However, if your company is interested in generating passive income by creating authority websites within your niche, but not really focused on generating new local customers, Google AdSense could potentially be a good fit. If you're not sure, you can always consult with an online marketing specialist who will help you determine when it's a viable option and when it should be avoided.

As you can see, Google has many different tools available to business owners to help them manage their online presence, get more leads, and convert more prospects into customers. Contact me at if you would like professional assistance or if you have questions about anything discussed in this report.

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