

Google Business Profile Optimization Checklist

Chocolat on James - Step-by-Step Guide

Goal: Improve local search visibility and attract more walk-in customers

Time Required: 2 hours initial setup + 15 minutes/week ongoing

PHASE 1: CLAIM & VERIFY (30 minutes)

Step 1: Claim Your Profile ☐ Go to <https://business.google.com> ☐ Search for "Chocolat on James Hamilton" ☐ If profile exists, click "Own this business?" ☐ If no profile exists, click "Add your business" ☐ Follow the verification process (usually postcard or phone)

Step 2: Basic Information ☐ Business name: Chocolat on James ☐ Category: Chocolate shop, Dessert shop, Ice cream shop ☐ Address: [Your address] James Street North, Hamilton, ON ☐ Phone: [Your phone number] ☐ Website: chocolatonjames.com ☐ Hours: Add regular hours + holiday hours

PHASE 2: COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE (45 minutes)

Step 3: Business Description ☐ Write a compelling 750-character description

Example: "Chocolat on James is Hamilton's artisan chocolate destination, handcrafting premium chocolates, truffles, and confections for 11 years in the heart of James Street North. We specialize in custom gift baskets, corporate gifting, and unique chocolate-covered treats. Enjoy our house-made ice cream and specialty coffee in-store. Whether you're celebrating a special occasion, treating yourself, or finding the perfect corporate gift, our locally-made, small-batch chocolates are crafted with care. Visit us downtown Hamilton for a sweet experience. #HamiltonChocolate #JamesStreetNorth"

Step 4: Add Attributes ☐ Women-led (if applicable) ☐ Locally owned ☐ Small business ☐ In-store shopping ☐ In-store pickup ☐ Delivery (once you offer it)

Step 5: Add Services ☐ Artisan Chocolates ☐ Custom Gift Baskets ☐ Corporate Gifting ☐ Wedding Favors ☐ Ice Cream ☐ Coffee & Beverages ☐ Chocolate-Covered Treats ☐ Custom Orders

Step 6: Add Products (optional but recommended) ☐ Add 5-10 of your top products with photos and prices

- Truffle assortment (\$XX)
 - Gift basket (\$XX)
 - Chocolate bar (\$XX)
 - Ice cream cone (\$XX)
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PHASE 3: PHOTOS (30 minutes)

Step 7: Upload High-Quality Photos

You need at least **10-15 photos** across these categories:

Exterior (2-3 photos): ☐ Storefront with signage clearly visible ☐ James Street North street view ☐ Entrance (inviting shot)

Interior (3-4 photos): ☐ Retail display cases with chocolates ☐ Ice cream area ☐ Coffee bar/seating (if any) ☐ Overall store ambiance

Products (5-6 photos): ☐ Truffle assortment close-up ☐ Gift baskets (multiple options) ☐ Ice cream cones ☐ Chocolate-covered items display ☐ Seasonal/specialty items ☐ Coffee drinks

Behind-the-Scenes (2-3 photos): ☐ You making chocolate ☐ Production area (clean and professional) ☐ Hand-dipping or crafting process

Team (1-2 photos): ☐ You (Dan) in the store ☐ Staff members (with permission)

Photo Tips:

- Use natural light when possible
 - Take photos in landscape orientation
 - Clean and stage displays before shooting
 - Smile in team photos
 - No blurry or dark photos
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✓ PHASE 4: REVIEWS & ENGAGEMENT (15 minutes)

Step 8: Respond to Reviews ☐ Respond to every existing review (positive and negative) ☐
Keep responses personal but professional

Example Responses:

Positive review: "Thank you so much, [Name]! We're thrilled you enjoyed the truffles. Can't wait to see you again soon! - Dan at Chocolat on James"

Negative review: "Hi [Name], thank you for your feedback. We're sorry your experience didn't meet expectations. Please reach out to us at [email] so we can make it right. - Dan at Chocolat on James"

Step 9: Enable Messaging ☐ Turn on messaging in settings ☐ Set up notifications so you respond within 24 hours

✓ PHASE 5: WEEKLY POSTING (15 minutes/week)

Step 10: Create a Weekly Post Schedule

Post **at least once per week** (ideally 2-3x/week) with these types:

Example Posts:

Monday - New Product: "New arrival alert! 💎 Our Pumpkin Spice Truffles are here for fall. Stop by this week and try them before they're gone. Open Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 11am-5pm." [Photo of pumpkin spice truffles]

Wednesday - Offer: "Corporate gifting made easy! 📺 Pre-order your holiday gift baskets by Nov 15 and save 10%. Perfect for clients and employees. DM us or call [phone] to order." [Photo of gift basket]

Friday - Behind-the-Scenes: "Friday vibes in the chocolate kitchen 🍫✨ Handcrafting your weekend treats. Stop by James Street North today!" [Photo of you making chocolate]

Sunday - Community: "Supporting local tastes better 🍷❤️ Proud to be part of the James Street North community. What's your favorite local Hamilton spot? Tag them below!" [Photo of storefront or community]






PHASE 6: MONITOR & OPTIMIZE (Ongoing)

Step 11: Check Your Insights ☐ Review monthly (how people find you, what actions they take) ☐ Track: Views, searches, calls, direction requests, website clicks

Step 12: Update Regularly ☐ Add holiday hours (Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year) ☐ Upload new product photos monthly ☐ Update services as you add them (delivery, online ordering) ☐ Post weekly (minimum)

SUCCESS METRICS

After 30 days, you should see:

-  Increased profile views (20-50%+)
 -  More direction requests
 -  More website clicks
 -  More calls
 -  Higher ranking in local search results
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NEED HELP?

Google Business Support: support.google.com/business

Questions? Email Greg at info@geartopdesign.com

Remember: Consistency is key. Spend 15 minutes every Monday updating your profile and you'll see results!