



# A Study on How Images Posted in Google My Business Listing Could Impact Search Performance of the Business

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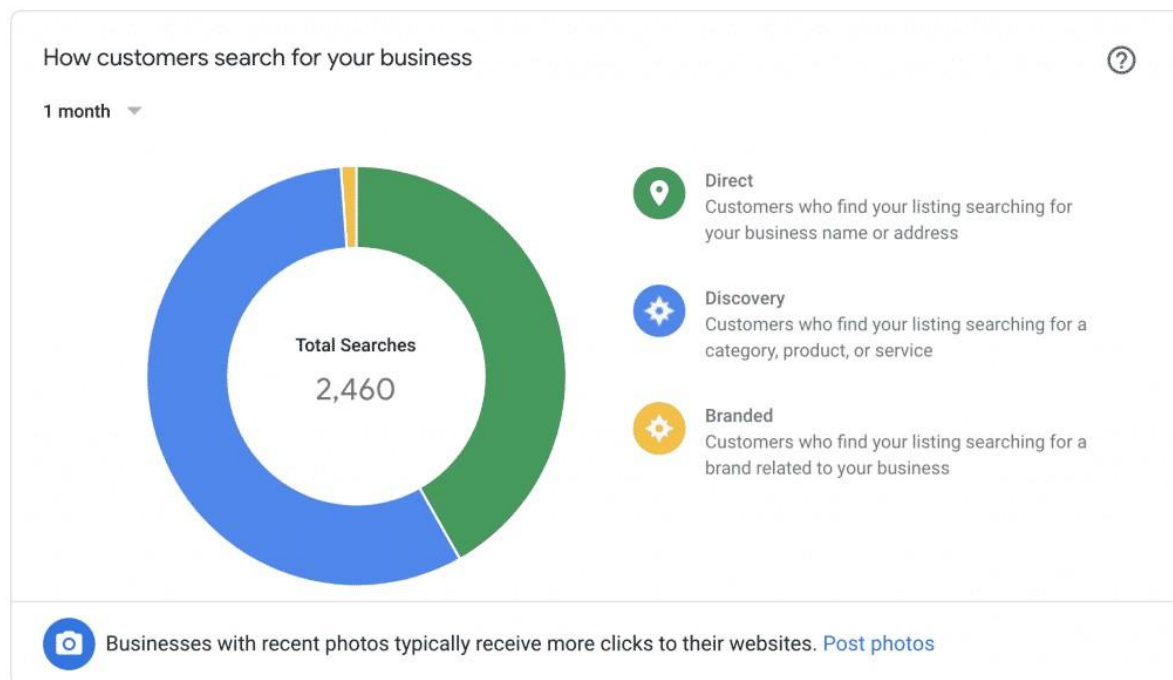
## INTRODUCTION

Google My Business (GMB) is a free tool created by Google to help business owners manage how they appear in Google search results and on Google Maps. With it you can claim your free local business listing on Google and add things like your contact information, business hours, photos, services, and much more.

### Why Is Google My Business Important?

Because whether you like it or not, your business can and likely will get listed on Google. Anyone can enter your business name and register it with Google. Doing so will make a Google My Business profile for your business begin appearing more prominently in the Google Map results. It also helps trigger your business appearing in the Knowledge Panel as well.

An optimized Google business listing allows you to supply useful business information to searchers such as business hours, where you're located, driving directions and a lot more to increase your overall online presence.



## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

### THE SEARCH

**Brin and Page** were deeply suspicious of blending advertising and search. In their academic paper introducing Google, they wrote: “In our prototype search engine one of the top results for [the search term] “cellular phone” is “The Effect of Cellular Phone Use Upon Driver Attention,” a study which explains in great detail the distractions and risk associated with conversing on a cell phone while driving. The search result came up first because of its high importance as judged by the PageRank algorithm, an approximation of citation importance on the Web. It is clear that a search engine which was taking money for showing cellular phone ads would have difficulty justifying the page that our system returned to its paying advertisers. For this type of reason and historical experience with other media, we expect that advertising funded search engines will be inherently biased towards the advertisers and away from the needs of the consumers.” Over time, the Google founders have clearly made peace with their reservations about advertising, but back in the early days, they were adamant that their company not fall into the same trap as had the companies that spurned them. Google would never put advertisers ahead of its users.

### GOOGLE MY BUSINESS PHOTO QUANTITY AND SEARCH PERFORMANCE

Bright Local released a research report in 2019 that shared some amazing insights into Google My Business listings. They looked at 45,000 GMB profiles across 36 industries. Here's a few highlights of what they found, On average, a business is found in 1,009 searches per month. That's roughly 33 times a day. Of those searches, 84% are discovery searches, which are queries for a business category rather than the specific name of a

business. The majority (75%) of searches for local businesses are done on Search, with the remaining 25% on Google Maps. Between Q4 2017 and Q4 2018, direct searches grew by 38%, while website clicks from GMB listings grew 29%

## **BUSINESS DIRECTORY SEARCH ENGINE**

A system and method for efficiently searching directory listing information to obtain more relevant results is provided. In a computer system running a computing application, it is advantageous to provide search capabilities, in the form of a search engine, to operators to assist them in their effort of retrieving desired data. The search engine may cooperate with a data store having directory listing information to provide listings data to an operator. In an illustrative implementation, this search engine may be deployed on an Internet Web site that offers business listing information. The search system may comprise a user interface to enter search query information, a data store that houses a variety of directory listing information according to a predefined data taxonomy, and a means for displaying the search results. In operation, the search engine offers a variety of search options, such as, search by business name, by business categories levels, by geographic position of the user or the business, or a combination thereof. Depending on the search query entered, the search engine will perform either a bounded search (i.e. a search bounded to a specific geographic area), a proximity search (i.e. a search proximate to a computed centroid), or a combination of the two to find the most relevant directory listings. Using the inputted search qualifiers, the search engine polls the data store according to a predefined set of rules and instructions for the relevant directory listing information. These rules are directly related to the taxonomy of the data store.

## **SEARCH BY IMAGE**

Image Retrieval could be a technique of looking out, browsing, and retrieving the pictures from a picture database. The Image search engines largely admit close text options. It's troublesome for search engines to interpret users' search intention solely by keywords and this ends up in ambiguous and reedy search results that are removed from satisfactory. It's necessary to use content primarily based search so as to unravel the paradox in text-based image retrieval. The present paper discusses the idea and functioning of most popular nonprofit Reverse Image Search Engines. We have chosen Dr. S. R. Ranganthan image to ascertain the performance and analysis of the results from most well-liked reverse search engines.

## **INFORMATION DISCOVERY AND IMAGES A CASE STUDY OF GOOGLE PHOTOS**

Images become more important as carriers of information. But information retrieval and discovery is still mainly based on words and text. In recent years progress is made in exploiting image-based information also. Searching for images using a text query is now already a classical method. Search by image or reverse image search is a more recent method in which the query consists not of text but of an image. This approach allows us to find and reveal exact and modified copies of a known image that is used as source image in the query. Since a few years, this method even makes progress in order to find images on the WWW, which are not only visually similar, but even semantically related to the query / source image; the same search action can also reveal related text information. All this has been demonstrated in previous tests by this author. A leading developer in this area is the company Google. More recently Google has changed their service for storage of photos by creating the new service named Google Photos; there also, the system applies the improving methods of automatic semantic analysis to the submitted photos. This results in automatic classification / categorization / annotation / tagging of photos, according to their contents. Here a case study of this feature is reported. It turns out that categories are created with high precision, as hoped; however, specificity is only low, as expected. This demonstrates at least that automatic semantic analysis of images is growing in importance. So managers of a digital library that includes images should keep an eye on this evolution in order to maximize the information discovery process of their users.

### **A GOOGLE PROTOTYPE FOR A PRECISION IMAGE SEARCH**

SAN FRANCISCO Google researchers say they have a software technology intended to do for digital images on the Web what the company's original PageRank software did for searches of Web pages.

On Thursday at the International World Wide Web Conference in Beijing, two Google scientists presented a paper describing what the researchers call VisualRank, an algorithm for blending image-recognition software methods with techniques for weighting and ranking images that look most similar.

Although image search has become popular on commercial search engines, results are usually generated today by using cues from the text that is associated with each image.

Despite decades of effort, image analysis remains a largely unsolved problem in computer science, the researchers said. For example, while progress has been made in automatic face detection in images, finding other objects such as mountains or tea pots, which are instantly recognizable to humans, has lagged.

The research paper, "PageRank for Product Image Search," is focused on a subset of the images that the giant search engine has cataloged because of the tremendous computing costs required to analyze and compare digital images. To do this for all of the images indexed by the search engine would be impractical, the researchers said.

Google does not disclose how many images it has cataloged, but it asserts that its Google Image Search is the “most comprehensive image search on the Web.”

The company said that in its research it had concentrated on the 2000 most popular product queries on Google’s product search, words such as iPod, Xbox and Zune. It then sorted the top 10 images both from its ranking system and the standard Google Image Search results.

With a team of 150 Google employees, it created a scoring system for image “relevance.”

The researchers said the retrieval returned 83 percent less irrelevant images.

Google is not the first into the visual product search category. Riya, a Silicon Valley start-up, introduced Like.com in 2006. The service, which refers users to shopping sites, makes it possible for a Web shopper to select a particular visual attribute, such as a certain style of brown shoes or a style of buckle, and then be presented with similar products available from competing Web merchants.

Rather than relying on a text query, the service focuses on the ability to match shapes or objects that might be hard to describe in writing, said Munjal Shah, the chief executive of Riya.

### **Exploring the use of Google Street View images for pedestrian counts**

New sources of data such as ‘big data’ and computational analytics have stimulated innovative pedestrian oriented research. This study aims to provide future research an alternative method to conduct large scale data collection more consistently and objectively on pedestrian counts and possibly for environment audits and stimulate discussion of the use of ‘big data’ and recent computational advances for planning and design. We explore and report information needed to automatically download and assemble Google Street View images, as well as other image parameters for a wide range of analysis and visualization, and explore extracting pedestrian count data based on these images using machine vision and learning technology. The reliability tests results based on pedestrian information collected from over 200 street segments in Buffalo, NY, Washington, D.C., and Boston, MA respectively suggested that the image detection method used in this study are capable of determining the presence of pedestrian with a reasonable level of accuracy.

The limitation and potential improvement of the proposed method is also discussed.

### **METHODOLOGY**

For this study, we explored anonymous data for 150+ local businesses across 6 industries in the Tamil Nadu. To do this, we reviewed data from a randomly chosen sample of Google My Business Insights between January 2021 and March 2021. Businesses did not necessarily have data for every month in the timeframe, and businesses that did not have an active Google My Business listing have been removed where relevant. Businesses that did not receive data for the whole period or a significant period were removed from data comparisons in order to measure

the effectiveness of Google My Business features for businesses that have them (for example, removing businesses that do not have an option for customers to call from their local business listing). Businesses that have no photos were not included in the photos data. In line with our main audience, the dataset is based on businesses from Tamil Nadu. Averages are based on medians. The 6 industries were created by grouping business categories. We did this to ensure we had a large enough sample to draw conclusions from industries.

### **PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA:**

The study area used for the research is Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu is a state in southern India. Its capital and largest city is Chennai. Tamil Nadu lies in the southernmost part of the Indian subcontinent and is bordered by the union territory of Puducherry and the South Indian states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. It is a thickly populated state, surrounded by a large number of domestic and multinational corporations. Tamil Nadu's GSDP was ₹9.767 trillion (US\$140 billion), and growth was 14.86. It ranks third in foreign direct investment (FDI) approvals of ₹225.826 billion (\$5,000 million), next only to Maharashtra and Delhi constituting 9.12 per cent of the total FDI in the country. The per capita income in 2007–2008 for the state was ₹72,993 ranking third among states with a population over 10 million and has steadily been above the national average.

### **SAMPLE SIZE:**

For this study, we explored anonymous data for 150+ local businesses across 6 industries in the Tamil Nadu. To do this, we reviewed data from a randomly chosen sample of Google My Business Insights between January 2021 and March 2021. Averages are based on medians. The 6 industries were created by grouping business categories. We did this to ensure we had a large enough sample to draw conclusions from industries. The analysis of the collected data was made with the help of Google Sheets.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The objectives of the study were accomplished in stages. The most common reason why the business isn't showing up on Google Maps is because it lacks location authority. If the GMB listing (location) lacks location authority, it will have to be in close proximity or standing directly at the business location to appear in Google Maps.

#### **Not Verifying Your Business Listing**

Some businesses assume that Google will list their business whether or not they verify it, or believe that there is no reason for them to verify it if they are already showing up in local search results. In reality, failing to verify your business in GMB damages Google's confidence in your location and status as a legitimate business, and reduces the chances that you will show up in search results, meaning that even if you show up sometimes, you could show up in more results if you verified. Verifying your GMB account also allows you to modify your listing, correct inaccuracies, improve your branding, show off pictures of what you do, and more.



## Using spammy techniques for your business name

Some businesses attempt to game their SEO by using an inaccurate business name. They believe that including keywords in their business name will allow them to rank better in local search results. Instead, doing so is a violation of Google's guidelines and may get you penalized. Even if it doesn't, the discrepancy between your business name in GMB and your business name in other places that list your name, address, and phone number will reduce Google's confidence that it has the right location for your business, and will result in your being less likely to show up near the top of the local results.

## Using your legal business name instead of your widely recognized name

If your legal business name and the name used across all of your platforms are identical, there is no problem. However, if your logos, signs, and business listings list a popularized business name that is different from its legal name, this leads to discrepancies that will reduce Google's confidence in your business's location.

## Bad Business Description

Businesses often enter a long-winded business description that doesn't sell users on the business quickly enough to positively impact their decision about whether or not to visit your location. Google only displays the 250 characters of the description, and users will be comparing you next to dozens of other businesses when they make a decision.

## No Reviews

Reviews are the most important ranking factor for local search. If your business has no reviews, this dramatically hurts your chances of showing up in search local search results and in Google Maps listings. Even if you do, a lack of customer reviews harms consumer trust, and users will be less likely to choose your location over others without any information from other customers to guide them.

## Solicited Or Fake Reviews

Some businesses incentivize users to leave reviews by offering a discount or coupon, or more egregiously, outright paying others to leave reviews. Doing so violates Google's guidelines and could result in your listing being removed from local search results entirely. Google requires that reviews left by customers who have actually visited the location and that they don't receive compensation for leaving a review. Even customers who visited the location and bought your products or services fall under this category if they are given a coupon or discount for leaving a review.

## Duplicate Listings

If you add a GMB location that has already been verified, your business will not show up in listings, and it will show up as a “Duplicate listing” in your GMB account.

To remove multiple listings from the Duplicate locations section, check the boxes next to each listing, click the three-dot menu icon, and click Remove. If you don't have access to the verified listing, you will need to get access to it. See Google's instructions on gaining access to an already verified listing. If your duplicate listings are mistakenly listed at different addresses, or at the same address with different names, you will need to remove the incorrect listing. These will not be listed as duplicates in your account summary and will need to be identified manually. See this in-depth guide on dealing with these types of duplicates.

## Use GMB Insight

GMB Insight tells you important information about how customers are discovering your business that you can use to drive your local SEO strategy. Make sure to leverage this information:

“How customers search for your business” tells you what percentage of people are seeing business impressions (not clicks) based on searching for your business directly or discovering it by searching for keywords that led them to you. It also tells you the total number of searches you appeared in. Your local SEO goal is to increase this number and show up for more keyword searches.

“Where customers view your business on Google” shows you a graph of views in Google Maps and in Google Search. Be aware that the graph is cumulative, meaning that the search data is displayed as an addition to the Maps data, rather than being plotted independently of it.

- “Customer Actions” is a graph over time of customers who chatted with you, called you, requested directions to you, and visited your site. This is where you will find your conversion data, so don't neglect it.
- “Photo Insights” is the number of times people have seen your photos, whether or not they have clicked on them. For some useful competitive insight, Photo Views graph shows how often your photos have been compared over time compared to similar businesses.
- “Photo Quantity” shows how many photos you have compared to similar businesses. Check here to make sure you are uploading enough photos to be competitive.
- “Popular Times” tells you when people who are using Google are visiting your business most often in person.

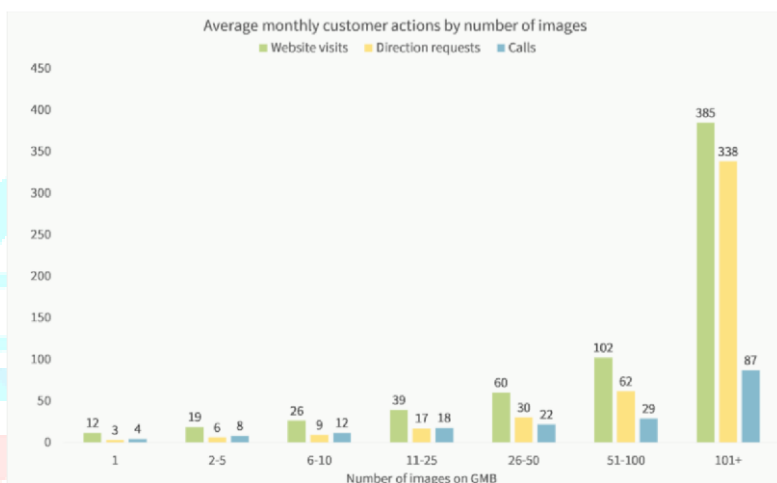


These seven mistakes plague businesses that are new to local SEO. The good news is that tackling these issues will put you ahead of a fair number of your competitors and put you on the map. Put this advice to use, and you should expect to see some gains in your GMB insights and in your store.

According to an in-depth study from BrightLocal, the average business that utilizes GMB receives over 1,000 views every month. Furthermore, GMB pages have a CTR of about 5%, which is considered fairly high!

Your GMB traffic is an incredibly important segment to track – but most businesses fail to do this. Thankfully, incorporating a tracking URL into your GMB page is pretty simple.

## CONCLUSION



As you can see, there is a consistent correlation between the number of images on a GMB profile and the numbers of website visits, phone calls and direction requests that came through Google My Business. The more photos you have on your Google My Business listing, the better your chances of leading customers from discovery to conversion.

We also looked at deviation from the median to get an understanding of exactly how much getting more images on your profile can affect customer actions. Here's what we found:

- Businesses with more than 100 images get 520% more calls than the average business, while those with just one image get 71% fewer.
- Businesses with more than 100 images get 2,717% more direction requests than the average business, while those with just one get 75% fewer.
- Businesses with more than 100 images get 1,065% more website clicks than the average business, while those with just one get 65% fewer.
- Businesses with more than 100 images get 960% more search views than the

average business, while those with just one get 62% fewer.

- Businesses with more than 100 images get 3459% more maps views than the average business, while those with just one get 71% fewer.
- Businesses with more than 100 images get 713% more discovery searches than the average business, while those with just one get 65% fewer.
- Businesses with more than 100 images get 1038% more direct searches than the average business, while those with just one get 71% fewer.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use your business name as it is consistently used on your signs, logos, website, and any business listing that shows your name, address, and phone number.
- Make sure that your GMB business name is the same as the one listed on your website, business listings, and on your signs and branding, as opposed to your legal business name, if they are different.
- Use a business description that clarifies what your business is for and how it is different from competitors as quickly as possible. Prioritize the things that customers tend to be most curious about, questions about your business that often come up in phone calls or walk-ins about what you can do for them.
- Implement a clear and strict policy against rewarding customers for leaving reviews on GMB. If any incentives are in place to reward staff for encouraging customers to leave reviews, they must be very carefully chosen to avoid incentivizing staff in any way “bribe” customers.
- You will need to remove the duplicate, making sure not to delete the verified listing

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