BRANDIFY

Changes in Local Search Due to COVID-19

Presented by

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"My God, those meetings really could all have been e-mails."

Important Changes
to Local Search Platforms

Google My Business Updates

1   Reviews and responses disabled

2   Questions and answers disabled and hidden

3   Temporary closures marked preemptively (in some cases)

4   Temporary closure flag launched in GMB dashboard 3/25

5   Google recommends using descriptions, posts to communicate special circumstances; new COVID-19 post type 3/24

6   Bug causing special hours not to display in Maps

7   UGC photos not appearing in Listings

8   *Not* recommended to add keywords to business name

Google

Updates

New Temporarily Closed Flag Launched 3/25
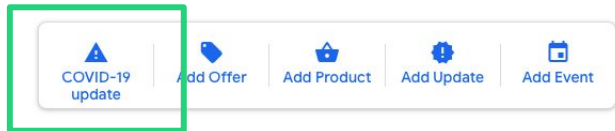
New COVID-19 Post Type Launched 3/24

Keep your customers updated by sharing what's new

Reach beyond just your followers - give everyone searching for your business a reason to come in by posting updates and offers directly to your local listing on Google

Create your first post

COVID-19 update | Offer | Product

Changes to your business?
Let customers know about any changes to your business due to COVID-19

Update your status

Add a button (optional)

None

Preview | Publish

Create post

COVID-19 update | Offer | Product

None

Book

Order online

Buy

Learn more

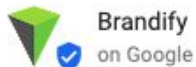Sign up

Call now

Preview | Publish

Google

Updates

New COVID-19 Post Type Launched 3/24

Google's Advice for Businesses

- **Change your business hours**

- **Manage your information** -- use business description to communicate special circumstances

- **Create a post** -- note new post type for COVID-19

- **Temporary closures**

  1. Google relying on "authoritative sources" to mark businesses closed

  2. Sources may include "national, state/provincial and local governments, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and businesses"

  3. Any businesses mistakenly can reopen in GMB dashboard; Google may also remove in future based on authoritative sources

Google My Business Help

Describe your issue

Businesses affected by COVID-19: Guidance on updating info and temporary closures

If your business is affected by COVID-19, update your Google My Business profile to provide the most accurate information to your customers. For example, change your hours of operation if you're closing early, or add more details to your description. You can also update if your restaurant moves to takeout or delivery only. The updates will show on your Business Profile on Google Search and Maps.

Important: We may review your changes for quality before publishing them, so the changes may not be immediately available on Google Search and Maps. Learn more about limited Google My Business functionality due to COVID-19.

Google

Updates

Changes in Google Support

- Google is operating (across the board) with reduced staff
- This means support is limited already
- Google has also implemented increased moderation, both manual and automated
- They will prioritize health-related and critical information
- Edits are slow -- some may take several days
- Reviews, review responses, and Q&A were disabled to optimize bandwidth for critical needs, and to remove sources of disinformation

Search Engine Land | SEO | SEM | MOBILE | LOCAL | RETAIL | GOOGLE | BING | SOCIAL | MORE | EVENTS

Google My Business not functioning as expected under the strain of coronavirus

Many updates are taking considerably longer than normal.

Greg Sterling on March 23, 2020 at 4:29 pm
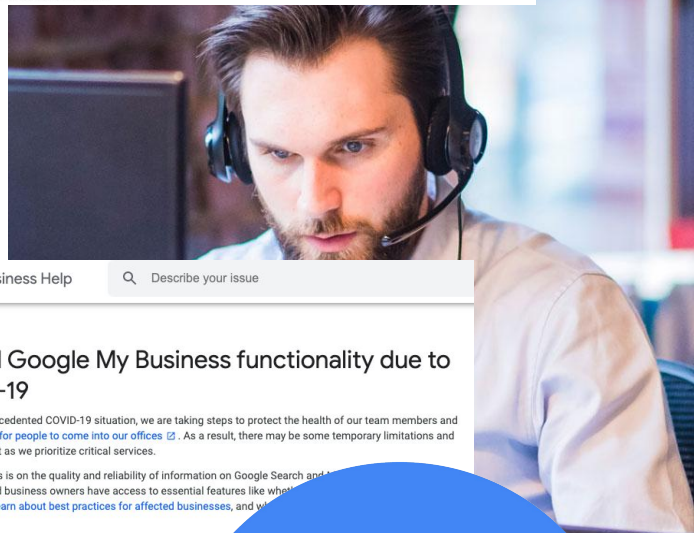
Google My Business Help   🔍 Describe your issue

Limited Google My Business functionality due to COVID-19

During the unprecedented COVID-19 situation, we are taking steps to protect the health of our team members and reduce the need for people to come into our offices ⧉ . As a result, there may be some temporary limitations and delays in support as we prioritize critical services.

Our current focus is on the quality and reliability of information on Google Search and to ensure users and business owners have access to essential features like whether special hours. Learn about best practices for affected businesses, and when informed.

Google

Updates

But There's Good News

- All Google support teams are functioning and working hard
- Google is staying in close contact with partners
- Edits are going through
- Teams are responding as quickly as they can to urgent needs
- Google is conducting extensive crisis-mode planning (all the way to the CEO) and rolling out several new features to support the response

Google

Updates

Yelp's New Features and SMB Assistance

1. New temporary closure flag can be enabled in dashboard or via API; must have a reopen date

2. Ad fee waivers for SMBs (restaurants, nightlife)

3. Contact-free delivery in partnership with GrubHub

4. Highlighting special circumstances, like open for pickup/delivery only

5. Highlighting virtual services

6. Banner alert for profiles

7. New, stricter moderation of reviews mentioning COVID-19 or blaming businesses for reduced services due to COVID-19

8. Donate buttons connecting to GoFundMe to help SMBs
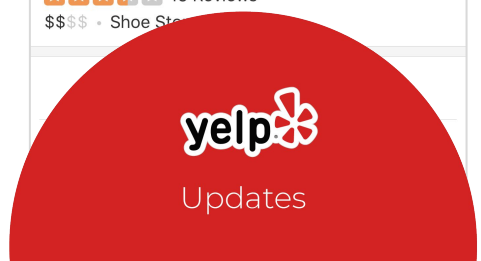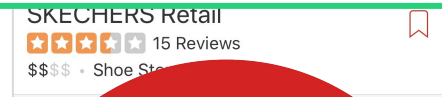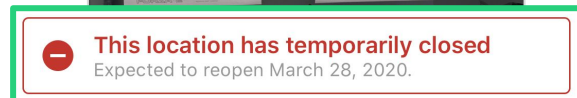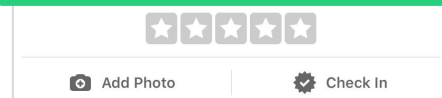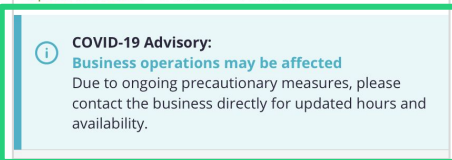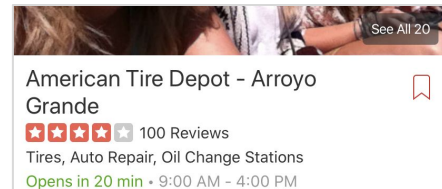
Facebook Offers Flexible Communication Tools

1   Pinned posts can let customers know about special circumstances like pickup/delivery only

2   You can craft friendlier, more explanatory messaging

3   Change standard hours if needed

4   For temporary closure, use "No hours available"

5   Update Instagram as needed and consider using Messenger to communicate directly with customers

Posts

Cracker Barrel Old Country Store
March 20 at 3:30 PM · 🌐

You can still get homestyle cooking via carry-out, and now through curbside and delivery at www.CrackerBarrelToGo.com. So even though dining rooms might be closed in some states to keep our communities safe, you can still enjoy comfort food from the comforts of home. Please visit our website to check your local store hours and to place an order. #OpenforDelivery

🔊

👍❤️ 5.2K   669 Comments   2.6K Shares
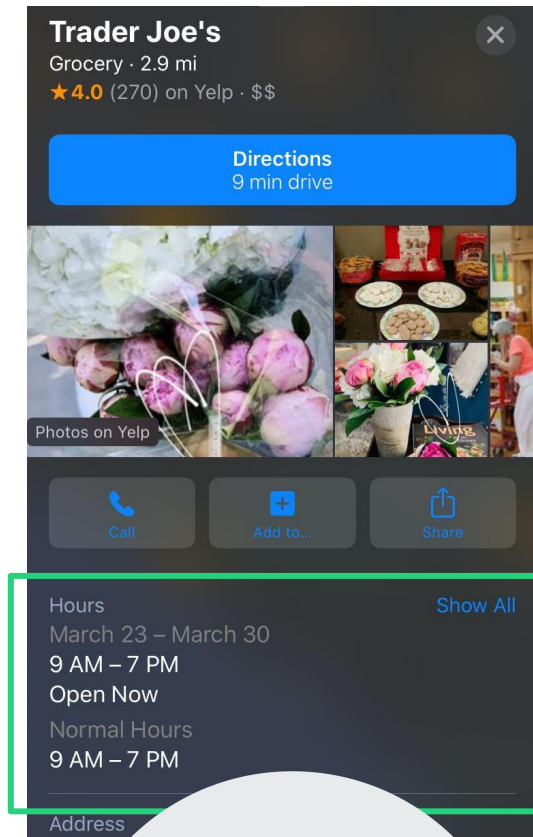
👍 Like   💬 Com...   ↗ Share

facebook

Updates

Apple Maps Has Several Updates

1 Use special hours to indicate reduced hours of operation

2 New temporary closure flag, can be suggested by users or triggered in feeds from partners; must have a reopen date

3 Use amenities to indicate availability of services like pickup and delivery

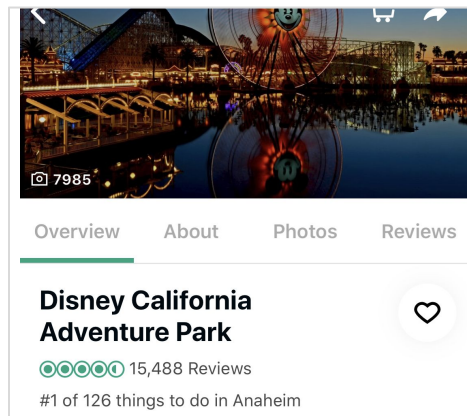**4** New category for testing sites: health.diagnosticservices.laboratorytesting.virologicaltests

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Trader Joe's
Grocery · 2.9 mi
★ **4.0** (270) on Yelp · $$

Directions
9 min drive

Photos on Yelp

Call | Add to... | Share

Hours   Show All
March 23 – March 30
9 AM – 7 PM
Open Now
Normal Hours
9 AM – 7 PM
_____
Address

Apple Maps

Updates

TripAdvisor Supporting Bulk and Manual Changes

1 New temporary closure flag can be enabled by request

2 Will be showcasing, in search, availability of pickup and delivery over other services like reservations

3 Can set special hours, end date for closures, and "delivery and pickup only" in dashboard (but not in bulk)

4 Ad fees will be waived in closed areas; all Premium fees waived

7985

Overview   About   Photos   Reviews

Disney California Adventure Park

15,488 Reviews

#1 of 126 things to do in Anaheim

Message from Tripadvisor:

This business is temporarily closed until 03/31/2020

Admission Tickets

Skip the Line: Disneyland Resort Tickets   from **$234.99**

Visiting Disneyland® Resort is a breeze when you book your tickets in advance. Cruise past the ticket lines and go strai...

More Info

Tripadvisor

Updates

Bing Supports Closures and Updated Hours

1 New temporary closure flag can be manually updated in Bing Places dashboard; must provide reopen date

2 Supports special hours; you can indicate reduced hours via Bing Places dashboard or API

3 Bing search has announced they are now indexing the new Special Announcement Schema type

SKECHERS Retail

★★★★ Yelp (26) · 26.0 mi

Shoe Store

OVERVIEW   PHOTOS   REVIEWS   ABOUT

CALL   DIRECTIONS   WEBSITE

632 Spectrum Center Dr #852, Irvine, CA 92618

Open · Closes 9 PM
(Hours & services may vary)

Wednesday	10 AM - 9 PM
Thursday	10 AM - 9 PM
Friday	10 AM - 10 PM
Saturday	10 AM - 10 PM
Sunday	10 AM - 9 PM
Monday	10 AM - 9 PM
Tuesday	11 AM - 7 PM

Due to coronavirus restrictions, business hours & services may vary for the near future. Please confirm with the business.
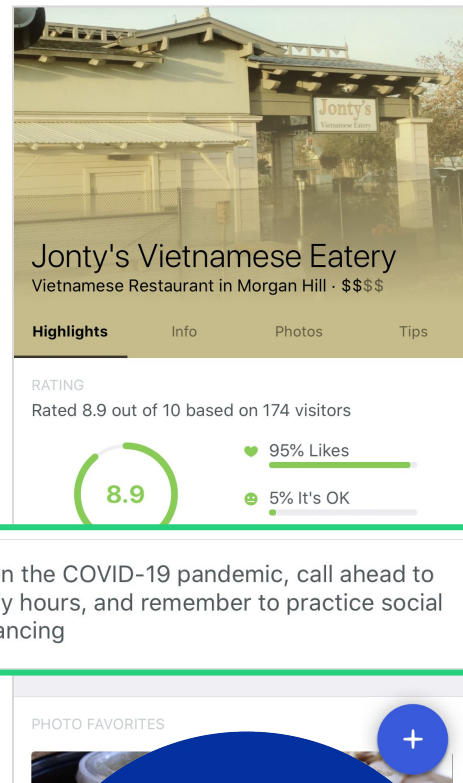
(949) 4...

Bing

Updates

Foursquare Has New Special Hours Guidelines

1 Can set special hours to override regular hours

2 Supports separate hours for drive through and other services

3 Can use description field to indicate special circumstances

4 Remember, Foursquare data goes to Uber and other platforms, so make sure basic information is accurate

Jonty's Vietnamese Eatery
Vietnamese Restaurant in Morgan Hill · $$$$

Highlights   Info   Photos   Tips

RATING
Rated 8.9 out of 10 based on 174 visitors

8.9   ♥ 95% Likes
       ☺ 5% It's OK

🕐 Given the COVID-19 pandemic, call ahead to verify hours, and remember to practice social distancing

PHOTO FAVORITES

FOURSQUARE
Updates

Neustar Localeze Suggests Use of Existing Fields

1 Can use tagline and keywords fields to communicate special circumstances like "Pickup and delivery only," "Open by appointment only," or "Temporarily closed"

2 Keep in mind that updates take some time to circulate, so reserve this option for changes that will remain in place for a few weeks

neustar. // Localeze.

Updates

Schema.org Rushes Update for COVID-19

1 Released v7.0 on March 16

2 SpecialAnnouncement is a new text field for communicating any special circumstances, can include URLs for more info as well as a date range

3 New location type for testing centers

4 New support for virtual events including:

- Events moving from offline to virtual
- Indication of events being all offline, partly online and partly offline, or all online

schema.org

Updates

Shifting Priorities
and Refocused Resources

Less Important Right Now

- Review moderation and response on Google
  - Soon and for the foreseeable future, no new Google reviews will be published
  - Responses you might compose now will not be published and may not be relevant later
- Questions and answers on Google
  - These are hidden completely, so no need to monitor
- Promotion of offerings not related (directly or indirectly) to COVID-19 and essential business operations

Still Important

- Review moderation and response on Yelp, Facebook, TripAdvisor

- Basic listing updates
    - Contact info and hours must be fully up to date everywhere
    - Even map pin placement is more important than ever
    - Special hours to communicate reduced availability

- Additional info wherever possible
    - Descriptions
    - Posts
    - Amenities
    - Services

More Important Right Now

- Very clear communication of changes to operations

- Syndication of these updates in all places consumers look for info:
    - Your corporate website
    - Your local pages
    - Your blog
    - Your social profiles
    - Your local profiles
    - Your in-store and external signage
    - Your advertising and marketing
    - Any other external sources (media, government, community groups)

Also More Important

- Pay close attention to the news in local -- things are changing rapidly

- Plan with flexibility

- Adjust your messaging to align with the times

- Continually reassess your planning to ensure it's still relevant

- Think hard about alternate offerings:
  - Pickup and delivery
  - Curbside pickup
  - Contact-free services
  - Virtual services

Questions You Should Be Asking

Questions You Should Be Asking

- How many of my ordinary services can be offered virtually?

'Classroom to Cloud': What happened when coronavirus forced my kid's school to go online

BY NICOLE TANNER on March 11, 2020 at 6:43 pm
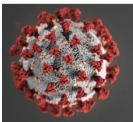
Ongoing coverage of the novel coronavirus, and its impact on Seattle and the technology industry. See all special coverage.

WE HAVE NO IDEA WHEN WE WILL OPEN

DUE TO COVID-19, VYB'S OPENING HAS BEEN POSTPONED TO ____?

FOR NOW, JOIN US FOR LIVE STREAM & VIRTUAL CLASSES

GOOD VYBS

POWERFUL YOGA

LOUD BEATS

Shred415 (Highlands) added an event.
14 hrs

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP: MENTAL HEALTH MONDAY

MON, MAR 30 AT 8 PM EDT
Mental Health Monday — LIVE Discussion with b.mindful Louisville

★ Interested

Wellness

❤ 1

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ↪ Share

Write a comment...

Questions You Should Be Asking

- How can I pivot toward contact-free options?
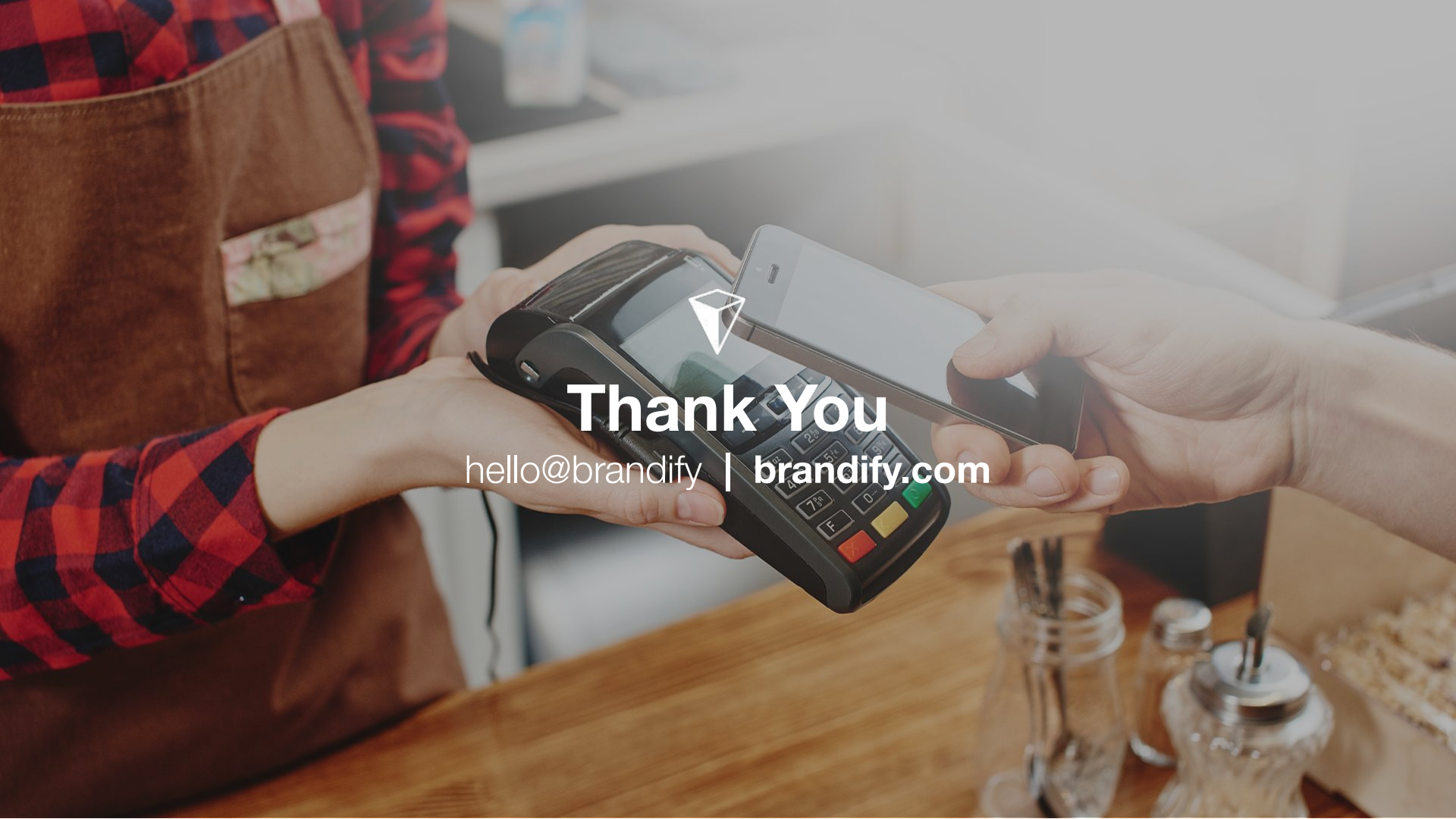
Questions You Should Be Asking

- How can I showcase contactless payment options?
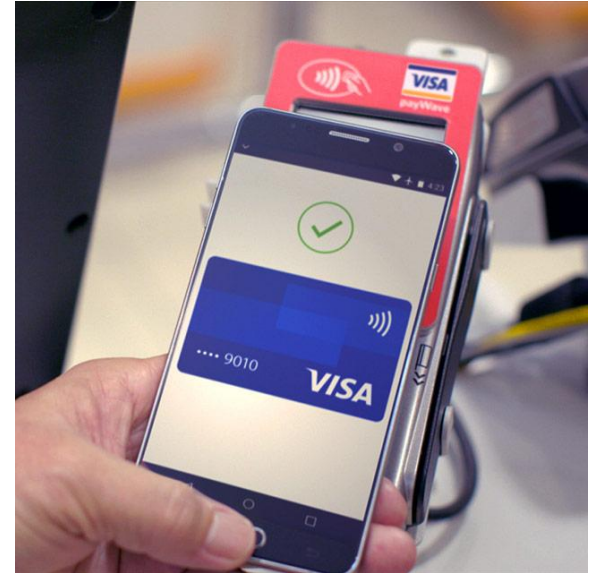
BRANDIFY

We're here to answer your questions.

Thank You

hello@brandify | **brandify.com**