

# Universal Business Listing

List Once. Be Found.

## Best Practices Get the Most Out of Your Online Business Listing.

List once with UBL and your accurate, detailed business profile is distributed to major data channels and digital portals including internet, mobile, and in-car search.

Our Universal Listing service depends on the information in your UBL business profile. Our enhanced listing services such as

Claimed Profiles, Profiles Plus, and Blogs & Video also make extensive use of the profile information you submit to us.

Please review these guidelines carefully. We're always available to answer your questions.



## Introduction

We recommend that you follow these guidelines in order to maximize the success of business listing distribution through UBL and its partners. Please note that publication rules and common practices vary from site to site; this is not intended to be a complete guide to local search optimization. For additional guidance, please review the following articles from local search experts.

- (1) Chris Silver Smith, "Anatomy and Optimization of a Local Business Profile," *Search Engine Land*, 17 December 2007 (<http://searchengineland.com/anatomy-optimization-of-a-local-business-profile-12943>).
- (2) David Mihm, "Local Search Ranking Factors Volume 3," *DavidMihm.com*, 7 June 2010 (<http://www.davidmihm.com/local-search-ranking-factors.shtml>).

## Business Profile Guidelines

- (1) **Consistency:** Keeping your name, address, and phone number consistent on all search platforms improves visibility and search ranking, decreases the chances that your listing will be duplicated, and minimizes consumer confusion. Syndication of your UBL business profile will help to ensure consistency. In addition, make sure that your website contains matching information, preferably in hCard formatting (<http://microformats.org/wiki/hcard>) although this is optional.

- (2) **Depth:** Fill out all the fields in your UBL business profile that are relevant for your business. Name, address, phone, and category are required, but there are many optional fields that you should take the time to fill out. More enhanced information means more ways your listing can be returned in search results. Often overlooked items that most search sites carry include hours of operation and payment methods; these are valued by publishers and consumers alike. Photos, videos, and business descriptions are also highly regarded by search experts as important fields.
- (3) **Name:** Use the “doing business as” or “street” name as it would be found by visitors to your physical location. (For corporate names, use the Alternate Name field described below.) Do *not* add keywords or locations to the business name as in “MyBusiness Window Treatment Specialists” or “MyBusiness Serving the Dayton Area.” This is considered spam by many important sites and can lead to loss of ranking, deletion, duplication, or general lack of prominence.
- (4) **Alternate Name:** The alternate name field is for a corporate name or another business name that might be found on public records relating to the business, such as government filings. This field will help connect public records to your business for verification purposes, and may provide additional information of value to the consumer. If you have a firm or practice with multiple professionals, you can use the alternate name field to indicate the name of the practice. (See our fact sheet on **Professional Group Listings** for more information.)
- (5) **Primary Contact:** You should designate a primary contact in your company who is available at the listed business location. Doing so will increase the legitimacy of your business profile and aid in verification. On some sites, listing a primary contact may be a requirement.
- (6) **Email Address:** A public email address is valuable because it provides another way for customers to contact you. Public email may also be used by some publishers as a way to verify your business listing information. You can specify the email address of a designated individual or a general contact address such as customersupport@mybusiness.com.
- (7) **Address:** Use the proper, deliverable address of your physical location wherever possible, so that your address matches third party data sources such as utility and government records. Do *not* use cross streets (“Corner of Main and Elm”) or GPS coordinates as these may not be accepted by publishers. If your business does not have a physical address, you may list a mailing address such as a P.O. Box number, but be aware that online publishers, especially those providing maps and directions, generally favor brick and mortar locations. You may also use “landmark” addresses, such as shopping malls, preferably in the secondary address line.
- (8) **City:** Do *not* choose a “better” city even if you are right on its border. What is sometimes termed “address social climbing” will actually lead to loss of visibility, as your listed city may not pass verification and will not match other public sources of information about your business.
- (9) **Phone:** Use the primary number that is most commonly associated with your business. Local numbers are strongly preferred by publishers. Avoid call tracking numbers and call center numbers. Such numbers are considered undesirable by publishers and data aggregators because they are associated with a third party provider and not the business itself. Such numbers, even if they do end up in publication, may cause your business listing to be duplicated, leading to lower ranking and reduced visibility. If you have multiple business

locations, try to use distinct phone numbers. Avoid using a toll-free number as your primary number if at all possible, as doing so may place you in a separate database and make your business less prominent in local search results. Mobile numbers and internet (VoIP) phone numbers are acceptable, though data aggregators and publishers sometimes find these numbers more difficult to verify.

- (10) **Alternate Phone Number:** This is the field for toll-free numbers or other secondary phone numbers.
- (11) **Business Website:** If possible, provide the main home page address and not a subdirectory page: [www.company.com](http://www.company.com) rather than [www.company.com/mybusiness](http://www.company.com/mybusiness) or [mybusiness.company.com](http://mybusiness.company.com). Try not to use subdomains or web pages on someone else's website as your primary web address, as such web addresses may not pass publisher validation. Make sure the business name, address, and phone number are clearly listed on your website and that they match the information in your UBL business profile.
- (12) **Verification:** The Express Update service from InfoGroup is a primary distribution channel for UBL business listings, and a critical means of syndicating your business listing to the top search sites on the internet, mobile and in-car search, and 411 services. You should be prepared to receive a verification call from InfoGroup to confirm the legitimacy of your listing. You are urged to respond with the appropriate information and should alert others in your office to also be prepared. Failure to confirm details may lead to lack of distribution or delay. You may also receive verification contacts from publishers and other data aggregators; such contacts are, for example, required as part of our Claimed Profiles service. You should know that you are under no obligation to do anything more than confirm the data you submitted to us in your UBL business profile. You are not obligated to purchase advertising or any other services that a search engine or directory may propose.
- (13) **Voicemail for Verification:** Include your business name and address on your voicemail. This will often suffice for important verification calls and is a good service for your customers.
- (14) **Length of Fields:** Pay close attention to the maximum length of important fields such as business name, city name, web address, and business description. Exceeding the suggested length may cause your content to be truncated.

## Conclusion

These guidelines are intended to ensure that UBL business profiles conform to the standards and restrictions of the majority of online publishers. If you do not adhere to these guidelines, you run the risk of delayed or ineffective syndication. Following these recommendations carefully means your business listing stands the best chance of being syndicated and published in the form you prefer.

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