



Patient Experience
by **Design**

A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR HEALTHCARE PRACTICE MANAGERS

How to Create & Manage Your **Google Business** **Profile**

Set up your practice and provider profiles, keep them accurate, post updates, and answer reviews without risking patient privacy.

Step-by-step setup

Practice and provider profiles, verification, every field

3 ready-to-use SOPs

Profile checks, posting updates, answering reviews

Checklists & templates

Monthly and quarterly checks, HIPAA-safe replies

Nine Pillars of Patient Experience · Pillar 1: Initial Exposure

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INITIAL EXPOSURE · PILLAR 1

Why your Google profile matters

Your Google Business Profile is often the first thing a patient sees about your practice, often before your website or a phone call. It is part of **Initial Exposure**, Pillar 1 of the Nine Pillars of Patient Experience Framework, and it sets expectations for every touchpoint that follows.

A complete, accurate profile lets a nervous first-time patient answer four questions without calling:

1

Can this practice help me?

2

How do I call or book?

3

Where exactly do I go?

4

Will I be treated well here?

This guide walks practice managers through setting up the practice profile, creating a profile for each provider, and three standard operating procedures that keep everything current. The companion Excel workbook, the **Google Review Tracker**, supports the review SOP and the monthly and quarterly checklists.

What's inside

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2 Create or claim the practice profile	Claiming and verifying
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8 Roles and the Review Tracker	Who owns what

SECTION 1

Before you start

Make three decisions before you touch Google: who owns the profile, who can edit it, and how your listings will be structured.

Ownership

- Create one shared practice Google account (for example, **google@yourpractice.com**) and make it the **primary owner** of every profile: the practice and each provider.
- Never let a marketing vendor, a former employee, or someone's personal Gmail be the primary owner. Losing access when that person leaves is one of the most common profile problems.
- Store the login in the practice password manager, with two-step verification sent to a practice phone, not a personal one.

Access roles

Role	Who	What they can do
Primary owner	Shared practice account	Everything, including adding and removing people
Owner	Practice manager or administrator	Edit the profile, manage users, reply to reviews
Manager	Marketing vendor, front desk lead	Edit info, post updates, reply to reviews

Review this access list every quarter and remove anyone who has left or no longer needs it.

Listing structure

Most multi-provider practices use one **practice profile** plus one **provider profile** for each patient-facing provider. Patients search both ways: "orthopedic practice near me" finds the practice, and "Dr. Patel orthopedics" finds the provider. Section 4 covers provider profiles in detail.

Gather this first

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Legal and public practice name, exactly as on your signage | ☐ Website URL and online booking or appointment-request URL |
| ☐ Full address with suite number | ☐ List of insurance plans accepted |
| ☐ Main phone number that reaches a person or a well-designed phone tree | ☐ List of services in patient-friendly words |
| ☐ Regular hours, lunch closures, and the holiday schedule | ☐ Provider list with credentials, specialties, and headshots |
| | ☐ Current photos of the exterior, parking, entrance, suite door, and front desk |

SECTION 2

Create or claim the practice profile

Search before you create. A listing often already exists (made automatically by Google, by a past employee, or by a patient adding a place), and claiming it keeps its reviews.

Steps

1. Sign in with the shared practice account.
2. Search Google Maps for your practice name, your address, and your phone number.
3. **If a listing exists:** open it, select "Own this business?" or "Claim this business," and follow the prompts. If someone else already owns it, request access; Google will contact the current owner.
4. **If no listing exists:** go to business.google.com, select "Add your business," and enter the name, category, address, phone, and website.
5. Mark any duplicate listings of the same practice at the same address as duplicates so reviews and traffic aren't split.
6. Verify the profile. Your edits won't show publicly until verification is complete.

Verify the profile

Google decides which verification methods you're offered. Video is now the most common. It requires one continuous, unedited video recorded in the Google Maps or Business Profile app on a phone. In one take, show:

1. The street or parking lot and your exterior signage.
2. The building entrance and directory, if you're in a medical building.
3. The suite door with your practice name and number.
4. Proof you manage the business, such as unlocking the door, the front desk, or the check-in area.

Verification tips

- Make sure the name and suite number on the profile match what the camera shows. A mismatch is the most common reason a video is rejected.
- Never film patients, screens, schedules, or paperwork.
- Expect a review of about 3 to 5 business days. If it's rejected, fix the mismatch before re-recording.

SECTION 3

Complete the practice profile

Fill in every field a patient relies on, in plain language, and make sure it matches your website, signage, and insurance directories exactly.

Core fields

Field	What to enter	Common mistake
Name	Your real-world name, exactly as on your signage	Adding keywords ("Best Family Doctor Springfield"), which can get the listing suspended
Primary category	The one category that describes you ("Family practice physician," "Orthopedic surgeon")	Choosing a broad category when a specific one exists
Secondary categories	A few accurate additions	Listing every possible specialty
Address	Street address plus suite number	Leaving off the suite in a large medical building
Phone	A number that reaches a person or a clear phone tree	A fax line or a tracking number that doesn't match your website
Hours	Regular hours, lunch closures, and special holiday hours	Out-of-date hours after a schedule change
Website	Your homepage or location page	A broken or outdated link
Appointment link	Your online booking or appointment-request page	Pointing to the homepage instead of scheduling
Insurance	Review the "Check insurance info" list and add or remove plans	Assuming Google's third-party insurance data is correct
Languages & attributes	Languages spoken, accessibility, telehealth or online care, parking	Leaving them blank

Business description

You have 750 characters, but most patients only see about the first 250 before tapping "More." Put the essentials there: who you serve, where you are, and one reason the experience is easy. Keywords don't improve ranking, so write for patients.

INSTEAD OF

"Premier comprehensive orthopedic care utilizing state-of-the-art modalities for optimal outcomes."

TRY

"Orthopedic care for knee, hip, shoulder, and sports injuries in Springfield. New patients are usually seen within a week, and you can book online. We're on the 3rd floor of the North Medical Building, Suite 320, with free parking in Garage B."

Only promise what your operations deliver. If the description says "same-day appointments," scheduling must offer them.

Services

List each service separately, using the words patients search. Each service description can be up to 300 characters. Use it to say what the service is, who it's for, and what to expect.

INSTEAD OF

"Comprehensive allergy evaluation."

TRY

"Testing to find what's causing your sneezing, hives, or reactions. Most skin tests take about an hour, with results the same day. You may need to stop antihistamines 5–7 days before. We'll tell you when you schedule."

Include visit types that remove uncertainty: new patient visits, telehealth visits, same-day sick visits, second opinions. Remove any service you no longer offer immediately.

Photos

Photos should help patients find you and feel welcome. Upload, at minimum:

- **Logo** and a deliberately chosen **cover photo**.
- **Wayfinding:** building exterior, parking and the garage entrance, the entrance patients should use, the lobby directory and elevators, and your suite door with the number visible.
- **Welcome:** front desk with staff, waiting room, a typical exam room.
- **People:** team photos and provider headshots.

Photo privacy rules

No patients without written consent. No visible screens, charts, schedules, whiteboards, or paperwork. Staff consent before posting their photos. Photos must show the office as it looks today.

SECTION 4

Create a profile for each provider

Each patient-facing provider should have their own profile, owned by the practice, so patients who search a provider's name find accurate information and can book.

Who gets a profile

- **Yes:** physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other licensed providers who see patients and can be contacted directly to verify the listing.
- **No:** support staff, medical assistants, front desk, billing, or administrators.
- One profile per provider per location. Don't create separate profiles for each specialty. A provider who works at two of your locations gets one profile at each.

Naming rules

A provider listing must include the provider's title or degree, such as Dr., MD, DO, NP, or PA. At a shared practice, the provider profile carries only the provider's name, and the practice profile carries only the practice name.

Correct	Incorrect
Dr. Priya Patel, MD	Dr. Priya Patel – Springfield Orthopedics
Jordan Lee, NP	Jordan Lee NP Best Nurse Practitioner Springfield
Springfield Orthopedics (practice profile)	Springfield Orthopedics – Dr. Patel & Dr. Kim

A solo provider whose practice is branded under their own name can use one combined profile in the format **[Practice name]: [Provider name]** instead of two.

What a provider profile should look like

Field	What to enter
Name	Name + credential, e.g. "Dr. Priya Patel, MD"
Primary category	The provider's specialty, e.g. "Orthopedic surgeon"
Address	The same address and suite as the practice profile
Phone	The practice's main or scheduling number (not a personal line)
Hours	The provider's clinic days and hours at this location
Website	The provider's bio page on your website, not the homepage
Appointment link	Booking that pre-selects this provider, if your system allows
Description	A short, human bio (see example)

Services	The conditions and procedures this provider handles
Languages	Languages the provider speaks
Photos	A current, professional, friendly headshot; the provider with the team; the practice entrance

Example provider description

Dr. Priya Patel is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon who treats knee, hip, and sports injuries for active adults and teens. She's known for taking time to explain options in plain language. Dr. Patel sees patients Monday through Thursday at Springfield Orthopedics, Suite 320, and is welcoming new patients. She speaks English and Hindi.

Reviews on provider profiles

Reviews left on a provider's profile stay with that provider; reviews on the practice profile stay with the practice. Decide your approach before asking patients for reviews. A common choice is to ask for reviews on the provider the patient saw, so each provider's profile reflects their own care.

When a provider leaves

1. Update the provider profile the same week they leave.
2. If they are retiring or leaving the area, mark the profile **permanently closed**. If they are moving to another practice, the profile belongs to them; transfer ownership when they request it.
3. Remove them from practice-profile photos, posts, and the practice description.
4. Post an update on the practice profile that explains how their patients will continue care.

SECTION 5 · STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP 1: Checking the profile for updates

PURPOSE

Keep every practice and provider profile accurate so patients never act on wrong hours, numbers, or locations.

OWNER

Practice manager (or designee).
Backup: front desk lead.

FREQUENCY

Monthly and quarterly checks, plus same-day updates when anything changes.

Procedure

1. Sign in with the shared practice account and open each profile: the practice profile first, then each provider.
2. Look at each profile **as a patient** on a phone: search the practice name and each provider's name in Google Search and Google Maps.
3. Work through the checklist below. Fix errors immediately.
4. Check for **suggested edits** from the public or from Google. Accept the accurate ones and reject the rest; anyone can suggest changes, and Google may apply some automatically.
5. Record the date, who completed the check, and what changed on the **Monthly & Quarterly Checks** tab of the Google Review Tracker.
6. Report anything you can't fix (a duplicate listing, a wrong insurance network, a suspended profile) to the practice manager within one business day.

Same-day update triggers. Update the profile the same day any of these happen: hours change, a holiday or weather closure, a provider joins or leaves, a phone or website change, a new entrance or suite, a service added or dropped, an insurance network added or dropped.

Monthly checklist

- ☐ Practice name matches signage and website exactly
- ☐ Address and suite number are correct
- ☐ Phone number is correct; call it to confirm it reaches the right place
- ☐ Regular hours and lunch closures are correct
- ☐ Special hours are set for holidays in the next 60 days
- ☐ Website link works and goes to the right page
- ☐ Appointment link works and goes to scheduling
- ☐ Every current provider has a profile; no departed provider is shown as active
- ☐ Each provider's hours and booking link are correct

- ☐ Suggested edits reviewed and accepted or rejected
- ☐ Photos uploaded by the public reviewed; inaccurate or private ones flagged
- ☐ At least one post published this month (SOP 2)
- ☐ All new reviews logged and answered (SOP 3)
- ☐ Check logged on the Monthly & Quarterly Checks tab

Month: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

Quarterly checklist

Complete the monthly checklist, plus:

- ☐ Business description still matches what we offer and what patients experience
- ☐ Services list is complete, in patient-friendly words, with nothing we no longer offer
- ☐ Primary and secondary categories are still accurate
- ☐ "Check insurance info" list matches the plans we accept
- ☐ Languages and attributes (accessibility, telehealth, parking) are correct
- ☐ Photos refreshed: exterior, parking, entrance, suite door, front desk, team
- ☐ Logo and cover photo still correct
- ☐ Provider headshots and bios are current
- ☐ No duplicate listings for the practice or any provider
- ☐ User access reviewed; anyone who has left or no longer needs access removed
- ☐ Next quarter's posts planned on the Post Calendar
- ☐ Review themes summarized and shared at the staff meeting
- ☐ Profile performance reviewed (calls, website clicks, directions, bookings) vs. last quarter

Quarter: _____ Completed by: _____ Date: _____

SECTION 6 · STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP 2: Posting updates to Google

PURPOSE

Show patients the practice is active and keep them informed about access, providers, and what to expect.

OWNER

Marketing lead or practice manager. Reviewer: practice manager or compliance lead.

FREQUENCY

At least one post per month on the practice profile, plus same-day posts for anything urgent.

Procedure

1. Pick the post from the 12-month Post Calendar, or a same-day trigger (closure, outage, entrance change).
2. Choose the post type: **Update** (news and announcements), **Event** (flu clinic, health fair), or **Offer** (rarely used in healthcare).
3. Write the post: lead with the point, add one helpful detail, end with one call to action. Aim for 150–300 characters; the limit is 1,500.
4. Add a clear, current, well-lit photo that contains no patient information.
5. Add a call-to-action button (Book, Call, Learn more) instead of typing a phone number into the text.
6. Send to the reviewer to check against the privacy rules below.
7. Publish, then view it on a phone to confirm it displays correctly.
8. Log the post date and topic on the Post Calendar tab.

Post ideas

Topic	Example
Access	"We now offer evening appointments until 7 p.m. on Tuesdays. Book online."
New provider	"Welcome Dr. Priya Patel, who treats knee, hip, and sports injuries. She is accepting new patients."
What to expect	"First visit? Park in Garage B, take the elevators to the 3rd floor, and look for Suite 320. Bring your ID and insurance card."
Holiday hours	"We're closed Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27. For urgent needs, call our main line for after-hours instructions."

Privacy and content rules

No patient names, stories, photos, or testimonials without written HIPAA authorization. No guaranteed results or outcome claims. No individual medical advice. No photos showing screens, charts, schedules, or paperwork. No content that contradicts the website, signage, or what the front desk tells patients.

SECTION 7 · STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP 3: Answering Google reviews

PURPOSE

Respond to every review in a way that shows how we handle feedback, protects patient privacy, and turns themes into improvements.

OWNER

Practice manager. Backup: administrator. Providers do not reply to reviews themselves.

TIMEFRAME

Check at least twice a week. Reply within 2 business days; negative reviews within 1 business day.

The HIPAA rule

A reply must never confirm that the reviewer is or was a patient, and must never mention any visit detail, even if the reviewer shared it first. Practices have been fined for replies that did. Keep replies general and move any specific conversation offline. Confirm this approach with your compliance lead.

Procedure

1. Read the review and log it on the **Review Log** tab of the Google Review Tracker: date, profile, star rating, theme, and touchpoint.
2. Decide the response path:
 - **Positive (4–5 stars):** reply with a thank-you template.
 - **Neutral or mixed (3 stars):** thank them and invite them to contact the practice manager.
 - **Negative (1–2 stars):** reply with the concern template, then flag it to the practice manager the same day.
 - **Fake, spam, offensive, or not about us:** don't reply. Flag it for removal in Google and note it in the log.
3. Personalize the template lightly, without any clinical or visit detail.
4. Read the reply once more against the HIPAA rule, then post it.
5. For negative reviews, try to identify the concern internally and follow up through your normal complaint process. Never contact the reviewer about their review through Google.
6. Update the tracker with the reply date, who replied, and any follow-up action.
7. Each month, review the themes in the tracker and route recurring ones to the owner of that touchpoint.

Reply templates

POSITIVE

Thank you for taking the time to share this. We're glad to hear it, and we'll pass your kind words along to our team.

MENTIONS A STAFF MEMBER BY NAME

Thank you so much for your kind words. We're proud of our team and will be sure to share your feedback.

MIXED OR NEUTRAL

Thank you for your feedback. We're always working to improve, and we'd welcome the chance to hear more. Please call our practice manager at [number].

NEGATIVE

We're sorry to hear about this experience. We take every concern seriously and would like to understand what happened. Please call our practice manager, [Name], at [number] so we can talk directly.

ABOUT BILLING

We're sorry for the frustration. Billing questions can be confusing, and we want to help. Please contact our billing team at [number] so we can look into this with you directly.

ABOUT WAIT TIMES OR ACCESS

Thank you for letting us know. We understand how frustrating delays can be, and we're reviewing how we can do better. We'd welcome the chance to talk; please call [Name] at [number].

What never goes in a reply

INSTEAD OF

"We're sorry your wait for Dr. Smith was long on Tuesday."

TRY

"We understand how frustrating delays can be."

INSTEAD OF

"We reviewed your chart and you were seen within 15 minutes."

TRY

"We'd welcome the chance to talk about what happened."

INSTEAD OF

"As you know, your procedure required pre-authorization."

TRY

"Please contact our billing team so we can look into this with you."

INSTEAD OF

"This patient was rude to our staff."

TRY

No reply. Flag the review if it violates Google's policies.

Asking for reviews

- Ask every patient the same way, never only the patients you expect to be happy. Selectively asking ("review gating") violates Google's policies.
- Never offer anything in exchange for a review.
- A post-visit text or email with a link to your review page is fine, as long as it contains no treatment details.

SECTION 8

Roles and the Google Review Tracker

Task	Owner	Backup	Frequency
Profile checks (SOP 1)	Practice manager	Front desk lead	Monthly and quarterly
Same-day updates	Practice manager	Front desk lead	When anything changes
Posting updates (SOP 2)	Marketing lead	Practice manager	At least monthly
Post review	Practice manager or compliance lead	Administrator	Every post
Answering reviews (SOP 3)	Practice manager	Administrator	Twice weekly
Access review	Primary account owner	Administrator	Quarterly

The companion workbook

The **Google Review Tracker** (Excel) has five tabs:

- **Instructions:** how to use the workbook.
- **Review Log:** one row per review; reply timing calculates automatically.
- **Theme Summary:** automatic counts and average rating by touchpoint, theme, provider, and month.
- **Monthly & Quarterly Checks:** the SOP 1 checklists, with columns for each month and quarter.
- **Post Calendar:** a 12-month plan for SOP 2.

Your Google profile is only one part of Initial Exposure.

Take the PX360 Assessment to see how patients experience every touchpoint of your practice, and where trust may be breaking down.

px360.hmcgllc-us.com

Want help putting these SOPs in place? Book a 30-minute conversation with HMCg.

calendly.com/melissa-gilkes-smith/30min · hmcgllc-us.com

Sources: Google Business Profile Help (support.google.com/business/answer/9798848 and [/7390603](https://support.google.com/business/answer/7390603)); BrightLocal, Verifying a Google Business Profile; SOCi, Managing healthcare practices and practitioners on Google Business Profile; V Digital Services, Practitioner listing best practices.

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Patient Experience
by **Design**

NEXT STEP

Your Google profile is only the **first** touchpoint

Patients start judging your practice online, and they keep judging at every step that follows: scheduling, check-in, the visit, checkout and billing. The PX360 Assessment shows how patients experience every touchpoint of your practice, and where trust may be breaking down.

Take the PX360 Assessment →

px360.hmcgllc-us.com

Keep learning, every Tuesday

You get a new Patient Experience by Design post each week: practical guidance on the Nine Pillars, leadership and practice operations.

melissagilkessmith.substack.com

Want help putting these SOPs in place?

Book a 30-minute conversation with Melissa at HMCG about your practice's patient experience.

calendly.com/melissa-gilkes-smith/30min

“Because a remarkable patient experience doesn’t happen by accident, it happens by design.”

— **Melissa Gilkes-Smith**