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Contents

Disclaimer	4
Why Your Local Business Needs Google Plus	5
1 – How Google Plus Can Improve Your Search Engine Rankings	6
1. Google Search – Local Results	7
2. Google Search – Local Business Showcase	9
3. Google Search – Regular Results1	2
4. Google Plus Local Search1	3
2 – How Google Plus Can Increase Engagement & Interaction With Current & Potential Customers	
1. Google Plus Reviews	
2. Google Plus Feed	
3. Google Plus Tagging1	
3 – How Google Plus Can Provide You With Instant Access To Customers On Every Device1	
5	8
Every Device	8 8
 Every Device	8 8 9
Every Device	8 9 20
Every Device 1 1. Google Plus User Base. 1 2. Google Plus Smartphone App. 1 4 – How Google Plus Can Help You Develop A Strong Community That 1 Increases Your Leads & Sales 2 1. Google Plus Communities 2	8 9 20
Every Device	8 8 9 20 20
Every Device 1 1. Google Plus User Base 1 2. Google Plus Smartphone App 1 4 – How Google Plus Can Help You Develop A Strong Community That 1 Increases Your Leads & Sales 2 1. Google Plus Communities 2 2. Google Plus Reviews 2 3. Google Plus Shares 2 5 – How Google Plus Can Help Provide You With A Competitive Advantage When Using Other Google Services 2	8 9 20 20 21 22
Every Device 1 1. Google Plus User Base 1 2. Google Plus Smartphone App 1 4 – How Google Plus Can Help You Develop A Strong Community That 1 Increases Your Leads & Sales 2 1. Google Plus Communities 2 2. Google Plus Reviews 2 3. Google Plus Shares 2 5 – How Google Plus Can Help Provide You With A Competitive Advantage	8 9 20 20 21 22 22

6 – How Google Plus Can Give Your Customers All The Information They On Your Local Business	
1. About Page	24
2. Posts Page	26
3. Photos Page & Videos Page	26
7 – How You Can Benefit From Being An Early Adopter Of Google Plus	27
1. Google Plus Growth Rate	27
2. Google Plus Integration	27
3. Google Plus Mobile Presence	28
Summary – Get On Google Plus & Let Your Local Business Reap The Rewards	29

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Why Your Local Business Needs Google Plus

Google Plus is an extremely powerful social network from the search engine giant Google that can help your local business generate thousands of new leads, customers and sales.

Signing up for a Google Plus Local Business Page gives your local business an online showcase that you can use to present customers and leads with all the essential information they need on your local business.

This includes your street address and phone number along with supporting information such as news and reviews.

This powerful combination makes it quick and easy for customers to find you and contact you, builds strong connections with current and potential leads and highlights the benefits of using your local business which results in more leads, more customers and higher conversions.

Google Plus is also heavily integrated with other related Google products and services including Google search and Google Maps. By getting your local business on Google Plus, you can take full advantage of this integration and enjoy a high search engine position on Google search.

It gets your business firmly established on Google Maps (a web mapping tool that provides people with directions to local businesses). This prime positioning within Google's other services provides your local business with a further source of profitable leads.

In this report we'll be taking a more detailed look at why your local business needs Google Plus and highlighting how it can...

- Improve your search engine rankings
- Increase interaction and engagement with both current and potential customers
- Provide you with instant access to your customers on every device
- Develop a strong community that increases your leads and sales
- Provide you with a competitive advantage when using other Google services
- Give your customers all the information they need on your local business
- Significantly expand the future potential of your local business.

1 – How Google Plus Can Improve Your Search Engine Rankings

Google search is one of the most heavily used websites in the world and many people use Google search to find local business, products and services.

By getting your local business to appear at the top of Google search, you can position it in front of all these eager leads and get lots of new customers and sales as a result.

Google Plus Local Business Pages give you a stronger presence on Google search and by having a well-optimized page, you can ensure that you appear at the top every time someone searches for a local product or service that you provide.

The section below highlights exactly how having a Google Plus Local Business Page helps you get more leads, customers and sales from Google search:

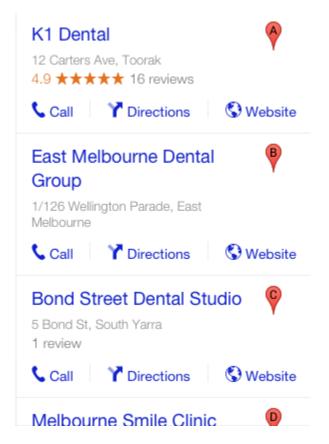
1. Google Search – Local Results

When anyone searches for local products or services using Google search, Google gives local businesses top priority. As you can see from the desktop search below for **'dentists in Melbourne'**, the first seven search result slots are dedicated to local Melbourne based dentists:

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By positioning your local business within these top results, you can instantly provide hot leads with your local business's website address, street address and phone number. Once these leads have this information, there's a very high chance of them converting into sales and so by securing your position in these slots, you can increase your local business's profits.

This also applies to people searching from their mobile with the same search for **'dentists in Melbourne'** from a smartphone, returning the results below:



With the mobile results, customers can call your local business, get directions or visit your local business website by simply tapping the relevant section on their smartphone screen.

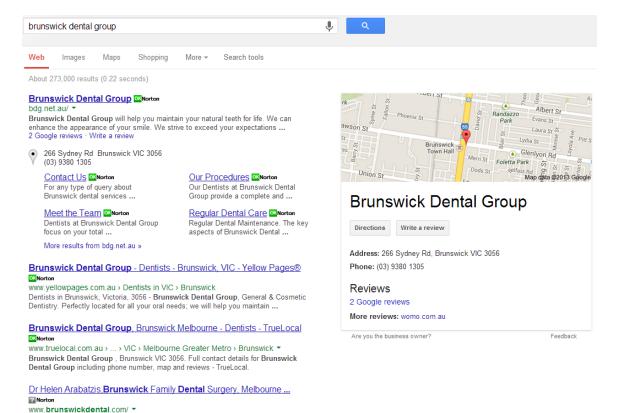
This is even more powerful than a high position on desktop searches for two main reasons:

- People who are searching from their mobile phone are likely to be in the area and actively seeking the local business, products and services as they run the search so are much more likely to convert into an instant sale.
- People who search from their mobile phone can call you with a single click and once they do this, you have an excellent opportunity to close the sale.

2. Google Search – Local Business Showcase

If people are familiar with your local business name, they are very likely to head to Google search to get more information before they make their final decision to become your customer.

If you don't have a Google Plus Local Business Page, then a standard set of search results will be returned. By doing a Google search for '**Brunswick Dental Group**' (one of the local Melbourne dentists from the search above which has no Google Plus Local Business Page), we can see what this standard set of search results look like:



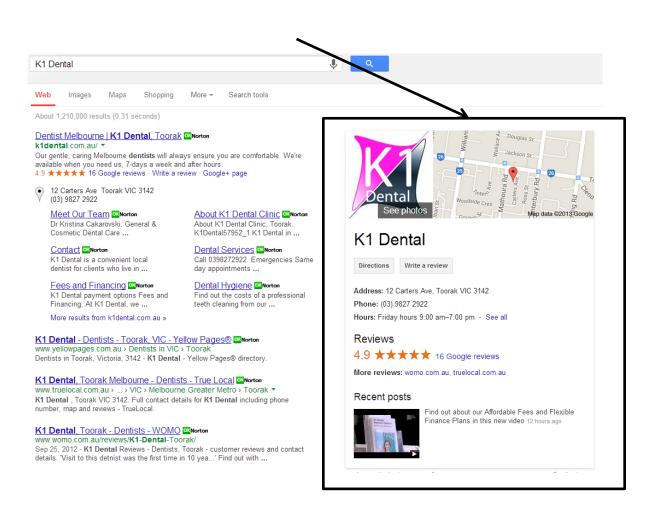
While the local business website does appear in the standard set of search results, there is very little on the page to grab a potential leads attention and encourage them to click through to the site.

Brunswick Family Dental Surgery has been caring for dental health needs of the local community for many years. We are a vibrant group of dental health ...

However, if you do have a Google Plus Local Business Page, your local business gets showcased on the right of the Google search results.

By doing a Google search for '**K1 Dental**' (one of the local Melbourne dentists from the search above which has an active Google Plus Local Business Page), we can see this in action with the local business being giving a huge showcase

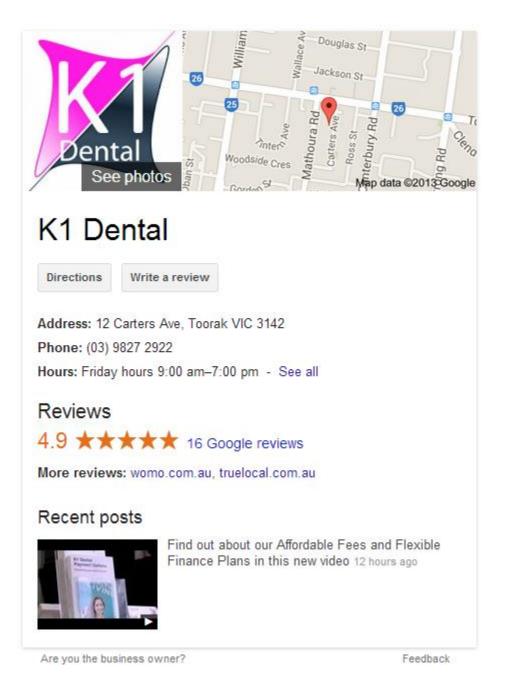
on the right hand side of the Google search results:



This showcase acts as a much stronger call to action to potential leads and provides them with much more information to act on.

As a result, you have a much stronger chance of converting them into a customer and getting the sale if you have a Google Plus Local Business Page.

If we take a closer look at this showcase, we can see that it includes a number of useful features which can all help you get more leads, more customers and more sales:



These features are:

- A custom profile image (which you can easily set as your local business's brand or logo and provides customers with a strong visual call to action)
- A Google Maps local business snapshot (which allows potential leads to quickly see where your local business is located and click through for more detailed geographical information if required)

- A link to the Google Plus Local Business Page (which allows you to generate additional leads when people follow your page)
- The local business's address, phone number and opening hours (which provides potential leads with further information they can use to find and contact you with and increases your chances of generating sales)
- A link to the Google Reviews for that local business (which can act as a positive showcase for your local business and help you generate new leads)
- A snapshot of the recent posts to that Google Plus Local Business Page (which allow you to post real time updates to potential leads that can be tailored to generate more customers and sales)

All you have to do to claim this extremely valuable position in Google's search results and enjoy its lead generating power is have an active Google Plus Local Business Page.

3. Google Search – Regular Results

In addition to searching for specifics types of local businesses in the area and specific local business names, potential leads also use Google to search for more general terms that may ultimately lead to them purchasing goods or services from your local business.

For example, customers who are looking for a local dentists may want to assess the quality of local dentists and search for '**dentist reviews**' before they make their final choice.

Without a Google Plus Local Business Page, it's virtually impossible to appear on the first page of Google for competitive search terms like this.

However, with a strong, well optimized Google Plus Local Business Page and a relevant website page, you can claim a position on the first page of Google for thousands of search terms related to your local business.

We can see this in action below, with the sixth result coming from a website linked to a Google Plus account:

dentist	reviews				
Web	Images	Maps	Shopping	More -	Search tools
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	althgrades.		- dentist ▼ by Name or S	nocialty	
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This has significant positive implications for your local business as it opens you up to lots of additional leads that you can easily convert into sales via your website, simply by having a well optimized Google Plus Local Business Page.

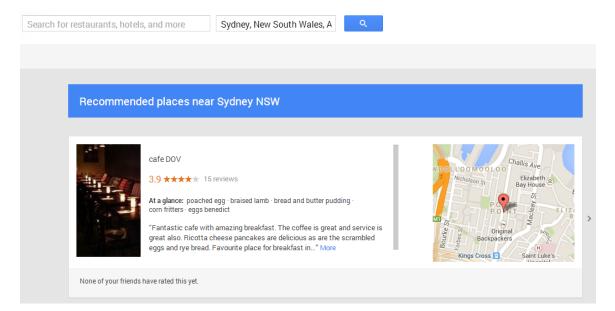
4. Google Plus Local Search

Google Plus Local Search is an increasingly popular alternative to the main Google search engine which allows users to specifically search for local businesses.

With Google Plus adding over 38 million new users per month and currently having over 500 million users, this is yet another huge source of untapped leads that your local business can take advantage of with a well optimized Google Plus Local Business Page.

Functionally, Google Plus Local is similar to the regular Google search engine. However, it has a number of key features that can help boost your local business.

First, when your customers and potential customers log into Google Plus Local, they are automatically presented with recommendations based on their location, as you can see in the example below:



These recommendations are based on a combination of reviews and the strength of the Google Plus Local Business Page.

Therefore, by having a strong, active Google Plus Local Business Page, you increase your chances of being recommended to Google Plus Local users and generating fresh leads.

Second, since Google Plus Local only returns results for Google Plus Local Business Pages, there is no chance of web results outranking your local business and with a strong Google Plus Local Business Page and a healthy bank of reviews, you can ensure that you appear at the very top of Google Plus Local search results.

2 – How Google Plus Can Increase Engagement and Interaction with Current and Potential Customers

One significant advantage Google Plus Local Business Pages have over your main website is that they're designed to promote engagement and interaction.

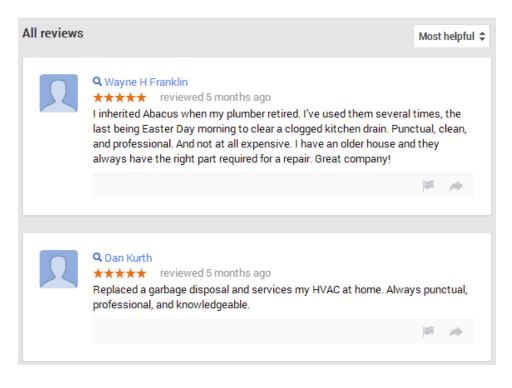
By getting people to follow your Google Plus Local Business Page you can connect with current and potential customers in a way that's not possible through your website.

The section below expands on this and fully explains the unique engagement and interaction opportunities that Google Plus Local Business Pages provide:

1. Google Plus Reviews

Every time a customer finds a local business through Google, they are encouraged to leave a review which consists of a star rating (between 1 and 5 stars) and a written review.

Not only are these reviews an excellent showcase for your local business but they're also a fantastic opportunity to engage and interact with your customers.



As the owner of the Google Plus Local Business Page, you can respond to customers who leave both positive and negative reviews. If customers leave a positive review you can thank them for taking the time to recommend your business.

If they leave a negative review, you can apologize for their poor experience and offer them some form of compensation (such as a coupon or discount) and turn a bad review into a new lead and potential sale.

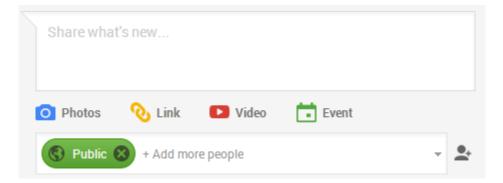
These interactions are public, so not only do they show the customers who you are engaging with that you care about their opinions and their quality of service but you're also showing potential customers that their opinions are important to you and that you're willing to actively engage with your customers.

2. Google Plus Feed

When you claim your Google Plus Local Business Page, you can post a number of different updates to your page. These updates then appear in the Google Plus Feed for all the people who are following your Google Plus Local Business Page.

The types of updates you can post include:

- Text updates (which are useful for quickly providing your customers with relevant information and updates)
- Photo updates (which are useful for grabbing customers attention with eye catching images)
- Link updates (which are useful for linking to relevant posts on your website)
- Video updates (which are useful for giving your customers visual updates)
- Event updates (which allow you to organize and share events with your customers e.g. happy hours, sales etc.)



Not only are these updates a great way to connect with your customer and keep them updated with all the goings on at your local business but they're also completely interactive. Customers and potential customers can comment on these updates, ask questions and share the updates with their friends.

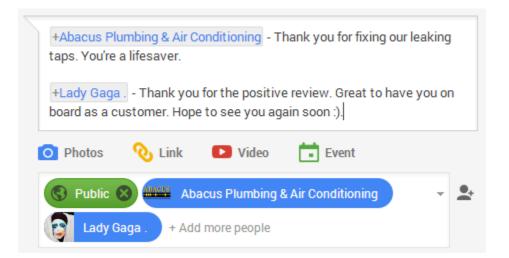
As the owner of the page, you can see all these comments and shares and respond appropriately.

This provides you with yet another platform to build engagement with existing and new customers and boost their perception of your local business which will ultimately have a positive impact on your sales.

3. Google Plus Tagging

Google Plus features an innovative tagging system that allows you to tag brands, businesses and people in any updates that you post to your Google Plus Local Business Page.

Whenever you tag these brands, businesses and people, they receive a notification in their own Google Plus account that they have been tagged by your local business.



This has a number of benefits for your local business which are listed below:

- By tagging people, brands and businesses, you increase the chances of them coming to check out your Google Plus Local Business Page, following it and becoming a new lead.
- By tagging existing customers, you build a stronger relationship with them

and make them more likely to recommend you to their friends and come back to you in the future.

- By tagging other local businesses, you can create a mutually beneficial networking opportunity which increases leads and sales for you both.
- By having consistent conversations, you increase the overall awareness of your local business and can generate lots of new leads in the process because these conversations appear in the feeds of both your followers and the followers of the person, brand or business you are talking to.

3 – How Google Plus Can Provide You With Instant Access To Customers On Every Device

Google Plus provides you with a much deeper level of access to your customers and potential customers than traditional forms of local business advertising (such as classified ads and print media). It also has much more current and future potential than these other forms of local business advertising.

The section below explains why Google Plus is such a key platform in terms of access to customers and leads and how it will provide your local business with a solid platform for many years to come:

1. Google Plus User Base

Google Plus currently has over 500 million users, is growing at a rate of over 38 million new users per month and is the second largest social network in the world. (At the time of this writing...)

This provides you with access to a much larger pool of potential leads than is possible through classified ads or print media.

Since these are active, online leads, they're also much more flexible and dynamic than the potential leads you generate through traditional offline types of local business advertising.

Local offline advertising is dependent on the customer reading the advert and taking action, so you only have a very small window to grab their attention and convert them into a sale.

2. Google Plus Smartphone App

Google Plus also has a very strong mobile presence. The latest statistics suggest that it's the fourth most used smartphone app with 30% of all smartphone owners using it.

When you combine this with the latest smartphone sales figures (which suggest that by the end of 2013, global smartphone sales will reach 700 million units and by the end of 2016, they will reach 1.6 billion units), it represents an excellent source of current and future leads that is set to grow and grow.

However, what really makes the Google Plus Smartphone App a key asset for your local business is that it gives you an even deeper level of access to current and potential leads.

Smartphone users are constantly connected to the Internet and since they're likely to be using the Internet while they're on the move, the chances of them searching for local businesses and converting into sales are very high.

By setting up and optimizing your Google Plus Local Business Page, you can ensure that you have the best possible chance of appearing to these mobile leads and showcasing what your local business has to offer.

4 – How Google Plus Can Help You Develop A Strong Community That Increases Your Leads and Sales

Google Plus is an excellent platform for engaging and interacting with customers.

One of the positive results of this increased interaction with customers is that your G+ page can develop into a strong, thriving community with current and potential customers naturally talking about your local business, sharing positive experiences with their friends and helping it grow.

The section below illustrates in greater detail how a strong community on your page can help it expand and generate increased leads and sales for you:

1. Google Plus Communities

Google Plus Communities are one of the best tools available to you for turning your Google Plus Local Business Page into a thriving community that attracts leads and sales.

Google Plus Communities can be set up to run side by side with your Google Plus Local Business Page and are designed to provide new and existing customers with a central forum to interact with you and each other.

Once set up, Google Plus Communities related to your local business naturally create conversations with your existing leads, draw in new leads and help expand your local business.

2. Google Plus Reviews

Positive Google Plus reviews are an important part of building a strong community around your Google Plus Local Business Page.

By building up a bank of glowing reviews, you make new customers more likely to leave a review and share their experiences with their friends.

Over time this results in a growing number of people leaving and sharing reviews about your local business and increases awareness of your local business which results in more leads and sales.

3. Google Plus Shares

Sharing is a key part of Google Plus. When customers find your local business through Google search, they are encouraged to share with others. When customers leave a review of your local business, they are prompted to share this review with their friends.

If you post to your Google Plus Local Business Page, that update is delivered to everyone who reads it with an accompanying share button.

Therefore, by simply having an active Google Plus Local Business Page, you'll naturally get more shares, generate new leads and boost your local business.

It truly is a win win!

5 – How Google Plus Can Help Provide You With A Competitive Advantage When Using Other Google Services

Google Plus is tightly integrated into various Google products and services. By setting up and optimizing your Google Plus Local Business Page, you can take full advantage of this integration and get increased exposure on these services.

The section below discusses exactly how an active Google Plus Local Business Page can boost your presence on Google products and services outside Google search and Google Plus itself:

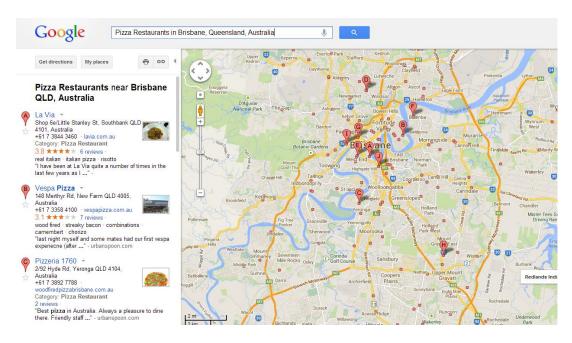
1. Google Maps

Google Maps is an extensive web mapping product created by Google which provides users with maps, photos and directions to almost any location in the world.

As well as being one of the most popular desktop mapping solutions, Google Maps is also the current number one smartphone app with the latest statistics suggesting that 54% of smartphone owners actively use Google Maps.

Creating a Google Plus Local Business Page allows you to place your business location on Google Maps and make it easy for Google Maps users to find.

It also allows you to present Google Maps users who find your business with other useful information including your phone number, your email address and even photos of your business (so they can visually identify it when they get close), as you can see from the screenshot below:



Like with Google search, a strong, active presence on Google Plus combined with a healthy batch of positive reviews can increase your rankings on Google Maps and help you appear near the top of the results when customers search for local businesses in your field via Google Maps.

This can significantly increase the amount of leads and sales that you generate, as people who are looking for local businesses through Google Maps are very likely to visit and convert into sales.

2. YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing website and the number two search engine in the world (with Google's main search engine being number one).

It's a fantastic asset for your local businesses that allows you to further engage your current and potential leads through video. Plus, with the huge user base, YouTube represents a significant growth opportunity for your local business if you're not using it already.

Google Plus Local Business Pages allow you to further capitalize on the benefits of YouTube by linking your YouTube account to your Google Plus account.

Doing this not only creates a more consistent brand for your local business but by maintaining a strong, active presence on Google Plus, your videos also get more exposure on YouTube, appears higher in user's search results and generate more leads for your local business.

6 – How Google Plus Can Give Your Customers All The Information They Need On Your Local Business

Google Plus is a fantastic central hub for your local business and with a welldesigned Google Plus Local Business Page you can present current and future leads with much more information than just an address and phone number without overwhelming them.

The section below runs through all the information you can quickly and easily share with your customers through Google Plus and how it can be mutually beneficial for both of you:

1. About Page

The About Page is the first thing customers see when they visit your Google Plus Local Business Page. It contains lots of helpful information which is listed below:

- Your local business's address (which allows customers to easily locate you)
- Your local business's phone number (which allows your customers to easily contact you)
- Your local business's opening hours (which allows your customers to instantly see when you're open)
- A follow button (which allows customers to follow your Google Plus Local Business Page and receive all your updates)
- A selection of photos from your local business (which are a great for giving first time customers a visual marker when they're looking for your local business)
- A custom description (which allows you to tell customers about your local business in your own words)
- A map displaying your local business's location (which can be clicked by customers to get detailed directions to your local business)
- A list of customer reviews of your local business (which can be sorted by 'Most Helpful', 'Latest', 'Highest Score' and 'Lowest Score').

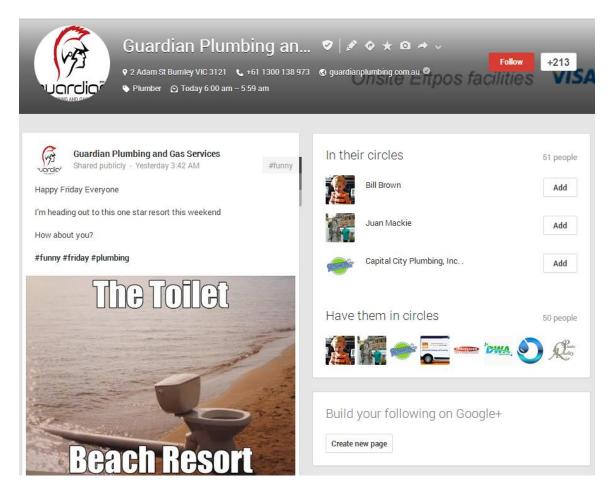
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 Plumber, Water Damage Restoration · Today 6:00 am - 5:59 am Melbourne plumber - from blocked drains to gas appliances water saving ideas all maintenance & repairs. Guardian Plumbing available 24hrs/7days 	Directions
	51 in their circles
5.0 5 star 4 star 3 star 15 reviews 1 star	Bill Brown Add Juan Mackie Add
At a glance: hot water systems · blocked drains · toilet repairs · burst pipes · hydro jetting	Capital City Plumbing, Add

2. Posts Page

The Posts Page is a great way to present more customized updates to your current and potential leads.

You can post five different types of updates to your Google Plus Local Business Page; text updates, photo updates, link updates, video updates and event updates.

It's perfect for providing your leads with more time sensitive information such as special offers, changes to your regular opening hours, sales, new product lines and more.



3. Photos Page & Videos Page

The Photos Page & Videos Page collates any photos or videos you publish on your posts page. Both of these pages provide you with an excellent opportunity to showcase visual content, including photos of your business premises, your staff, your products, videos showcasing your business and video how to guides.

7 – How You Can Benefit From Being An Early Adopter Of Google Plus

Google Plus isn't just a brilliant platform for your business now – it also has huge future potential.

It's growing at an astonishing rate, is tightly integrated with a number of other key Google products and services and this trend looks set to carry on as Google continue to push the Google Plus platform.

However, despite all these positives and the huge amount of future potential, very few local businesses are currently on Google Plus.

By setting up and optimizing your Google Plus Local Business Page now, you can gain a competitive advantage over your rivals by being an early adopter and also lay down a solid foundation for your local business as Google Plus continues to grow in the future.

The section below looks at the specific ways being an early adopter of Google Plus can benefit your local business:

1. Google Plus Growth Rate

Google Plus is growing at an incredible rate and has become the second largest social network in the world in just over two years. (Started 2011)

When you consider that this is a faster growth rate than Facebook (the largest and most used social network in the world) had within its first two years and that the rate at which Google Plus is growing is constantly expanding, it's easy to see why being an early adopter is so beneficial.

By setting up your Google Plus Local Business Page today and keeping it active and engaged, you can put your local business in a prime position as Google Plus grows and make it easily visible to these new leads.

2. Google Plus Integration

As a service, Google Plus is still in the relatively early stages of it's of life, however Google has heavily integrated Google Plus into a number of their main products including Google search, Google maps and YouTube.

This suggests that Google have very big future plans for Google Plus and are likely to further integrate it into all their main products and services as it grows.

If you set up your Google Plus Local Business Page now and build a strong presence on there, you can ensure that you'll get the full benefit of this increased integration for many years to come and enjoy improved search engine rankings, priority positioning on Google Maps and much more.

3. Google Plus Mobile Presence

Google Plus has quickly established a dominant presence on mobile devices.

The Google Plus app is currently the fourth most used smartphone app available and the Google Maps app (which heavily integrates data from Google Plus Local Business Pages) is currently the most used smartphone app in the world with over half of all smartphone owners using it.

Additionally, the latest statistics suggest that mobile Internet traffic is going to be hugely important over the next few years.

Mobile Internet usage is currently doubling each year and is expected to overtake desktop Internet usage and become the dominant source of access to the Internet very soon!

By getting your local business on Google Plus now, you can benefit from Google's very strong position in the mobile market and take advantage of the surge in mobile traffic for years to come.

Summary – Get On Google Plus and Let Your Local Business Reap The Rewards

If you're not already on Google Plus, you're missing out on a range of leads, customers, sales and future growth opportunities.

So don't delay and get your Google Plus Local Business Page setup today.

Simply contact us using the information below and we'll be happy to further discuss how a Google Plus Local Business Page can benefit your business specifically and how we can help set it up and also manage it for you.

Call Us: +61 07 3166 1424

Email Us: susan@websitedesignsaustralia.com

Visit Our Website: www.WebsiteDesignsAustralia.com

I look forward to hearing from you.

Susan O'Dea Website Designs Australia