

The Ultimate
Social Media
Guide to Google+





Google+ was created by the masterminds behind the most popular (and largest) search engine in the world. More than just a social network, Google+ has become the center of Google's identity, unifying Google user accounts, simplifying email, events, places, messaging, phone calls, and so much more. Because Google has begun factoring Google+ usage into search engine rankings, implementing Google+ into your social media marketing campaign can not only improve your market reach, **but can also help dramatically improve your ranking on the largest search engine in the world - Google.**

Getting Started

Setting up your Google+ Business profile is incredibly simple:

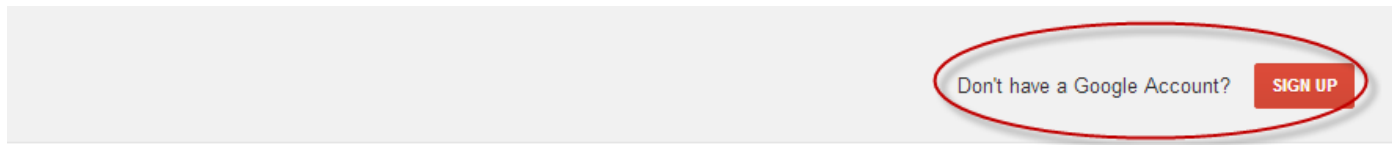
- Start by heading to <http://www.google.com/+business>.
- Click on the "Create a Google+ page" at the top right-hand corner of the screen.

The screenshot shows the Google+ Business homepage. At the top, the Google+ logo is followed by the word 'Business'. To the right, there is a '+1' button with '393k' next to it, and a 'Sign in or' button. The 'Create a Google+ page' button is highlighted with a red circle. Below the navigation bar, the main heading reads 'Make your business social, across the web'. There are three columns of content, each with an image, a title, a short paragraph, and a link to learn more.

Image	Title	Text	Link
	Get found across Google	When your customers search on Google, the results to the right may include relevant posts, photos, and videos from your Google+ page. Get found across Google, right when your customers are most interested.	Learn more about Google+ and search
	Get face-to-face with customers	Wherever your followers are, Google+ brings them together and helps you talk with them, via 10 way video Hangouts. You can even stream and record conversations for playback later.	Learn more about Hangouts
	Make social accountable	In the end, it's all about numbers. That's why we offer in-depth data about +1's, conversion reporting, and more, showing how Google+ contributes to your bottom line.	Learn more about measuring social

We recommend creating a new Gmail account for this profile, to separate your practice from any pre-existing personal accounts.

The next screen will prompt you to input your Gmail account. If you wish to use a preexisting Gmail account, continue logging in. To create a new Gmail account, click the red "Sign Up" button at the top right hand corner, and complete the prompts.



Sign in with Google+

Share the right things with the right people.



Games



Stream



Photos



Events

Sign in Google

Email

Password

Stay signed in

[Can't access your account?](#)

Select the type of business profile you wish to create. We recommend selecting the "Local Business or Place" option. Next, enter your practice phone number.

Google

1 Pick category

2 Add info

3 Get started

Local Business or Place
Hotels, restaurants, places, stores, services ...

United States

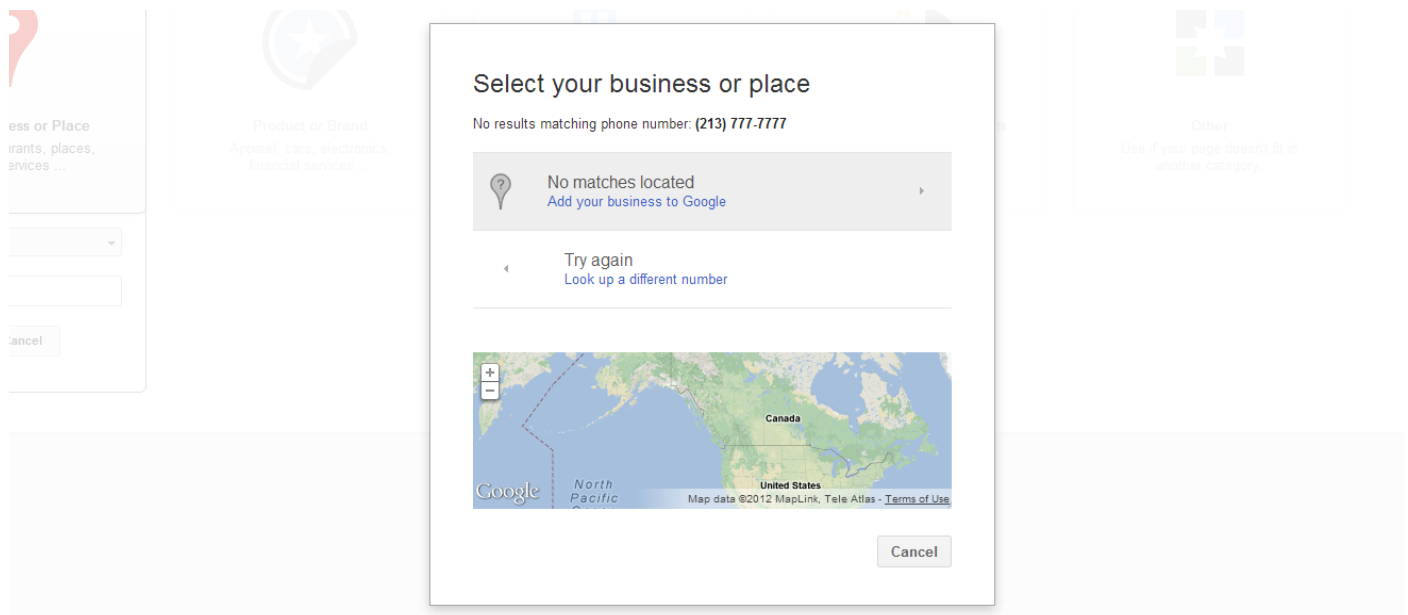
Primary phone number

Product or Brand
Apparel, cars, electronics, financial services ...

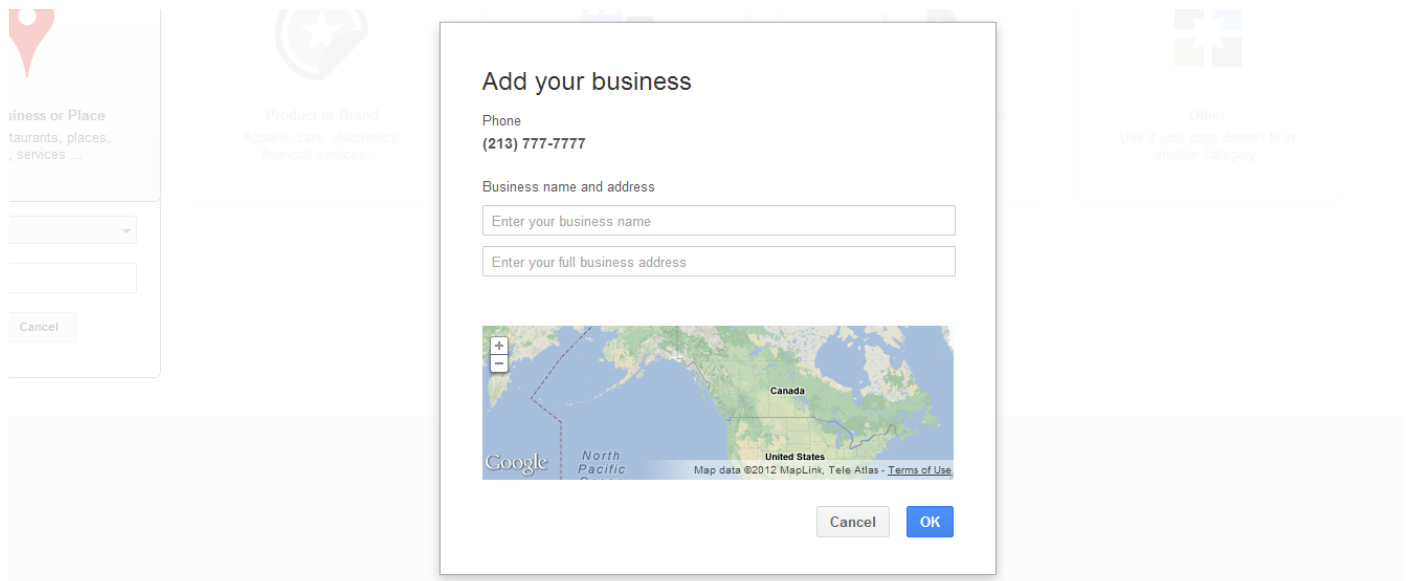
Company, Institution or Organization
Companies, organizations, institutions, non-profits ...

Arts, Entertainment
Movies, TV, music, sports, shows

After clicking the blue "Locate" button, you will be asked to input your business address.



Google will display businesses that may already be associated with that address and phone number. If your practice is already listed, click the listing to continue. If your practice is not listed, click the blue text that says "Add your business to Google", underneath the "No matches located" title.



If your business is not listed, fill in your phone number, business name, and business address to complete the setup.

You will then receive an email from Google+ welcoming you to the community. To further optimize your profile for search engines, you can edit your Google+ account to contain more information about your practice. To begin optimization, click the "Profile" button from the Google+ Badges located in grey along the left hand side of your homepage. Then, click the blue "Edit Profile" button at the top of the page.



When completing your profile, it's important to highlight where you offer your services, to help local prospects easily find your practice. Follow the tips below to best optimize your profile:

- **Introduce Yourself** - Within the "Introduction" section, type a brief summary of your practice, services, and education, letting prospective patients gain further insight into what you offer. We recommend including keywords related to the services you offer.
- **Open Open Open** - Input your business hours to allow online searchers to view whether your business is open in real time. Doing so will also inform on-the-go, mobile searchers of your hours as they view your page.
- **Include a Link to Your Website** - Let the Google+ community easily access your website with a link by inputting your web address into the "Website" section. (Hint: this also builds backlinks to your website, an important optimization technique that can help further improve your website's visibility on search engines.)
- **Double Check** - The Google map, phone number, and email address should display the information you entered during the sign up process. Double check to make sure the information is correct and that the red marker is in the correct position*.
*If the red marker is not in the correct position, click on the map within the "Address" section, and drag the red marker to where it should be located.
- **Save** - When everything is said and done, click the "Done editing" button, within the blue banner at the top of the screen, to save your changes.



Google+ Glossary

One of the most difficult aspects for Google+ newcomers is grasping the language. With Circles and Hangouts, Ripples and Sparks, it can easily get confusing. To better navigate the social network, we have included an informative glossary to help you understand what these terms mean.

- **Circles** – groupings of clients, patients, colleagues, family, friends, etc. that you wish to associate together.
- **Communities** – networks of Google+ users with similar hobbies, concerns, or interests.
- **Creative Kit** – a photo editor within Google+ that allows you to make detailed edits of the images you add to your profile.
- **Google+ Badges** – the large navigational icons to the left of your profile. Use badges to quickly access areas throughout Google+.
- **Google+ Events** – allows users to invite an unlimited number of Google+ users to attend an event and share images with all users attending the event. Google+ also adds the event to your Google Calendar.
- **Google+ Local** – allows users to find nearby businesses and services, view images and reviews from others, or share their own.
- **Google+ Pages** – the Google+ hub of businesses, organizations, and corporations.
- **Hangouts** – a place where you can participate in video chat with up to 10 people at any given time. Hangouts are joined by visiting an exclusive web address and are by invite only.
- **Hashtags*** – Affixing the pound sign (#) to the beginning of any keyword or phrase (without spaces) that you want your post to be categorized by (e.g. #Dentist or #LosAngelesDentist).
- **Instant Upload** – automatically detects when new images or videos are recorded on your mobile device, and



enables you to instantly upload them to your Google+ profile.

- **Messenger** – a way to communicate with the people in your circles through text or video chat on your Google+ accessible mobile device.
- **People** – groupings of clients, patients, colleagues, family, friends, etc., that you wish to associate together.
- **Post** – anything shared by a Google+ user.
- **Share** – posting an item or reposting an item that someone else has previously posted. When you share an item, you are given the opportunity to write your own comment to communicate to others.
- **Sparks** – the Google search within your profile that creates a custom drop-down menu of suggestions you may be interested in based on your search history.
- **Stream** – the portion of your profile homepage that displays recent activity, photos, and shares of those in your circles. The stream can be filtered to only display updates from select circles.
- **What's Hot** – a stream that appears after log in and displays the current popular Shares. This stream can also be accessed by clicking "Explore" within the Badges.

*Refer to our blog post ["Why #Hashtags?"](#) to learn more about implementing hashtags in your pins.

Your Cover Story

The Google+ profile displays two images: a wide image and a square image. The wide image is called the cover image, while the square image is your profile photo. Each of these photos should be indicative of the atmosphere your practice evokes. If you are a high-end plastic surgery practice or a small town pediatric dentist, be sure to convey that message through these images.

There are specific size requirements for the images you use; the wide cover image is 960 x 540 pixels and the square profile image is 250 x 250 pixels. You can resize images using your own familiar photo editor, or you can use Google's integrated photo editing suite. You can even adjust the appearance of your images in Google's notable editor if you desire.

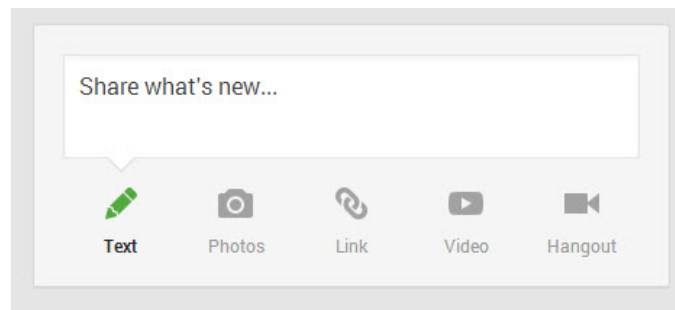


How to Share

Do you remember that old phrase from when you were a kid, "sharing is caring"? Well on Google+, sharing truly is caring because Google weighs shared items into account when crafting their search engine algorithms, and items that are heavily shared have a better chance at ranking higher within search results.

So, how does that influence what you share and how you share? We recommend sharing your practice blog posts, Facebook updates, and Tweets, as well as any articles you write or research you perform. The more quality shares you have, the more Google will recognize your practice as an authority within your profession.

To share a link to any item, go to your home page. You will then see a box that says "Share what's new..." Within this box, type the message you want to share. Click on the grey icons to the right to attach a photo, video, event, or link accordingly.



The idea behind the information that you post is "you are what you share", so be sure to share information that you feel is representative of your practice, profession, and self.

Google+ On-The-Go

One of the greatest features of Google+ for busy professionals is the network's integration into Android and Apple devices. Now, professionals with Google+ profiles can update their posts and comments directly from their mobile enabled device. Additionally, Google+ can recognize when photos or videos are recorded on a mobile phone and will automatically ask if you would like to share the new media on your Google+ profile, simplifying the process of streaming media.

Create an Event

Google+ integrates numerous unique features to make the user-experience seamless. With the Events feature, you can invite followers and the public to special events you attend or coordinate. When you choose to inform the Google+ community of your Grand Opening or volunteer work at a local animal shelter, invite others and inform them of the location, date, and time. Google even allows you to include a photo that appears in your post stream.

After creating an event, accept the invite to your event to show others you will be attending. The event will then appear in your Google Calendar so you are alerted of the event across Google's other applications. Additionally, everyone attending the event can upload images they take at the event, allowing all event-goers to access the images after the event has ended – just a few more ways Google+ makes everything convenient and seamless.

Joining the Circle

Google+ operates with "circles" rather than friends or followers. Circles allow you to categorize friends and followers into different groups (circles), enabling you to choose who you share specific information with. As a business owner, we recommend creating separate circles for "Family", "Friends," "Patients/Clients," "Colleagues," "Team Members", "Associations/Organizations", and "Brands".



Circles signify different types of relationships. Just as you would not address your grandmother and best friend in the same manner, you probably wouldn't address each circle exactly alike. Separating your contacts into various groups allows you to differentiate your shares among your circles. For example, if you are a dentist offering two brands of teeth whitening solutions, have both brands within your "Brand" circle, and are running a special for just one of these brand's products, you may only want to share the special with your "Patients",



"Friends", and "Family" circles, to avoid any hard feelings among your brand representatives.

To add people to your circles, simply enter a person's name (or brand name) within the search bar at the top of your Google+ profile. Above the search results, there is a navigation menu that allows you to filter the search results between "Everything," "People and Pages," "Communities," "Google+ Posts," and "Photos". Select "People and Pages" from the navigation menu to find the company or person you're seeking. When adding a Google+ user, first click on their name, then click the red "Add to circles" button at the top of their profile. You will then be prompted to select which of your circles you would like to add them to.



Review Your Quality of Service

There's no denying that patient reviews drive practice growth. With the popularity of review sites, such as Yelp and Citysearch, it's no wonder more patients are turning to online reviews prior to selecting a provider.

Within Google+ Local, patients can leave reviews, informing the Google+ community and local searchers of their experience with your services. Not only can patient reviews encourage new prospects to choose your services over another's, but Google+ also allows you to respond to reviews left by Google+ users. Replying to reviews enables you to publically address comments that may reflect poorly upon your practice, helping you begin working to resolve a patient's dissatisfaction. If you receive a negative review, always be sure to respond in a calm, professional manner, to avoid escalating the situation. Showing prospective patients that you took the initiative to ensure patient satisfaction is a quality that many find admirable and desirable in a medical or dental professional.

Furthermore, if a patient left a favorable review, don't be afraid to thank them for their kindness. A quick response to their review only takes a few seconds and, again, lets current and prospective patients know that you value them.

Tips and Tricks

- **Promote your Google+ page everywhere you can.** Add a Google+ icon to your website homepage, and advertise it in your practice, on business cards, etc.
- **Follow other businesses that interest or inspire you.** Like many other social networks, following and networking with others is the primary form of self-promotion. Getting others' attention through following will make them more likely to notice you and follow back.
- **Share photos, videos, links, and ideas often** – and keep them interesting! Your circles and followers want to be entertained and intrigued; that's why they began following you in the first place. Also, each time you post, your business is kept fresh in their thoughts; so try to post on a regular basis.
- **Respond to followers when they comment on your posts.** Social media should be social, so don't stop the conversation before it starts! Answer questions, add your thoughts, and thank your followers for giving you their opinions and recommendations.
- **Set your shares and posts to "Public," to maximize your practice's exposure.** The only time you want to single-out a specific circle is when you don't want anyone but that group of people to see what you're posting. For example, if you're sharing information about a special you're offering only for current patients, you would set it to share with the "Current Patients" circle.



Idea Bank for Sharing

- **Informative articles relating to your practice** – showing patients and prospects that you remain current on trends in your field through recent literature is a key method of obtaining credibility and establishing yourself as an authority on your services.
- **Trending Shares** that are unbiased and work appropriate.
- **Local events** your practice is volunteering at or attending.
- **Blog or Facebook posts you create** - This is an easy way to gain attention across numerous social networks and increase your visibility.
- **Share a link to special discounts** you are advertising on your website or other social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter.
- **Promotion** for patients who leave a review or check-in via Google+.
- **Information about new employees** or employee of the month.
- If your practice is **sponsoring an event** (e.g. a veterinarian sponsoring a local animal adoption clinic), create a Google+ Event and make it public for all local and global Google+ users to see. Don't forget to upload a picture of you and your practice at the event!
- **Questions or polls** for patients regarding your practice, such as "What color should we paint the new exam room? Big Bird Yellow, Rainy Day Grey, Big Apple Red, or Thanksgiving Beige?".



Get Googling

Google+ Local combines all the benefits of the retired Google Places business listings within the atmosphere of a thriving social network. Now that the search engine giant has integrated their Google+ network into nearly every aspect of their search engine algorithm, it has become imperative to build your presence on Google+ Local.

