How to optimize your Google business profile

That search term has grown 92% year-over-year. Search terms like these will continue to grow as more people turn to Google for their real estate search. In fact, Google connects consumers to home buying and selling information 20+ million times per month.

Agents have a variety of tools available to help them get a piece of that action, including Google Ads and traditional SEO (optimizing your website to rank highly on search engines). The most important tool turns out to be the least used: a Google business profile. Homesnap's internal research shows that less than 10% of agents have a Google business profile, and only about 1% of those agents actually optimize it.

Keep in mind that Google wants to connect consumers to the very best information possible. It's essential for maintaining its market-leading position as a search engine. Google created Google business profiles to help small businesses, like real estate agents, compete with, and even beat, larger business that can afford to spend big on Google Ads and hire teams of experts to manage traditional SEO.

In real estate, a profile helps prospects find an agent whether they are searching for the agent directly (e.g. "John Hogan, Clever Realty"), or executing a broader search (e.g. "Best real estate agent in Bethesda, MD").

Top Google business profiles appear in 250% more searches and get 7X more clicks than empty profiles. If you want your profile to rank above the rest, you need to take these five key actions:

Fill in all information

Once you've claimed your profile, it's important that you complete all fields. Most agents claim their profiles and subsequently do nothing or only partially complete the profile. Information you must include: name, address, phone number, website, business hours, and business description. Make sure your business description includes keywords for your specialties. Google will pick up on these keywords and use them to recommend you in search results.

Get reviews

According to Homesnap's internal data, agents with one review appear in 250% more searches than agents without reviews. This holds true for top producers and lower production agents alike. In fact, our data reveals that the more reviews you have the better. To optimize your profile, you should ensure at least one new review every 30 days.

It's ok if you don't have a recent client from which to solicit a review. Google doesn't require that reviews come from former clients only – in fact, Google encourages reviews from multiple sources

precisely because it wants to give all users a voice.

Include photos

Google cites as a best practice: “Businesses with recent photos typically receive more clicks to their websites.” You can bet that photos not only encourage prospects to interact with your profile but that Google also considers photo frequency when determining how many searches you will appear in. You can also post videos.

Here are the photo and video requirements directly from Google:

Photos:

- Format: JPG or PNG
- Size: Between 10 KB and 5 MB.
- Minimum resolution: 720 px tall, 720 px wide.
- Quality: The photo should be in focus and well lit, and have no significant alterations or excessive use of filters. In other words, the image should represent reality.

Videos:

- Duration: Up to 30 seconds long
- File size: Up to 100 MB
- Resolution: 720p or higher

Keep it updated with posts

Google allows you to post Tweet-like bits of content on your profile. Our data proves that prospects engage with these posts. You can share also these posts across Facebook and Twitter. Google also takes into account how often and recently you have posted when deciding whether to promote your profile in search results.

For an optimized profile, you must post a minimum of once per week. If you don’t post at least

once every seven days, Google won’t display the post portion of your profile until you post again.

You can and should add images to each post, but make sure you meet the requirements:

- Minimum size of 720 pixels wide and 540 pixels tall
- JPG, PNG or BMP file format
- 4:3 Aspect ratio (If you violate the aspect ratio, your image will be cropped.)
- Minimum file size of 10KB
- Maximum file size of 5MB

Save time, headache & hassle

If you’re interested in a Google business profile, but don’t have the time or expertise to properly manage it on a weekly basis, you’re in good company. Homesnap offers a managed service through Homesnap Pro+ for this very reason: so you can stand above your competition. Homesnap Pro+ currently manages profiles for more than 12,000 agents.
Our service includes completely digital verification (no postcard necessary), frequent and optimized content and photo posts, review solicitation and management tools, and reporting. This work adds up. We calculated that a well-managed and optimized profile requires a minimum of four hours of maintenance per week or 208 hours per year.

Visit Homesnap Pro+ to learn more and take advantage of a first-year promotional discount for Inman readers (ends soon!).

Source: click here