

CONFLUENCE
DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY+EXECUTION

Improving Visibility with Online Local Business Listings

AN EXECUTIVE BRIEF

April 2011

Executive Summary

Claiming, adding, and validating your online business listing page in Google, Yahoo, and Bing can increase your business and website traffic, draw new customers, and reduce your marketing costs while increasing your local business' Internet visibility. By claiming your page, you can tell the search engines directly about your business by using your relevant, business-critical keywords and improve trust in your geo-location for better Local Search rankings. These business listing pages are often added to location-specific search results, giving your business listing more space on the search results page. Claiming, updating, and maintaining these business listing pages is easy and, in most cases, free.

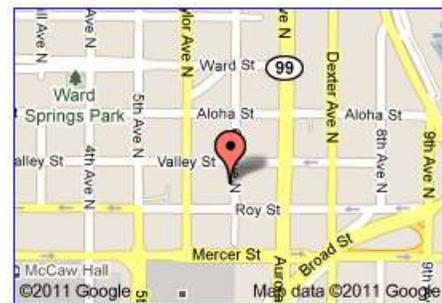
Introduction

Whether you own a barber shop or a home electronics store, with [97% of consumers using the Internet to research products or services in their local area](#) before they buy, and [53% of Bing mobile search queries focusing on local results](#), maintaining a local search presence for your business is critical to your success. Fortunately, Google, Bing, and Yahoo offer online business listings to help promote your business to local Internet users. And best of all, most are free!

Instead of waiting for your web developer to update your website and for the search engine spiders to crawl your web copy, online local business listings provide a channel for you to deliver business information directly to the search engines for inclusion in search results. Some businesses who claim and utilize their business listings say they get as much as a [10% increase in new customers](#). You can use this local listing to reduce your current marketing costs or to augment your existing campaigns. In addition, you get:

- Improved visibility for your products and services
- Easy, do-it-yourself update capabilities
- Free monitoring and analytics tools
- Coupon distribution for mobile devices and print
- Maps and driving directions
- Reviews and ratings collected from throughout the web

Business listings are originally compiled from crawl data and information from trusted sources such as the Better Business Bureau and other business directories such as InfoUSA, Acxiom, and Localeze. A link to the business listing page is then added to local search results along with information taken directly from that page. It's definitely to your advantage to claim your local business listing before your competition claims it. Then, you can correct or augment the listing, add pictures or videos, select



Confluence Digital 
[Place page](#)
711 Sixth Avenue North, Suite 201
Seattle, WA 98119
 (206) 852-7102 
Tram: SLU Streetcar & Terry Ave N
[Get directions](#) - [Is this accurate?](#)
Open Weekdays 9am-5pm
[4 reviews](#) - [Write a review](#)

categories, and use any of the features offered such as map tags and coupons.

Links to these local business listing pages are often added to mainstream location-specific search results, giving your company listing greater visibility and allotting them more space—and therefore more impressions—in the search results devoted to your business.

SEO Benefit

Claiming and completing your business listing gives you the opportunity to optimize that page with your business-critical keywords for greater relevancy, just like you'd optimize your web copy. Additionally, consistent geo-location references are important for ranking on Local (or map) Search. Be sure to fill out all the available information fields consistently across all the online business centers to help establish trust in your geo-location. Business listing centers will allow you to correct the business location on the map if necessary by dragging the pushpin.

Getting Started

You can get started by one of two methods:

1. Search for and claim or add your business listings in Google, Yahoo, and Bing local business listing centers. Fill out all the applicable fields. Your ownership claim will need to be verified either by mail or by phone. The postcard and automated phone message will give you a code that you enter into the verification page to confirm your listing.

How would you like to validate your listing?
For your protection, we need to verify the information you've just given us. This can be done in one of 2 ways:

 **By phone**
We'll call you at this phone number **866-971-5464**

 **By postcard (2-3 weeks)**
We'll send you a postcard in the mail to this address

Confluence Digital
711 6th Ave N, Ste 201
Seattle, WA 98109
United States

If necessary, you may specify another recipient or enter a mailstop/mailbox number below. *This information won't appear on Google Maps.*

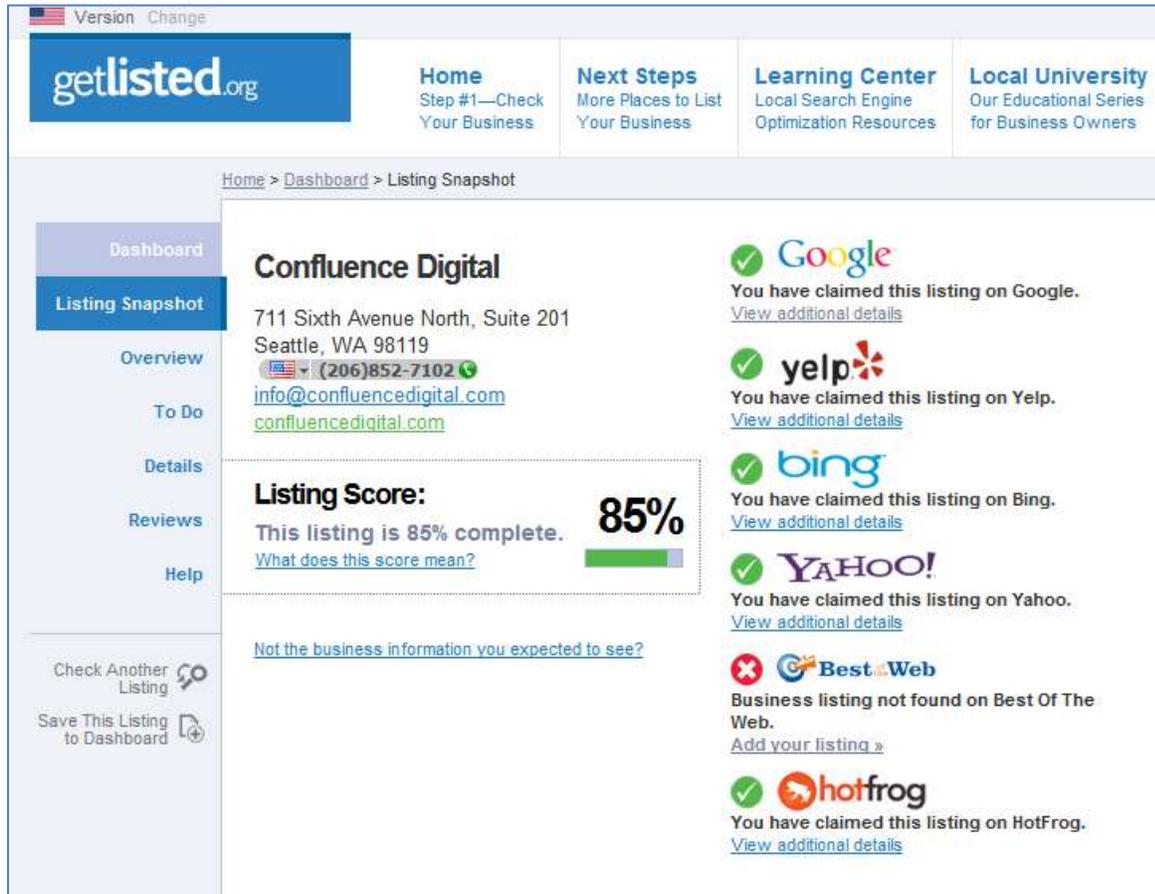
Contact name:

2. Or, use a tool such as GetListed.org to automatically search for and score your listing center.

GetListed.org

Using GetListed.org saves you time by organizing the links to the top business center listings in one place for convenience. You can see at a glance if you've missed any of the recommended listing centers. At a deeper level, you can see if any of your listing centers include reviews or if you've missed adding photos.

Although not essential, GetListed.org includes links to Yelp, Best of the Web, and Hotfrog. Claim these other listings after completing and verifying your Google, Yahoo, and Bing local business listings.

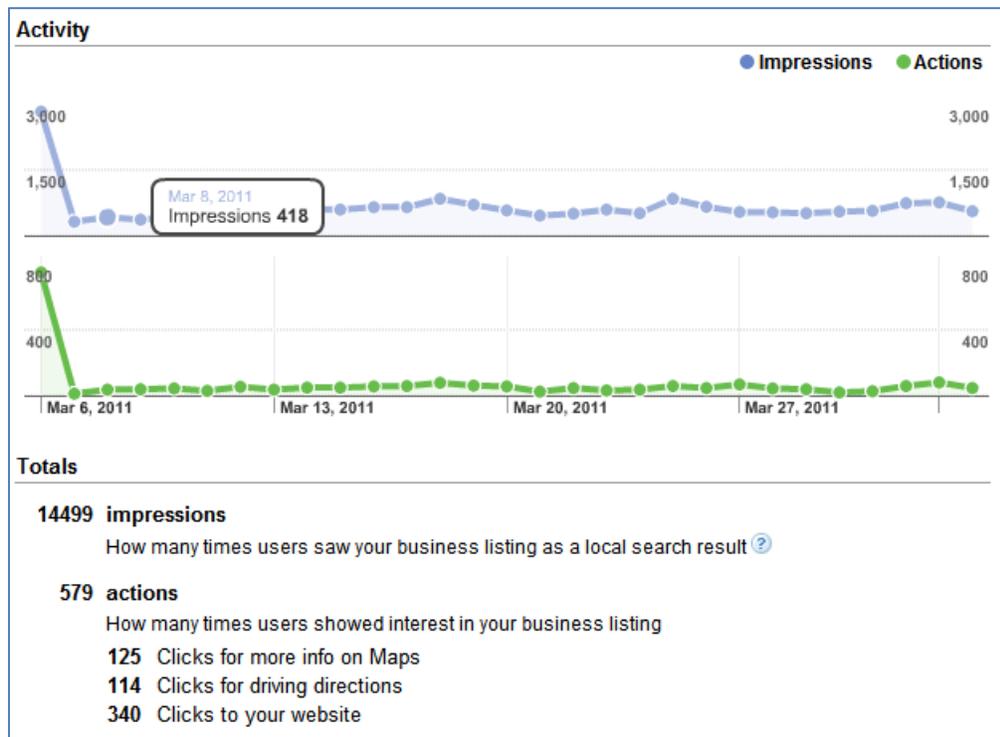


The screenshot shows the GetListed.org dashboard for a business named "Confluence Digital". The dashboard includes a navigation menu on the left with options like "Dashboard", "Listing Snapshot", "Overview", "To Do", "Details", "Reviews", and "Help". The main content area displays the business name, address (711 Sixth Avenue North, Suite 201, Seattle, WA 98119), phone number ((206)852-7102), and email (info@confluencedigital.com). A "Listing Score" section indicates that the listing is 85% complete, with a progress bar and a link to "What does this score mean?". Below this, there is a link to "Not the business information you expected to see?". On the right side, there are status indicators for various listing services: Google (claimed), Yelp (claimed), Bing (claimed), Yahoo! (claimed), Best of the Web (not found), and Hotfrog (claimed). Each status includes a "View additional details" link.



Google Place Page

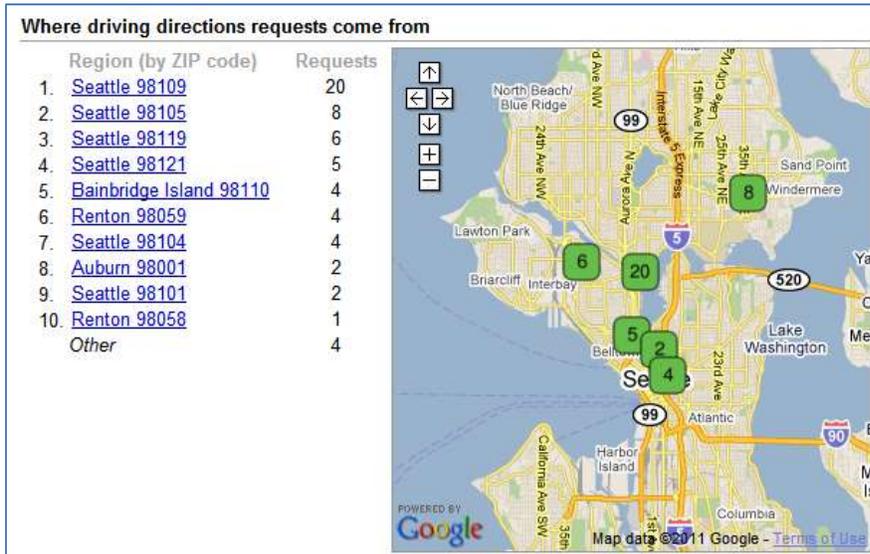
The Google Place page has grown from a business listing to a control center that complements your web analytics. It includes Google Analytics–like charts of impressions and actions broken down by day and by action.



It also:

- Lists your top search queries
- Maps the regions by zip code that contribute the most driving direction requests
- Breaks down the number of driving direction requests per region

This is useful information to help focus your mail and AdWords campaigns on your most productive geographic areas.



There are options to share special announcements, respond to reviews, create a QR code, and to build free coupons for print or for mobile phones. All of this takes only minutes to create and implement.

Mobile



Show this offer on your phone at the participating business.

\$10.00 OFF
[Your business location]

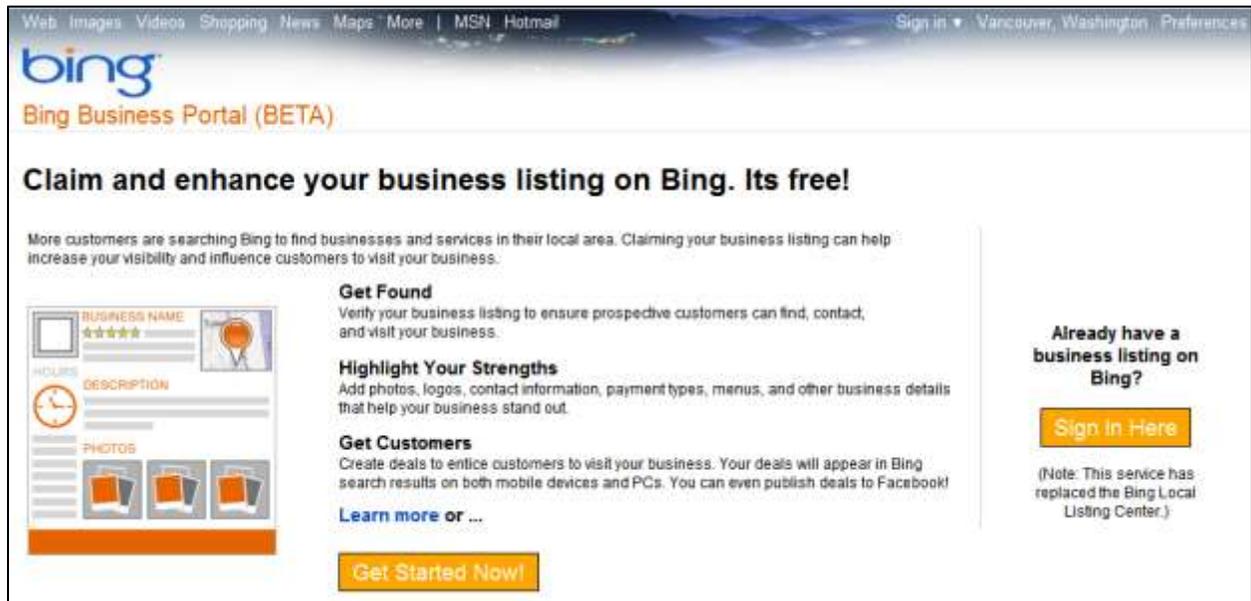
With minimum purchase of \$20.00. Not valid in conjunction with any other offers. No discount on alcohol. Cannot be used for events in private dining room. Dine in only. Limit one coupon per table. Please use only once.

Code - **07312010**
Expires - **Jul 31, 2010**

The Google Place page is a cost-efficient use of your (free) advertising dollars. In fact, some businesses report that the Google Place page is their [most successful form of marketing](#).

Bing Business Portal

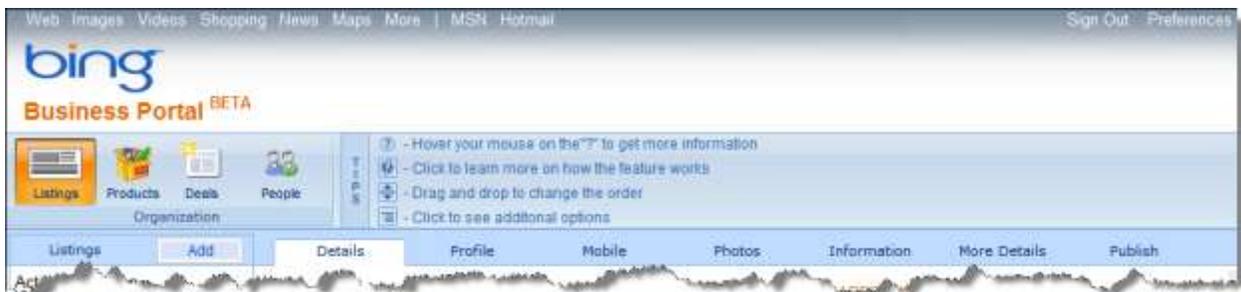
Bing has its own version of the Google Place page. Even though it is currently in beta, it is a promising promotional vehicle. With it, you can create deals and promote them on both the Bing desktop and mobile devices. Like the Google Place page, it's free. Unlike the Google Place page, there's an option to list your products or menus individually or by link. Better yet, you can create a mobile menu, a huge benefit for the restaurant sector where 50% of searches for dining choices are done on mobile devices.



The best thing about the Bing Business Portal is the integration with Facebook. Coupons that you create using their easy Deal Editor wizard will not only be promoted in Bing search results, on mobile devices, and on your Bing Business Portal page, but also on your Facebook page, should you choose to link it. You can also:

- Design and publish your own mobile website
- Upload and caption images
- Add links to your Facebook and Twitter accounts
- Create and download a window sticker with your business contact info and a QR code
- Authorize others to manage your listings

While the Bing Business Portal is lacking all the analytics that the Google Place page includes, it's still in beta and may change.

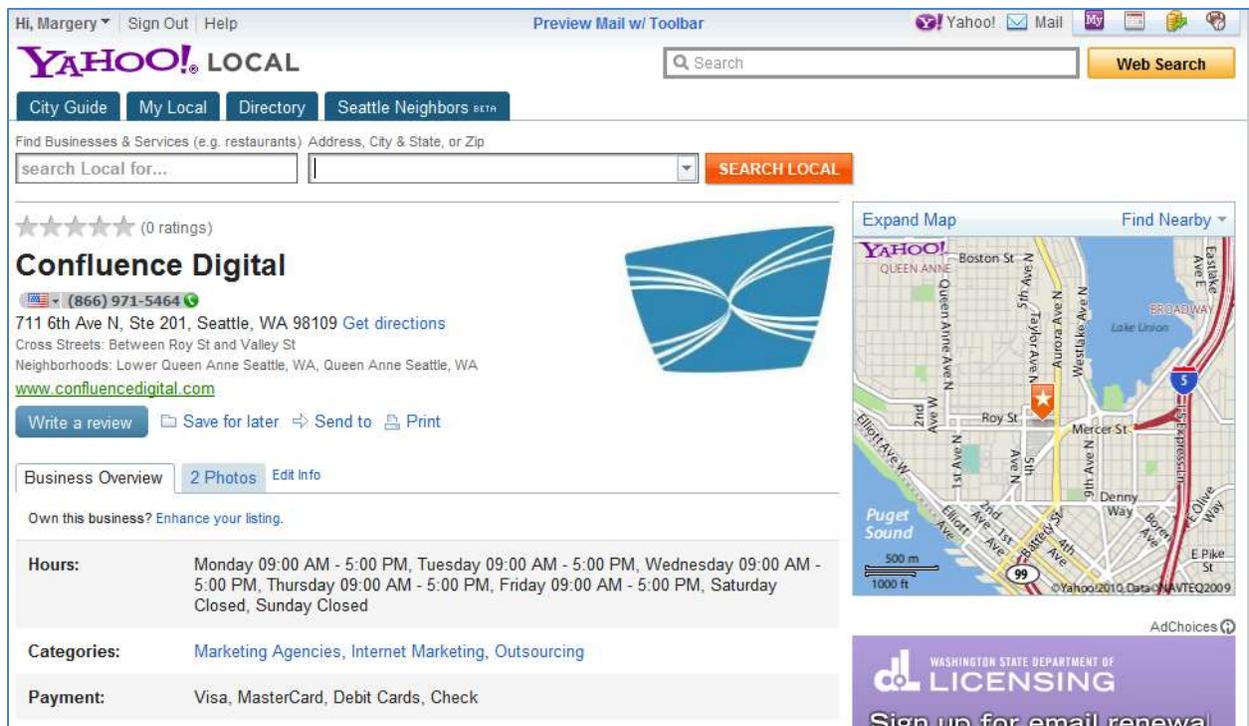


Yahoo Local Listing Center

The Yahoo Local Listing Center offers two classes of listings, the Basic and the Enhanced. Basic listings are free, but limited. With the Enhanced listings, at \$9.95 per month per location, you can add:

- Up to ten photos
- Company tagline
- Fully searchable long description
- Two additional links to a web site useful for menu pages or product descriptions
- Performance reports to tell you how many customers are seeing and acting on your listing

Like the other local business listing centers, both versions also offer a map, driving directions, ratings, categories, hours, payment methods, and so on.



Hi, Margery | Sign Out | Help | Preview Mail w/ Toolbar | Yahoo! | Mail | My |

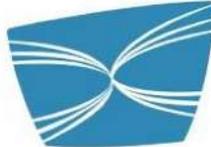
YAHOO! LOCAL | Search | Web Search

City Guide | My Local | Directory | Seattle Neighbors beta

Find Businesses & Services (e.g. restaurants) Address, City & State, or Zip

★★★★★ (0 ratings)

Confluence Digital



US (866) 971-5464 

711 6th Ave N, Ste 201, Seattle, WA 98109 [Get directions](#)
 Cross Streets: Between Roy St and Valley St
 Neighborhoods: Lower Queen Anne Seattle, WA, Queen Anne Seattle, WA
www.confluencedigital.com

[Write a review](#) | [Save for later](#) | [Send to](#) | [Print](#)

Business Overview | **2 Photos** | [Edit Info](#)

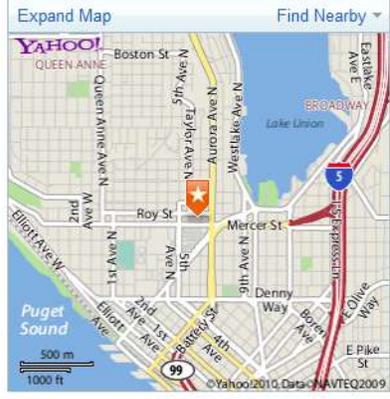
Own this business? [Enhance your listing.](#)

Hours: Monday 09:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Tuesday 09:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Wednesday 09:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Thursday 09:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Friday 09:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Saturday Closed, Sunday Closed

Categories: [Marketing Agencies](#), [Internet Marketing](#), [Outsourcing](#)

Payment: [Visa](#), [MasterCard](#), [Debit Cards](#), [Check](#)

[Expand Map](#) | [Find Nearby](#)

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 Sign up for email renewal

Conclusion

Increasing your business' visibility in Local Search was never so easy or so inexpensive. Claiming and completing your Google, Yahoo, and Bing local business listings takes very little time and is a cost-effective use of your marketing dollars, whether you use these in place of other marketing channels or to augment those that already exist.



About the Author

Margery Spears is a practicing Search Engine Optimization expert at [Confluence Digital, LLC](#). Margery has been doing organic search engine optimization full-time since 2007. Born in Pennsylvania, she has lived in many parts of the US before settling down in Seattle. She is the proud friend of two cats and a dog, and can be found on weekends on one of the many bike paths in Seattle under many layers of rain gear. Follow her on Twitter [@MargeryS](#).

About Confluence Digital

Confluence Digital, LLC is a Seattle-based digital marketing consultancy providing search engine optimization (SEO), paid search (PPC), web analytics and other search engine marketing, online advertising and strategy solutions to B2B and B2C clients. Follow us on Twitter [@ConfluenceDigtl](#).