‘Google Guarantee’ local listings appearing in Google Home results

This article has been corrected. Yesterday we discussed the appearance of local Google Guaranteed listings in voice search results from Google Home. We mistakenly inferred these were undisclosed ads because the Google Guarantee has historically been an integral component of Local Services ads: “You automatically apply for the Google guarantee when you sign up for Local Services ads.”

A Google spokesperson clarified earlier today that local ranking in Google Home voice search results is based solely on organic relevancy — not paid advertising. Google Guaranteed local listings that appear may be from the database of Local Services advertisers, but there are no ad placements in voice search results on Google Home.

Google Guarantee badge is technically distinct from Local Services ads. Google Guaranteed is a consumer protection program and not something that can be obtained simply by being a paid advertiser. The following is a statement provided by Google about the matter:

> *The ranking of local providers listed on the Assistant is based on relevancy and not monetized. Any local provider can become eligible to show up in those results by going through our verification process and earning the Google Guarantee badge — which is completely free. This experience is only available in the United States.”*

Currently, if users search for “plumber,” for example, Google Home will take consumers through a short interaction to confirm their location (and perhaps the nature of the job) and

then offer up a list of results. It then offers to call the results in order. It also sends the list to a user’s email address.

Local Services by Google results sent via email.

Why you should care. Currently Local Services Ads operate on the desktop and in mobile results. Google Guaranteed listings in Google Home results are entirely organic at this point, as mentioned. One can imagine how Local Services advertisers might ultimately make their way into Google Home results. But that’s not happening today.

In addition to serving relevant local results, Google may be

watching the impact of the Google Guarantee badge on CTRs and call-through rates. That may lead to a determination about whether and how to monetize local search on Google Home. But for the time being there are no ads on Google Home. Accordingly, as we incorrectly implied yesterday, Google has not run afoul of the FTC’s ad disclosure requirements.

About The Author

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