

EXISTING LISTINGS · NEW OWNERS · LOST ACCESS

# How to Claim & Manage Your *Profile*

Take ownership, regain access, and keep your Google Business Profile up to date.

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# For when the listing already *exists.*

This guide is for businesses that already have a Google profile but need to take it over, regain access, or update what's there. If you're starting from scratch, use the companion guide "*How to List Your Business on Google*" instead.

Three scenarios this guide covers:

- You bought or inherited a business** *and need to take ownership of its existing Google listing*
- You're a new staff member or manager** *and need access to update info, post, and respond to reviews*
- You lost access** — *the previous owner left, the original Gmail account was deleted, or login details were lost*

## ▲ Don't create a duplicate listing

It's tempting to start a fresh profile if the old one feels out of reach. Don't. Google's spam systems will catch the duplicate, suspend it, and the existing listing stays in someone else's hands. Always go through the claim process described in this guide.

## How long does this take?

Anywhere from a few minutes (if you can reach the previous owner) to 14 days (if you have to wait the response window and re-verify). Plan accordingly.

## BEFORE YOU START

# Get these *ready first.*

Claiming an existing listing has a few extra requirements compared to creating a new one. Have these on hand before starting.

- The Gmail account you want to use going forward.** *Use a primary business Gmail you'll always have access to — ideally one tied to your business website's domain via Google Search Console.*
- Any old login info, if available.** *If the original owner left credentials behind, try those first — recovery is much faster than the formal request process.*
- Proof of business ownership.** *Business licence, utility bill, lease agreement, or tax document with your name and address.*
- Access to the business location.** *You'll likely need to record a video for re-verification — be ready to be on-site.*
- The contact details of the current owner, if you know them.** *A direct conversation skips the entire 7-day waiting window.*
- Patience.** *The process can take 3 to 14 days depending on which path applies.*

### Pro tip — link your website to Google Search Console first

Accounts tied to verified websites get approved much faster, even when the previous owner is unresponsive. If you have time, set up Search Console ([search.google.com/search-console](https://search.google.com/search-console)) and verify your domain before requesting access.

# 1

## FIND YOUR BUSINESS

# Search and check the listing

Search your business name on Google or Google Maps. Find the existing listing in the results — it's usually the panel on the right side of search results — and look for one of two messages:

- If you see **"Own this business?"** or **"Claim this business"** — the profile is unclaimed. *Skip ahead to page 8 (Unclaimed Listing Quick Path).*
- If you see only **"Suggest an edit"** with no claim option — the profile is already managed by someone else. *Continue to page 5.*

The screenshot shows a Google search for "bloom cafe east gwillimbury". The search results include a link to <https://bloomcafe.ca> and a Yelp review for "BLOOM CAFÉ - Updated May 2026 - Reviews". On the right side, there is a business listing panel for "Bloom Café" with a 4.8 rating (127 reviews), address "19034 Leslie Street, East Gwillimbury, ON L9N 0L1", and phone number "(905) 555-0142". At the bottom of the listing panel, there is a button labeled "Own this business?" with a red arrow pointing to it. Below the listing panel, there is a red text link: "Click here to start the claim ownership process".

### Don't see your business at all?

It might not have a listing yet. In that case, use the companion guide *"How to List Your Business on Google"* to create one from scratch.

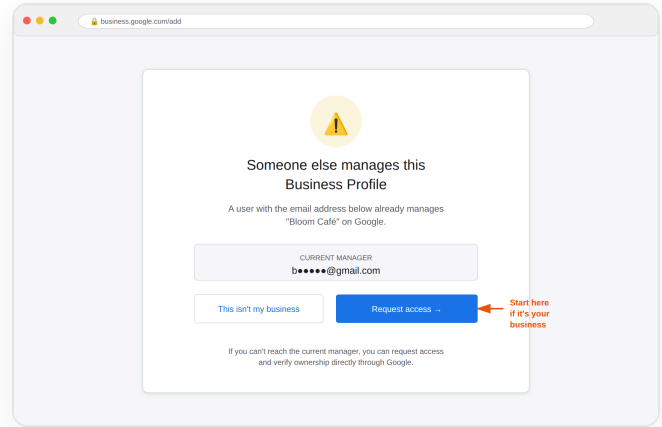
# 2

## ALREADY CLAIMED LISTING

# Request access from the current owner

If someone else already manages the listing:

- 1 Sign in to **business.google.com** with the Gmail you want to use going forward
- 2 Search for your business
- 3 You'll see "*Someone else manages this Business Profile*" with a partially hidden email of the current owner
- 4 Click **Request Access**
- 5 Fill out the form on the next page
- 6 Click **Submit request**



### Recognize the email?

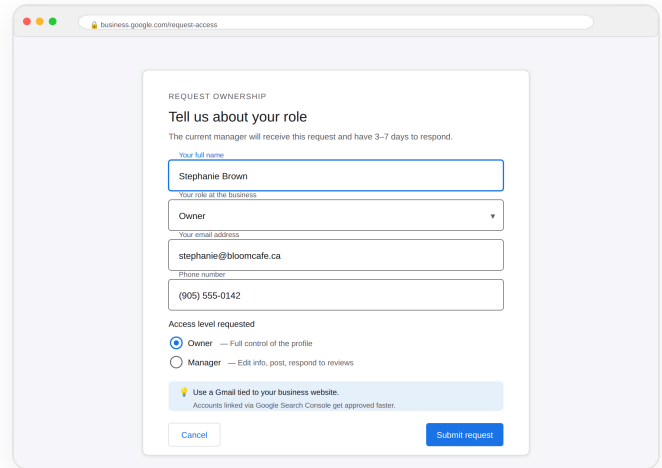
Google shows part of it (e.g. *b\*\*\*\*\*@gmail.com*). If you recognize it, contact that person directly — a manual handoff via email is much faster than the formal request system.

## THE REQUEST FORM

# What to put in *each field.*

The request form goes directly to the current owner. Be specific and accurate — vague forms get denied.

- Your full name** — *as it appears on business documents*
- Your role** — *Owner; Manager; Authorized rep, etc.*
- Your email** — *ideally a domain-based business email tied to Search Console*
- Your phone** — *matching the phone on the listing if possible*
- Access level requested** — *Owner if you'll fully take it over; Manager if you'll work alongside the current team*



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL 'business.google.com/request-access'. The page title is 'REQUEST OWNERSHIP' and the main heading is 'Tell us about your role'. Below this, it states 'The current manager will receive this request and have 3-7 days to respond.' The form contains several fields: 'Your full name' (text input with 'Stephanie Brown'), 'Your role at the business' (dropdown menu with 'Owner' selected), 'Your email address' (text input with 'stephanie@bloomcafe.ca'), and 'Phone number' (text input with '(905) 555-0142'). There is a section for 'Access level requested' with radio buttons for 'Owner' (selected) and 'Manager'. A blue banner at the bottom of the form says 'Use a Gmail tied to your business website. Accounts linked via Google Search Console get approved faster.' At the very bottom are 'Cancel' and 'Submit request' buttons.

### Boost your approval rate

Google approves requests faster when the requesting account has a verified site in Google Search Console. This signals you're a real business with legitimate authority.

# 3

## WAIT & APPEAL

# What happens next

The current owner has 3 to 7 days to respond. Three things can happen:

### ✓ They approve

You'll get an email confirmation. Sign in to [business.google.com](https://business.google.com) and the listing is yours to manage. Skip to page 10 (Update Your Information).

### ○ No response

After 7 days of silence, you'll see an "Appeal Now" link in your confirmation email. Click it to verify the listing yourself and take over.

### × They deny

You'll be notified by email. Click "View request" → "Appeal" to escalate to Google directly with proof of ownership.

### AUTO-TRANSFER

### Inactive owner

If Google can't reach the current owner (bouncing emails, outdated contact info), they may automatically un-verify the inactive owner and transfer access to you.

If you need to appeal:

- 1 Find the original confirmation email Google sent when you submitted the request
- 2 Click **View request** → **Appeal**
- 3 Re-verify the business yourself — Google will offer a verification method, usually video
- 4 Once verified, you become the new owner

### Service-area businesses (no public address)

The standard appeal flow may not be available. Contact Google Business Profile support directly and select "*Transfer ownership of listing*" as the issue type.

# Nobody manages it yet? *Take it.*

If the listing was never claimed by anyone, the path is much shorter — no waiting, no appeals. You just claim and verify.

- 1 From the business listing in Google Search or Google Maps, click "**Claim this business**" or "**Own this business**"
- 2 Confirm you're authorized to manage it
- 3 Choose a verification method (most likely video — see next page for details)
- 4 Complete verification — once Google confirms, you're the owner

## ✓ Why unclaimed listings are easier

No third party needs to approve anything. Google just needs to confirm **you** represent the real business — same as if you were creating a new listing from scratch.

## ▲ Still has reviews and photos

Don't worry — claiming an existing listing keeps all the reviews, photos, and history customers have already added. You're not starting over; you're just gaining the keys.

## VERIFICATION

# In 2026, expect *video*.

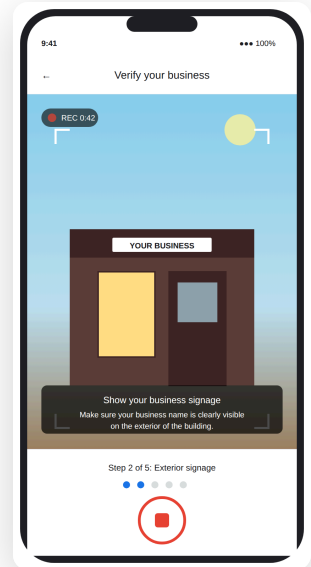
Roughly 8 in 10 ownership claims now use video verification. Be ready to record a single, continuous, unedited video showing your business in operation.

### Your video should clearly show:

- Exterior signage** — the building and your business name visible from the street
- The entrance** — and how you access it (keys, code, etc.)
- Your interior workspace** — main areas, equipment, branded items
- Proof you manage** — branded documents, system access, business licence with your name

### Other methods that may appear:

- Phone or SMS** — instant when offered (rare for ownership claims)
- Email** — to a domain-based business email
- Postcard** — 5–14 days, less common in 2026
- Search Console** — instant if your website is already verified there



### ▲ "No More Ways to Verify"

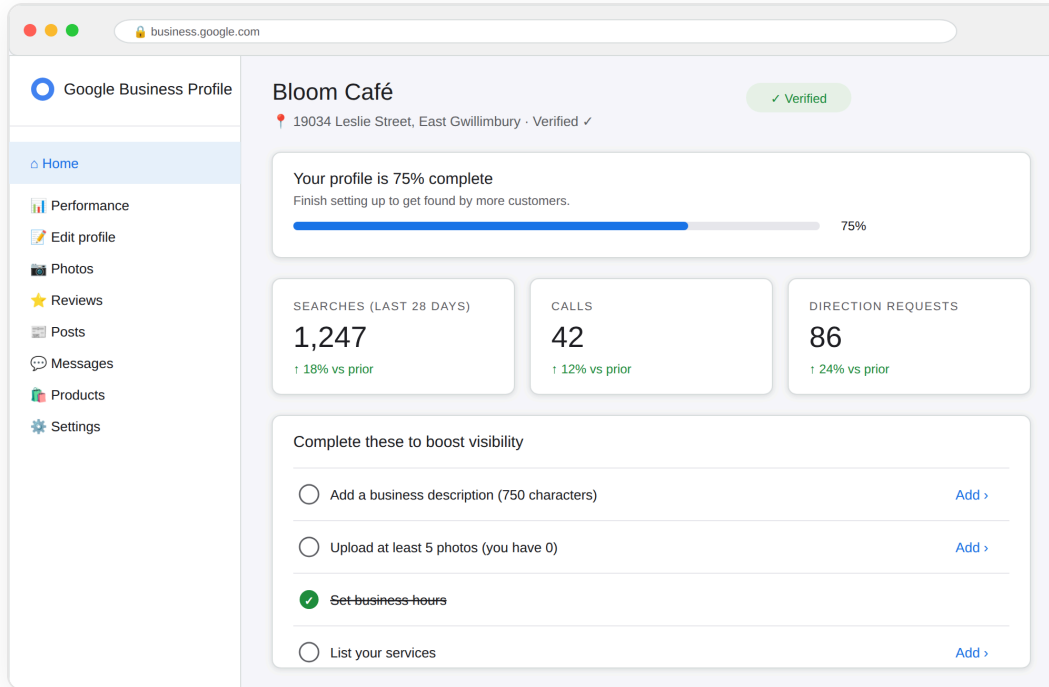
After multiple failed video attempts, Google may show this message and lock you out for 7–30 days. Get the video right the first time — single take, well-lit, signage clearly visible, no faces or personal documents on screen.

# 4

## UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

# Now that you have access

Once you have ownership, sign in at [business.google.com](https://business.google.com) and click **Edit profile** from the dashboard.



### What to update:

- Hours** — regular and special hours for holidays
- Phone & website** — match exactly what's on your website and other directories
- Photos** — replace any outdated images, add fresh ones (5–10 minimum)
- Description** — refresh to reflect what the business does today

### ⚠ Wait before making big changes

Wait at least **2 weeks** after taking over before changing the business name, address, phone, or primary category. Editing too much too fast triggers Google's fraud detection and can suspend the listing.

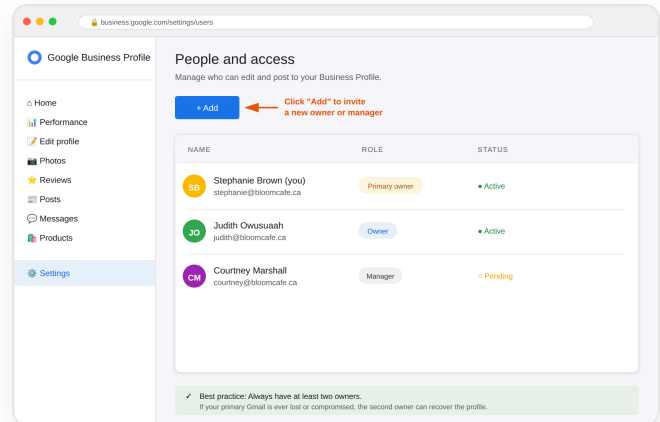
# 5

## ADD OTHER OWNERS & MANAGERS

# Don't be the single point of failure

The single best thing you can do to avoid going through this whole process again is add at least one other trusted person as an Owner.

- 1 From your dashboard, click the three-dot menu
- 2 Select **Business Profile settings** → **People and access**
- 3 Click **+ Add**
- 4 Enter their email and assign a role:  
**Owner** — full control, can add or remove other users  
**Manager** — can edit info, post, and respond to reviews
- 5 They'll get an invitation email and click to accept



### ✓ Always have at least two Owners

If your primary Gmail is ever lost, hacked, or the person leaves the business, the second Owner can recover the profile without any of the steps in this guide. It's the simplest insurance policy you'll ever set up.

# Make your updated profile *work harder.*

Now that you control the listing, the same six habits that drive new profiles drive existing ones too — even more so, because you're building on existing reviews and history.

**1**

## **Keep your information accurate, always.**

Hours, phone, address, services. Update immediately when anything changes. Add holiday hours in advance.

**2**

## **Upload fresh photos every week.**

Profiles with photos get 35% more website clicks and 42% more direction requests. Mix exterior, interior, team, and work-in-progress.

**3**

## **Post weekly updates.**

Google Posts behave like mini-ads in your listing. Aim for 1–2 per week — promotions, events, news, tips.

**4**

## **Respond to every review.**

Be specific and personal. Generic "Thanks!" replies don't help. Never offer rewards in exchange for reviews.

**5**

## **Pick the narrowest accurate category.**

Switching from a broad to a specific primary category is often the single biggest visibility lever you can pull.

**6**

## **Keep NAP consistent everywhere.**

Your **N**ame, **A**ddress, and **P**hone number should match exactly on your website, social profiles, and directories.

### **AI search is reading your profile in 2026.**

Google's AI Overview and Gemini's "Ask Maps" pull directly from Business Profiles when answering local queries. Inactive profiles get skipped entirely.

# When something *goes sideways.*

A short reference for the issues that come up most often. If your situation isn't here, reach out — page 14 has the contact info.

PROBLEM	QUICK FIX
Lost access to original Gmail	Try Google account recovery first at <a href="https://account.google.com/recovery">account.google.com/recovery</a> . If unsuccessful, request access using a new Gmail tied to your domain via Search Console.
Request access denied	Wait 24 hours, then appeal through the confirmation email's "View request" link and re-verify yourself with the offered method.
Video verification rejected	Re-record with better lighting, steadier hands, clear signage, and visible proof of management. Wait 24–48 hours before resubmitting.
"No More Ways to Verify" message	Wait the lockout period (7–30 days), then contact Google Business Profile support directly. Don't keep submitting — that extends the lockout.
Profile suspended after taking over	Stop editing immediately. Submit a reinstatement request through the GBP Help Centre with your ownership documents attached.
Duplicate listing exists	Don't create a third one. Report duplicates to Google and request consolidation through GBP support — they'll merge the listings into one.
Email shown is one you can't access	If the email is truly inactive, Google will eventually un-verify it. Submit your request anyway and wait — Google's auto-checks will confirm the email is dead within 7 days.

YSPACE YORK-SIMCOE

# Stuck somewhere?

## *Reach out.*

YSpace York-Simcoe supports founders and small business owners across York Region with one-on-one consultations, workshops, and a co-working community. Claim processes can be tricky — if you hit a wall, get in touch.

MORE INFO ON YSPACE & BUSINESS SUPPORT

[georgina.ca/yspace](http://georgina.ca/yspace)

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YSpace and Office of the VP, Research & Innovation

Pair this guide with the companion: *"How to List Your Business on Google"* — for businesses starting from scratch with no existing listing.

