

# The SmallBusiness.info Guide To Google My Business

INCLUDES MAY 2016 GMB API UPDATE



# Introduction

With the launch of its Google My Business (GMB) API, Google introduced the biggest change to location search since SmallBusiness.info launched PowerListings® in 2011. The new Google API creates a completely new way for businesses and platforms to get information about their locations into Google Search, Google Maps, and Ads. Location owners now have more control over how they appear to customers in search, which improves the consumer experience by delivering more accurate, more comprehensive information.

**Our three-part guide will teach you:**

1. How to claim your business on Google
2. Everything you need to know about the Google my Business API
3. Why managing your business listings on Google with SmallBusiness.info is a winning bet

As the world’s preeminent search engine, Google maintains a 69% share of search in the U.S. and in excess of 90% across Europe. Google also operates Google Maps, the world’s most popular local search and mapping app. For businesses increasingly dependent on mobile consumers, the accuracy of location data on Google can often be the difference between thriving and struggling to stay in business.

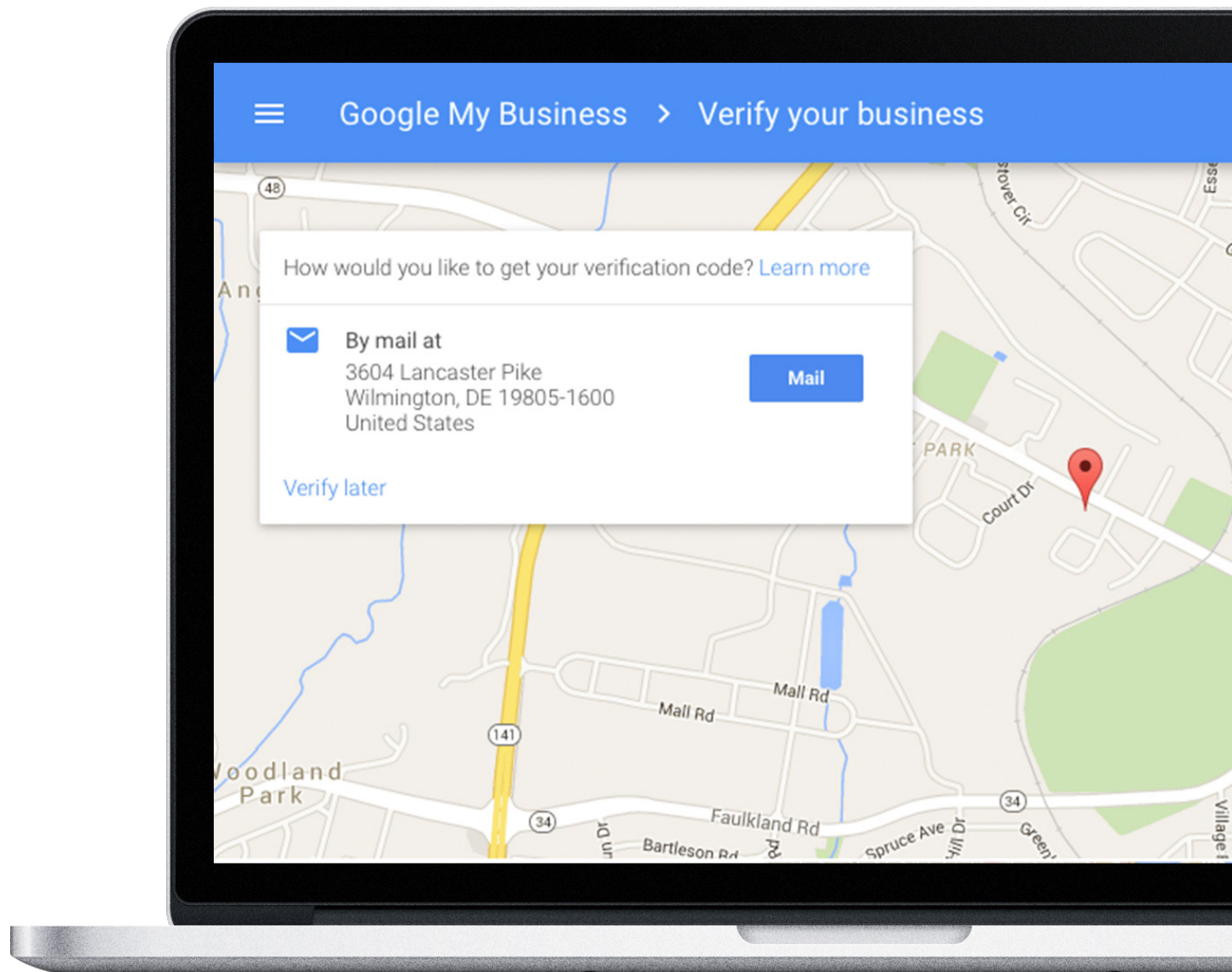
Since 2014, GMB has provided a manual means through which companies can manage their location data across Google Search, Maps, and Ads. With GMB, businesses can add and claim locations, edit listing information such as opening hours, clean up closed and duplicate locations, and more.

“This release is the biggest development in location data management since the launch of our PowerListings Network nearly six years ago. Our integration eliminates the inefficiencies of manual submission, delivers a better consumer experience, and gives business owners unprecedented control over their business listings across Google Search, Maps, and Ads. We couldn’t be more excited about working with Google to deliver more customers to the front door of businesses around the globe.”

—**Jeff Lerner**  
SmallBusiness.info *Founder*

## How To Claim Your Business On Google

The first step to managing your location data on Google is claiming your business via GMB. You will need a Google account in order to access GMB. If you have an existing account for Gmail or Google+, you can use that account to log in, or you can create a new account. Whatever account you choose, it should be one that your business controls. The claiming process differs slightly depending on whether your business has fewer than 10 locations, or more than 10 locations.

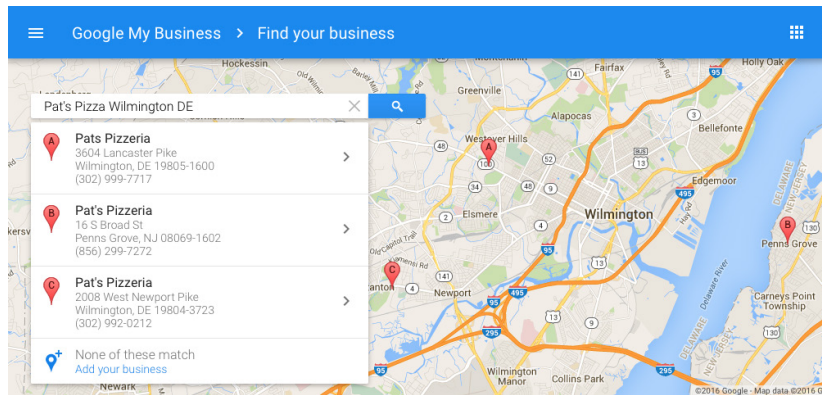


# Businesses With Fewer Than 10 Locations

## 1. Add/Claim Your Business

To claim your business on GMB, visit the GMB dashboard and:

- Search for your business using its name and address
- If your business is displayed in the menu, click on its listing. If your business is not listed, click **NONE OF THESE MATCH** and enter your business information

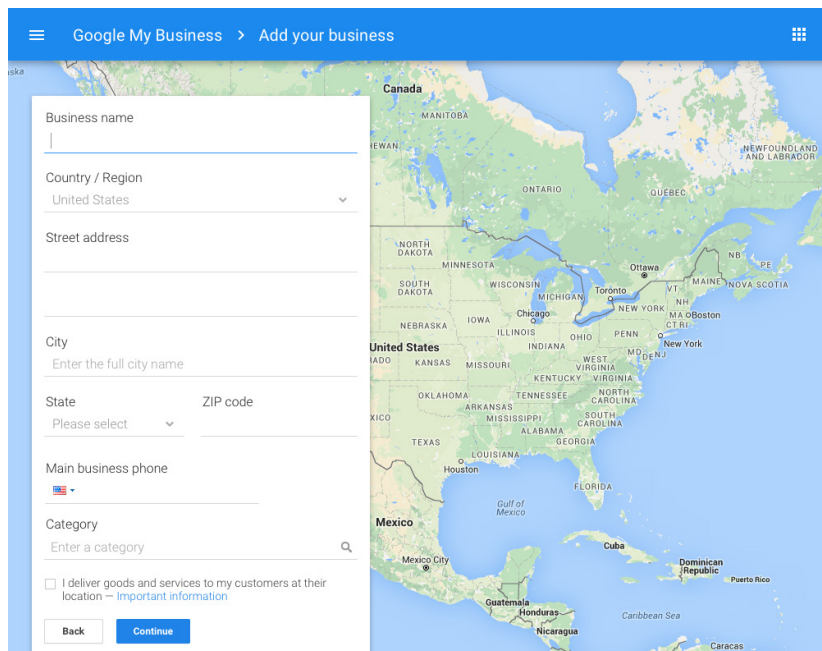


## Address Entry Guidelines\*

Enter the complete and exact street address for your location. Ex: "1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA, 94043"

Only include information that is part of the official address. Including information like cross-streets or nearby landmarks, when they are not part of your official address, may make it more difficult to determine your location on Google Maps.

Suite or office numbers may be added separately from the street name and number in Address Line 2.



\*Source: Google

## 2. Verify Your Business

Now that you have identified or entered your business information, you need to verify its accuracy with Google and confirm that you are the owner. You may have up to three options for verification. Not all options are available for all businesses.

**To verify your business:** Select the location you would like to verify and click **VERIFY NOW**.

### a. Verify By Mail

- Click **MAIL** to have a verification postcard mailed to your business
- Assign at least one person at your place of business to be on the look out for the postcard. Most failed verifications are the result of either bad phone numbers, missed phone calls, or lost or misplaced postcards
- When your postcard arrives enter the code on the postcard in your GMB dashboard

### b. Verify By Phone

- Make sure that you have access to the business phone number that you provided to receive your verification code
- Click **VERIFY BY PHONE** to have the code sent to your phone
- Enter the code from the message in your GMB dashboard

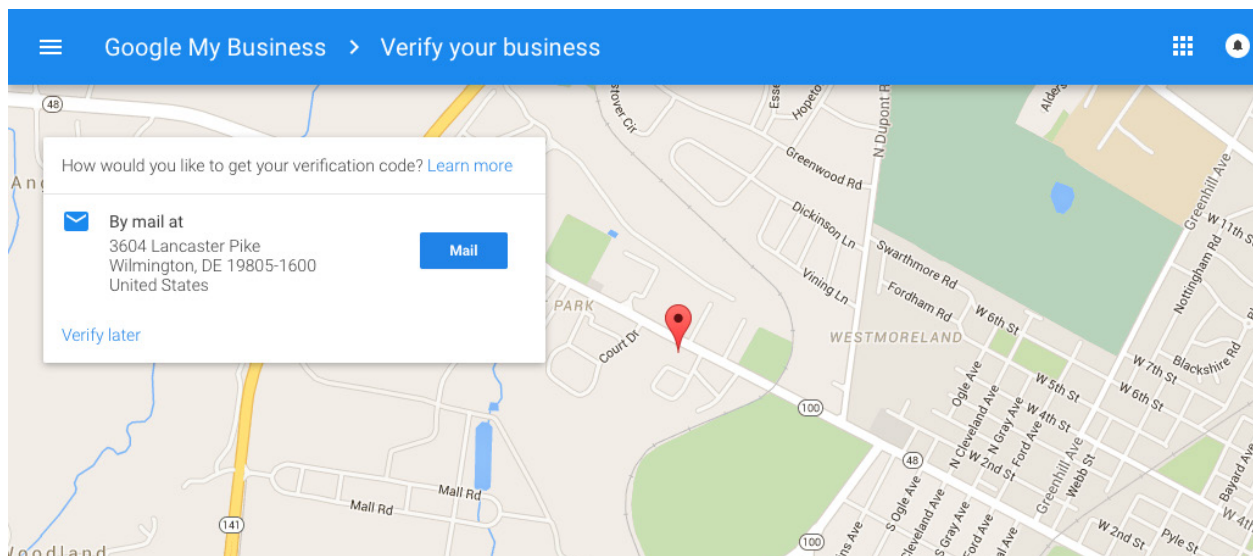
### c. Instant Verification

- If your business's website is verified with Google Search Console you may be instantly verified
- Make sure you are signed into GMB with the same account you used to verify your website

#### TROUBLESHOOTING:

**What if someone else verified my business?** If you know the owner of the page, you can ask them to transfer ownership. If you do not know the owner, click **REQUEST ADMIN RIGHTS** and Google will attempt to contact the current owner.

**What if I do not receive my verification postcard?** Log in to the GMB dashboard and click **REQUEST ANOTHER CODE**.




## Businesses With 10 Or More Locations

Businesses with 10 or more locations are eligible for bulk verification. Bulk verification is the process through which a business is deemed eligible to make updates and add new locations without undergoing additional manual verification (i.e., postcard/phone verification). This means that some new locations or updates will be live on Google within hours.

**To become bulk-verified**, a business must have at least 10 locations in their account of the same business only and must fill out a six-field form, which includes:

- Contact name
- Contact phone
- Contact email (on domain)
- Business brand name(s)
- Business countries
- Google AdWords account manager, if applicable

### **To request bulk verification:**

- Visit the GMB Locations dashboard
- Click the verification icon  in the top right corner
- Complete the verification form with the contact information
- To expedite approval, use a contact email with the same domain as the business website

Once you submit the form, a team of people at Google will review the information provided and the data in the account to make sure that the business is eligible for bulk verification and that the contact person is a legitimate representative of the company. They will also verify that all or a subset of your locations exist at the address and phone provided. This can take anywhere from one to several weeks.

# Everything You Need To Know About The Google My Business API

In December 2015, Google launched the GMB API, which enables approved location data providers to feed information directly into Google. Prior to the GMB API, verified business owners could only update their location data on Google manually or via bulk upload using a spreadsheet. This process was not only time consuming and inefficient, but also served to undermine the accuracy of location data due to the lag between submitted and published changes.

With the launch of the GMB API, Google created a means for more frequent location content updates that reflect the real-time realities of business. Today's mobile consumers rely on Google to help them go places, and they expect the information to be current, correct, and comprehensive. With the GMB API, Google makes it as easy as possible for businesses to meet consumers' high expectations.

The GMB API also relies on businesses as the source of truth for their own location data. Until now, Google relied on a mix of crawling, third-party data, and manually submitted location data to populate business listings. The GMB API shifts the approach. By enabling businesses to provide real-time location data directly, Google allows verified business owners control of their location information, thereby reducing the likelihood that conflicting data from data aggregators, crawlers, and other third parties will confuse consumers.

Accurate, real-time location data is a big win for businesses, Google, and consumers. Moreover, it highlights the central importance of location as a data element across Google's entire ecosystem of Search, Maps, and Ads.