

27. d Google barriers to entry and expansion for general search and search and advertising services

Google verification shared space

Yesterday I tried to verify my sports massage business. I have been running this business for 19 years. I have previously had my business verified with google. In March last year, I moved my business to a shared space for a number of reasons:

- Renting a room for just my business the overheads were becoming too high (a shared space really cuts down the costs)
- I am getting older and the number of massages I do is becoming a factor.

Since March 2024 I have tried to verify my business with google in a number of times. I did a couple of videos which seemed to work for a couple of weeks, then I would lose verification again. It's become really frustrating. Today I had two verification calls with the customer support team. Bearing in mind I have filled out the support form several times to get to this stage. I have provided documentation - rental contracts, photographs of the exterior of the building, directional signage photographs etc.

The first phone call I had told me I had to put up a sign on the door. I couldn't just use my leaflet as that wasn't good enough it had to be in a frame. So at lunch time I went out and purchased a frame, put my leaflet in it and made a second call. The second call resulted in refused verification because the signage wasn't permanent. Google does not verify business that operate from shared spaces. Verification of the business from google is important, as it allows my business to be listed and rank in googles results.

My sports massage business hardly appears at all in the search results now and it is affecting my business and my earnings. There seems to be no way of verifying my business with google because I operate from a shared space. And I believe this is discriminating against small businesses.

I also run a counselling business in the other half of the week, this too is run from a shared space which I can rent by the session. I fear I will not be able to get this business verified either, because of googles verification rules around shared spaces.

I don't know what to do next. I run 2 legitimate businesses neither of which google will verify. I am saddened and concerned that google is discriminating against small businesses and the self employed, because we can't afford the overhead of renting a space full time.