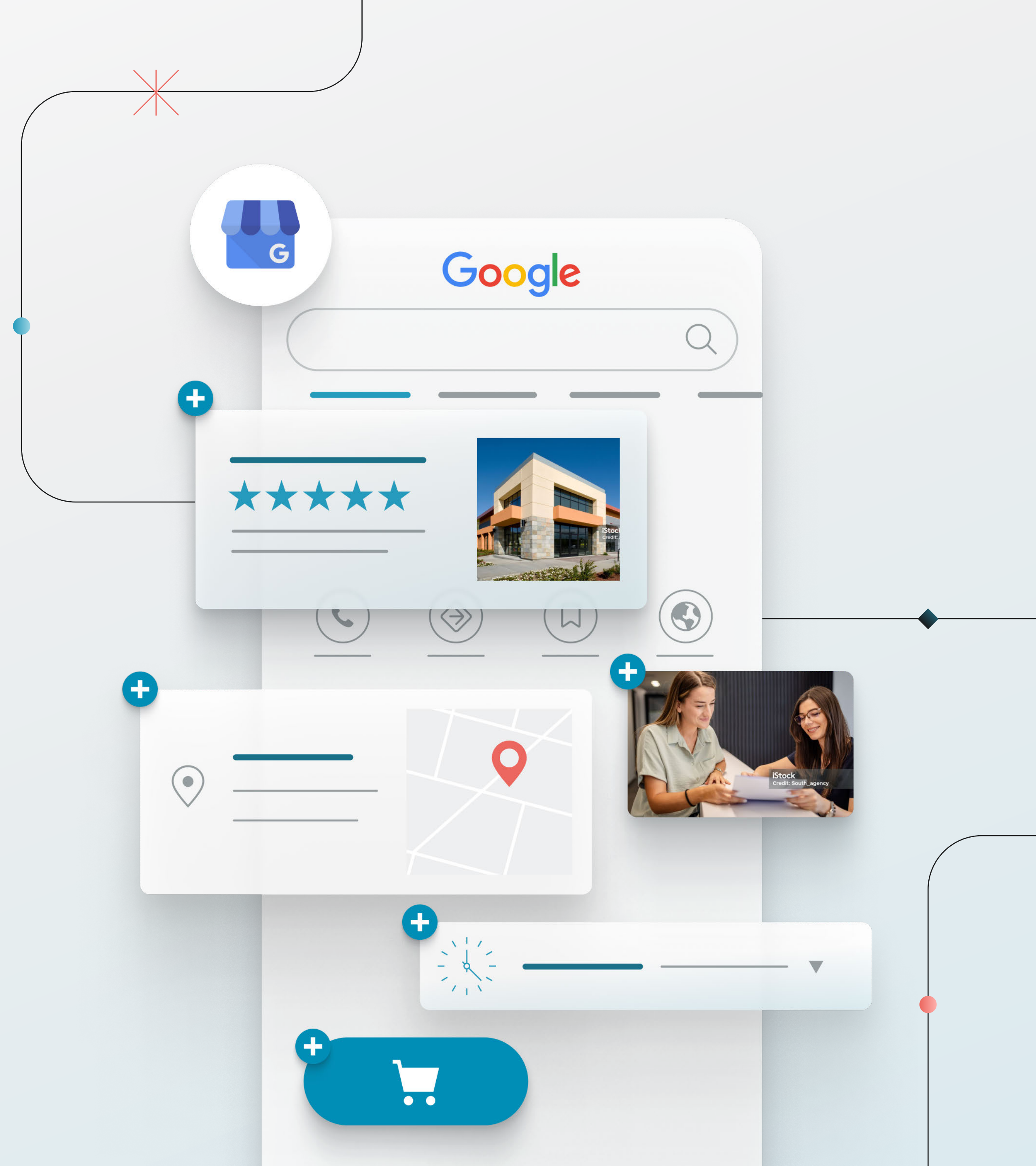


The Yext Guide to Google Business Profiles

How multi-location brands can earn trust and boost brand visibility in the age of AI search

February 2025 Update





Marketers, here's why you need this guide:

Search has changed, and your strategy needs to follow suit.

Popular tools like ChatGPT are scouring every corner of the web — from trusty go-to's like GBPs to long-forgotten long-tail sites like YP.com — to find trustworthy brands worth surfacing.

That means optimizing brand visibility in Perplexity, Gemini, or Apple Intelligence is just as important as optimizing for Google's Page 1 SERP.

Our SEO experts created this guide to provide you with up-to-date insights and strategies to help you boost your brand visibility on Google and beyond in this new age of AI-powered search.

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The Strategic Value of your GBP

Your Google Business Profile (GBP) is more than just a listing — it's a powerful tool that drives local visibility and customer engagement.

What's a Google Business Profile (GBP)?

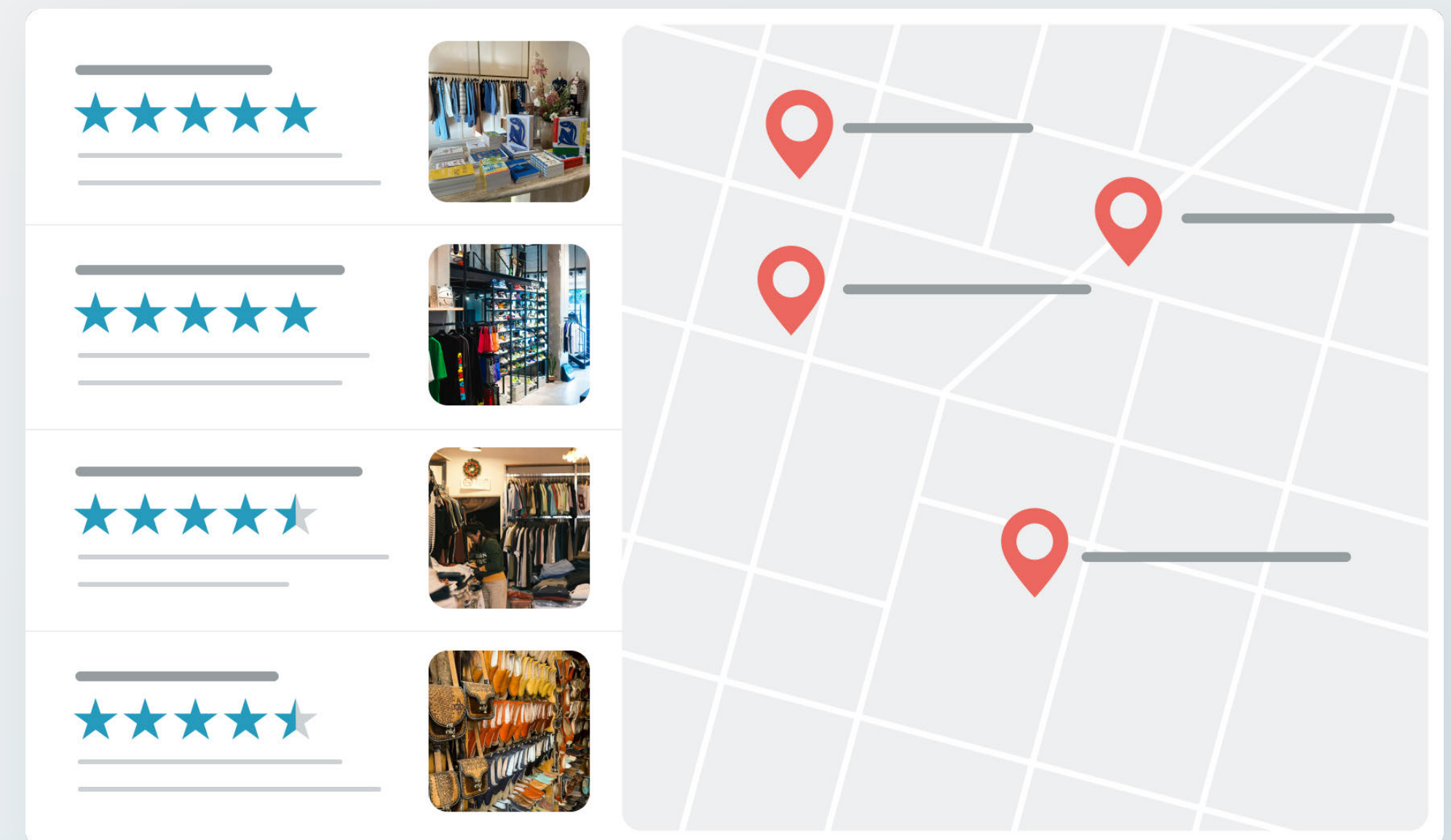
GBP is a free tool that helps businesses appear as listings in local Google Search results, including the Local Map Pack.

Initially called Google My Business (GMB), the tool was rebranded to Google Business Profile (GBP) in 2021.

GBP allows brands to:

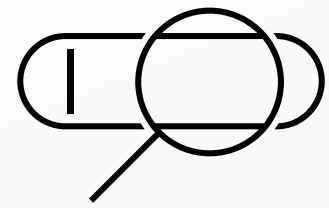
- Claim a business listing
- Verify listings for each location
- Specify a service area, operating hours, and contact information
- Send and receive messages from customers
- Manage local reviews
- Add staff bios, photos, videos, and virtual tours
- List top products, services, and providers
- List menu items, parking recommendations, current promotions, and more

To determine which businesses to surface in search results, Google compares brand relevance, prominence, and distance (for local searches). The more complete, accurate, and recent your GBP data is, the more likely your brand will outrank your competition.

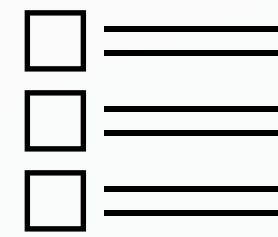


Why are accurate, consistent, and frequently updated local listings so important?

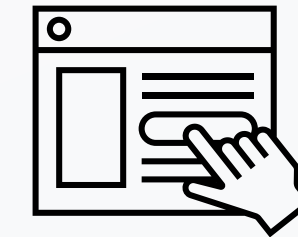
Even as social media and AI platforms emerge as rivals to traditional search, all platforms feed off the brand data that Google has crawled and consumed for almost 30 years.



Google processes **~5.8 million** searches per minute worldwide. Nearly half (46%) are searches with local intent.



Online listings receive **2.7x more views** than your brand's website — including local store pages and directories.



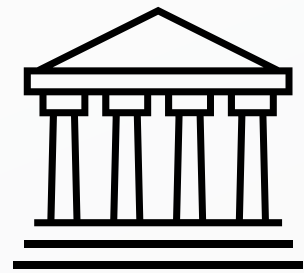
76% of customers look at your listings before visiting your location.



When searching for a local business on their mobile devices, **88%** of customers will call or visit the location within 24 hours.

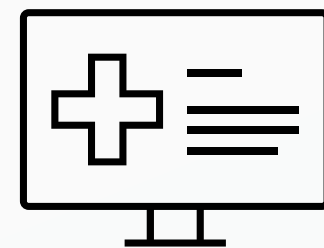
Finally, GBP signals are the most important factor when serving Local Pack and Local Finder listings*

Here are some examples of how listings structured with complete, accurate local content can help customers find and choose your brand:



Financial services

customers check your listings for details like holiday hours, current CD rates, or which CFP® professionals are taking on new clients.



Patients check reviews, ask questions, check insurance network coverage, and consider photos of providers or procedural outcomes.



Foodies check listings for seasonal menu updates, price ranges, parking availability, reservation requirements, wheelchair accessibility, and credit cards accepted.


GBPs also give brands the power to improve local search performance.

With a GBP, you can see:

- How many people directly searched for your brand
- Which service areas your views and clicks are coming from
- The number of inbound calls that come from your online listing
- How many customers, clients, or patients have clicked on your listing

Having a GBP is foundational to each location's ability to rank in Local Pack, Local Finder, and organic search results. Updating these profiles is free, and adding more details can immediately impact your brand visibility.

*Based on [whitespark's 2023 local search ranking factors](#)

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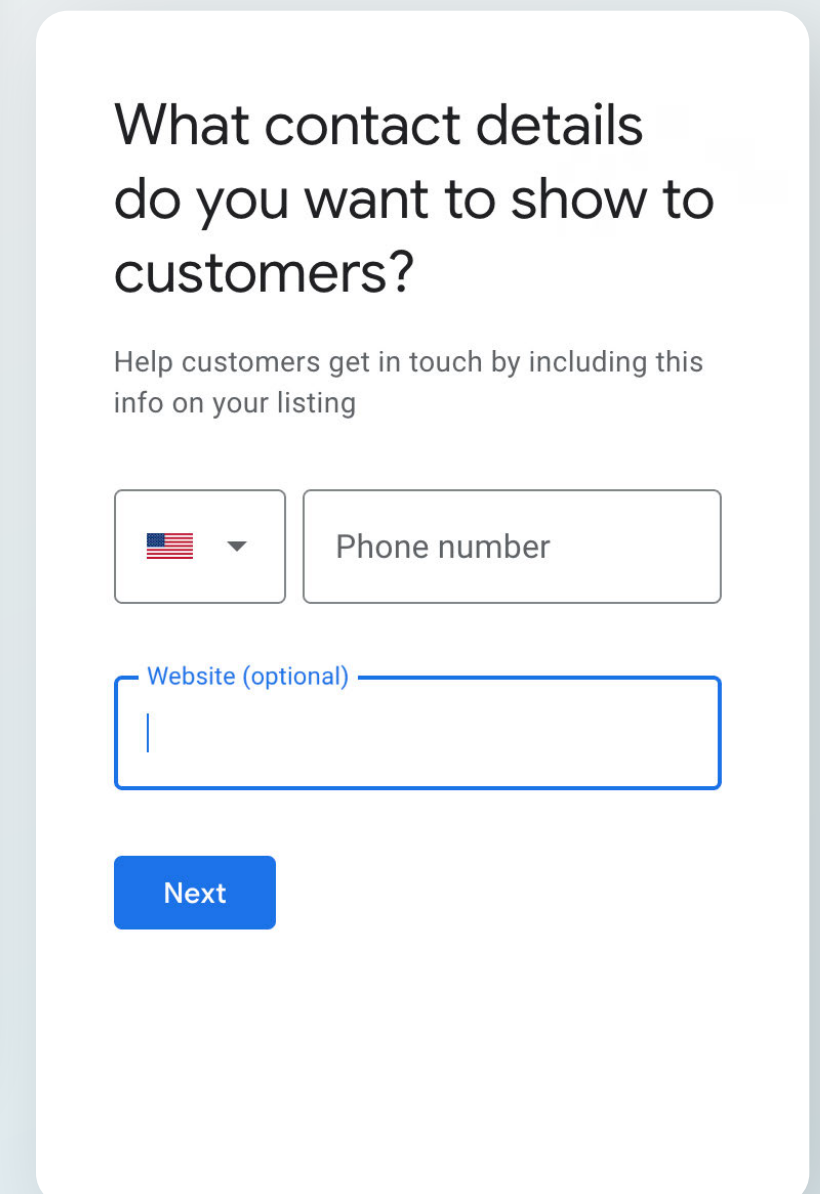
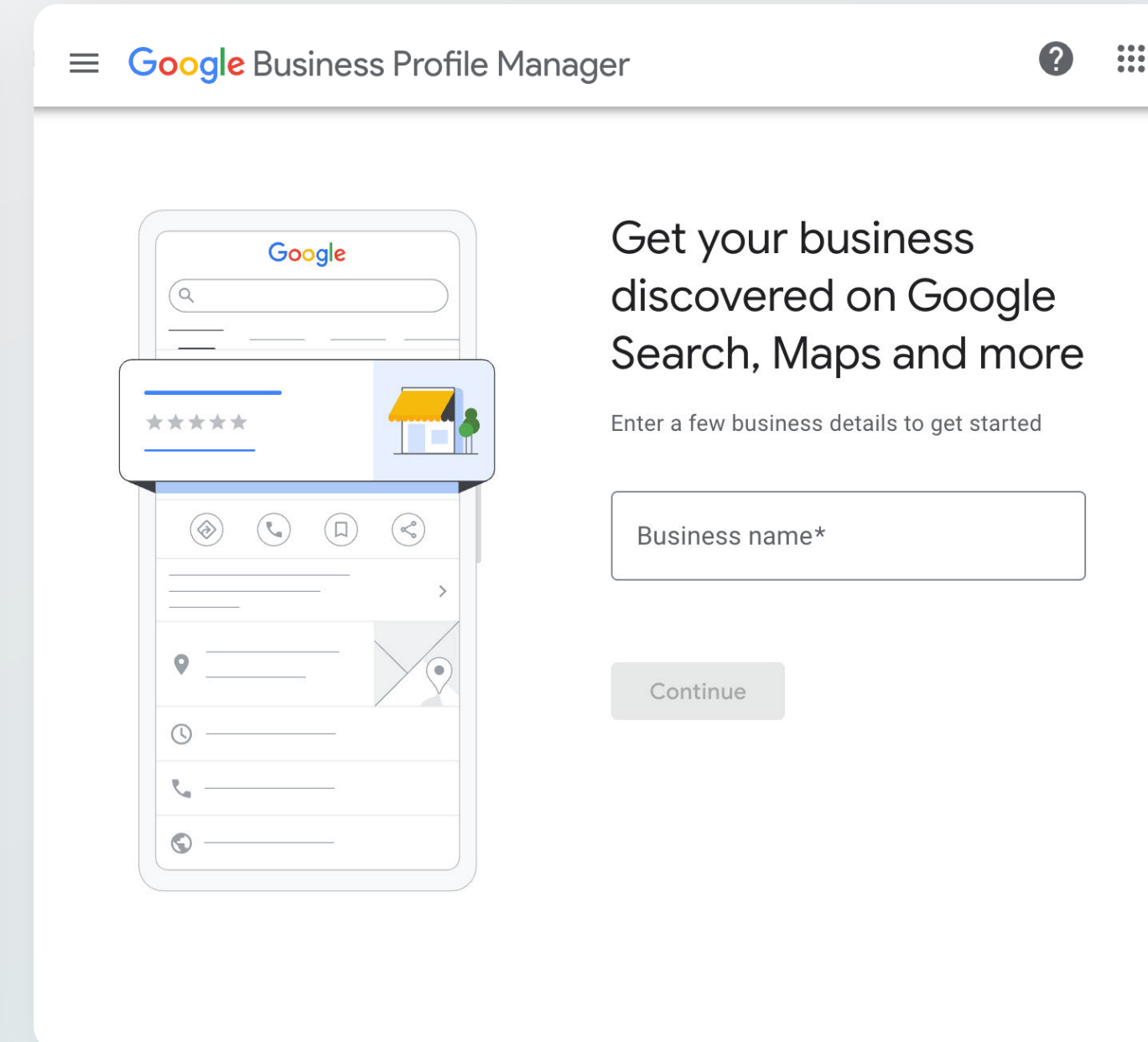
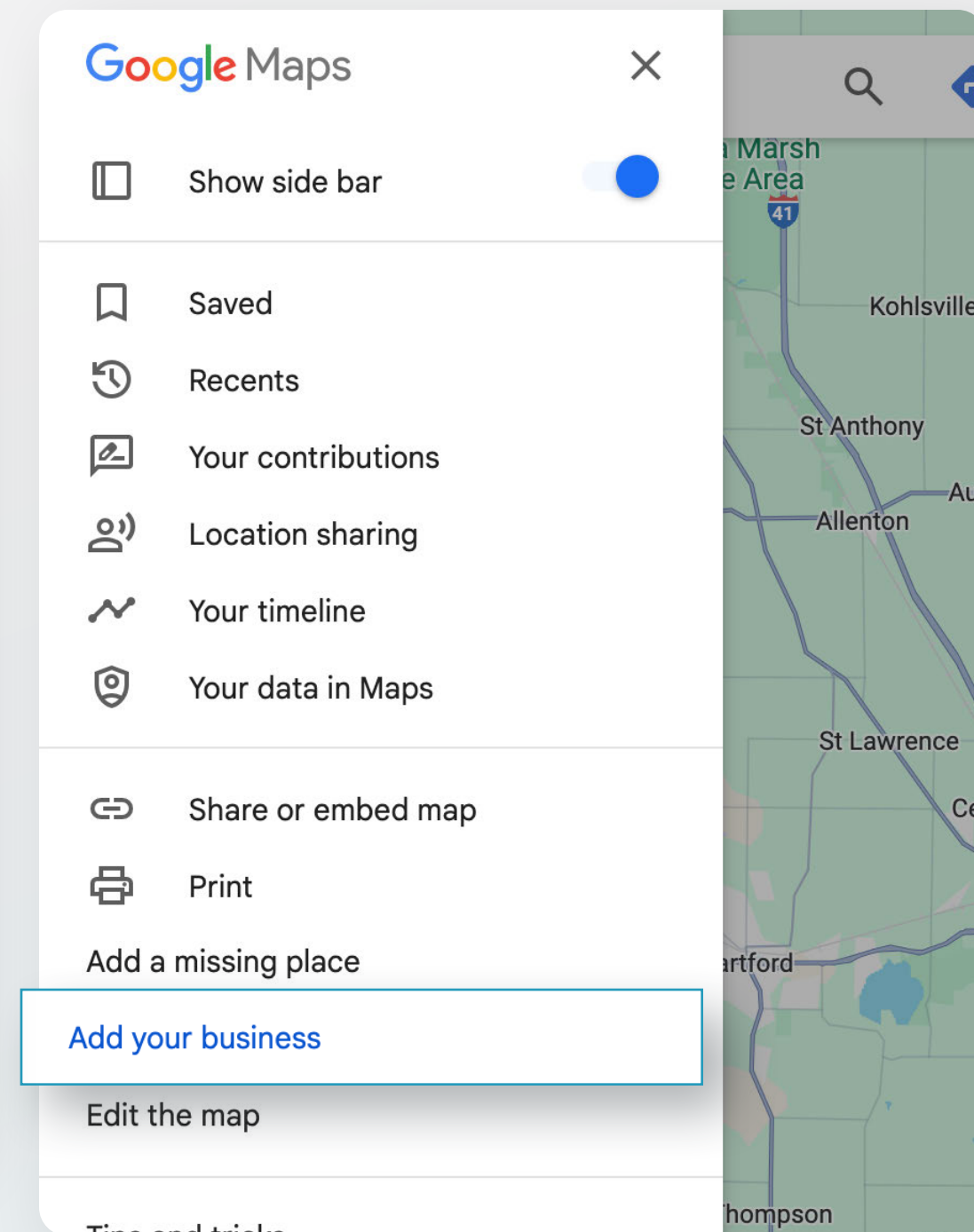
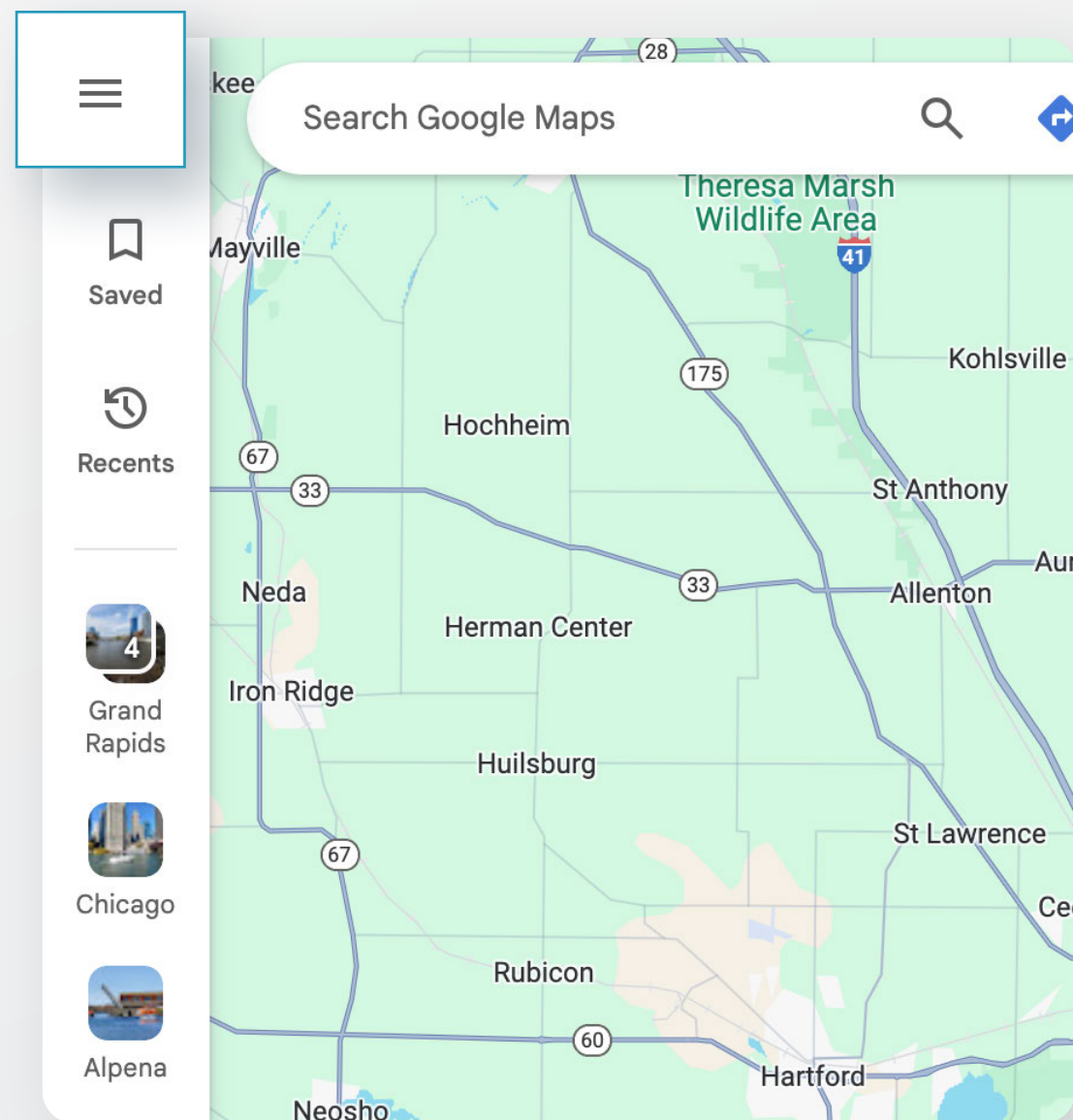
How to claim, verify, update, and troubleshoot your GBP

Now that we've touched on the strategic value of managing your Google Business Profile, here's how to make the most of it to differentiate your brand from the competition.

How to claim your GBP listing

Step by Step

1. Open Google Maps.
2. Select the hamburger menu in the top left corner.
3. Select **Add your business** from the drop-down menu
4. Enter your Business name, and click **Continue.**
5. Select all the relevant details about your business (business type, Google category, etc.).



Bulk verify your GBP listings

Brands with 10 or more claimed business locations can verify individual listings in bulk instead of manually.* With bulk verification, your brand's updates can go live on Google within hours of submission.

To access the bulk-verify function, a brand must have at least 10 locations in their GBP account and must fill out a short form to provide:

- Business Name
- Business countries
- Contact name
- Contact phone
- Business manager email
- Google account manager email

To request bulk verification, follow the instructions laid out by Google in [this help article](#).**

Google will review the information to verify that your account is eligible for bulk verification and that your contact person is a legitimate company representative. They will also confirm that all of your locations, or a subset of your locations, exist at the addresses and can be reached at the phone numbers provided.

This review process can take anywhere from one to several weeks.

**Brands with fewer than 10 listings must go through a manual verification process. Typically, Google mails a postcard to the business address and waits for the recipient to log in to Google and enter the verification code printed on the postcard. This approach can take several days.*

***Note: Yext helps with this process by having a readiness report built into the platform that streamlines the bulk verification process.*



How to eliminate duplicate listings

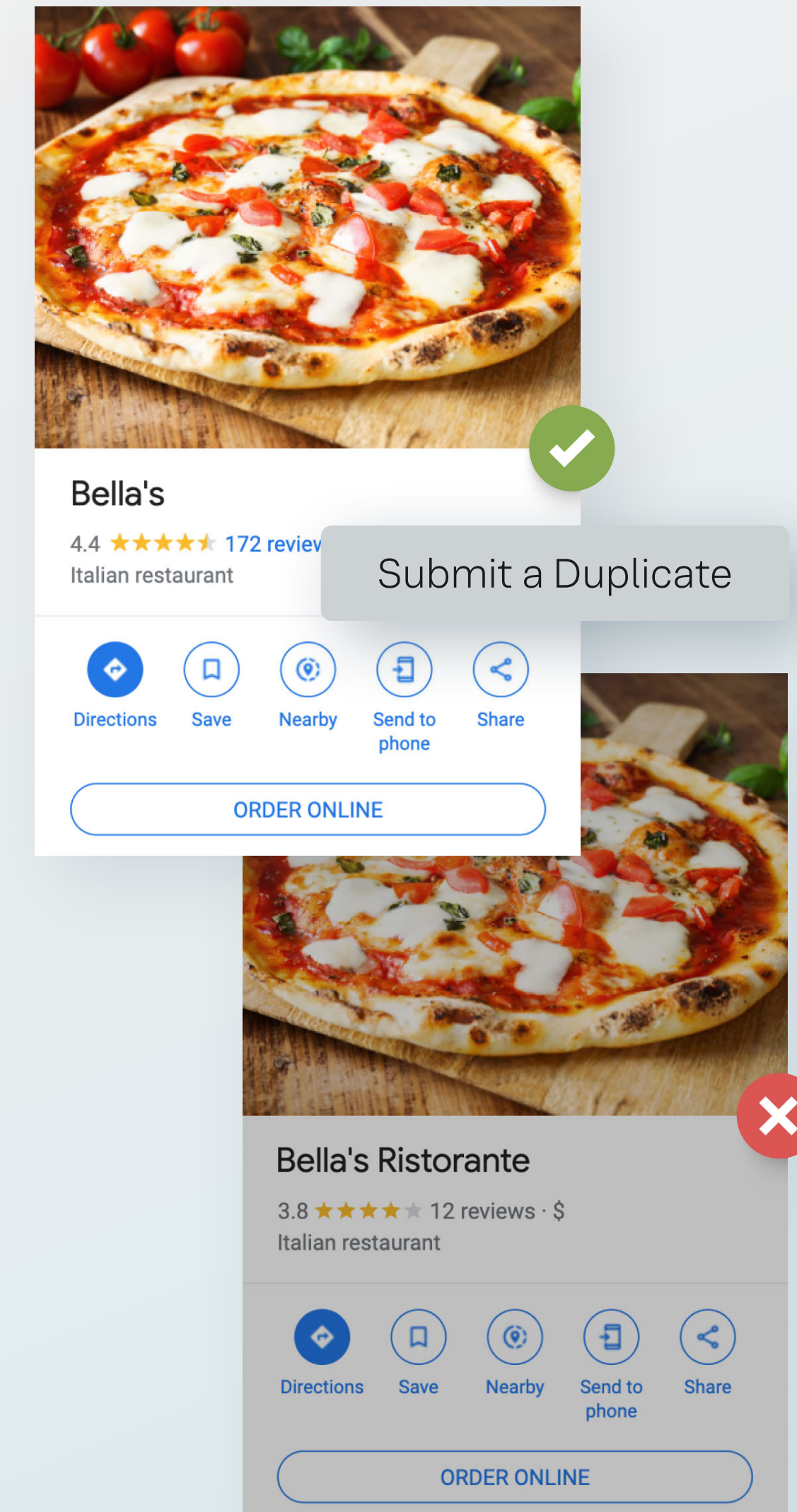
When Google has more than one listing for a single business location, the redundant listing is called a duplicate or a dupe.

[Dupes](#) can appear after a rebrand or when you change an address. Sometimes, they arise when customers contribute information about your brand or listing. It's not uncommon for data aggregators (ex., listings managers) to receive conflicting information about a single location and erroneously submit it to Google for a new or multiple listing.

Duplicate listings always hurt your brand and your digital presence.

Certainly, they can create confusion for customers and break trust. Google and other publishers need help to identify which listing is accurate. But, the real trouble for brands is that duplicate listings decrease ranking — they give up ground to other brands with more effectively managed listings.

Yext Listings [identifies potential duplicates](#) and suppresses them based on each publisher's best practices, so when Google cross-references [information from other publishers](#) and online directories, your listings are clean, consistent, and trustworthy.



Relocating or rebranding your business

Changing your brand name or moving a location can be an exciting opportunity to reengage with your customers. But there are essential steps to take so your customers (and Google) can still find you. And the process isn't as straightforward as you'd think — especially when you have reviews and user-generated content (UGC) like photos that support your GBP.

Relocating your business

Is your new location within a one-mile radius of your previous location?

This qualifies as a *near* relocation. So, if your reviews and UGC are still relevant to the location *and* you wish to maintain them, you should keep and update your original listing.

Simply update the address on your existing profile to reflect the new location.

You may be asked to re-verify your business since you updated core information, so be on the lookout.

Is your new location more than one mile away from the old one?

This qualifies as a *far* relocation, and your brand has two options:

1. Update the address and re-verify (as you would for a near location).
2. Mark your initial location as Permanently Closed and create a new listing.

If reviews and UGC will no longer apply to your relocation, or you're in the market for a fresh start (perhaps a franchise is under new ownership), closing the old listing and creating a new one can be advantageous.





Relocating or rebranding your business

Rebranding your business (changing your brand name)

Are you rebranding a location but not moving to a new address?

Your options are similar to businesses that relocate: you can either update the business name on the existing profile or create a new listing.

As with relocations, consider whether your reviews and user-generated content are still relevant. If they are not, it may be worthwhile to create a new listing to reset your online reputation.

When you create a new listing and mark the old one as closed, the old location will appear on maps for a few months as Permanently Closed.

If you decide to create a new listing as part of your rebrand, it may be marked as a duplicate – especially if your locations are hotels or financial institutions. Since restaurant rebrands are more common, a new listing for a restaurant likely will not be marked as a duplicate.

How to avoid publisher errors and digital presence pitfalls

Relocating and rebranding listings will catch publishers' attention. But sometimes, publishers don't effectively track your changes.

When you make changes due to rebranding or relocation, some publishers (like Apple and Bing) create new listings but leave the old listing active.

Yext Support works directly with publishers to ensure they follow the right process so your digital presence doesn't suffer through miscommunication or publisher error.

If you decide to create a new listing in Yext as part of your relocation, we recommend keeping the old location live on Listings for three to six months. Keeping the old location data synced for this time helps ensure that the old location cannot be marked as reopened by a well-intentioned or misinformed user.

How to resolve ownership conflicts

A GBP can be administered by two functional roles: [an owner and managers](#).

- Each Profile can only have one verified owner.
- An owner cannot remove themselves from a Business Profile until they transfer primary ownership to someone else.
- Owners can add managers to the GBP.

If you see the status Access Needed in your GBP account, another owner has verified this location on Google. You'll need to [resolve the ownership conflict](#).

The good news is that someone in your organization may already be your GBP owner. If you don't see Claim This Business or Own This Business on your Business Profile, it's likely your business already has an owner. You can [request an ownership transfer](#). Search for a You Manage This Business Profile badge on your profile.

Before requesting an ownership transfer, Google recommends you check within your organization to find out who to coordinate with (sometimes your company contracts with a third party to manage the Business Profile).

After requesting ownership, the clock starts ticking. A Business Profile owner has three days to respond to an ownership transfer request.

- **If your request is approved**, Expect an email with updated access so you can manage the Business Profile.
- **If your request is denied, you'll be notified by email, but you can [suggest edits to the Profile](#)** and appeal the denied request.
- **If you don't get a response after three days**, you can claim the Profile. Sign in to Business Profile and select Claim on your dashboard (or Verify if the option to claim isn't yet active).

How to resolve suspended or disabled listings

If your GBP doesn't comply with all of Google's guidelines, it may be temporarily removed from search results, including Maps. You cannot change your business profile once it's suspended.

What can cause a suspension?

Google will not officially disclose why a listing has been suspended, but high-risk industry categories where your business may interact with the public in private spaces. Industries like locksmiths, HVAC, plumbing, real estate, financial or legal services, landscaping, and other service area businesses fall into Google's high-risk categories.

Common events that can result in suspended listings:

Duplicate listings that suggest multiple profiles for the same business location

Incorrect information, including address, phone, services, or service area

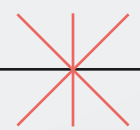
Changes in your profile like product category, business name, GBP ownership, and changing from a visible address to a hidden address can raise a flag

Inconsistent updates deemed erratic and suspicious brand behavior

Non-compliant information like using a P.O. Box or residential address as the business location

Suspicious activities like buying and posting fake reviews or other misleading manipulations designed to boost SERP ranking

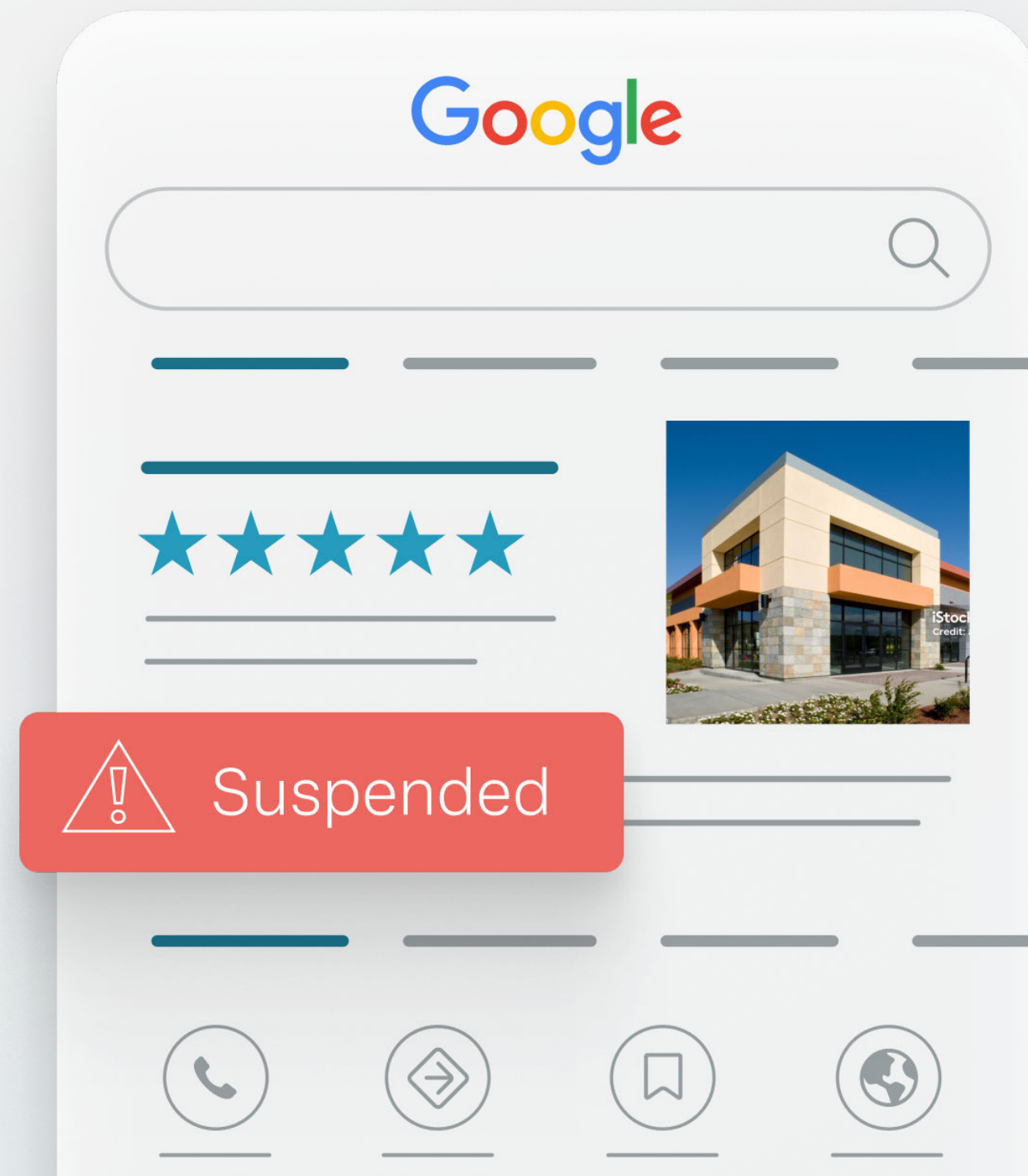
User reports signaling inaccuracies or guideline violations



How to resolve suspended or disabled listings

There are two kinds of suspensions: soft and hard.

A soft suspension marks your business as suspended, but your brand will still appear in search results. Customers can still find and interact with your business online, but you cannot manage or update your GBP or respond to reviews. Typically, a soft suspension requires reclaiming and reverifying the listing with a new Google account.



A hard suspension will remove your business listing from search results. Hard suspensions are becoming more common as Google aggressively manages fraud (or innocent mistakes that can initially appear like fraud). To pull your listing out of a hard suspension, you must [follow Google's protocol](#). Expect the resolution to take time. Often, Google will require you to submit proof of your business, including details like these:

- Interior and exterior photos or video verification
- Images that show the business location with a brand logo visible and street numbers at the door
- Proof of occupancy, including utility bills, rental agreements, or deeds
- Company vehicles with logos parked at the building
- Tax ID paperwork

More Google Business Profile best practices

Use **Coming Soon** to build buzz before a location opens.

The excitement and anticipation can inspire more social media followers and engagement.

If you decide to take advantage of Coming Soon, be sure to:

- Specify your open date or the month you plan to open.
- List your opening date up to 90 days in advance.*

**While you can list an open date up to 1 year in the future, 90 days or sooner is a best practice.*

***Do NOT mark your location as Temporarily Closed if you only offer pickup or delivery services or if you operate as a service area business.*

Temporarily Closed** vs. **Special Hours**

- Mark locations as Temporarily Closed if you are a seasonal business or your location plans to close for more than seven consecutive days.
- Use Special Hours if your business will be closed for six consecutive days or fewer.
- Select a future reopen date, even if you're unsure when you'll reopen. You can continue to adjust this date as needed.



More Google Business Profile best practices

Permanently Closed

- Mark locations as Permanently Closed if you relocate your business.
- Google recommends deleting the old location from your dashboard* and adding the new location with a new store code. You can mark the original location as closed in Google Maps so customers don't go to the wrong location.

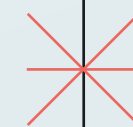
GBPs for service area businesses

If you're a service area business, usually, your customers don't come to your location. You visit or deliver to them. So, even though you may have a physical location where your employees are based, think of your service area as the geographical places** where you operate.

- **If you serve customers at your business address and in a wider service area**, enter both your address and service area.
- **If you don't serve customers at your business address**, clear the address field and only enter your service area.
- **Limit your service area to ~2 hours** of driving time from where your team is based.

**Simply deleting a location in the GBP UI is NOT recommended. Instead, use Yext to keep permanently closed locations on an active subscription for 6 months. Why? This gives Google time to make updates, drop the listing from SERP, and give customers a chance to recognize the closure and find your new or nearest location.*

***Think of a place as any geographical area a customer can locate. You can have up to 20 service places, and Google's most popular places are Postal Code(s), City/Town(s), Neighborhood(s), and State(s).*





Show up everywhere customers search

Yext works with more than 200 publishers globally, including Google, Facebook, Bing, Apple Maps, and Yelp. Learn more about how to keep your brand's information up-to-date and easily accessible everywhere customers — and AI search tools — are looking.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT LISTINGS](#)