Google Business Profile: what to fix, what to skip.

A checklist for Singapore businesses. It is ordered by what actually moves your ranking, not by what fills up your profile. **The rank numbers come from the Whitespark 2026 report**, where 47 local search experts scored 187 factors. These are expert opinions, not measurements from Google. The experts are mostly US-based, so treat the numbers as a guide, not a rule.

GOOGLE Google says so | RANK Survey position, expert opinion | TESTED Someone ran a real test

01 Do these first

Four fields carry most of the weight. If you do nothing else, do these.

- ☐ **Get your primary category exactly right.** This is the top factor. If it is wrong, nothing else will fix it. — RANK 1
- ☐ **Set your opening hours correctly. Include public holidays.** Being open when someone searches is now the No. 5 factor. Wrong hours mean you disappear at the exact moment someone wants you. — RANK 5 / 21
- ☐ **Fill in your services list. Use Google's ready-made options and be specific.** This jumped from No. 81 to No. 22 in one year, the biggest rise in the survey. In one test, rankings moved within 24 to 72 hours. — RANK 22
- ☐ **Add your other categories, but only true ones.** Remove any service you no longer want to sell. — RANK 8

02 Do these next

- ☐ **Ask for reviews regularly.** Reviews are somewhere between a sixth and a fifth of what decides the local pack. Recent reviews matter more than old ones. Never pay for reviews, never ask only your happy customers, and ask one at a time. — ~16-20% OF WEIGHT
- ☐ **Upload your logo and a cover photo.** Do this much. Beyond that, photos matter mostly for food and beauty businesses. For service businesses the effect is weak. — RANK 45 / 89
- ☐ **Fill in your attributes accurately.** They help you show up when people filter their search. They do not lift your ranking. — RANK 81
- ☐ **Add tracking to your website link.** So you can see this traffic in your analytics. — HOUSEKEEPING

03 Stop doing these

All four are common advice. All four are wrong for 2026.

- ⊟ **Stop adding your own questions and answers.** Google is removing Q&A. It confirmed this on 3 December 2025 and is replacing it with an AI tool called Ask Maps. — BEING REMOVED
- ⊟ **Stop stuffing keywords into your description.** It ranks 171st out of 187. Google's own help page does not say it affects ranking. Stuffing also breaks Google's rules. Write it for customers. — RANK 171
- ⊟ **Stop posting weekly just to rank.** Post frequency ranks 148th. Post quantity ranks 168th. Post only if it is useful marketing. — RANK 148 / 168
- ⊟ **Stop looking for the chat feature.** Google removed it on 31 July 2024. There is a WhatsApp or SMS button now, but only in some countries. If a guide tells you to turn on chat, it is out of date. — REMOVED 2024

> **Why "fill in everything" advice keeps going around.** Profile completeness does rank 16th. But the fields inside it range from No. 1 to No. 171. It scores well because a few of its parts matter a lot. So fill your profile accurately, then put your effort into category, hours and services.

04 Two changes that can get you suspended

Everything on page 1 is safe. These two are not. Do them carefully.

Most important rule: change one thing at a time. Changing your name, address and category in the same sitting is the pattern most linked to suspensions. Space them out. One field, then wait a few days.

- ☐ **Before renaming, make sure your website and invoices already show the new name.** Google wants the name your customers actually see. Words like Pte Ltd are not allowed unless they are really part of your branding. GOOGLE
- ☐ **When you rename, change only that field. Nothing else that week.** Google says a name change may mean you have to verify your business again. It does not say when this happens. GOOGLE
- ☐ **Screenshot your rankings before you touch your address.** In a 2024 test, a business hid its address and vanished from the local pack completely. It came back when the address was restored. Results differed between businesses and experts still disagree, but the risk is real. TESTED
- ☐ **Do not assume you can just undo it.** Hiding your address counts as an address change, so it can trigger re-verification. Some accounts find the setting locked until that is done. GOOGLE

05 If you work from home

The most common question, and the one with the most bad advice around it. An address is compulsory. What you do with it is the real question.

Not allowed	A **virtual office**, or a mailing address you do not actually work from. Google says it "isn't eligible for a Business Profile". PO boxes and remote mailboxes are also not allowed.
Almost never allowed	A **co-working desk**. It only counts if the office has your signage, receives your customers during opening hours, and is staffed by your own people. A hot desk does not count.
Not the same thing	Your **ACRA registered office address** is needed to register your company. That is normal and fine. But it does not make the address valid for Google. Google wants to know if a customer can come and find you there.
What you can do	Register as a **service-area business** and hide your address. You still enter it, and Google still verifies you at it. It just does not show publicly. This is what the setting is for.
The trade-off	Hiding costs you visibility in the local pack. Showing your home address costs you privacy. There is no option that costs nothing, and the shortcut that looks free will get you suspended.

06 Get these ready before you make changes

Google decides when to ask you to verify again. You cannot control that. You can control whether you are ready.

- ☐ **Your ACRA business profile or company registration.**
- ☐ **Photos of your signage, or of branded items with your business name on them.**
- ☐ **An invoice with the same business name.**
- ☐ **Get these ready before you change anything, not after.** If Google asks for a video verification and you have nothing ready, a simple edit can take your profile down while you scramble.

What no one can tell you. Google only publishes three ranking factors: relevance, distance and prominence. Every rank number here comes from an industry survey. Useful, but not from Google. Whether your profile feeds Google's AI answers is also unknown. And the statistics you see everywhere, like "76% of local searches lead to a purchase within 24 hours" or "photos give you 520% more calls", could not be traced to any real study. So they are not in here.

If you would rather someone else did this, we do local SEO and Business Profile work. Send us your listing and we will say what we would look at first. No obligation, and we will say so if nothing in it stands out. **info@xsquare.com.sg** · **xsquare.com.sg/services/seo**

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