

MANAGING YOUR FREE DIRECTORY ENTRIES

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How directories have changed. Once upon a time they were huge publications painstakingly compiled but generally little used and if you could afford one you probably kept it for years so that it was probably out of date when you needed it.

Today directories have found their true environment – the internet, where they can be up to date and are easily searchable all the time - and so perform a really valuable role. In addition, the older directory format has developed into a more current presentation often with news and other information in addition to the simple company name and address. Even free entries usually have room for a product/services description or company profile. Meanwhile elsewhere, many journal and news publishers have taken on a directory role as an aid to their audience and a way to keep people on their site for longer. Directories no longer work as doorsteps – today they can get you on page 1 of Google.

How then can an SME or micro-business use this important channel of information flow?

Fortunately, by their nature, directories need to be comprehensive in their coverage and so they are keen to include all relevant companies – consequently they will usually invite simple registration for free. This allows a very limited entry in the directory – but usually enough to benefit from their greater online presence, especially for niche companies where a yell.com or Applegate entry may be picked up by your search engine ahead of your own website.

Free entries are generally available but it may be difficult to locate the registration page – after all they would probably rather you click on the “advertise” page. Once you have found your free entry registration, it is important to fill it in completely with all your relevant contact information and to have a pre-prepared profile of around 70 words which includes all your main keywords.

Which directories should you register with? This should be relatively simple – just search your main keywords on your search engine and find which directories come up.

You can then pick the most relevant directories and place your pre-prepared profile for free on as many directories as you can. Naturally, it makes sense to focus on ones that are likely to be most useful, e.g. major national sites, national sites with local coverage (if appropriate to your business), niche sites, i.e. on your particular area of business.

Most sites will offer a pre-prepared list of product/service categories to make a user search more efficient – do ensure that you register for all appropriate groups.

Maintenance – do keep your information up to date – it is worth checking your entries at 12 month intervals to ensure that they are still up to date and correct. Sometimes, for example, directories change their layout or structure and you may find that your entry listing has changed its location, search criteria etc. in the process – or even lost some data.

Typically, directory sites will require you to create an account with username and password so that you can manage your entry. Do take a little time to properly organize this information so that you can gain access to your account for updates and editing.

For further information see our [Top Tips for Directory Management \(free entries\)](#).