
TUESDAY TECH TIPS

A weekly update of real estate related tech news and tips

Need a change?

If you are a real estate agent in the Danville, San Ramon, Alamo, Diablo and Dublin area and you'd like to work with a broker that "gets" technology, come and talk with me!

I am the manager of Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Drysdale Properties offices in San Ramon and Danville. Let's explore the possibilities!

The Blog

For the past 9 years I have been publishing a weekly blog for real estate professionals. Each week I find some new app, software program or some new gadget that I think will be helpful to you in your business. Occasionally, I slip in a little sales training that I think you would find useful too.

And on rare occasions I publish a rant about something that rubbed me the wrong way. Check it out:

<http://www.RealtyTechBytes.com>



Google My Business Part 5

This is the final article on using Google My Business. I hope that you found it to be helpful.

Google can be a bit picky at times. If you want to use Google My Business successfully, then you'll need to employ several best practices to get the most out of the platform. Each of these pointers will help you avoid verification issues, Google penalties, and ranking problems that can prevent you from experiencing all of the benefits Google My Business has to offer.

1. Make sure you complete every step of the process as thoroughly and as completely as possible. Fill out as much information about your business as possible. There are a lot of "fake businesses" out there who attempt to set up profiles for nefarious purposes. Google wants to make sure you aren't one of them. If you provide more information you'll give Google more reason to believe your profile is trustworthy, which means you can expect to experience an increase in your rankings.
2. Use your legal business name—not a nickname. Using a nickname or an abbreviated version of your name slows down the verification process, reduces your trustworthiness in Google's eyes, and creates a listing which contradicts listings in other directories—which are important.



Here are some useful Links

(For when I can't be there)

TopProducer Help

<http://www.topproducer.com/campus/top-producer/top-producer-help>

zipForms Help

<https://www.youtube.com/user/zipLogix/featured>

DocuSign Help

<https://support.docuSign.com/>

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In a moment, I'll explain exactly why this is so important (see Tip #7).

3. Use your physical, business address precisely as the US Postal Service uses it, right down to spelling out the word "Street" if that is what the postal service does. Again, see Tip #7 to find out why.

4. Use a local phone number—not a 1-800 number. You want to strengthen Google's perception of your business as being a good fit for location based search results. That means you want to show Google an area code that fits the location you're trying to rank for. 800 numbers are also far less trustworthy than traditional local numbers.

5. Add your hours of operation. Again, Google wants to see more information. So do customers. Besides, when you do this you get a perk. Customers who click on your business listing during your hours of operation will see a cheerful, "Open now!" right under your business hours. This may inspire them to take the next step, which is, of course, getting into their car, showing up at your doorstep, and spending some money.

6. Create a detailed overview of your business. Keep in mind that Google does not want to see slogans, URLs, store codes or phone numbers in this section. You need to avoid exaggerated claims like: "The best real estate agent in town!" You can, however, give more details about your location: "A full service real estate agent in San Francisco's Mission District" would be just fine.

7. Get NAP (name, address, phone number) citations to improve your rank. You receive a citation when anyone lists your name, address, and phone number somewhere on the Internet. You'll usually see citations in a directory of some kind, but they don't have to be. Placing your NAP in the footer of all of your web pages counts, too. Here's the catch: the NAP has to match the address in Google My Business in order to count. And it has to be an exact match. That's why you're

safest using your legal name, and it's why you should take the time to look up the US Postal Service's version of your address. That's the address that Google is going to treat as trustworthy.

You probably have some citations already thanks to data aggregators. However, you do not have to rely on those services, and, indeed, you shouldn't. You'll miss vital opportunities if you wait for others to list you—and there's no guarantee that others will list your business in an accurate, helpful way.

You should actively make citation-building a priority. You can start by targeting the "usual suspects," which are:

- Yelp
- Yellowpages.com
- Citysearch.com
- Facebook.com
- Manta.com
- Merchantcircle.com
- Superpages.com
- Switchboard.com

The [Whitespark Local Citation Finder](#) is one of the easiest and best tools that you can use in order to update, claim, verify, and add citations across the Internet. You can use it to check and claim existing citations, and you can use it to create new ones. It's incredibly comprehensive. It also allows you to check out your competition, giving you an opportunity to build more citations.

It is a paid tool, but it's not an expensive paid tool. It's also the tool that the pros use to make sure they're hitting every citation opportunity.

Citation building can be tedious. Every site has its own rules and its own verification processes. You'll have to make an account on each site. However, it's also an easy way to market your business. Most web searchers click on the top local search result first. As a result, most of those web searchers end up doing business with that business. Therefore, being first is going to pay off in a big way, so your goal should be to get there (or very close to it at the least).

8. Kill duplicates. You'll want to find any duplicate Google My Business Pages and get rid of them. You'll also want to kill duplicates in every other directory you find as well.

9. Encourage your customers to leave reviews on your listing. Reviews are the other major ranking factor that Google My Business uses to rank your listing. Just make sure you're not offering customers incentives to do so, like discounts or free product. Usually, simply asking or reminding them is enough.

10. Use the photos and virtual tours features whenever possible. With visual content like this, consumers will be able to get a better idea of the atmosphere of your business. Plus, Google is more likely to display visual content next to your business listing in the search results. This is great, because visual content is so much more engaging and eye-catching than text alone.