



www.wwwart.com.au

Tailored Website Solutions
Domains | Hosting | Support

PO Box 593 Beechworth Vic 3747

0419 527 705

contact@wwwart.com.au

Using Google Places

Google has long understood the relevance of a business's location to commercially motivated searches, which is largely what prompted them to create the Places service. Google Places is effectively a business directory that has been integrated with the company's popular Maps service.

In comparison to search engine optimisation, creating a Google Places search listing for your business is relatively simple, and doesn't require much technical expertise. Unlike organic search, it is entirely dedicated to connecting consumers with nearby businesses, meaning that those listed on it don't have to compete with non-commercial pages for relevance. Also, Places is distinct from search marketing services like AdWords in one very significant respect – it's free.

Stake a claim

The first step in getting your business on Google Places is to simply go and claim its location. Before claiming a listing, it's a good idea to read Google's Places guidelines.

It's essential to only use contact information that is relevant to your physical offices or stores. Google won't place any value in a PO Box, so always use your real address.

Given that Google draws information from third party sources like the Yellow Pages, your business may already have unclaimed, 'place-holder' listings on Places. For this reason, it's wise to search Maps for variations on your business name and your own name, so that you can claim any pre-existing listings. Unclaimed listings can struggle to rank high in results, claiming a listing can help improve website traffic.

Once all relevant listings have been claimed and consolidated, it helps to have a clear idea of the kind of keywords the business wants to be ranked for. It's important to make sure the keywords you use on your website match, or at least are similar to, those you're targeting with Places listings.

To help identify keywords of importance do some keyword research using tools such as the Google Adwords keyword research tool or Market Samurai.

Tell them everything

The next step is to fill the listing with information about the business. Google's main objective is to present searchers with the most relevant results. The more content you fill your Places listing with the more likely it is to be deemed relevant to a query.

Information provided by Nett Magazine



www.wwwart.com.au

Tailored Website Solutions
Domains | Hosting | Support

PO Box 593 Beechworth Vic 3747

0419 527 705

contact@wwwart.com.au

There is roughly 30 or 40 different fields that you can fill out about your business inside Google Places. If you have filled out all the fields in your listing, and a competitor hasn't, you will generally be ranked higher than them in Google Places.

The content that a listing can accommodate extends well beyond your standard business information to include pictures, videos and testimonials. Reviews are a particularly important component of a listing.

Set up a business process to get regular customer reviews on your Places listing. Reviews can mean the difference between not appearing and appearing in the number one spot. After you have five or more reviews, your listing will stand out amongst competitors, as Google shows review ratings next to your business listing.

Citations

One of the most significant factors affecting organic search rankings is the number of incoming links a site receives. Google has identified this as a reasonable measure of how many people found that particular page relevant enough to share. The more links a page receives, the higher it ranks in search.

In place of incoming links, Google Places tends to favour businesses that have their contact details listed in the greatest volume on different sites throughout the internet.

Google looks at the number of places on the web that are naming your business, address and phone number, and they're called citations. The more citations your business has, generally the higher ranked your Google Places listing will be.

Citations are part of the reason Google places so much value in data from third party directories like the Yellow Pages. For the purposes of an improved Places ranking, it's worthwhile for businesses to investigate being listed in review directories like Urban Spoon, True Local or Dentist.com.au, depending on what your business specialises in.

Given that it's based on the most widely used global positioning service in the world, the potential reach of Places is considerably greater than a simple mobile search query. By getting a listing in Google Places, potentially, you could be showing up on tens or hundreds of different iPhone apps and directory-based search systems. It's definitely something worth doing."