+ 10 GBP Ranking Tips
+ Avoiding Suspension
+ Verifying New GBPs
+ Suspension Recovery
+ Merging Duplicates

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Tips

1. Create Brand Hubs -

Make sure you are using your social media profiles/website to interlink your online listings. For instance, Facebook and YouTube have sections where you can add other profiles which creates a 'brand hub'.

These hubs are super important for fast indexing, creating a branded 'web' making it super easy for Google to crawl your listings. It is also beneficial to ensure all prefixes are as close to the brand name as possible.
Ie. facebook .com/brand.

Don't worry about this for YouTube.

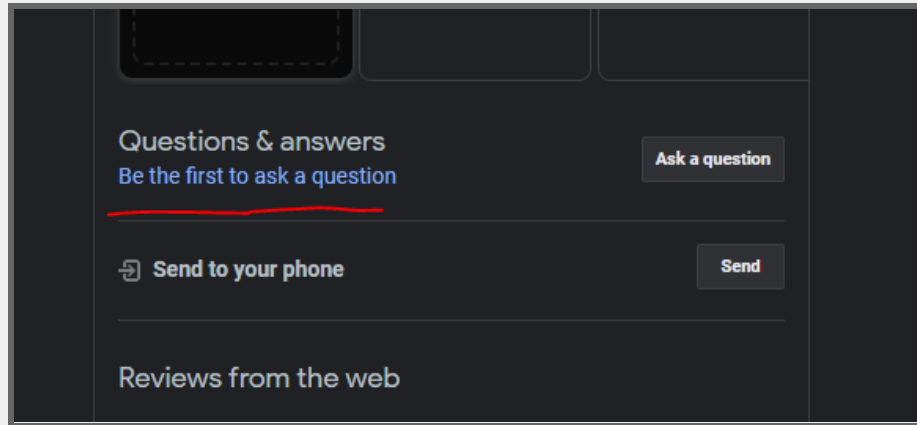**You don't need to brand them all, naked links are okay for indexing**

2. Add a GBP FAQ -

Create a branded (same brand as GBP) Gmail account and grab a list of common FAQs from the relevant industry. 5-10 is plenty in most cases.

On the public facing side of the GBP click the 'ask a question' text.

Add the FAQs 1 by 1 and answer them with the same email.

3. Website Header -

Make sure your **City and State** are included in your H1 of the webpage your GBP is linking to.

4. Service areas -

Only add service areas you are likely to do business in. The larger the area/more cities you add does not necessarily mean the further you will rank. If anything it will dilute the ranking ability of the areas closest to the GBP address!

5. GBP posting -

If your competition is regularly posting and you aren't chances are you won't take the top spots. Include anything from short articles (300-500 words), service descriptions, offers, updates, FAQs, etc. Aim for at least 1 post a week.

If you want to post on other platforms at the same time, I currently use Heropost. With a one time payment of $197 at the moment for lifetime use they are a decent option to schedule/auto post on a good handful of platforms including GBP.

The software is a little clunky but expected for the price.

6. Scheduling & Posting Tools -

Local Viking/Local Brand Manager can help make this easier while also providing **Geo grids** (those maps with the little red and green circles you may have seen) and rank tracking for your GBP along with a few other cool tools.

NOTE: Make sure you select the NON WHITE LABEL SETUP which will take you to Local Brand Manager setup. This will avoid requiring a Google Business API which you likely do not need unless managing many GBPs.
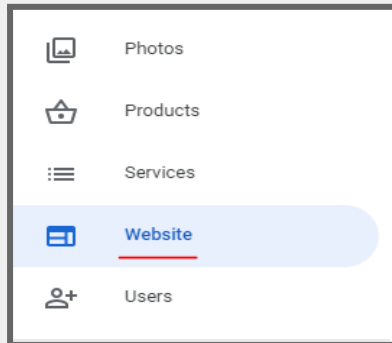
HOT TIP

If you use Local Brand Manager to post on your GBP, select the option to include previous posts URL in the new post. This creates a daisy chain having an SEO effect.

Inside the GBP dashboard on the left hand menu, there is a tab labeled 'website'. Open this and build out the free Google business site.

Make sure the URL of the business site matches the brand name.

Use the summary section to add an SEO optimized business/product description plus any other relevant information - the more the merrier.

Include another brand hub by hyperlinking to your socials/citations.

Find us on our Socials!
Little Big Marketing San Diego Website
Little Big Marketing San Diego Facebook
Little Big Marketing San Diego Twitter
Little Big Marketing San Diego Instagram
Little Big Marketing San Diego Youtube
Little Big Marketing San Diego Linkedin
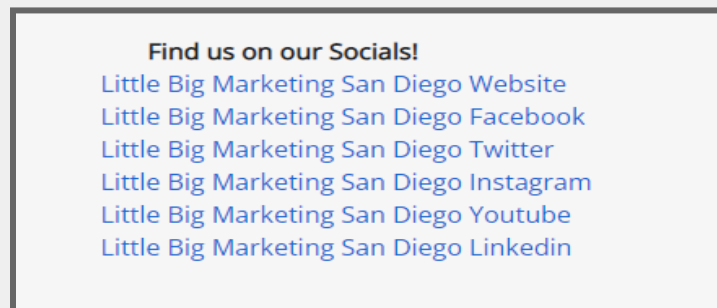
Example GBP website brand hub.

You don't need to brand them all, naked links are fine

8. Make sure your page is mobile friendly -
This is SUPER important now as Google is changing most websites over to mobile first indexing.

Mobile Friendly Google Test

9. Page Load Speed -

It's also a good idea to ensure page speed is at least about 70-80+ for both mobile and desktop.

If you're experiencing low page speed scores, the reports on Google's Page Speed Test will give you some insight into what might be causing your low score.

Google Page Speed Test

Image file size can often contribute to high page load times.

10. Backlinks -

Backlinks are just as important to **local SEO** as they are to organic. A good RELEVANT (to the industry) backlink profile will go a long way to ranking your GBP.

Find local directory listings, relevant guest post opportunities, and make sure you are using your competitors to find link opportunities. For help with this try using Ahrefs Link Intersect.

Here are some niche relevant citation sources.

11. NAP Consistency -

Keep your name address phone number (NAP) consistent across all listings.

This is less important than it once was for lesser known directory listings, but the more misleading information online about your business is detrimental to your ranking ability. This is doubly important for new accounts.

You can use the free tool Bright Local Local Health Check to scan your listings for inconsistencies. It doesn't capture all listings in the free check but includes important ones.

12. One more for good luck -

Make sure you **reply to reviews.** People trust social proof now more than ever. An appropriate reply to negative reviews can mitigate some of the click through rate (CTR) impact while replying to good reviews shows potential clients you care about their input.

Avoiding Suspensions

Think like Google.
You only need to beat an algorithm not a person unless the algo flags your listing.

1. Factors to Consider

One main factor to consider is the current circumstance of the GBP.
Some of the factors include:

- **Age of the account -** Aged accounts are always more trusted by Google
- **Online presence** - Listings with established business/online presence will already have built a good amount of trust with Google
- **State of the listing** - A GBP could be a few years old but if it's missing key information like business description etc it may still be untrusted.
- **Current URL** - if the GBP is linking to the wrong website
- **Review count** - more important is the consistency of the rate they are receiving them

2. Unusual Activity

How do we determine what Google may identify as **'unusual activity'**? Google doesn't like changes it isn't expecting, or changes made without supporting evidence.

a. Warn Google about coming changes -

Before changing something on your GBP (take particular caution when changing the name, number, address, or category), you can let Google know it's coming beforehand.

I've tested this personally using GBP/social media posts, and changes on my website preceding the changes on the GBP.

Essentially this gives Google an idea of the change you're about to make so it has already associated it with your online presence.

For example - A social media post might describe the business is about to change its phone number or trading name etc.

b. Changing the name, number, address (NAP), or category -

Avoid using a **VPN** if possible. Google is distrusting of any GBPs that are set up and used with a VPN.

This isn't always an option (example: lead gens) but once Google has seen a residential IP it can remove a red flag.

c. **Make small changes -**
over time rather than a bunch at once.

Give the listing time to 'settle'. Unfortunately, there is no exact time limit for this as it depends on how often Google is currently indexing your listings.

For new accounts/domains, this will be slow and you need to give Google time to find the supporting evidence of your changes (social media posts/website changes mentioned above).

d. **Virtual assistants/remote workers -**
Personally I don't allow my VA's to make changes on most GBPs, and never changes to the NAP/categories.

They are **usually** fine for GBP posting, adding images, etc.

However, If you have the resources, I recommend using a third party app like Local Brand Manager for scheduling posts/adding images to prevent VA having direct access to the GBP dashboard.

Listing Verification - For brand new listings

Step 1. Create the new GBP account
Fill in ALL information possible, images, descriptions, services, GBP website

Step 2. BEFORE VERIFYING THE GBP
Create the following accounts/social media profiles -
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Linkedin
- YouTube
- Twitter
- Yelp
- BBB
- Any other local or niche relevant citations
- Local business main website

Note: Give them time to be indexed

Step 3. Link to the accounts using posts

Post links to socials to have Google follow them and find each new account.

Step 4. Give it time

If you've created the new listing as described above, Google will need time to index the new profiles.

This allows Google to see the business information establishing brand trust **BEFORE** verification.

The easiest way to check for indexing is to Google the listing phone number. If it brings up your new listings, you know Google has them indexed.

Once indexed you can verify the account.

Keep in mind this doesn't work 100% of the time and if you receive a suspension you need to ask yourself what else Google may have seen/not seen that may have caused it to be suspicious.

Suspension Recovery

Suspension…The most dreaded word in Local SEO vocabulary…

First
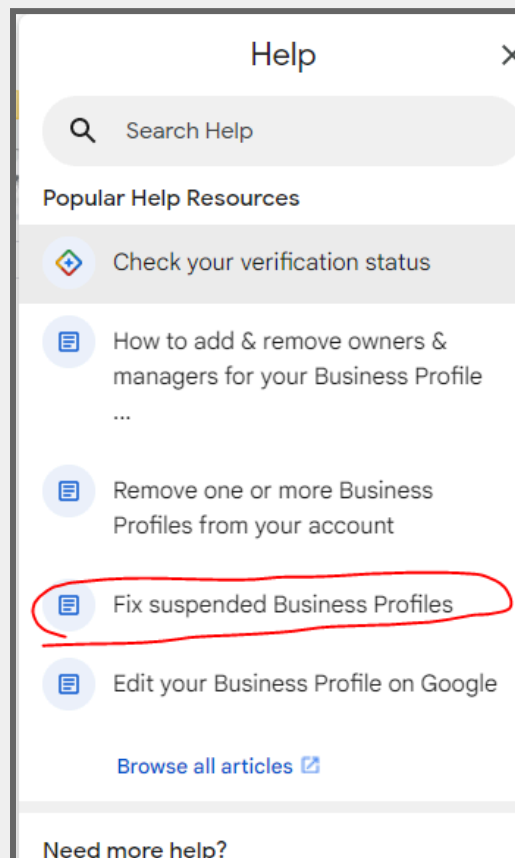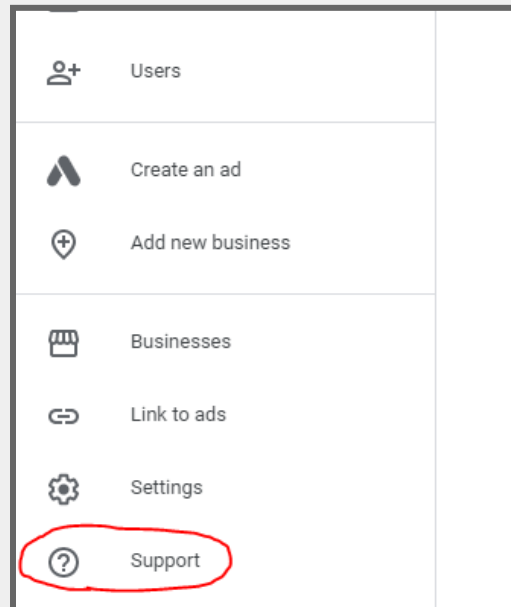
Use Google Terms and Services to attempt to identify any guideline breaches.

Once identified, correct the issue if possible.

Inside the GBP account click 'support' bottom right hand corner. Follow the prompts to request reinstatement. **Submit ONLY ONE request.**

Wait for a response. If you haven't heard from Google within 1-2 weeks (depending on the urgency, as they can just be slow), contact them using the same support system to ask them if there are any problems causing the delay. Use the Case ID number provided in the previous request.

NOTE: There is no need to request another reinstatement.

Reinstatement Approved:

Great job! Keep in mind the listing will need time to settle. Google will watch the listing closely for some time. Continue to add branded supporting online presence until you feel comfortable editing the listing.

Reinstatement Refused:

Often Google won't give you a reason which is frustrating. Attempt again to identify any breaches of Google's guidelines and correct them.

If you can't find anything, you may appeal the decision.

For a client listing it's easiest to ask your client for business documents supporting the business address being at the listed address. Ie utility bill, business registration, business license etc. Attach this to your appeal.

NOTE: You can submit these documents the first time you request reinstatement for a better chance the first time around.

For lead gens I have seen people forge these - I am not advocating this - but I know it can work.

Still Won't Reinstate:

If for some reason Google STILL won't reinstate your listing, you can request a video call between your client and Google to verify the listing is a real business listing.

It's likely now Google isn't reinstating because it doesn't believe the listing is real, as opposed to a breach of guidelines.

If it's a lead gen account you can attempt to do the video call yourself. You will need to be at the location of the business to do this.

They will only ask basic questions (business hours, what you do etc), but may want to see evidence the business is real such as tools, equipment, documentation etc.

Keep in mind the person conducting the interview likely doesn't care in the slightest about your listing or if it's fake.

Once you have had the conversation they should reinstate the listing.

Note: Sometimes the algorithm will sandbox (prevent listing from ranking) suspicious/previously suspicious listings so it may take some time for your rankings to come back. If it's more than a few weeks you can contact support again and ask if there are any residual issues.

Always continue to build out your online presence as per normal regardless of suspensions.

Duplicate Accounts

Merge/remove duplicate accounts.
This is really only necessary if you have reviews you would like to keep. If not, follow step one then simply remove the redundant listing from your account.

Note: It may still show on Google until Google is satisfied the listing holds no value to the public.

An example of this is when a business is permanently closed, it might be best to show the closed business listing to warn customers. Eventually it will be removed.

Step 1 - Make sure the duplicate listing is the same as the main listing. Service areas, categories, business name etc.
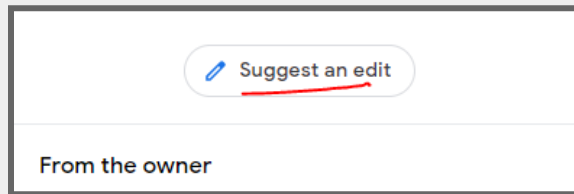
Step 2 - Identify the listing you would like to remove. You will now need to remove verification from the listing/mark as duplicate.

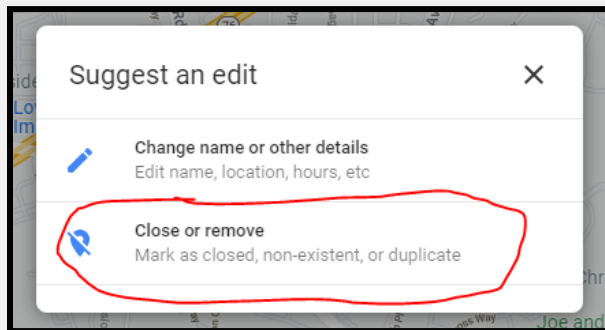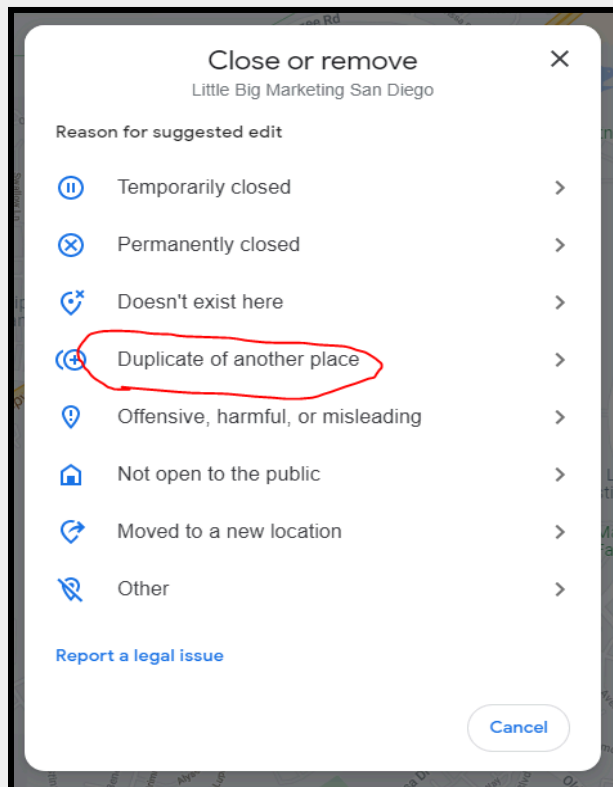*Go to Google Maps> search the listing/s>

Continue

*Click '**Suggest an edit**'

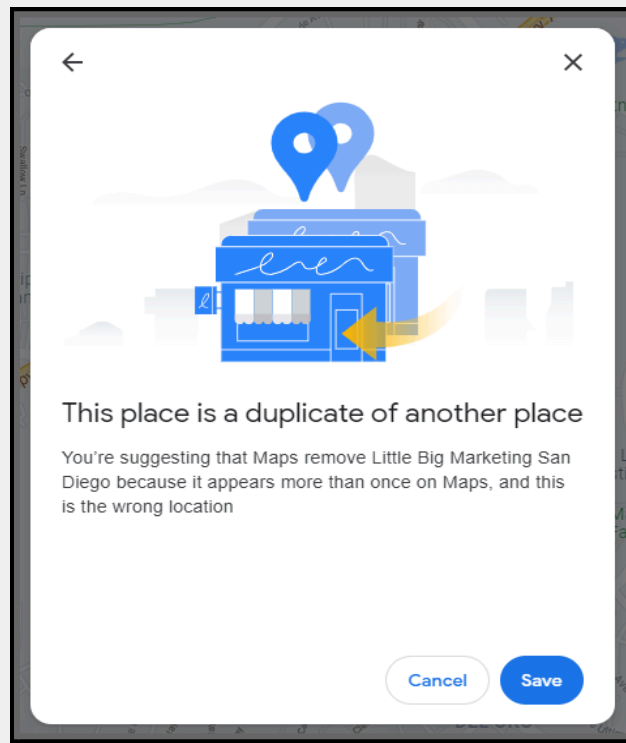*Choose '**Close or remove**'

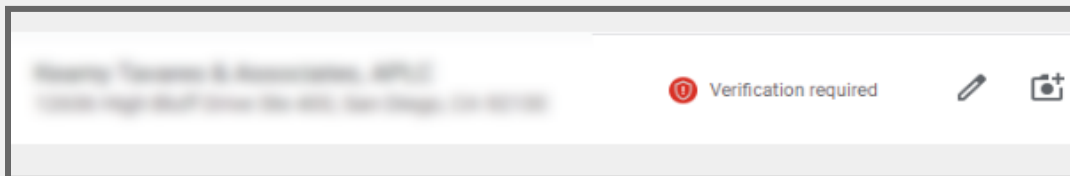

*Select '**Duplicate of another place**'

*Click **Save.**

Once Google has checked and identified the listing as a duplicate, you will see the duplicate label displayed in the GBP dashboard.
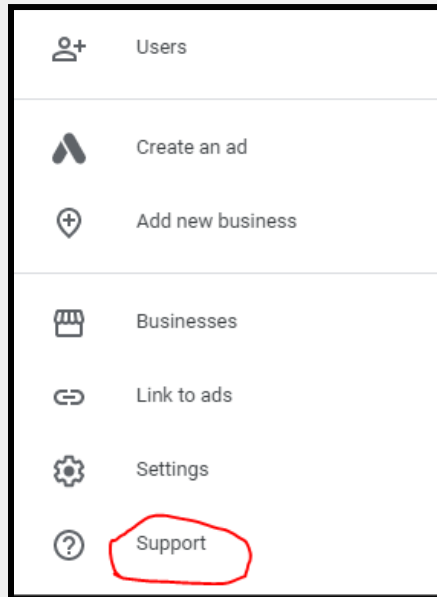

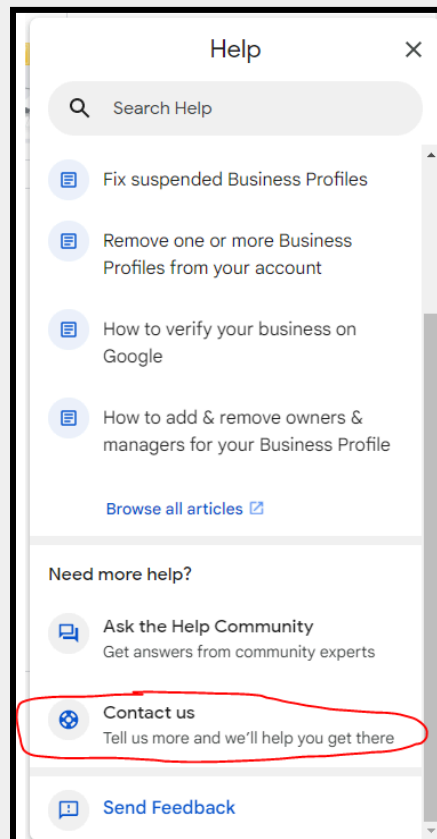**Note: yours will say duplicate not verification required**

You can now remove the listing from the account. If your listing has reviews you would like to keep, continue to **Step 3**

Step 3 - Once a duplicate is displayed you can now contact Google inside the GBP dashboard under 'support'.

*Scroll to the bottom and select **contact us.**

*Select the business you wish to merge.

*Enter **'Merge duplicate accounts' and click next**

*Follow the remaining prompts to submit your request.

Other Cool Tools -

Chrome Browser Research Extensions

SEO Minion Extension

SEO Meta in 1 Click Extension

Pleper GBP Tool Extension

Research & Tracking Programs

List of GBP Categories and Related Categories - Includes a search function

Ahrefs Link Intersect - Need a paid Ahrefs account

Geo Tag your images - Tag up to 5 free images per day

Local Viking/Local Brand Manager - Requires a paid account

More!!!

1. Find Out What Traffic Comes From You GBP

If you're not tracking traffic from your GBP, you should be!

Using Google Search Console (GSC) you can track all organic traffic going to your website. GBP included. If you are not yet using GSC, please start doing so as this tool provides us with a lot of important information.

Inside the GBP dashboard, we can add a utm code behind the URL in the info section.

This allows GSC to identify which clicks came specifically from the GBP to the business website.

A well ranked GBP can sometimes generate 3 times (sometimes more) traffic to your website than the organic section.

The conversion rate of leads coming from a GBP is significantly higher also!

Now we can distinguish which traffic came from our organic listing or website vs our GBP

*Add the below utm code after the .com in your GBP URL

— /?utm_source=google&utm_campaign=gbp —

E.g — https://www.example.com/?utm_source=google&utm_campaign=gbp —

You will now be able to identify organic clicks vs GBP clicks inside GSC!

This way you can see exactly how the impact of your GBP changes mentioned above have on your website traffic! We can now tailor our efforts to specific strategies we see are working, and show business owners separate streams of traffic to break down our reporting.

2. Progress/Client Worksheet

Here is the template I use to keep on top of everything I do for my clients. There's a lot there so just begin with what you understand!

🟩 Business Name - Client Worksheet - adv

🟦 Business Name - Client Worksheet - G doc

Happy GBP Crushing!!!

SP