



REPORT

The Impact of COVID-19 on Google My Business Listings

One question our clients keep asking us is this:

“How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the performance of my Google My Business (GMB) listing?”

This report answers that question by analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on GMB listings across several industries as the pandemic began to escalate across the United States. Our analysis examines metrics ranging from GMB views to clicks for driving directions.

Our key finding: COVID-19 caused businesses to experience a sharp drop in GMB performance throughout March. But GMB performance also appears to have bottomed out. The data suggests that GMB performance will improve from here on out.

Introduction

Because a GMB listing acts as a digital front door to a brick-and-mortar business, performance metrics on GMB sites provide a useful predictor of consumer purchase behavior.

As a Premium Google partner, we manage business data for tens of thousands of GMB listings. For this study we examined more than 81,000 GMB listings across multiple industries and U.S. regions to look at metrics such as GMB impressions and actions (clicks for driving directions, clicks to a website, and clicks to call a business). Following are our findings.



81,000

GMB listings analyzed across multiple industries in the U.S.

Local Automotive

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Car Dealership

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Hours: [Open](#) • [Closes 7PM](#) ▾

Click interactions analyzed:



Clicks for driving directions



Clicks to a website



Clicks to call a business



GMB Impressions

1 GMB impressions may have bottomed out

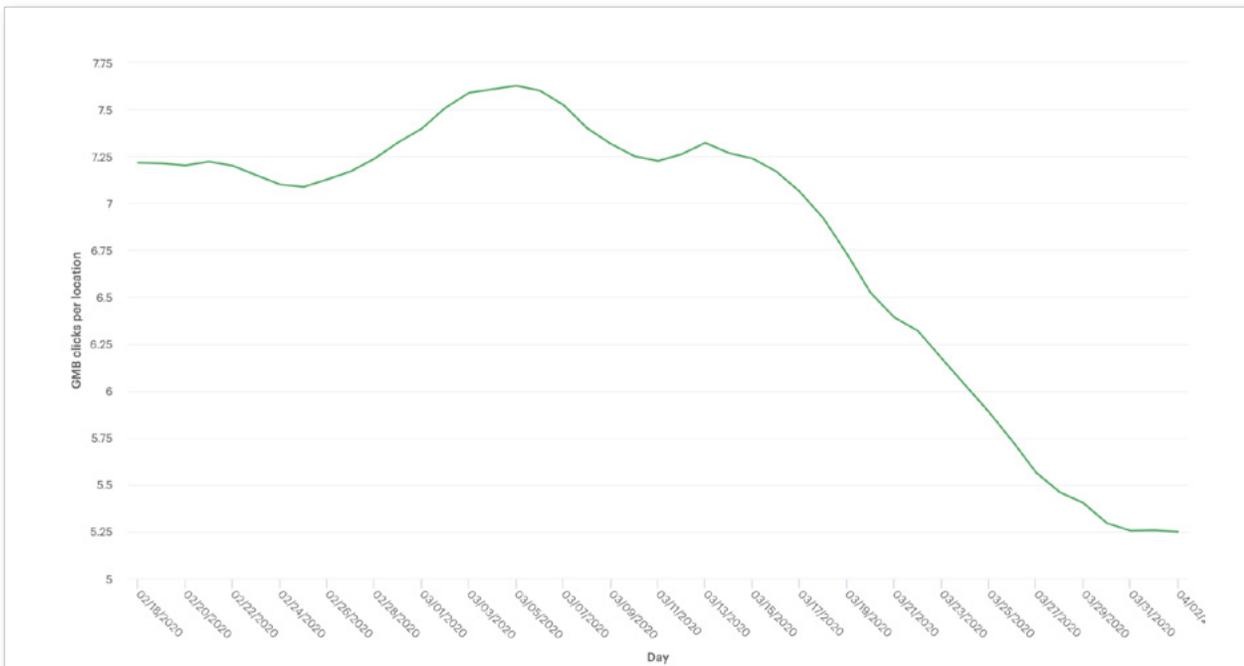
Across every industry and region, GMB listing views climbed steadily until about March 5. But as the pandemic began to take hold, views began to drop and continued to drop until they were 59% lower than where they were on March 5th, which makes sense as people began to shelter in place and curtail their visits to brick-and-mortar stores.

Every industry and region got rocked, especially restaurants. But at the end of March, we noticed what appears to be a flattening out of the data. There is a ray of hope that businesses have already hit a valley, and their customers might be more willing to visit the merchants that do remain open at this time in order to support them once the crisis passes.

-59%

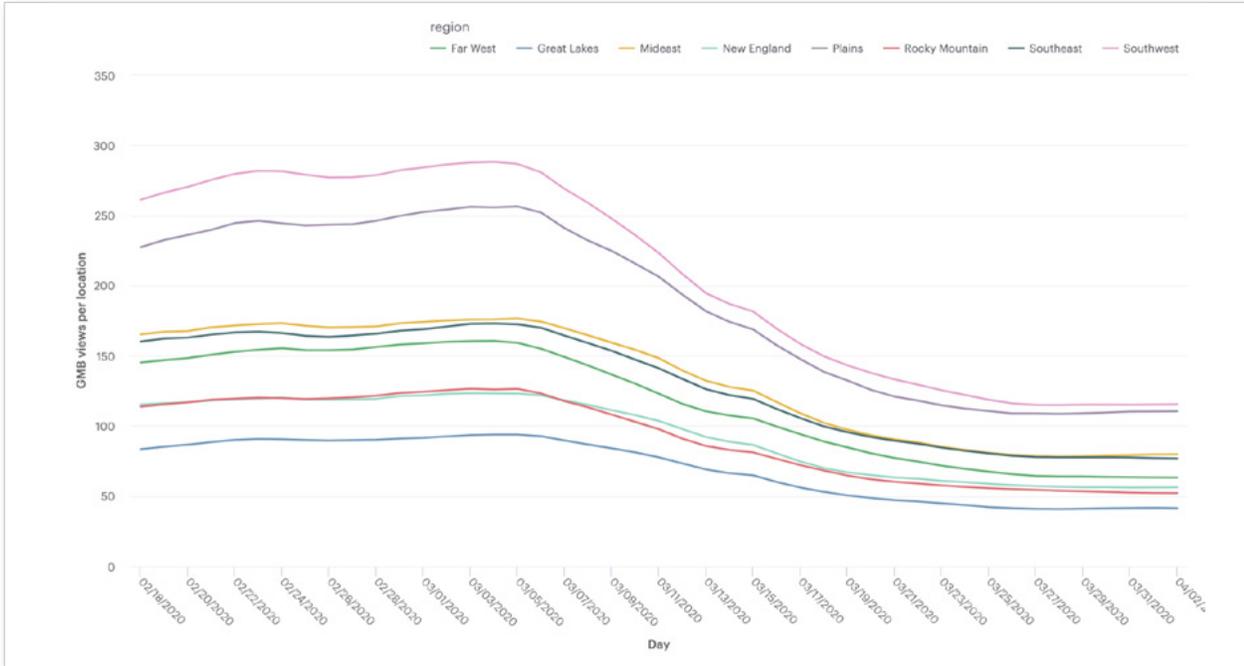
Google My Business impressions are down on average 59% across all verticals.

GMB views per location

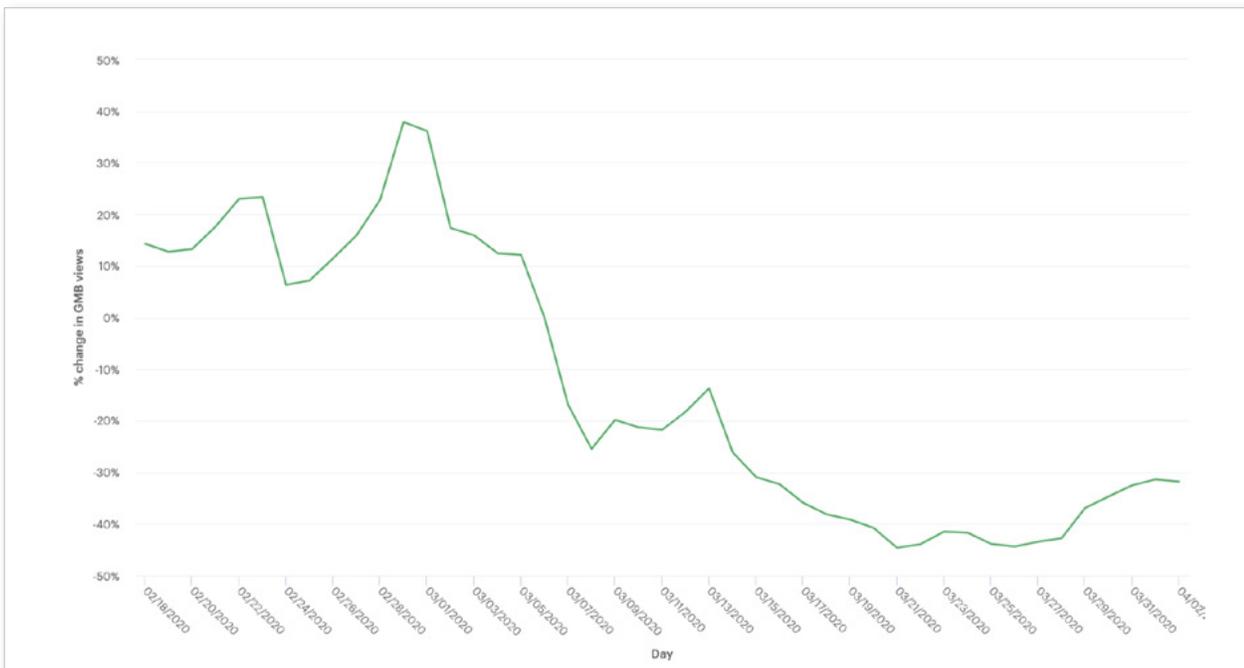


Impression drops have **hit all regions** of the U.S.

GMB views by location



Percentage decrease in GMB views from week to week



2 GMB clicks are down overall – but clicks-to-call not as much

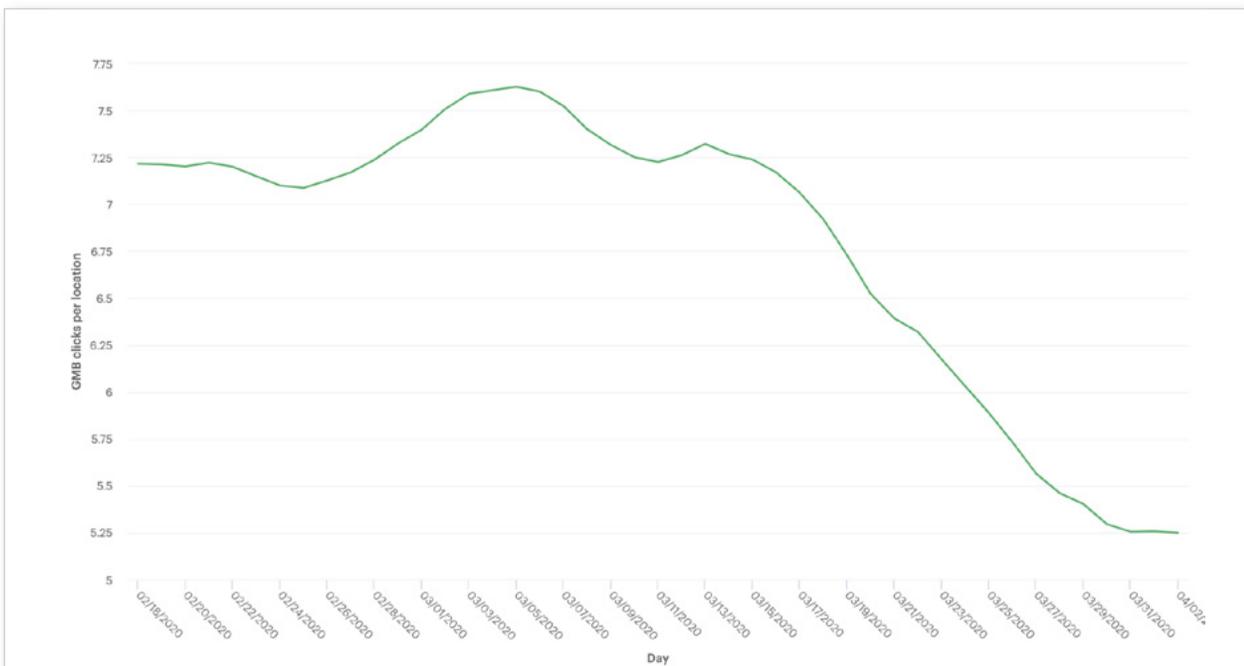
Clicks to action on GMB sites – such as clicks to driving directions, clicks to websites, and clicks to call a business – are down by 37% overall. The steep drop in clicks to driving directions most certainly results from people responding to state-by-state shelter-in-place mandates. But note that those clicks are bottoming out, probably as people have learned more about which businesses are essential (and remain open) and which are not (and are closed). But even though clicks are down overall, clicks to phone have not been hit nearly as dramatically.

In fact, as [Dialogtech reports](#), for some industries such as financial services, call volume has increased. This data suggests that people are still interested in your business even if they are not visiting you. As they shelter in place, they might be calling rather than driving, or it's possible they want to visit and are calling to verify your hours during COVID-19.

-37%

Total clicks are down by 37%

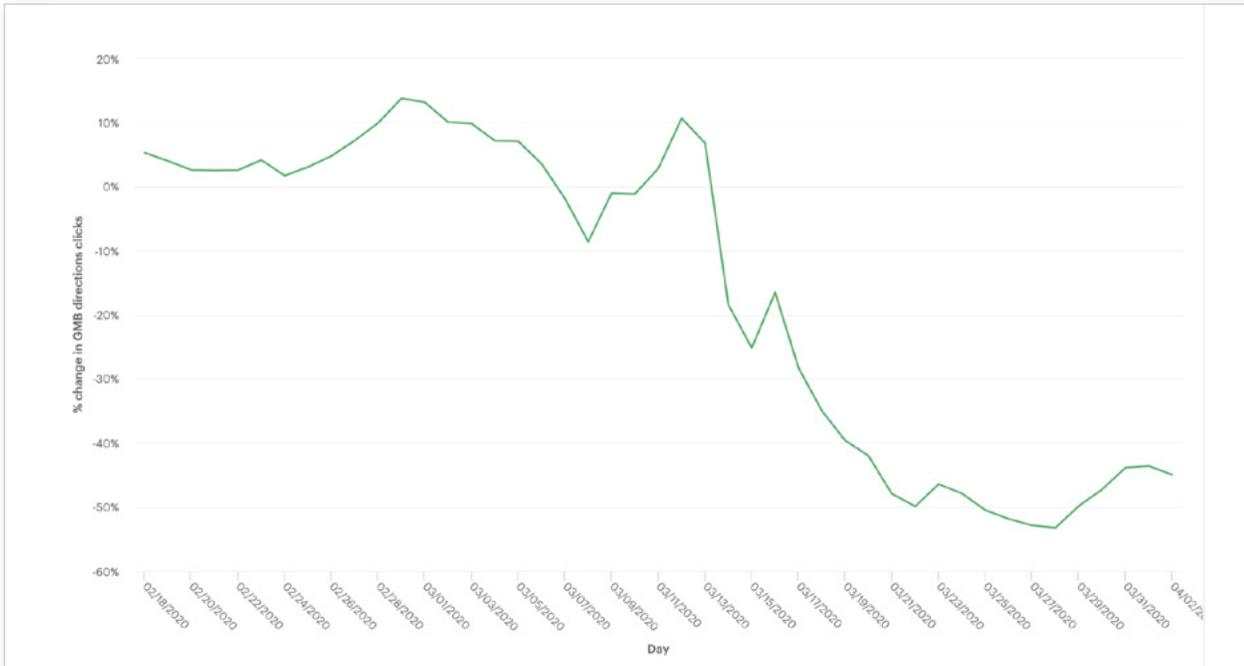
GMB clicks per location



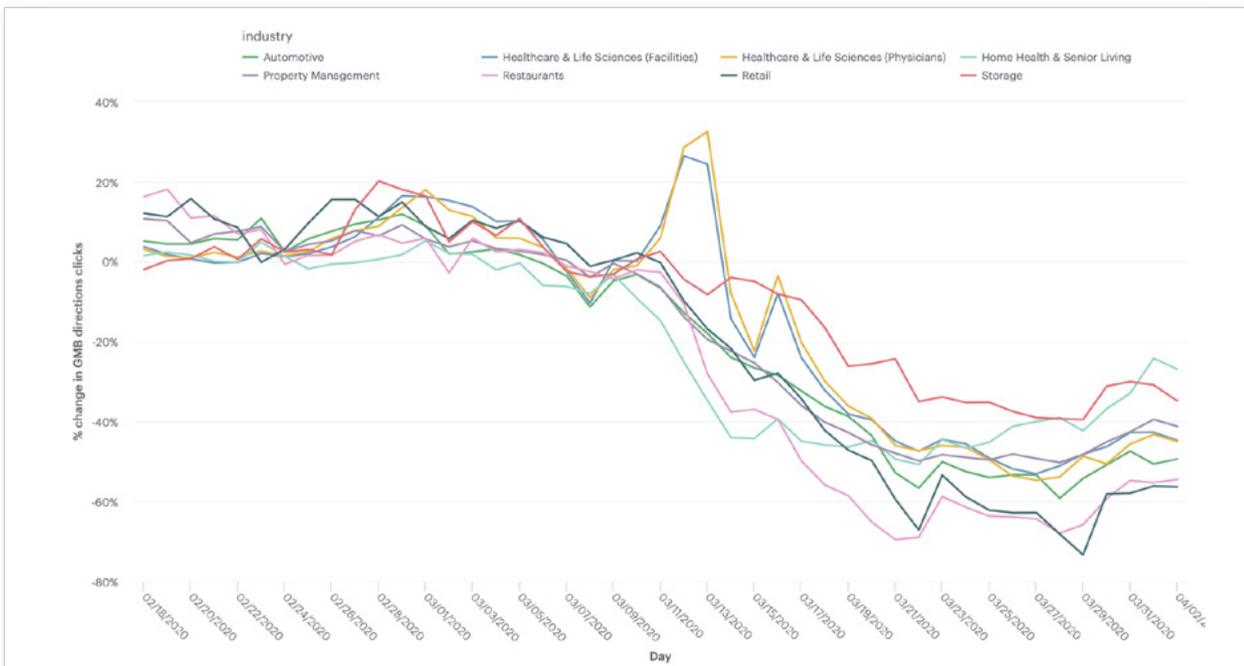


GMB driving direction clicks are **down 60%** across all verticals.

Percentage change in GMB directions clicks



Comparison of drop in GMB directions clicks across industries



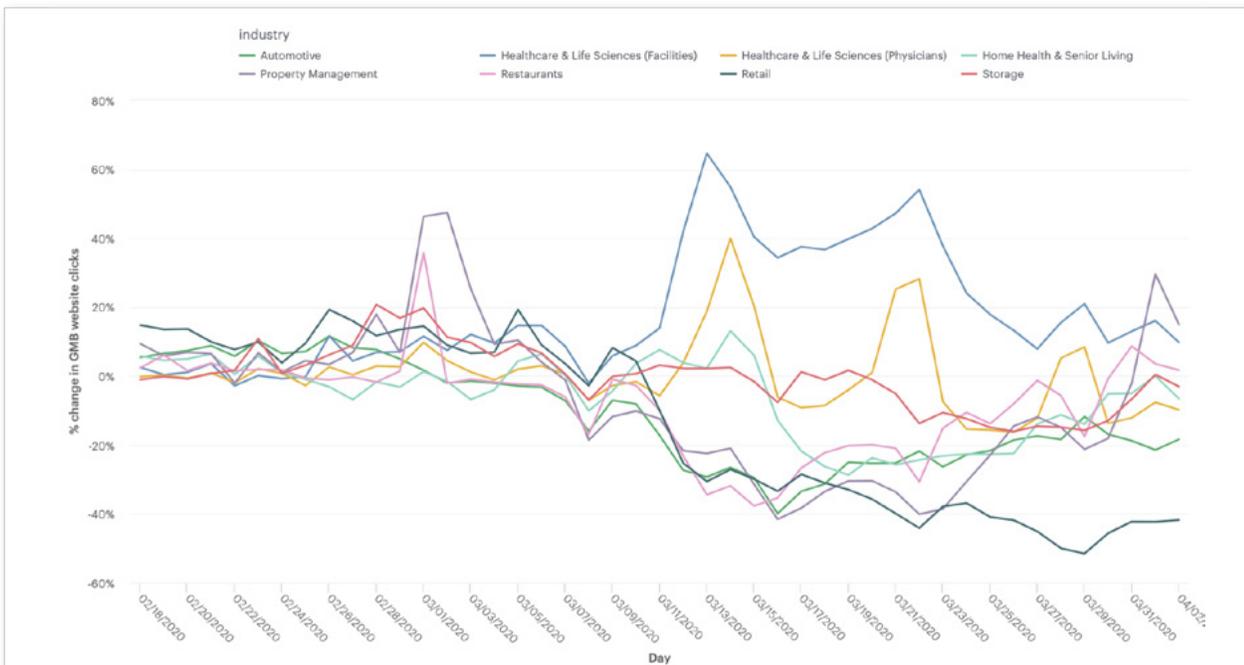


GMB website clicks are **down 31%** across all verticals.

Percentage change in GMB website clicks



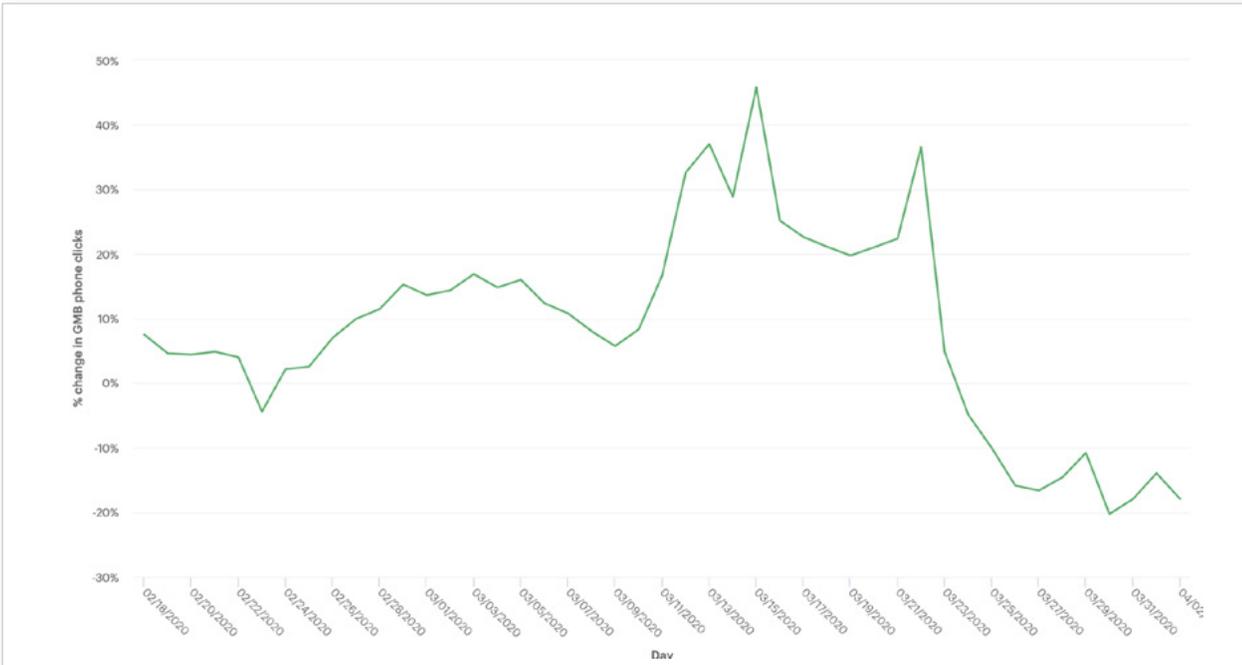
Drop in GMB website clicks comparison across industries



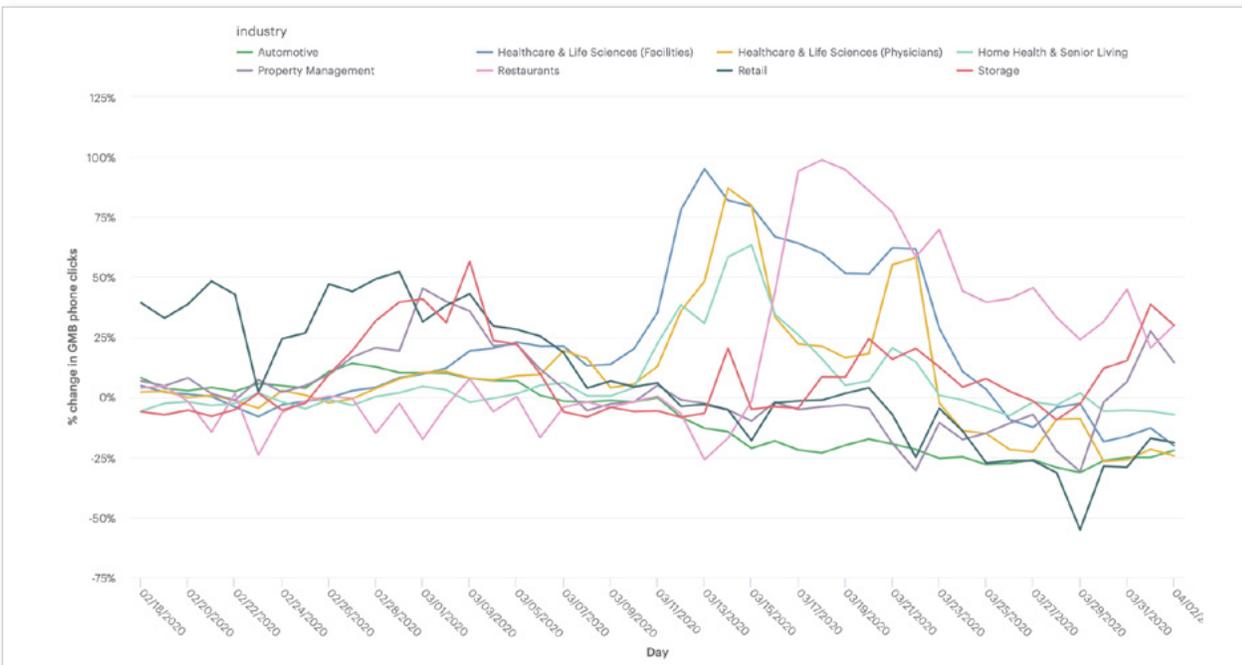


GMB clicks to call are **down 21%** across all verticals.

Percentage change in GMB phone clicks

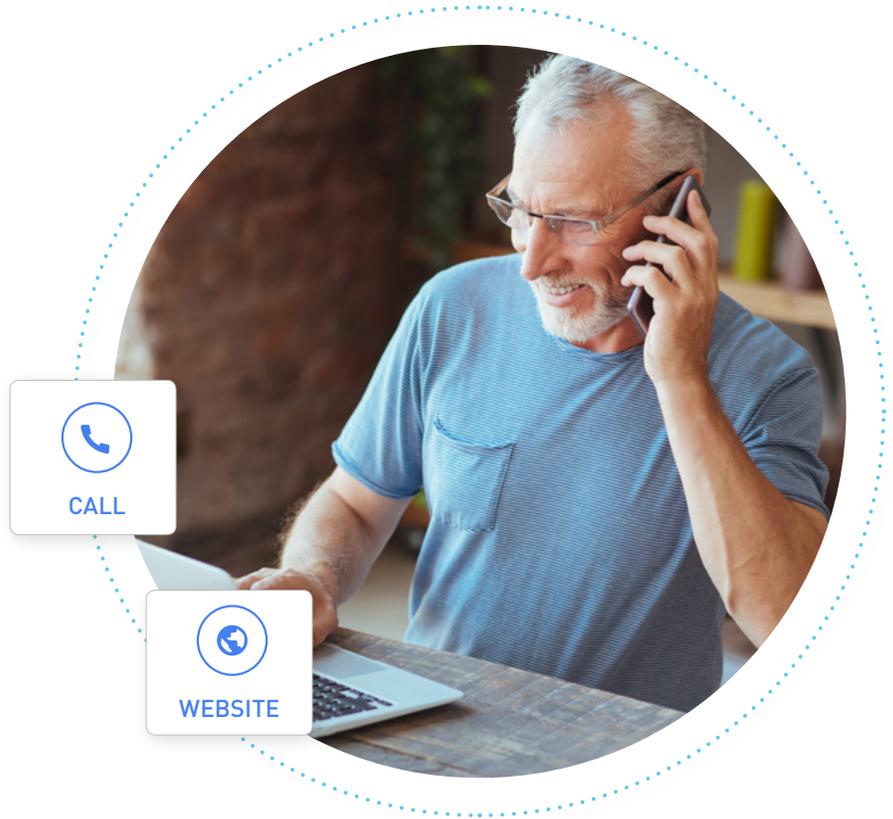


Drop in GMB phone clicks comparison across industries

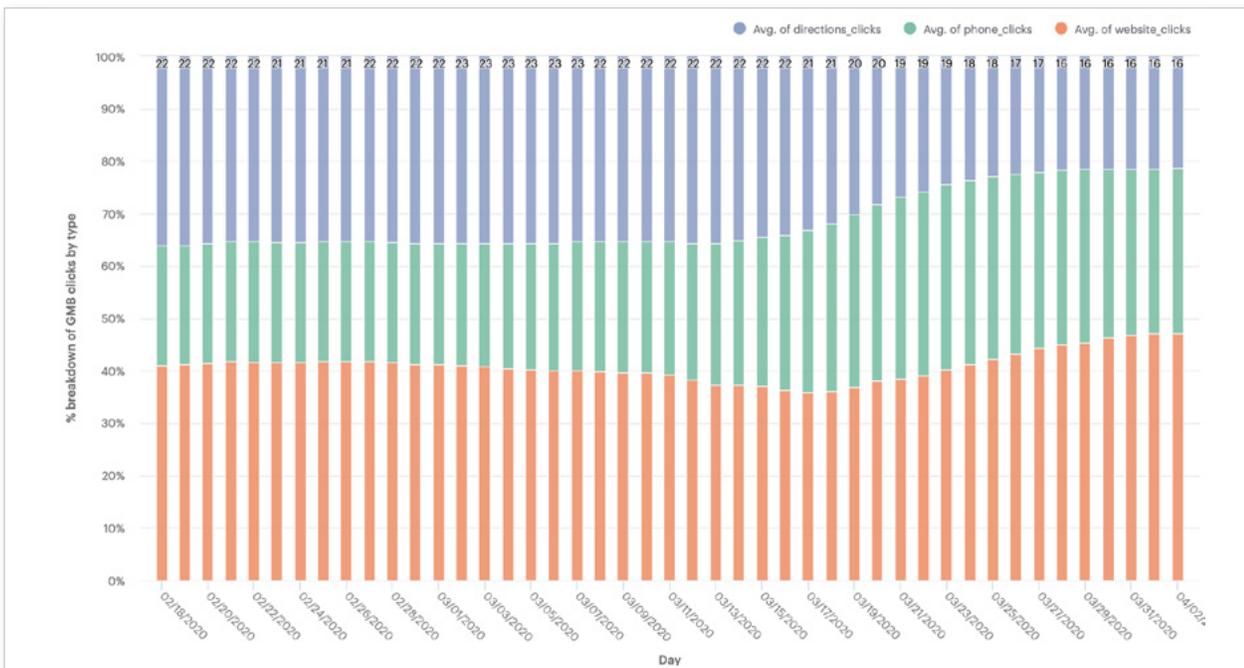


GMB Clicks are shifting

GMB clicks are shifting away from directions and towards phone calls and website visits.



GMB Clicks per location breakdown: Directions, Calls, Website

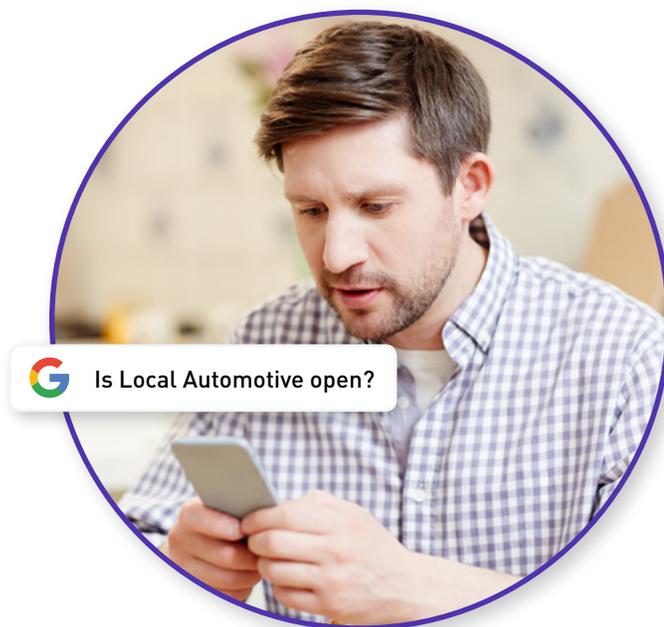


3 Good News for Automotive and Retail

Automotive and retail – two businesses absolutely rocked by the pandemic – are showing signs of a GMB performance recovery.

Even though clicks for automotive dealerships dropped steeply throughout March, they appear to have bottomed out and are even showing a modest increase. Across the United States, depending on how states apply their shelter-in-place mandates, [a number of auto dealerships have remained open](#), many for service exclusively, but others for both sales and service. Possibly the gradual bottoming out of auto dealer visits reflects the reality that spring is traditionally a peak buying season for automotive. Where permitted, shoppers are venturing out to service and even to shop for a car (virtually or in person) that will need to be picked up or delivered.

Retail experienced a free fall in March followed by an apparent bottoming out. Why? It's possible the data reflects people showing an interest in shopping again after stocking up in March and sheltering in place. In addition, as more consumers figure out how to purchase online, they might be clicking more often now to visit a retailer's website to make a purchase online; and then click on driving directions if they want to pick up a purchase in a store. In any event, GMB performance appears to have turned a corner.



Local Automotive

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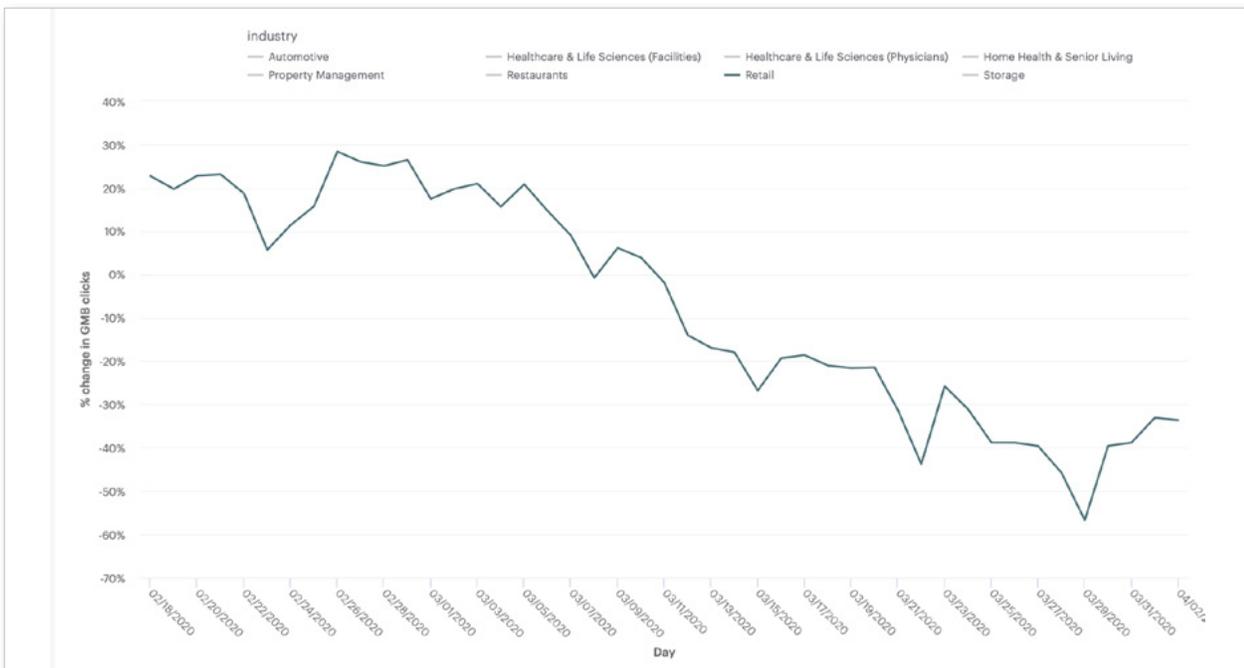
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Is GMB performance **turning a corner** for auto and retail?

Percentage change of GMB clicks for Automotive: Down 45%



Percentage change of GMB clicks for Retail: Down 46%



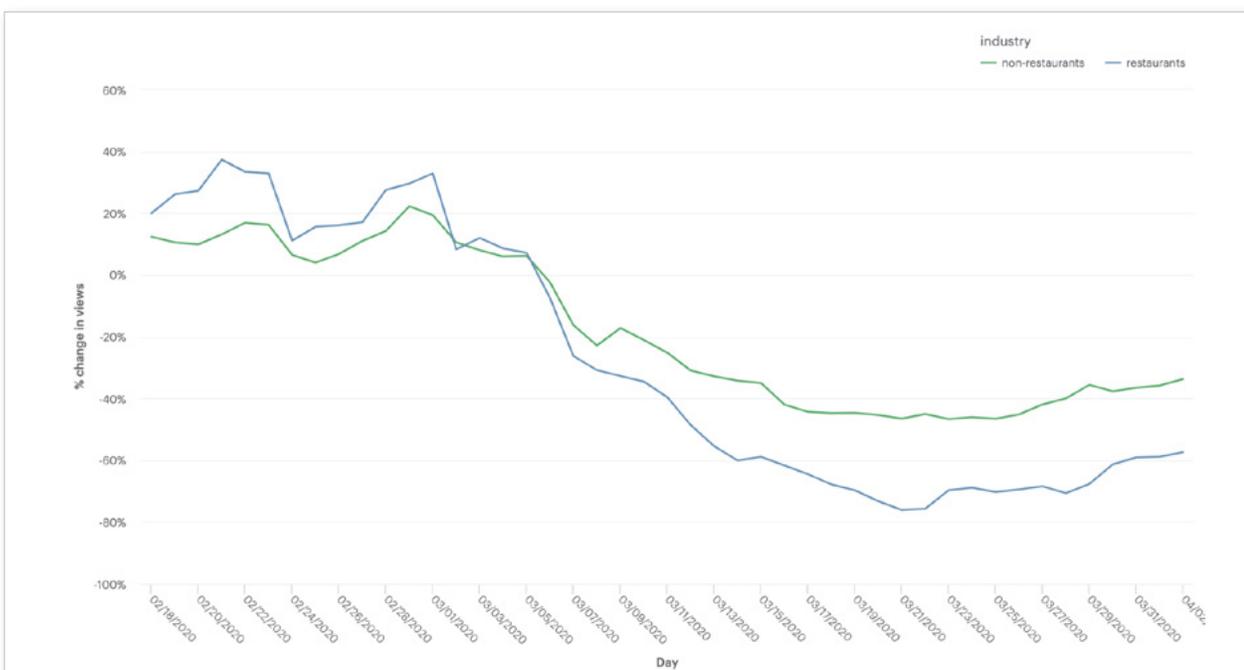
4 Restaurants are unique

Restaurants have faced unique challenges. As the pandemic spread throughout the United States and states enacted shelter-in-place mandates, people settled into their homes and began looking around for options to have food delivered or ordered for carry-out. At first, it was not always clear that it was possible to order from a restaurant, or whether restaurants were even open. As consumers sorted out their options, they began to call restaurants to place food orders. That's possibly why GMB phone clicks began to spike around the middle of March. But why the decline in clicks to call near the end of March? Conceivably consumers were adapting to ordering online or by then had found satisfactory answers to their initial questions. We also see a sharp decline in GMB impressions followed by a bottoming out at the end of March. It's possible that as restaurants have updated their GMB listings with COVID-19 related attributes (such as special hours of operation and the availability of no-contact delivery) that people are finding GMB listings to be more reliable sources of information. And, the bottoming out may reflect a broader desire to support local businesses.

-57%

Restaurant GMB impressions are down 57%

Percentage change in GMB views



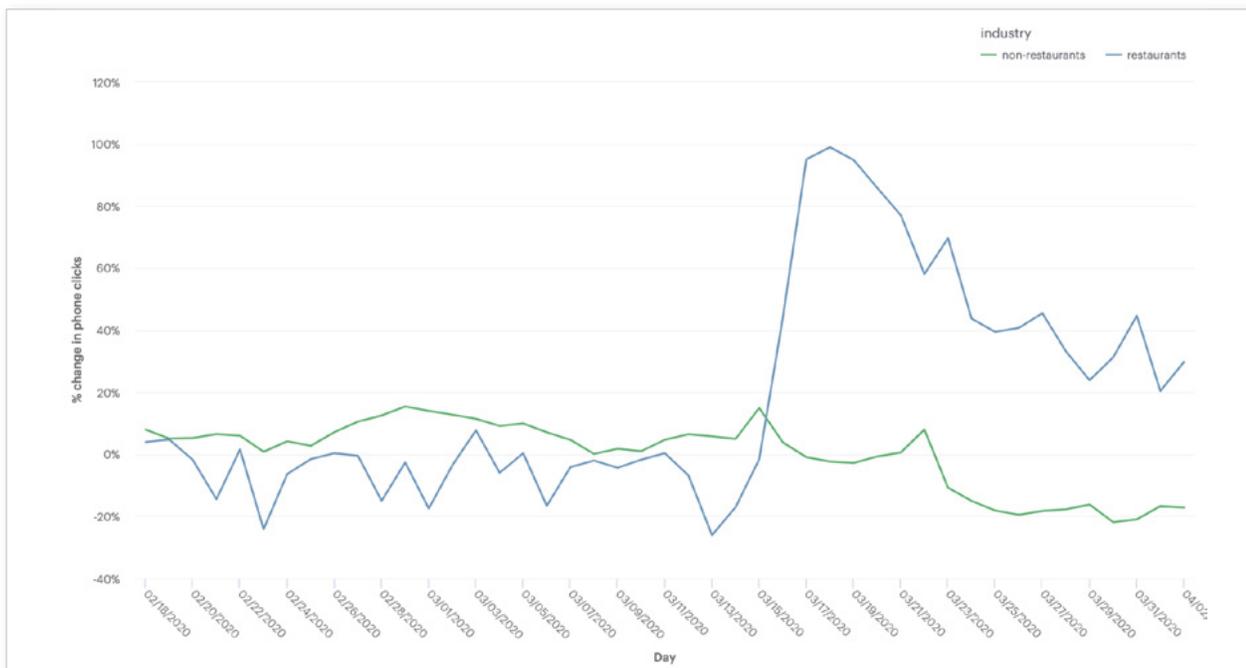


 Vietnamese restaurant near me

An uptick

Restaurant GMB phone clicks have experienced volatility but are up significantly

Percentage change in GMB phone clicks: restaurants vs. other industries



Mind Your GMBs

Regardless of your industry or region, it's crucial that you manage your GMB listings. People are still using GMB to learn about your business even during the pandemic, and Google has been shifting quickly with changes in how your data can be managed. Be ready with accurate data and informative content when those searches pick back up.

Footnote: we arrived at the % change figures by taking a single week day and comparing it to the average of four previous comparable week days. For example, if a GMB registered 100 views on Thursday, March 26, we compared that number to the average of the previous four past Thursdays (March 19, 12, and 5; and February 28). Doing so provides a more granular view that accounts for variances in days of the week.

Additional reading:

- [Google Announces New COVID-19 Attributes and API Support](#)
April 14, 2020
- [Customer Reviews Return To Google](#)
April 14, 2020
- [The Google My Business COVID-19 Post Type: What You Need to Know](#)
April 2, 2020
- [Google Lifts Chain Restrictions for Google Posts](#)
March 27, 2020
- [New Google Attributes to Help Restaurants React to COVID-19](#)
March 30, 2020

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