

## Get a Google Places Listing in 5 Easy Steps

The Internet searches have changed recently. But you can easily capitalize on this change if you act fast.

What I'll do here is walk you, step-by-step, through signing up for a FREE listing on Google Places. Then I'll show you how to tweak your listing for the best chance of showing up on top. This is the easiest and fastest way to get listed on Google. It's a must that every cleaning company does this. You don't even need a website to get listed here, just the information in this article will do. And if you're already listed, I'll show you a few things that can improve your list ranking.

What is Google Places? Google Places and the regular Google "Organic" search are two separate listings. A Google Places listing is identified with a red balloon-like icon with a letter inside from A to G. To the right of the red balloon icon is the company name, and further to the right are the words "Places Page." Clicking on the link that says "Places Page" will lead you to...you guessed it...the Google Places page for that company.

How do you find your Google Places listing? Go to [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com) and enter the name of your service followed by your city name in the search bar. For example, if you are a carpet cleaning company located in Miami, Florida, enter "Carpet Cleaning Miami." You'll see listings from companies all over your area. If your listing doesn't show up on the first page, click the link that says, "More results near Yourcity, Yourstate." This will lead you to the page with all the Google Places pages. Another way to find your Google Places listing is to click the link in the top left corner under "Everything" that says "Places." There you'll see the Google Places results.

You can only get listed in Google Places in the city in which your company is physically located. If you service a city where your business is located, you typically can't get listed in Google Places. In addition to getting listed in Google Places, you'll want to use search engine optimization efforts to get listed in other cities you service. See my October 2010 ICS cover story article titled "Getting Your Website to the Top" for tips on general search engine ranking. But for the city where you are physically located, Google Places is rather easy.

Now here's what's happening in the Google search: Google recently integrated their local searches like "carpet cleaning" and "water damage" with Google Places (formerly called Local Business Results). Now you can find Google Places listings mingling in with the actual Google search. In some cities, the top listing in Google could be the Google Places listing. In other cities, the top listing could be a listing in the Google "Organic" search. This greatly increases the importance of using Google Places because now you can get listed in the city you service without much effort.

If all this confuses you, don't worry. All you need to know is you simply must claim your Google listing. It's simple and FREE, so you may as well get listed.

Here are the EXACT steps.

**Step #1:** First, see if your business is registered on Google Places. Log into your Google account. If you don't have a Google account, go to [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com) and click the "sign in" button. From there you'll be given an option to create your Google account.

**Step #2:** Simply go to [www.Google.com/local/add/businessCenter](http://www.Google.com/local/add/businessCenter) to see your Google Places listing. If you don't have a listing for your business, you will be given the option to create your listing. Just click the link that says, "Add business" or "Add another business." You'll be asked for your business phone number. If your phone number currently exists in Google's system, your number will be found and you'll be able to verify your listing. If you don't currently have your company phone number in Google's system, you'll be able to add your company information at this time.

**Step #3:** Fill in all your information. Don't leave anything out. If at all possible, provide pictures and videos in the sections toward the bottom. One of the most important things to fill out is the "Description" section. Here you'll want to add your keywords and your city name. For example, if you're a carpet cleaning company that services Atlanta, you'll want to say something like, "Carpet cleaning serving the entire Atlanta and surrounding areas by XYZ Cleaning Company." This tells Google and your prospective clients who you are and where you service.

**Step #4:** Verify your listing. Google will instantly call your business phone number. You'll be given a code to enter over the phone. If you don't have access to your phone, you can have Google mail you a postcard with your unique code. But the postcard process can take a week or two. Phone verification is much quicker.

**Step #5:** Get reviews. This is a VERY important factor Google considers in how high you are ranked in Google Places. I recommend you get legitimate reviews from clients. Google has a way of knowing whether or not your reviews are real, so I recommend against making up your own reviews. You could ask clients to give you a Google review after you have finished the cleaning job. As well, you could put a link on your website to your Google Places page where your client can create a review for your company. More reviews create legitimacy in the eyes of Google and for your prospects. And often, the company with the most reviews ranks toward the top.

**CAUTION:** If you have multiple listings in Google Places, consider removing any listings that have a false address. And narrow your Places listings down to only one profile in the city you are physically located. Google is really cracking down on companies who have false listings. Some companies have had all their listings

banned. I highly recommend you avoid using a P.O. Box, UPS store address, your local Applebee's address, etc. Google knows when an address isn't really yours.

That's all there is to it. Believe it or not, at recent seminars, I've had a few cleaners tell me they were paying an "SEO" company \$100-\$300 per month to get listed in Google Places. But now you know how to do it yourself for FREE. Dedicate a short 30-minute time slot and get this done as soon as possible. It's time well spent with a potential huge return.