Helping a florist claim their local business listing on Google

Why is it important to claim a Google listing?

Claiming a shop's listing tells Google that the listing represents a bona fide business. When information has been verified by a business owner, Google can feel confident that the information they provide to their users is accurate and up-to-date. This increases the likelihood that the listing will appear in the Google local listings that appear in local search results with a map. For the florist, going from a basic listing to a claimed listing is like going from being listed in the yellow pages (name and number) to getting a one page ad (for free!). Most important: When a potential customer sees that a florist has taken the time to claim their listing and post additional information, they're encouraged to give their business to that shop.

Getting started

• Go to <u>www.google.com</u>.

- Perform a search to get to the store's listing.
 - Search for "[name of shop] in [city name, state]" if you want to quickly find the listing for a *specific* shop.
 - OR search for "florists in [city name, state]" if you want to see the listings for *all the florists* in that city.
- Note- Your search terms need to include a *location* (e.g. city name, state) in order to view the *local* search results.

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Search results for "florists in [city name], [state]"

• In order to get to the listing more easily, click on the "<u>Maps</u>" link at the very top of the page.

If the florist is having a hard time finding the link, tell them to look for it above the search field.



Maps results page

- Now we need to find their shop and click on the "more info" link in order to go to their local business listing.
- If they're not on the first page they should click "<u>Next</u>" (which is located after the end of the list) until they find their listing.

If you can't find the listing, try searching for [store name] [store zip code]. If the store still doesn't show up in the search results, you'll need to add the listing manually. In general, established shops will have a listing, since we provide shop information to Google; brand new shops may need to add their own listing. If they need to create a listing, direct them to <u>www.google.com/localbusinesscenter</u> and skip to page 6 of these instructions. Once they're signed in, they'll click on the "Add new listing" link in the dashboard (link is located below "Locations").



A typical shop's local business listing

- A shop's local business listing will have their name listed in large bold letters. The page provides information about their shop only.
- Ask the florist to add this page to their favorites or bookmarks on their browser so they will be able to find the listing more easily later on.
- If the listing hasn't been claimed, click on the link that reads, "<u>Business owner?</u>" This is located in the light blue bar above the name of their shop.

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Google Local Business Center sign-in page

- In order for the florist to claim their local business listing, they need a Google (or Gmail) account.
- Google accounts are free and easy to set up.
- If they don't have an account yet, they can click on the blue "Sign up now" link to create an account.
- If they already have a Google account, they can sign into the Google Local Business Center using their email and password. If they have a Gmail account, they can sign in using their Google email address and password.
- If they already have a Google account and are already signed into that account, they won't come to this page after clicking "Business owner?". Instead they'll go straight to the page on slide 7. If they're already signed in, they'll see their email address in bold near the upper right side of the page.



If they need to sign up for an account:

Clicking "Sign up now" will take them to the **Create an Account** page.

▲ Don't forget to have the florist to write down their email account and password and store it in a safe place! They will need their Google account information in order to edit their listing later on.

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Add, Edit or Suspend Listing page

- Once they've signed in using a pre-existing Google account or created an account, Google will take them to this page.
- Select "Edit my business information." and hit the "Continue" button.

Now that they're signed in, Google *should* take them to this page. Sometimes, however, Google will take them to the Local Business Center dashboard instead. If that happens, they need to go *back* to their local business listing and click on the "Business owner?" link again. Then they will come to this page.



Edit Information page: Basic Information section

This page is VERY important!

This is where the florist fills out information about their shop. Make sure they fill this out *completely* and *correctly* so their listing will be fully optimized.

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Notes on important fields:

- **Company name** should be the shop's *legal* business name.
- Main phone should be their local number.
 - If they want to provide their toll-free number as well, they can click on the "<u>Add more phone numbers</u>" link and type their toll-free number in the new field.
- Email address is optional.
 - \circ Only enter an email address if the shop is comfortable with customers contacting them by email.
- Website URL is VERY important!
 - o Florists can only link to ONE website from their listing (and they should only have ONE listing per location).
 - Recommend that they link to their eFlorist website and make sure they enter the entire URL correctly, including the http://www. at the beginning.
 - By choosing to link to their eFlorist website instead of any other website, they're directing traffic (and business!) to their eFlorist website.
 - Changing the link on their local business listing will not change their other website's rankings in the organic search results (if they have any other sites).
- Description: Encourage the florist to describe their store in a few sentences. They're limited to 200 characters.
 - Viewers of the listing will be able to read the description, so make it a good one. Ask the florist to think about what they would want a potential customer to know about their store.
 - The florist can include details such as how long they've been in business, mention that they're local, full service, family owned, specialize in wedding flowers, etc.
 - $\circ\,$ Encourage them to enter full sentences and discourage them from merely listing services offered.
 - Ex: Cherry Blossom has served the Woodward area for over 50 years. You can trust us to deliver beautiful, handarranged bouquets to your loved ones.

Edit Information page: Basic Information section

- **Category:** Categories are also important. By adding more categories to the listing, the shop is more likely to show up in local search results for those categories. You can add up to five categories but you must add them individually.
 - To get started, ask the florist to type in "Florist". As they type the word, Google's suggestions appear below. The shop owner can click on their suggestion for "Florist".
 - In order to add a new category, click on the "Add another category" link.
 - The florist doesn't have to choose from Google's suggestions. They can type in their own categories if they would like.
 - Some other Google categories they might want to add, if relevant: wedding planner, silk plant shop, dried flower shop, gift basket shop, and gift shop.
 - If none of Google's suggestions fit, florists can create their own categories that are relevant to their store and services.
 - Google wants the categories to be accurate and describe the store well, so don't add irrelevant categories.

Edit Information page: Hours of operations, Payment options, and Photos sections

All of these are on the same page, you just scroll down to each one.

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- Hours of operations: The florist can specify the shop's operating hours.
 - Select the "<u>My operating hours are:</u>" option and then correct the times/dates the store is open.
 - If Saturday and Sunday are listed as closed, just un-check the "closed" box and the time drop boxes will appear for each day.
- **Payment options:** Check the boxes for the various payment methods accepted in the store.
- **Photos:** If the florist has photos of the store or products on the computer they're currently using, they can add those photos to their listing.
 - o If they don't have photos that are web-ready, they can skip this section for now and come back to it later.
 - The same goes for videos (see next page).

Edit Information page: Hours of operations, Payment options, and Photos sections

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The **Additional Details** section is the last section. This is the area where florists can include additional information that they would like to share with customers.

- In the field to the left, type in an attribute label, like "Areas served".
- In the field to the right, type in the details associated with that attribute (in this case, the towns that the florist serves), separated by commas.

• E>	c	Areas served	:	Norman, Noble, Blanchard, and more
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- In order to add another set of fields, click on the link labeled "Add another".
- The florist can add up to five sets of additional details.

Other attributes they may want to use (other than areas served):

- **Shop specialties:** wedding flowers, funeral flowers, sympathy flowers, flower delivery, flower arrangements, Valentine's Day flowers, Mother's Day flowers, birthday flowers, get well flowers, roses, plants, gift baskets, etc.
- Facilities served: list hospitals, funeral homes and retirement homes served. OR they could break down the facilities they serve into Hospitals served (list hospitals), Funeral homes served (list funeral homes) and Retirement homes served (list retirement homes).
- Brands carried: Teleflora, Gund bears, Godiva chocolates, Yankee candles, etc.
- Once they're satisfied with their additional details section, ask them to click on the "Submit" button.
- If they don't hit "Submit", Google won't save any of their changes!

Edit Information page: Hours of operations, Payment options, and Photos sections Continued...

- If Google finds any problems with their information, Google will ask the florist to correct the errors before continuing. Once the errors are resolved, they'll go to the following validation page.
 - ▲ Do not let the florist hit the "back" button on the browser here! If they hit the back button, they will lose their changes.
- The last step of the claiming process is to validate that the florist is truly the owner of the business.
 - Validating the listing ensures Google that the information we've given them is trustworthy and accurate.
- Once the florist has validated the listing, they will have successfully claimed their listing.
- If they don't validate their listing, their changes won't go into effect and they will more than likely be lost.
- Validating the listing by phone is much faster than validating it by postcard.
 - Tell the florist to select the "**By phone**" option.
 - Before they click the "Finish" button, warn them that Google will call their store within seconds after clicking "Finish".
 - An automated message from Google will then provide the florist with a 5-digit PIN, which the florist should write down.
 - Clicking "Finish" takes the florist to the Google Dashboard, where they will be asked for their PIN.

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Validating the listing: Entering the PIN in the Dashboard

Once the florist has received the store's PIN from Google, they can enter the number in the field provided and ٠ then hit the "Go" button.



If Google hasn't called the store within one minute, tell the florist to click the "<u>Request verification</u>" link below the "Enter PIN" field. They can then re-select validate by phone and try again.

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Final step: Confirming validation

- Once the florist has filled in the PIN and hit the "Go" button, they should see a notification that their listing has been validated successfully.
- The notification will appear under the "Dashboard" tab.

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- The best way to confirm that the listing has been validated is to look under the "Status" column for that listing on the dashboard page.
- If the Status is "Active", the florist has validated the listing and is done with the claiming process. Make sure to go over the notes on the following page before ending the call.
- If the Status is "Awaiting verification", there has been a problem and they need to request verification again.



Sample unclaimed listing



Sample claimed listing



To view Google's Local Business Center guidelines and learn more about local listings online, please visit: http://maps.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=107528