

Google+ Business Page Optimization Guide: **How to Master Google+ for Your Business & SEO**



Introduction

There are more than **one billion Google searches** performed worldwide every day. According to research from **GroupM UK and Nielsen** published in August 2012, 94 percent of searchers click through on organic search results, and the top three positions in Google earn 61 percent of the clicks.

In June 2011 Google introduced Google+, which is a combination of social networking and search that is more powerful than Facebook or Twitter. As of September 2012, more than **400 million people have upgraded to Google+**. That is almost half of Facebook's total current user base in a fraction of the time, and double Twitter's!

If you have one minute left in your day to post content to a social network your time is best spent posting it on your Google+ business page because it has the power to extend reach to a broader organic search audience, a longer life than Facebook and Twitter, and more social signals too.

Why You Should Create a Google+ Business Page

You may already have a popular **Facebook Business Page** with an active community, and may question why you need a Google+ page for your brand or organization. The most significant reason to get your business on Google+ is simple: organic search visibility or SEO.

Search, Plus Your World is the most significant change to the world of search in recent years, because it alters organic search results based on a new range of personalization signals. While signed into your Google account (e.g. Gmail, AdWords), Google searches return personal results including posts, pages, images and profiles of people you follow on Google+. You can also expand your world by discovering people related to your search beyond those within your immediate Circles.

From an organic search perspective, Google search engine results are skewed around the user's preferences. An active presence on Google+ means your web presence visibility will increase for those people who have your page within their Circles or extended Circles.

Google+ Business Pages versus Facebook Business Pages

While Google+ Business Pages make use of familiar engagement signals, such as comments, shares and likes, it offers one major benefit over Facebook Business Pages: Google+ posts are more open and visible via the search engine results.



Currently, Facebook content is not searchable via Google or even Facebook's own built-in search function. A successful Facebook post with several engagement signals will disappear as quickly as new content is posted on that page.

Google+ posts, on the other hand, are searchable. It is possible for a Google+ post to appear as an organic search result in Google, affording your web presence yet another opportunity to rank for your keywords. Google+ users can also find your content by using the built-in Google+ search bar, and comment or share your content without having your page within their Circles.

It is also worth noting that Google+ posts will always appear in users' streams once they have been circled, whereas Facebook Pages are subject to a qualifying calculation known as **Edgerank** that determines if your content will be seen within your fans' news feeds.

Overview

This Google+ Business Page Optimization Guide will explain how to create, optimize, promote and master your new Google+ for Business Page in four easy steps:

1. Creating a Google+ Page for Your Business
2. Optimizing Content for Your Google+ Business Page
3. Promoting Your Google+ Business Page & Building a Community
4. Mastering Advanced Google+ Techniques

Click Here to Visit
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on Google+

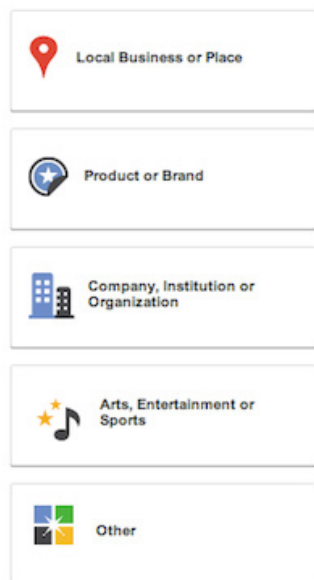
1. Creating a Google+ Page for Your Business

In order to set-up a Google+ for Business Page, you will need a Google account and personal Google+ page. The Google+ user who creates the business page (the “Owner”) has the ability to add managers, so you can easily authorize multiple page managers, and transfer ownership to a manager if needed.

To begin the process, log into your Google+ account and click on “Pages” located under “More” within the menu on the left, then click on the “Create a New Page” button at the top right. You can also create a new page by visiting www.google.com/+business.

You will be prompted to select a category that best represents your business among the following choices:

Pick a category



The screenshot shows a vertical list of five category selection boxes. Each box contains an icon and a label. The first box has a red location pin icon and the text 'Local Business or Place'. The second box has a blue and white globe icon and the text 'Product or Brand'. The third box has a blue building icon and the text 'Company, Institution or Organization'. The fourth box has a yellow star and musical note icon and the text 'Arts, Entertainment or Sports'. The fifth box has a multi-colored square icon and the text 'Other'.

Local Business or Place:

A great option for hotels, restaurants, places, stores and any other local service businesses where locality is important. If you select this category, you will be prompted for your business’ country and primary phone number. Google will match this information against Google Places listings and use the listing details to help build your profile.

Product or Brand:

An option for any product or brand that is not local, including online stores and presences. If you select this category, you will be asked to enter your page name and website then prompted to choose an applicable category from a dropdown list. If none of the categories are appropriate, you can simply choose Brand, Other, Product or Service.

Company, Institution or Organization:

Suitable for company pages, non-profits, organizations, schools and more. To complete set-up, this category will ask you for the page name and website as well as prompt you to select a category from the dropdown. If none of the categories are appropriate, you can simply choose Company, Institution, Organization or Other.

Arts, Entertainment or Sports:

Applicable for books, bands, movies, shows, teams, leagues, and more. Your Google+ business page will require a name, website and category ranging from album to website. You can also simply choose Entertainment, Other or Sports if none of the categories are appropriate.

Other:

If your brand does not fit into any other category, choose “Other”.

Once you have selected your category, Google will ask you to verify that your content is appropriate for selected audiences: any Google+ user, users 18 or older, users 21 or older, or specifically note whether the content will be alcohol-related. While all pages are public and visible, interactive features that require Google+ users to be logged in will be limited to people who are the minimum age or older.

Profile basics

These are just the basics of your page's profile. You can fill out a complete profile later.

TAGLINE

The 10 words that describe your page best

PROFILE PHOTO



Give your page some personality with an icon, brand, or profile photo.

The image you choose will represent you when you post, leave comments, or interact with other people and pages on Google+!

Set profile photo

Your profile photo will be presented on your page as you see here. The dimensions are 250x250 pixels.

Continue »

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Tagline

You will be asked to create a Tagline for your webpage. Taglines serve as your page's meta description and will appear in Google organic search engine results, so it is important to make use of your keywords while adhering to the 10-word suggested limit. Taglines also appear in Google+ feeds when people hover over the brand name.

Creating Your Google+ Profile Photo

You will be prompted to enter a profile photo. Businesses typically use their logos as profile images since they are representative of a brand and easy for customers to recognize. This image will appear within Google+ searches, so your brand image is best.

Once you have saved your page tagline and profile image, your initial set-up is considered complete. Your profile will be created, and Google will ask you if you would like to promote your new page on your personal Google+ stream. Keep in mind that your profile is in reality only one third complete at this point. It is recommended that you fully complete your profile prior to promoting it, which can easily be done at any time by clicking on the arrow button under the page profile photo.

Completing Your Google+ Profile

Complete your profile by clicking on the "Edit Profile" button in the top right corner, and selecting the About tab. The About section consists of five areas: Tagline, Introduction, Contact Information, Website and Links.



Tagline The 10 words that describe your page best

Introduction Put a little about your page here so people know they've found the correct "Test".

Contact info How can people reach you?

Website Your primary website

Links What pages interest you?



Tagline:

Google prompted you for this information earlier in the set-up process. Your tagline can be changed at any time by editing this field.

Introduction:

Use this space to introduce your company. Be sure to incorporate your keywords in this description. A small WYSIWYG editor is provided that allows you to add links. Be sure to hyperlink from your keywords to relevant, optimized pages.

Contact Info:

Include your contact information (phone number, mobile, email, fax, pager, chat, address) and determine whether to make this information public or visible only to you, your Circles or a custom setting.

Links:

Use this section to showcase your related web presences. This can include social profiles, official websites and micro-sites.

Profile and Banner Images

Your account will consist of your profile image (250px by 250px) and a banner image (with your choice of one complete image measuring 940 pixels by 180 pixels, or 5 smaller images measuring 110px each). While the profile picture accepts only jpg and png files, the banner image also allows animated gifs to be used.

Photos and Videos

The Photos and Videos tabs allow you to add more visual content to your profile. Businesses often use this space to post images of corporate events, team members, product launches, commercials, company and promotional videos, etc. If you prefer to opt out of this functionality, uncheck the *Show this tab on your profile* checkbox on either the Videos or Photos tab.

Posts

About

Photos


Videos

☒ **Show this tab on your profile**
Albums in the Photos tab are visible only to people they've been shared with.

☒ **Allow viewers to download my photos**

☐ Find my face in photos and videos and prompt people I know to tag me. [Learn more](#)

Automatically approve name tags when these people tag you:

 Your circles ×

+ Add more people

When anyone else tags you, you're notified and must approve the tag before it links to your profile.

☐ **Show geo location on the albums and photos you've uploaded.**

Save

Be sure to make use of the tagging feature to tag team members, brand enthusiasts and other influencers who appear in your images. This personalizes your content, as well as extends the promotion of your brand to other people who may not be directly connected to your Google+ business page, but who are connected to the people tagged in your pictures.

Fill Your Google+ Stream with Content

Before promoting your new Google+ business page to outside users, you will want to avoid an empty profile by populating your stream with 5-10 keyword-rich posts. Give your audience a taste of what you will post on Google+ while also giving them a reason to return to your profile in the future.

2. Optimizing Content for your Google+ Business Page

In an ongoing effort by Google to promote quality content, spam-type posts can be penalized and lose visibility in Google+ streams. Therefore it is increasingly important to avoid spamming your stream by paying attention to the relevance and quality of the content you are publishing. To do so, decide exactly how you will use this medium - what kinds of content will you publish?

- Corporate information
- Contest announcements
- Coupon codes
- Blog posts on niche-topics that do not necessarily fit your corporate blog

Once you have decided on the type of content that will be featured on your Google+ business page, create a content schedule that outlines the topic and focus keywords of each post to ensure you are consistently posting relevant, timely and shareable content that reflects your overall optimization efforts.

Anatomy of An Optimized Google+ Post

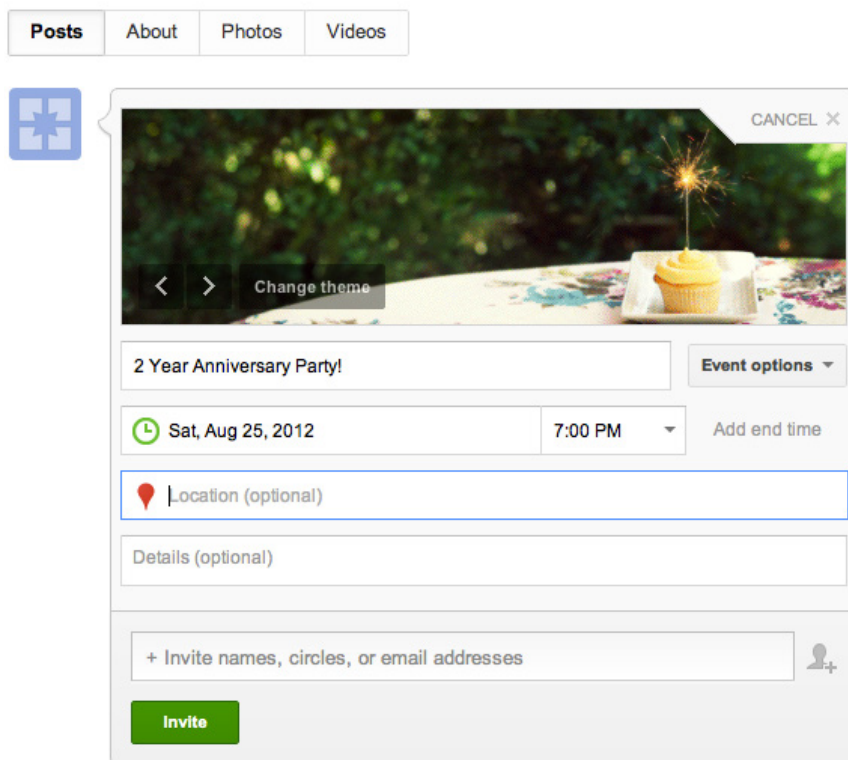
Posting updates on Google+ is a straightforward and simple process similar to Facebook, with a few added features. Each post has a user-tested limit of **100,000 characters**, likening it to a blog post rather than a status update.

Post Attachments: Links, Videos, Images and Events

With each post you have the option to attach an image, a link, a video or an event. A video can be added by recording it directly to your stream, browsing YouTube within the Google+ application, or uploading a clip from your computer.



Events are also easily created and shared via your Google+ business page. To create an event, click on the calendar icon, choose either a preselected theme image or upload your own branded image, add the event details and select the people you would like to invite to your event. Your event will appear in your guests' Google+ streams and they will receive a notification.



The screenshot shows the Google+ event creation interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Posts', 'About', 'Photos', and 'Videos'. Below these is a blue square icon with a white plus sign. The main area is a form for creating an event. It features a large image of a cupcake with a sparkler, with a 'CANCEL X' button in the top right corner. Below the image is a 'Change theme' button. The event title is '2 Year Anniversary Party!'. There is an 'Event options' dropdown menu. The date is 'Sat, Aug 25, 2012' and the time is '7:00 PM'. There is an 'Add end time' link. Below the date and time is a 'Location (optional)' field with a red location pin icon. Below the location field is a 'Details (optional)' field. At the bottom, there is a field to '+ Invite names, circles, or email addresses' with a person icon. A green 'Invite' button is at the bottom left.

Headline

Give your posts a relevant, keyword-rich headline by adding an asterisk immediately before and after your title (e.g. *Keyword-Rich Headline*). Once published, the headline will appear bolded and act as the post's only meta tag.

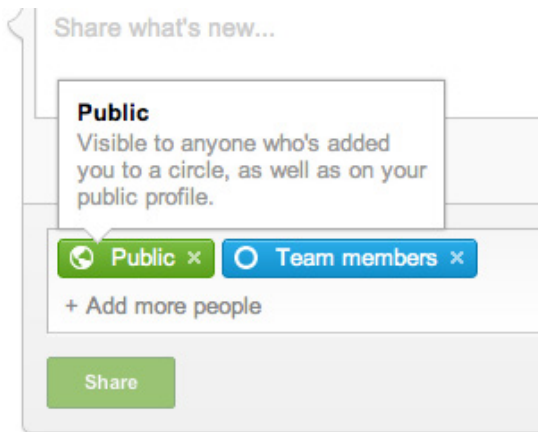
Using your Keywords

While Google+ does not allow you to link directly from your keywords, it is still important to optimize your post content with keywords or tags. Draw the reader's eye to the keyword while signaling importance by italicizing, striking out or tagging your keywords. To do so, immediately add an underscore (to italicize) or dash (to strikeout) before and after your keywords (e.g. italicize these keywords).

To tag a term, add a hash tag before the keyword (e.g. #keyword), and select your desired keyword from the dropdown list that appears. Tagging keywords categorizes your post and offers another opportunity to be found for your keywords. Clicking on individual tags showcases all posts that have been tagged with that keyword, and therefore promotes your content to a new, targeted audience of advanced Google+ users and influencers who have purposely searched your keyword tags looking for a discussion.

Sharing Content with Google+ Circles

Before publishing your post, ensure you are sharing your content with the appropriate audience.



Public:

Visible to anyone who has added you to a Circle, as well as on your public profile.

Extended Circles:

Your friends' friends. Sharing to Extended Circles will allow anyone in your Circles, as well as anyone within their Circles, to view your post.

Your Circles:

Everyone in your Circles, except those you are just following.

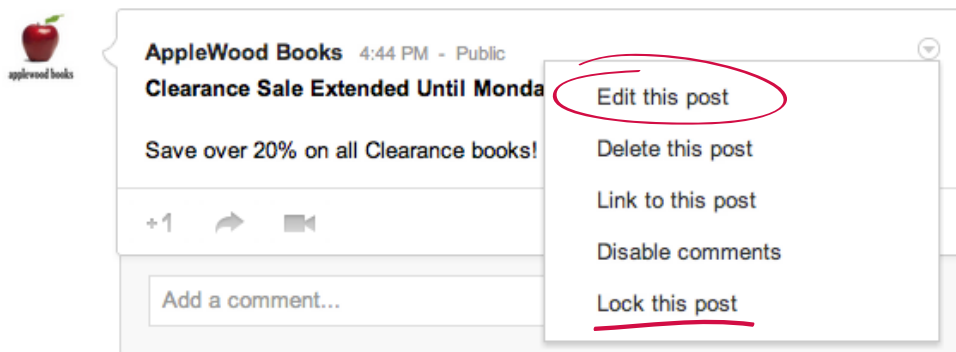
Specific Circles:

Your post will only be shared with the people assigned to this particular circle (e.g. *Teammates, Faculty, Customers, Vendors*)

A Single User:

A Google+ version of the private message. Your message will only be shared with this particular person.

To lock your post so that others cannot share your content, click on the arrow at the top right of the post and choose *Lock this post*. To edit an already-published post, click on *Edit this post*.



3. Promoting Your Google+ Business Page & Building a Community

Promote your New Google+ Presence

Begin the promotion process by highlighting your new Google+ business page on your company website. Google offers a variety of plugins to promote your Google+ presence on your website, including the following options:

Icon:

A small icon (32px by 32px) that directs people to your Google+ business page.

Badge:

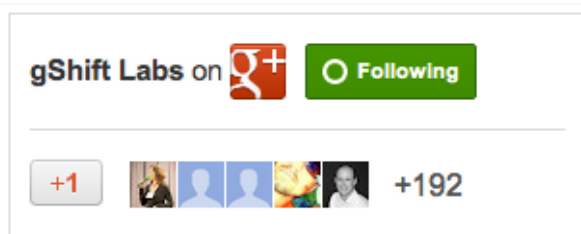
A medium-sized badge that allows people to follow and/or +1 your Google+ business page directly without leaving the current webpage.

+1 button:

People can click the +1 button to like your website on Google+ without leaving the current webpage.

Share button:

An inline button that allows people to share your website content with their Circles on Google+ without leaving the current webpage.



Ideally, you will want a mix of these buttons on your website. A Google+ icon on every page of your website allows people to view your Google+ business page, while a +1 or Share button allows users to promote your web content within their Circles. Any interaction will appear in the user's Google+ stream.

The Google+ Badge is frequently featured on company blogs, and acts similar to the Facebook Fan Box plugin.

More Ways to Promote your Google+ Business Page

Promote your new social profile on your other, more established profiles, such as Twitter and Facebook. Gain some attention by announcing your new profile in a blog post, email blast or newsletter. For added reach, ask your employees to include a link to your new Google+ business page in their email and forum signatures.

Promote Your Business Page on Google+



Encourage promotion and visibility by asking your employees, partners and customers to add your Google+ business page to and share it with their Circles. This is easily accomplished by clicking on the arrow button under the profile photo on your page.

Alternatively, people can +1 your page, which is similar to a Facebook Like. +1s act as a vote of confidence. Your +1s accumulate in a total number highlighted directly under your company profile image. It serves as a reminder that many people like this page.

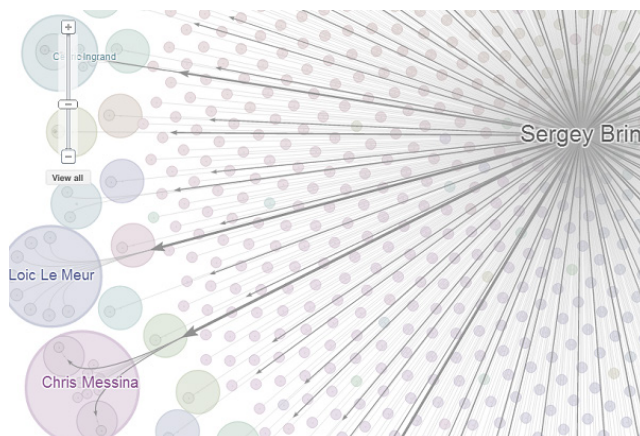
Build your own Circles by adding relevant industry pages. While you may want to avoid adding competitors' pages to your Circles, instead look for industry associations and like-minded community groups or fan pages. Keep in mind that you cannot add individuals to your Circles before they have added you. Once individuals have added your company page to their Circles, you can return the follow by adding their connection to any one of your designated Circles (i.e. Clients, Customers, VIPs).

Listening to Your Google+ Community

As you build your own Google+ community, be active without solely focusing on publishing to your own stream. Be sure to comment, +1 and share interesting content published by people within your Circles. When publishing your own content or commenting on shared content, tag appropriate Google+ users by adding a plus sign (+) before their username. Pages can also be tagged using the same method.

Listen to the overall Google+ community, including those members who are not in your Circles. Perform searches on your branded and focus keywords to see any ongoing discussions that may concern your company or image. Any keyword you search can be saved for future searches by clicking on the *Save This Search* button. This facilitates the listening process by keeping your important tagged searches a mere click away.

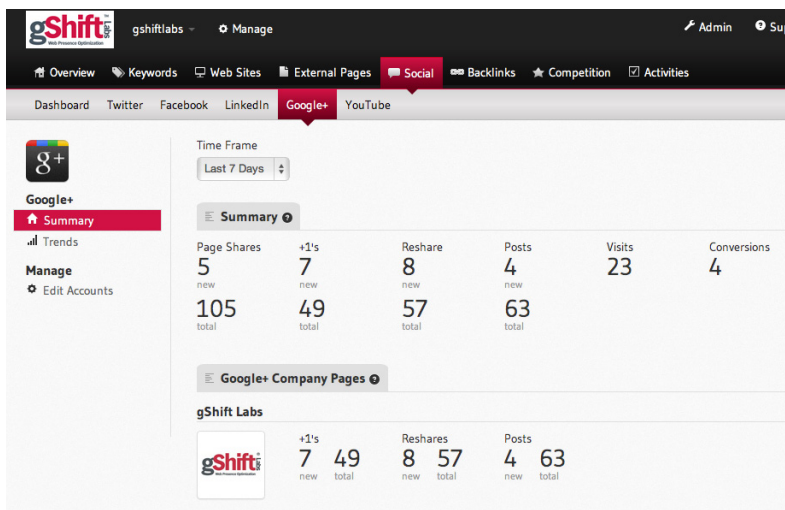
Measuring Your Social Media Success



Google+ offers a unique view of your content's shareability in a feature called **Google Ripples**. Google Ripples is a graphical representation that charts the chain reaction that occurs when your content is shared on Google+. It follows the trajectory of a public post as it is shared from one person to another, showcasing the speed and scale of the interactions. Influencers are highlighted in the graph with larger Circles representing shared posts that influenced more people.



Measuring your Google+ Performance with gShift Labs

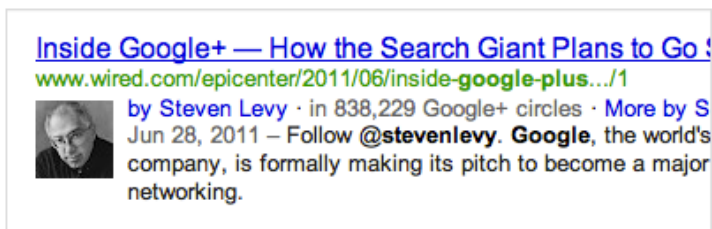


gShift Labs' Web Presence Optimizer (WPO) software also helps track the success of your Google+ campaign by reporting on a number of key performance indicators. Specifically, WPO examines the number of Page Shares and +1s your website content receives through share buttons, the number of Reshares your posts receive on Google+, as well as the number of posts, visits and conversions referred to your main website by way of your Google+ Business page.

4. Mastering Advanced Google+ Techniques

Google Authorship

When performing a search in Google, you have likely already encountered results with author profile pictures alongside the brief article description. This is known as **Google Authorship**, a program introduced in conjunction with the launch of Google+ whereby authors are verified as the creators of their content. It has blossomed into a form of credibility, where people are more willing to trust a face associated alongside an organic search result.



When an Authorship result is returned, Google+ users will be able to see the authors profile image, a byline directing people to the author's profile page, the number of Circles the author belongs to, and a link to an author-specific Google search.

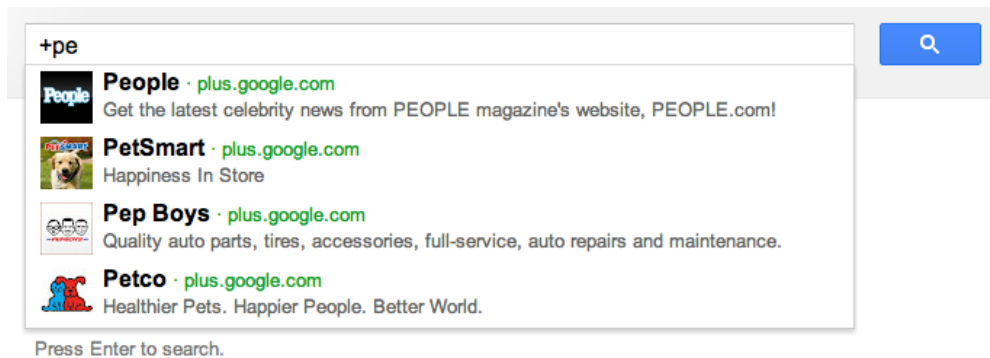
Claiming Google Authorship is a multi-step process that essentially requires an author to possess two things:

1. A verified Google+ profile that links to your content;
2. Content that references you as the author with a link to your Google+ profile.

Currently, there are three different ways to implement Google Authorship. For instructions on the most applicable method, visit Google's **Inside Search**.

Direct Connect

Google+ Direct Connect allows users to search for your organization's Google+ business page directly in Google by adding a "+" in front of their search. This feature was designed as a shortcut for users to quickly find your Google+ presence. When searching for an organization through Direct Connect, users will be prompted to add your page to their Circles. If they have "automatic connect" enabled, your page will automatically be added into their "Following" circle.



Like many other advanced features, Direct Connect is not yet widely available. Google is currently adding pages algorithmically. To improve your chances of enabling this feature, focus on the following:

- Connect your website and Google+ business page. Be sure to link to your website in your Google+ profile, and add a Google+ link on your website.
- Maintain an active profile by posting regularly.
- Promote your Google+ presence to increase your page popularity.

Google Hangouts on Air

Hangouts on Air is an excellent tool that allows Google+ users to broadcast live to unlimited viewers for free. It also allows people to share their screen, share documents and collaborate, making it an easy solution for companies to reach their audience.

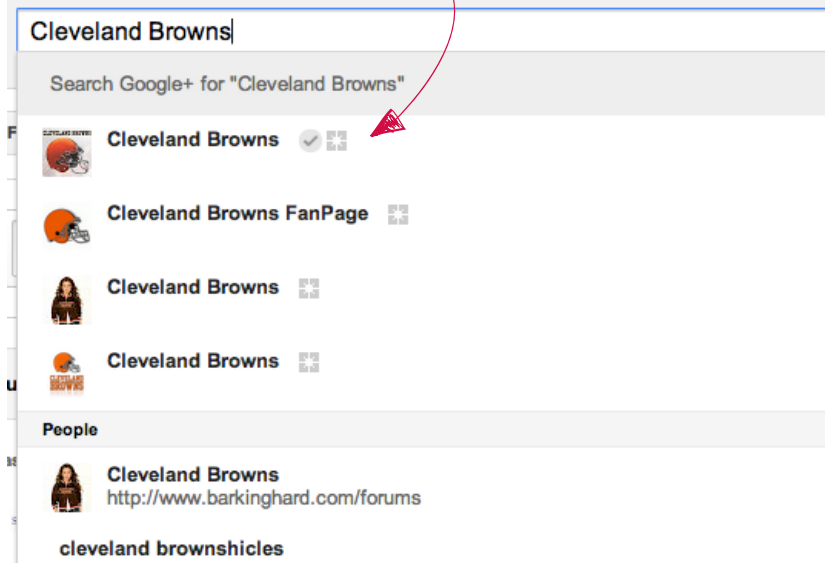
When broadcasting, your video will stream live on your Google+ business page and YouTube account. Anyone with the YouTube URL can therefore watch your video live without having a Google+ account. You can also embed your live video streaming on your website or blog by grabbing the embed code from inside the Hangout.

For added functionality, you can incorporate a number of Google Apps that allow you to collaborate, draw and share with others during the Hangout.

Once your Hangout is complete, your video can be edited on **YouTube** and shared.

Google+ Page Verification

Verified Pages signify that the identity of an individual account or page has been authenticated as the official Google+ presence.



Large businesses and brand pages are eligible for page verification once they have completed the following:

- Your Google+ business page must be authorized by your commercial entity, organization, brand or product.
- Your Google+ business page's profile must contain a link to your organization's website.
- Your organization's website must connect to your Google+ business page, by adding the Google+ badge or snippet of code.
- A meaningful number of people must have added your Google+ business page to their Circles.

Complete the process by submitting a form to Google available through [Google Support](#). Once verified, a grey checkmark will appear beside your profile.

Google+ Page Verification for Local Pages

To verify your local business page, click on *Verify now* on the right side of the page. A postcard will be sent to your business address that includes a verification code that you will need to enter at a later date. Unfortunately, you will need to complete this process even if you are the verified owner on Google Places for Business.

Once you have received your postcard, go to www.google.com/local/verify to enter the PIN listed on the postcard and click on submit.

This process is expected to merge your Google+ Business Page with Google+ Local, allowing for the social features of Google+ to transfer to your business listing. For an example, please visit [The Meatball Shop](#).

Conclusion

Despite a lower membership than other more active social sites, the Google+ platform is a great medium for marketers to connect their brand with an open and accessible community. It is also a platform that can directly impact search results, with the possibility of changing how people find and interact with your business online.

Incorporating a Google+ business page into your **optimized content marketing strategy** will increase your web presence visibility and allow people to interact with your business in a new, dynamic way.



About gShift Labs

gShift Labs provides Web Presence Optimization Software giving SMBs and agencies control over their organic search campaigns. Companies across North America are achieving top organic rankings in search engines using gShift's Web Presence Optimizer™ (WPO), which simplifies, demystifies and standardizes the way a website gets found on the internet. Organizations of all sizes benefit by reducing the time and resources required to analyze and improve organic search optimization.

For more information, please contact us at 1-866-743-5960 or sales@gShiftLabs.com.