



# Presbytery of Riverside

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## How to Be Found – Part 1 – Business Listings - Google

Increasing the likelihood of being seen when a search term is entered into a search tool is called “Search Engine Optimization (SEO)”. When a new family is in town and they type “church near me”, what do they find? The content of your web page including key words is only about 20% of your ranking. Additional major factors are links from others to your page, Your Google My Business listing, mentions of your organization in other online media, how people behave when on your site, reviews, and social media activity.

1. Enter “church near me or Church (Your community name)” in your favorite search engine. If you use something other than Google, make sure you also try Google. What comes up? There may be an ad that comes first, or you may find your own website, but usually before you scroll, you will see Google’s own listings of businesses that meet your search criteria.
2. If you have not done so, consider claiming or checking your Google My Business page and maybe Yelp, Bing, Mapquest & any local tool that shows up when searching as you expect a prospect might search. Claiming your page often requires you to receive a call at the business phone number listed.
3. Review your listings to correct any misinformation. You can suggest changes without claiming the site. This is both an opportunity and a problem. Others are influencing the contents of your listings, sometimes even suggesting inaccurate “corrections”. People may also be posting photos. Note: Your organization probably didn’t ever ask to be listed. You are an established organization that would be listed in the white or yellow pages. The company that listed your church gets to put ads in front of their users for the privilege of helping their customers find what they want.
4. For each listing (Google, Yelp, Bing), verify or add current photos, business hours, and details. The details differ on the different sites. Some allow the equivalent of posts. Even if you just claim your Google My Business Page and another like Yelp, you can improve the likelihood of your congregation being found and accurately represented. Alternatively, [access your free Google My Business listing](#).
5. Invite members or guests to write a review of your congregation on Yelp, Google, MapQuest or the business search sites that come up when you search for a church your town. Reviews increase the likelihood of your congregation being found when someone searches for a church. Ask the reviewer to be specific about what they love about your community. A personal account of a positive experience will inform & invite other people into fellowship.
6. Because keeping up with these many different listings can be a challenge, some businesses, such as Yext, sell services allowing you to take control of many sites at once by maintaining a single profile. Yext charges an annual fee per website to push out accurate information to all these listing services. To show you the value of their services, they offer a free scan. (No obligation). Enter the name of your congregation and your business phone at [www.yext.com](http://www.yext.com) and click “Scan Now” to see a report of linked listings. In most cases you can click right from this report to view your specific business listing on Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc. - some 40 listings. The most influential sites are at the top of the list, but others further down the list may be important in your area. Check your basic information. If you have a significant problem with misinformation -- for example you changed basic the name, address, web address, or phone number of the church -- the paid services may be something to investigate. In any case, reviewing your listing on the influential sites will improve the likelihood of being found in search.

