

# 5 Steps to Get Started with Local Search

What You Need to Know



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# Introduction



It used to be that store location was the difference between a thriving business and whether or not your doors stayed open at all.

Once upon a time, location was everything.

It still is important, but we're no longer limited to a physical space. You might have the best spot on Main Street, but if people are walking right by you with their faces glued to a phone, it's important to consider the virtual space too.

Today, digital presence is the key to getting found. In this guide we'll cover how to create a Google Business Account, get found with NAP, optimize your digital presence, stay relevant and rank well, and get listed on online business directories.

# Claim What's Yours

Most people research before they buy. That might include looking at Yelp reviews before deciding where to eat, or looking at a store's inventory and deciding on exactly what they'll buy before they've set foot on the property.

That's why it's more important than ever for small and local businesses to get found online. In order to do this, you'll need to create a **Google My Business** (GMB) account.

**Step 1** Click "Sign In" in the upper right-hand corner and enter the email address you'd like your business to be associated with.

**Step 2** Follow the prompts regarding your name, location, delivery area, and business category.

**Step 3** Verify your business through postcard, phone, or email.



## Multilocation Tip

If you operate more than ten locations for the same business, you can use the bulk verification option.

*82% of smartphone users consult their phones on purchases they are about to make in-store.*

**Forbes**

# NAP Like a Champion

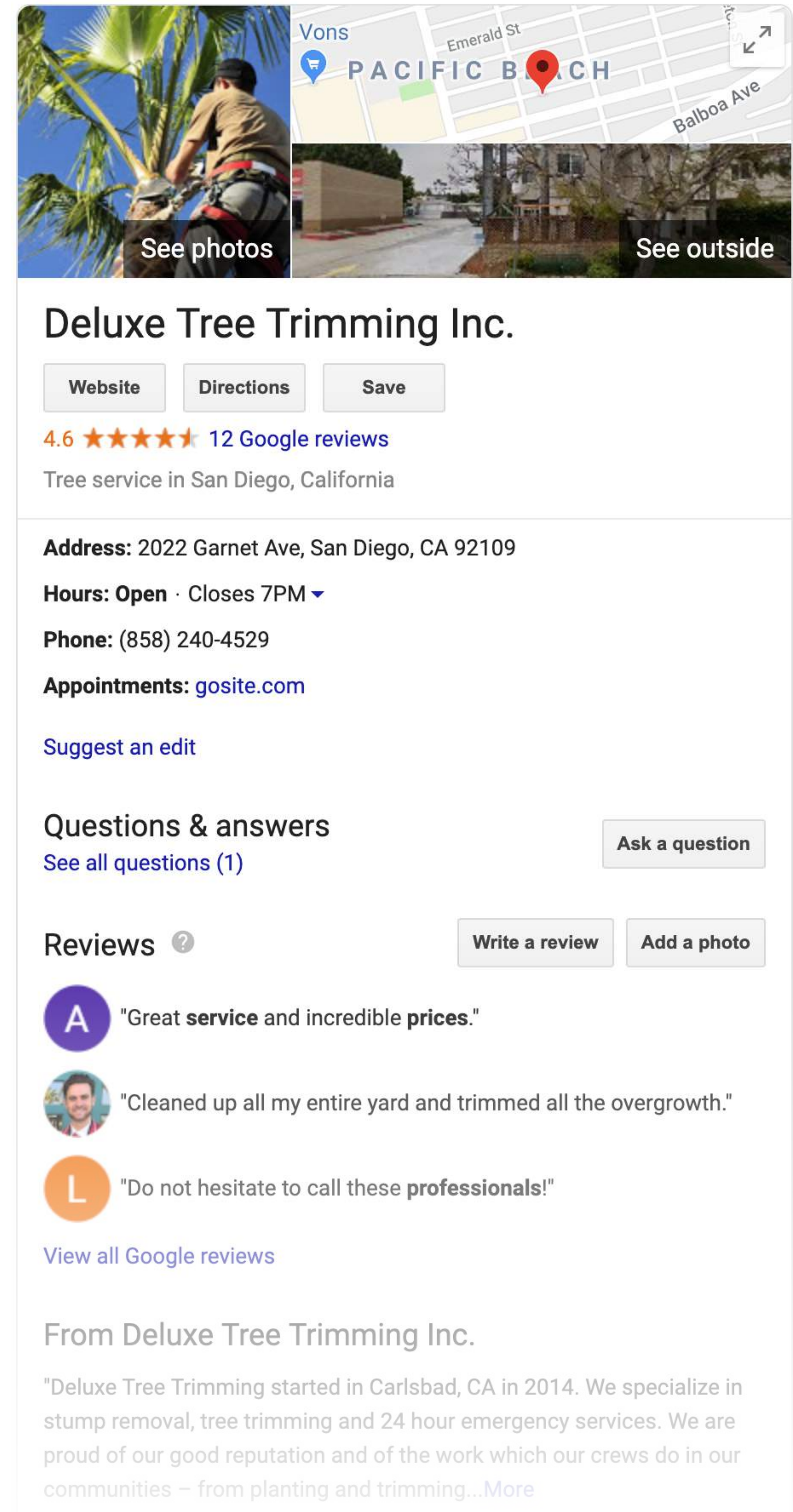
Your name, address, and phone number (NAP) is the holy triad for local SEO. Be sure that wherever your NAP appears online it is both accurate and uniform.

For example, don't have your address listed 1500 W Fifth Street in one place and 1500 West 5th Street in another place; or your number as 8675309 in one place and 867-5309 in a second.

NAP is the first critical step of optimizing your online presence for local search. Keeping it consistent ensures that Google (and all other search engines, for that matter) can easily identify your business and connect it with the right listings and reviews.

*56% of local stores have yet to claim their local listing on Google.*

**Google**



The screenshot shows a Google Business Profile for "Deluxe Tree Trimming Inc." in San Diego, California. The profile features a map, photos, and a detailed description of the business. The business is located at 2022 Garnet Ave, San Diego, CA 92109. It has a 4.6-star rating from 12 Google reviews. The business hours are listed as "Open" and it closes at 7PM. The phone number is (858) 240-4529. The business website is gosite.com. The profile also includes a "Questions & answers" section, a "Reviews" section with three reviews, and a "From Deluxe Tree Trimming Inc." section with a description of the business.

## Multilocation Tip

For multiple locations, the best way to optimize NAP connectivity is to have an individual page on your website for each location.

# Own Your Digital Presence

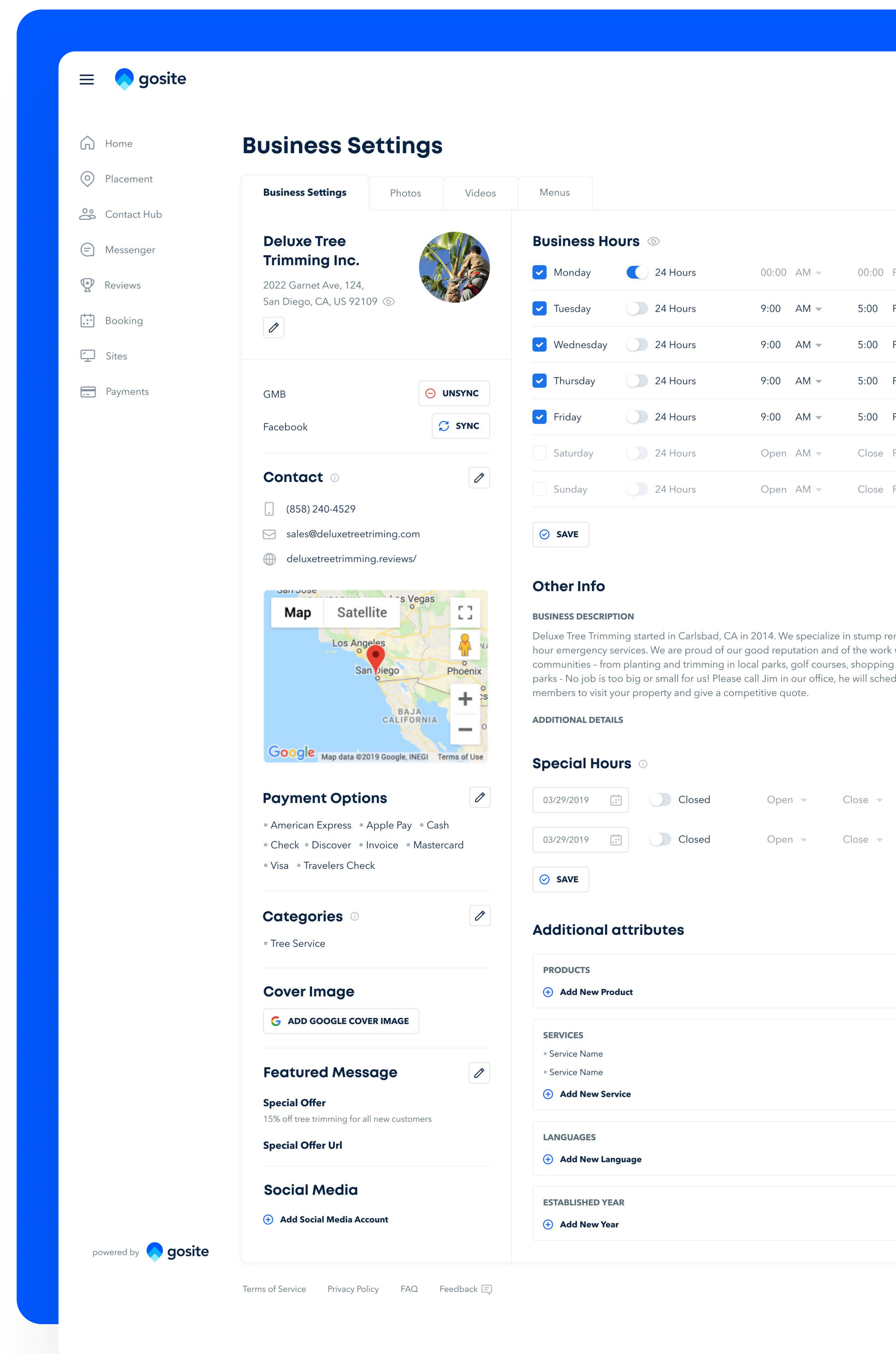
When it comes to local businesses, NAP is Google's north star, but there are additional steps you can (and should) take to help guide the way.

Within GMB, make sure that every possible field is filled out. That includes uploading your logo and professional looking photos.

You also should have a website. A website is the heartbeat of your digital presence, and can be a valuable source of information for customers and search engines alike. For a website to truly enhance your digital presence, it should have a fast load time, title tags, internal linking, meta descriptions for every page, and be mobile-friendly.

*Businesses with photos on their GMB profile receive 35% more clicks and 42% more requests for driving instructions.*

**Google**



## General Tip

Anyone can edit information about your listing, so be sure to check back periodically and make sure it's still accurate.

# Keep It Fresh

The quality of your digital presence is determined by frequency signals, or cues to Google that your business is “fresh.” And if there’s one thing we know about Google, it’s that the search engine eats fresh for breakfast. Google is always trying to tweak their algorithm in order to deliver more recent and relevant results to users.

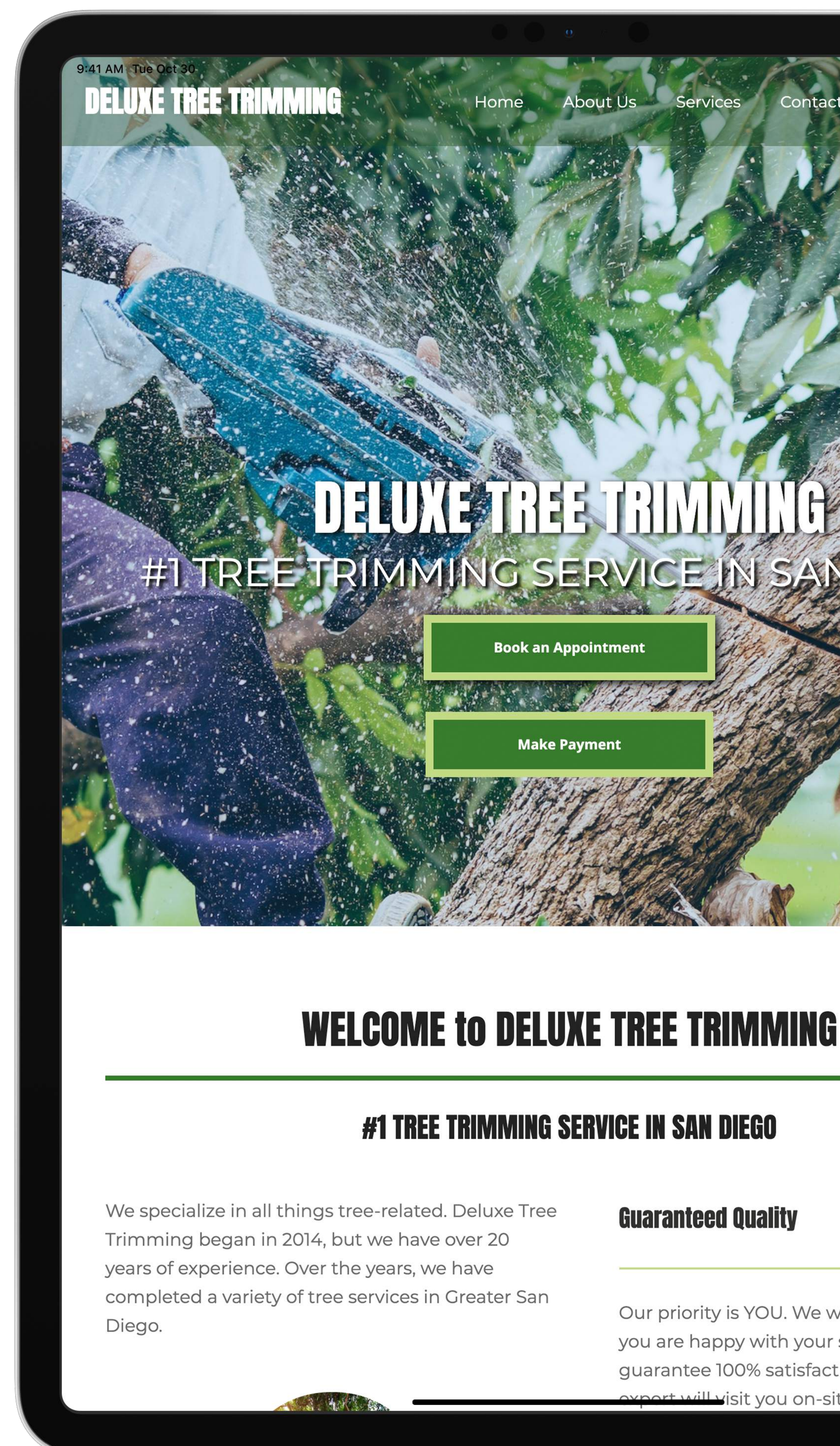
So, the more that users interact with content on your GMB profile, the more frequency signals Google receives regarding your business. In other words, Google favors profiles where people spend time writing a review, clicking on new images, booking an appointment, or sending an SMS message.

## General Tip

Use a lot of recent photos on your GMB profile! Photos will keep visitors browsing longer, which improves frequency signals.

*Unoptimized content prompts 79% to leave in search of another provider to complete the task.*

## Experience Dynamics

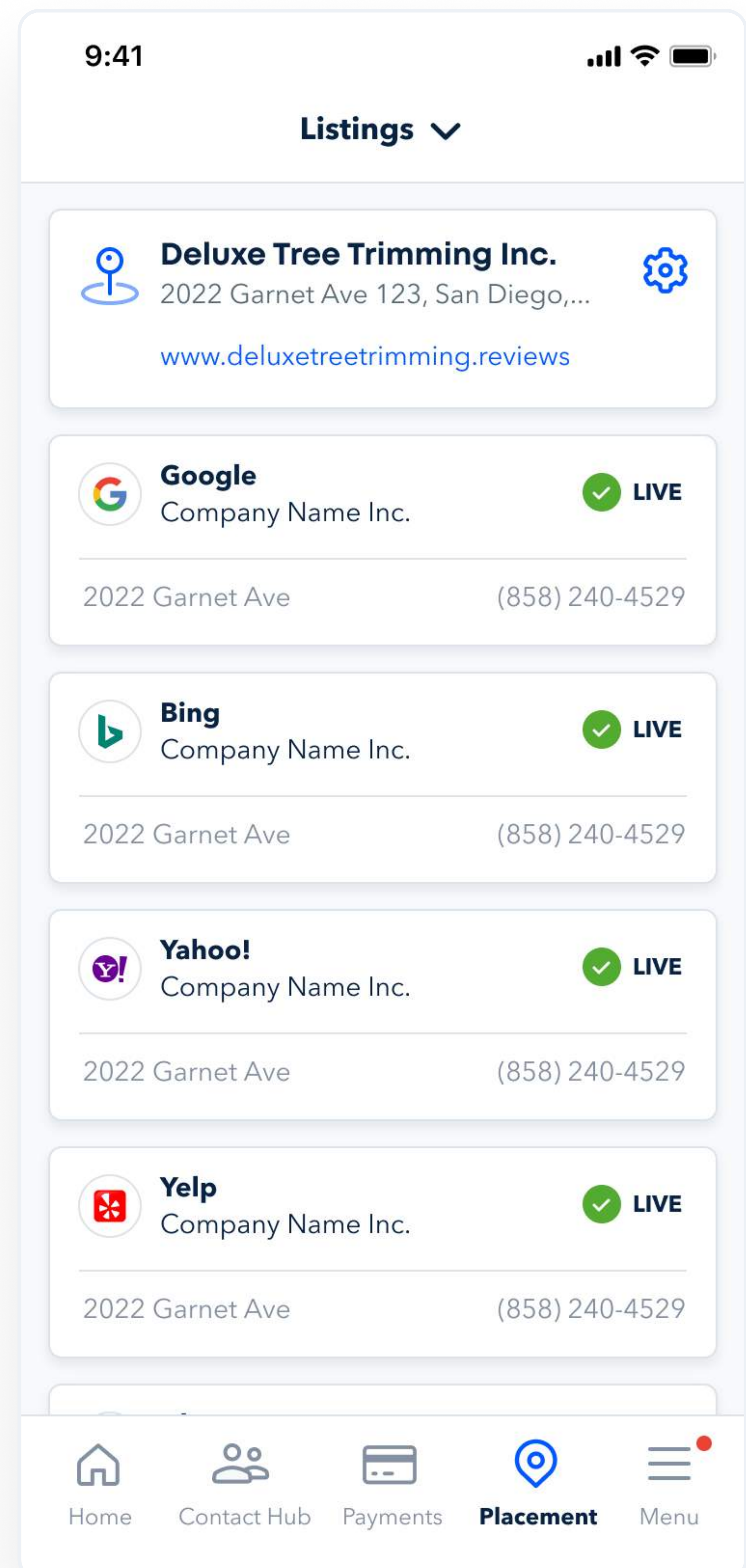


# Get Listed

Once you've created and optimized your Google My Business profile, you want to get listed in as many online business directories as possible. These include the big names like Yelp, Apple Maps, Facebook, and Google Maps, as well as the dozens of others of directories that most people have never heard of before.

These "local citations" build your SEO, and is one of the most powerful factors when it comes to Google calculating your ranking. You can't rank in the "snack pack" (i.e., those top three results that come up in a search) without this tactic.

Ultimately, having more of these profiles linked to your business makes you more visible to more customers.



## General Tip

When it comes to listing online, be sure to include your hours of operation—and any changes during holidays.

*92% of searchers will pick businesses on the first page of local search results.*

**Google**



# Small Business Can Beat Big Business with Local Search



See how one business improved their local listing with automated distribution. Using technology, they were able to optimize their online presence on a limited budget and with just 1 person!

Download the case study to discover how they achieved success.

[DOWNLOAD CASE STUDY](#)



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PHONE

858-295-7995

EMAIL

[hello@gosite.com](mailto:hello@gosite.com)

[www.gosite.com](http://www.gosite.com)