

Using Google and Local Search to Benefit your Business



Sheri Hart

Group Discoverability Director - VML

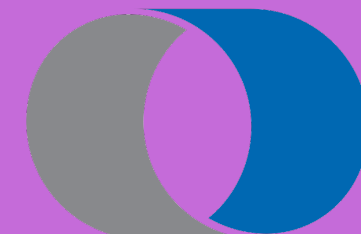


- Leader of the award-winning Performance Content Team at VML since 2018
- 20+ years of Agency experience with 12 years of content compliance focus
- 15 years of leadership experience with a passion for keeping humanity in the workplace
- Developed the Coaching and Professional Development program utilized by previous and current agencies

Client list:



JOHN DEERE



United
Rentals



Awards:



Best Use of Content Marketing

The Drum
Search Awards

International Search Team of the Year



Target Best-in-Class PDP-
Grocery

Walmart Best-in-Class PDP-
Household



1.0 The Landscape of Local Discovery



How Your Customers Find You Locally

Local search focuses on optimizing your online presence to **attract customers** within a **specific geographic area** by **increasing visibility** to **attract more foot traffic** or **generate online conversions**.

Google

hotel near me with free breakfast and wifi

0

N/A

X

Powered by **SURFER**

All

Maps

Short videos

Images

Forums

Shopping

Videos

More

Tools

Hotels | 64116, North Kansas City, MO

Tonight

Tomorrow

2


Free breakfast

Top-rated

Budget options

Free cancellation

Deals

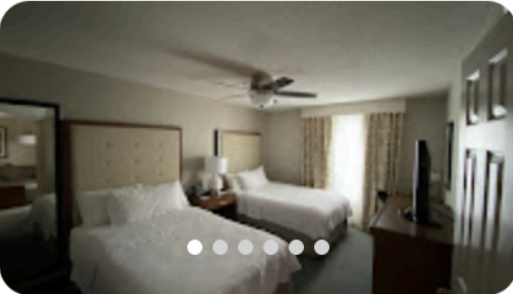


Comfort Inn & Suites Kansas City - \$79

3.9 (946) · 2-star hotel

"Amazing good room free breakfast and ..."

Free breakfast · Pool

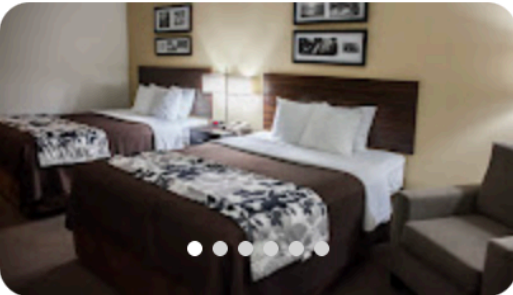


Homewood Suites by Hilton \$87

4.1 (709) · 3-star hotel

"Nice staff, clean rooms, free standard br..."

Free breakfast · Eco-certified



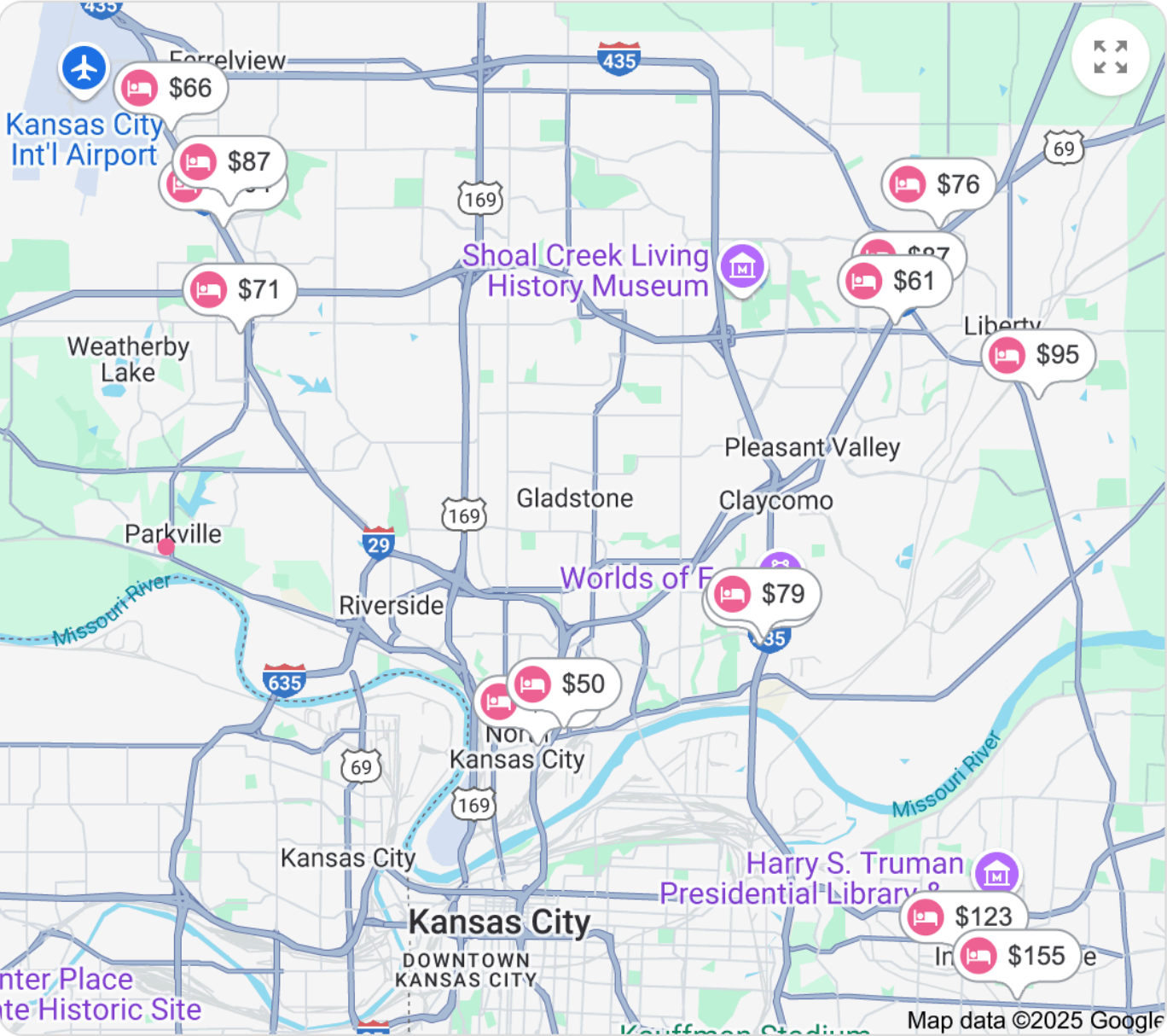
Sleep Inn & Suites Indoor \$76

3.9 (1K) · 3-star hotel

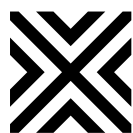
"They also have a free breakfast which w..."

Free breakfast · Pool

See more



Map data ©2025 Google

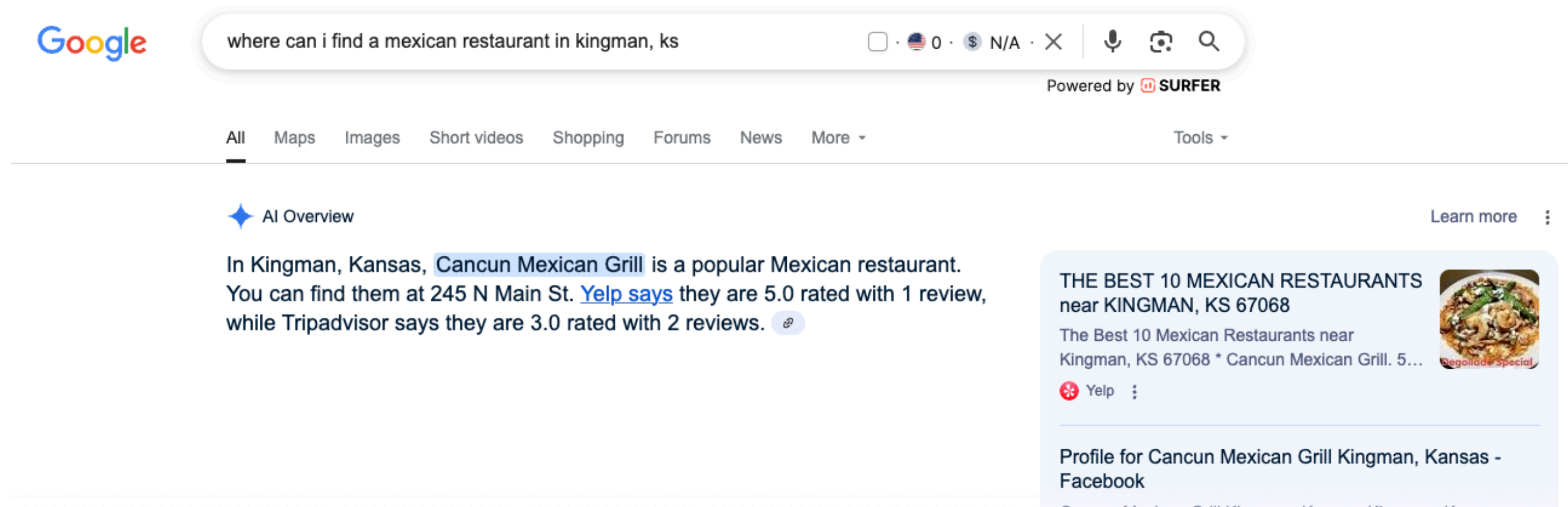


The Local Compass: *Decoding What Drives Discovery*

Ranking Pillars

- **Proximity:** How near a customer is to your business location when they search
- **Prominence:** How well known your brand reputation is compared to local competition
- **Relevance:** How closely your online offering in listings & website content matches the user query

Generative AI Response





Local Pack


Businesses

Shelter Insurance - Chadwick Osborn

4.2 ★★★★★ (6) · Insurance agency
10+ years in business · 126 W A Ave
Open · Closes 5 PM · (620) 532-3100


 "Chad has given us many years of unmatched customer service and commitment."


 Website


 Directions

Strong's Insurance

4.0 ★★★★★ (3) · Auto insurance agency
10+ years in business · 142 N Main St
Open · Closes 8 PM · (620) 532-5831


 "Great **agency!**"


 Website


 Directions

Farm Bureau Financial Services: Charl...

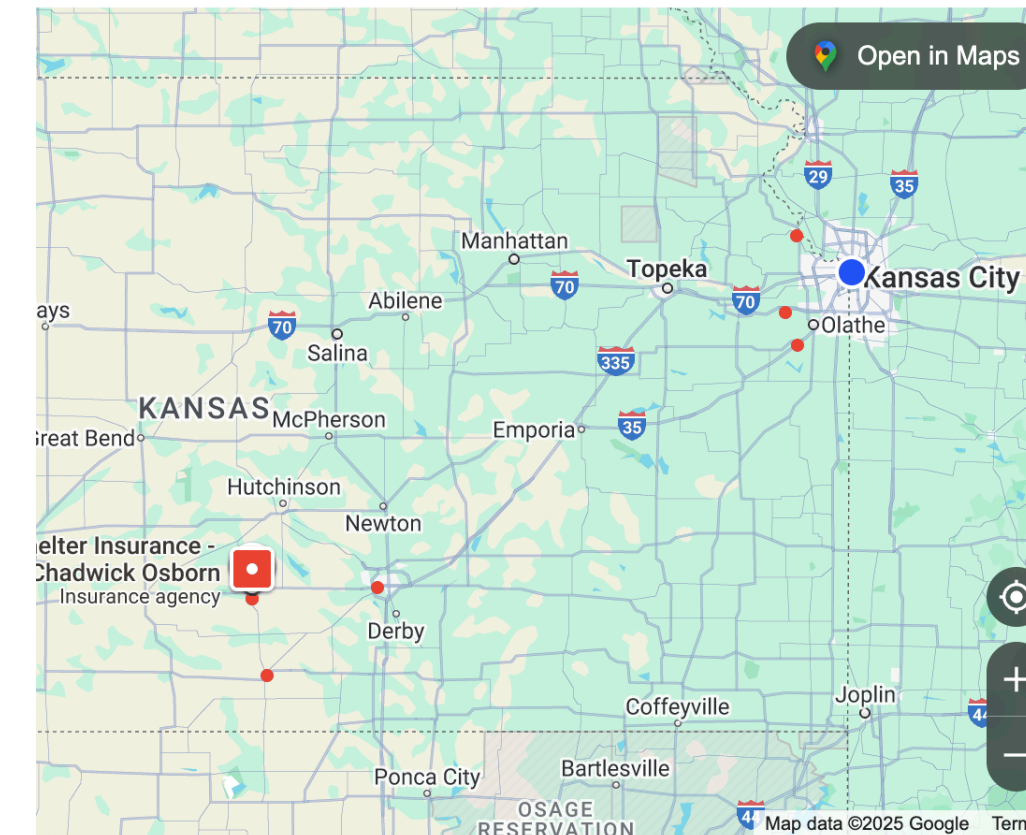
4.5 ★★★★★ (11) · Insurance agency
10+ years in business · 220 W D Ave
Open · Closes 5 PM · (620) 532-3188

 "Friendly and well-informed **agents.**"


 Website

 Directions

More businesses →



Local Organic Results



Sunstar Insurance Group
<https://sunstarinsurancegroup.com> › our-footprint › kin... ⋮

Kingman Insurance Agency

📞 1,680 📄 177 · 🗣️ 0 · TITLE CHANGED

Kingman Insurance Agency has been servicing insurance needs for over 60 years. Kingman Insurance Agency 120 W. B Avenue PO Box 493 Kingman, KS 67068

People also ask ⋮


How much does it cost to use an insurance broker? ▼

Is it better to go with an insurance broker or insurance company? ▼

Is insurance cheaper without a broker? ▼

Is an insurance broker better than an agent? ▼

[Feedback](#)




Shelter Insurance
<https://www.shelterinsurance.com> › agent › COSBORN ⋮

Chadwick Osborn | Kingman, KS | Auto, Home, Life Insurance

📞 688,952 📄 528 · 🗣️ 0 · TITLE CHANGED

Request free auto, home, life or other insurance quotes from Shelter Insurance® agent Chadwick Osborn today! I am proud to be your local Kingman, KS ...




Strong's Insurance
<https://stronginsinsurance.com> ⋮

Strong's Insurance, Inc.

📞 346 📄 N/A · 🗣️ N/A

Strong's Insurance began in 1921 and now serves the following Kansas communities: Kingman, Medicine Lodge, Pratt, Anthony and Cheney.



jonwollen.com
<https://jonwollen.com> ⋮

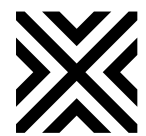
State Farm Insurance Agent Jon Wollen in Kingman KS

📞 12 📄 2,548 · 🗣️ 0

For State Farm car, home, life insurance and more in Kingman KS, call Jon Wollen at (620) 532-3179. See how a good neighbor may help you save today!.



The Cost of Confusion: Why Your Local Presence Can't Be a Guessing Game



2.0

The Power of Local Search

**How
Many
Google
searches
happen
every
day in
the US?**

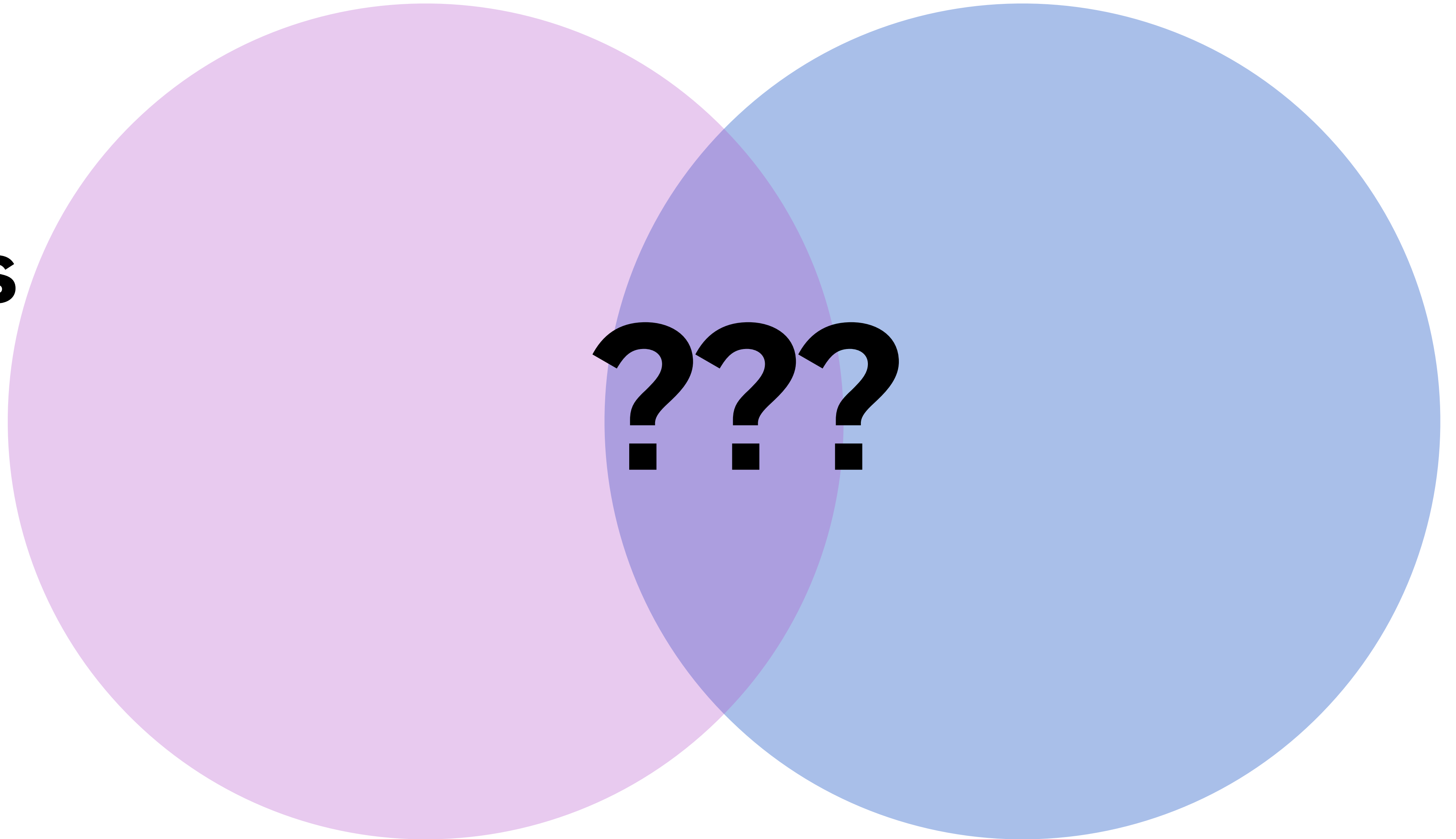


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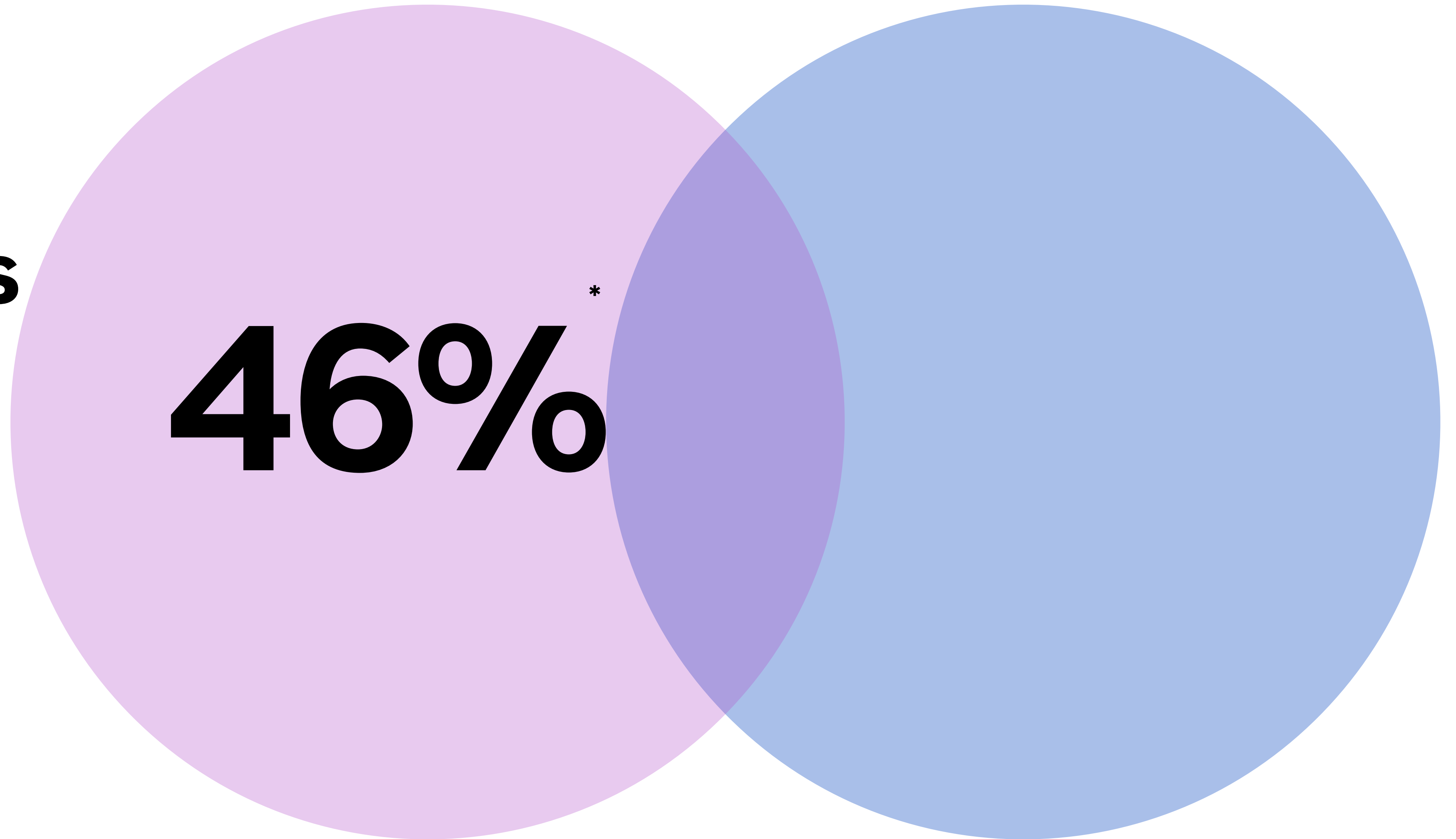
**How
Many
Google
searches
happen
every
day in
the US?**

**16.4
Billion***

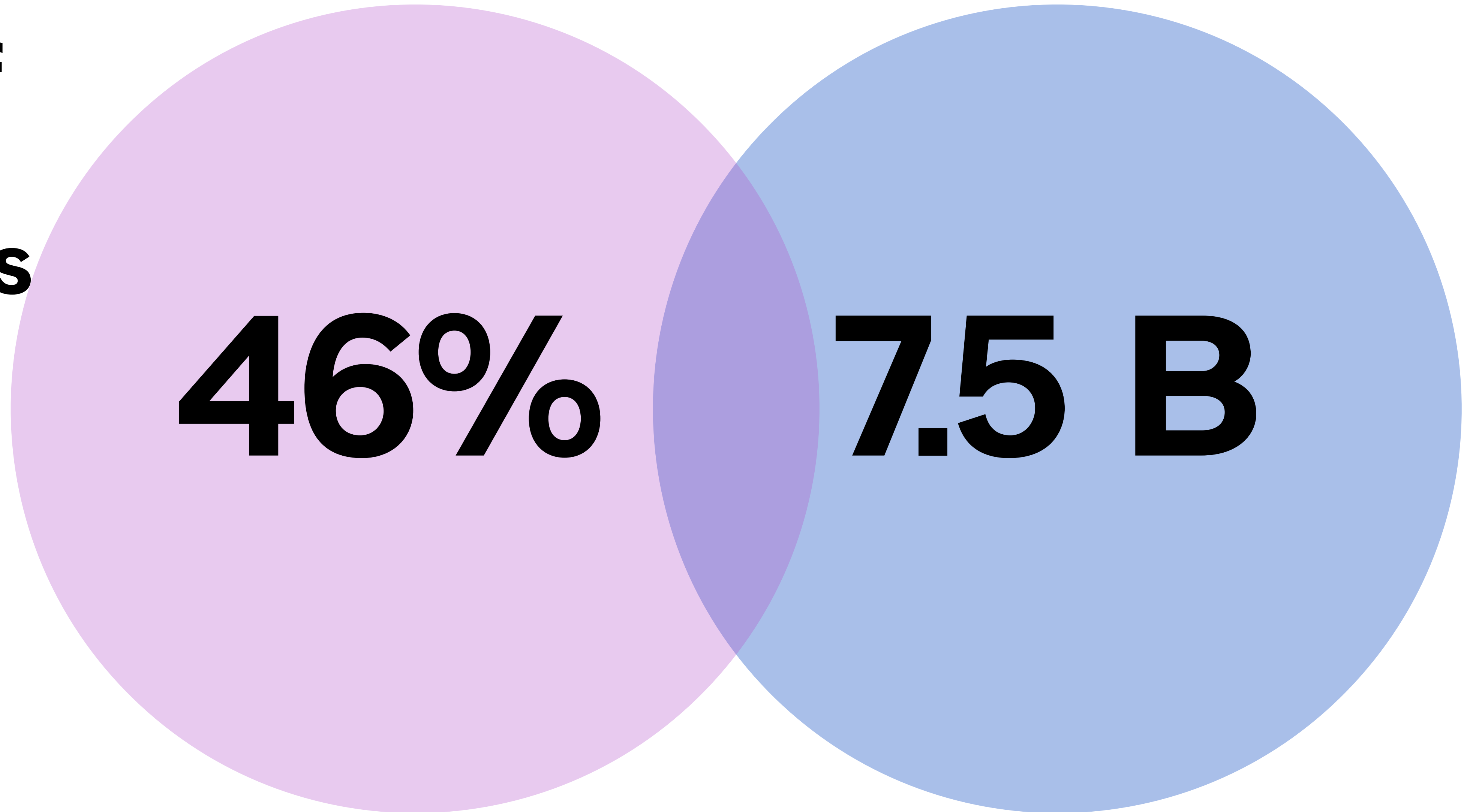
**How
many of
these
searches
are
local?**



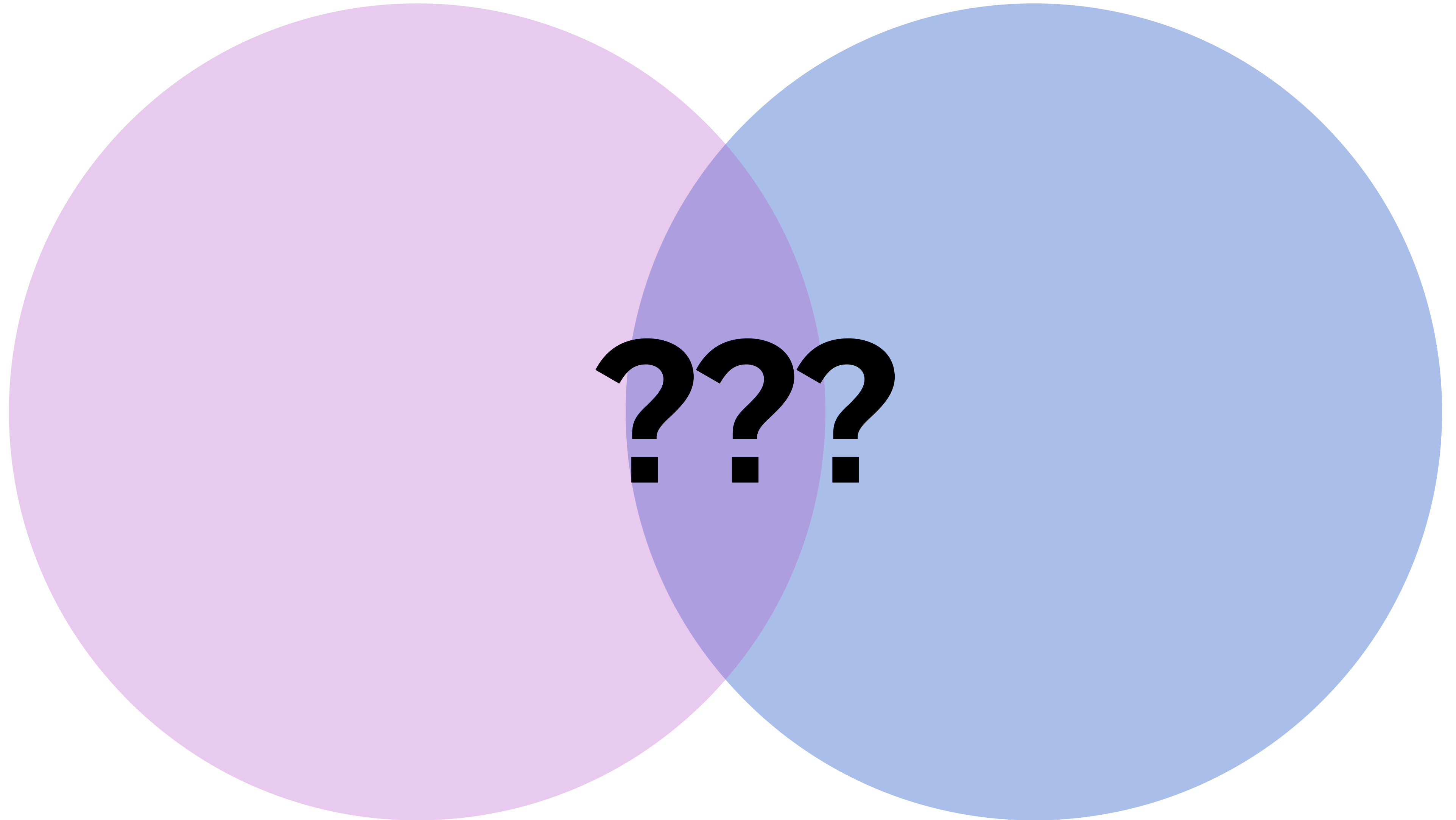
**How
many of
these
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are
local?**



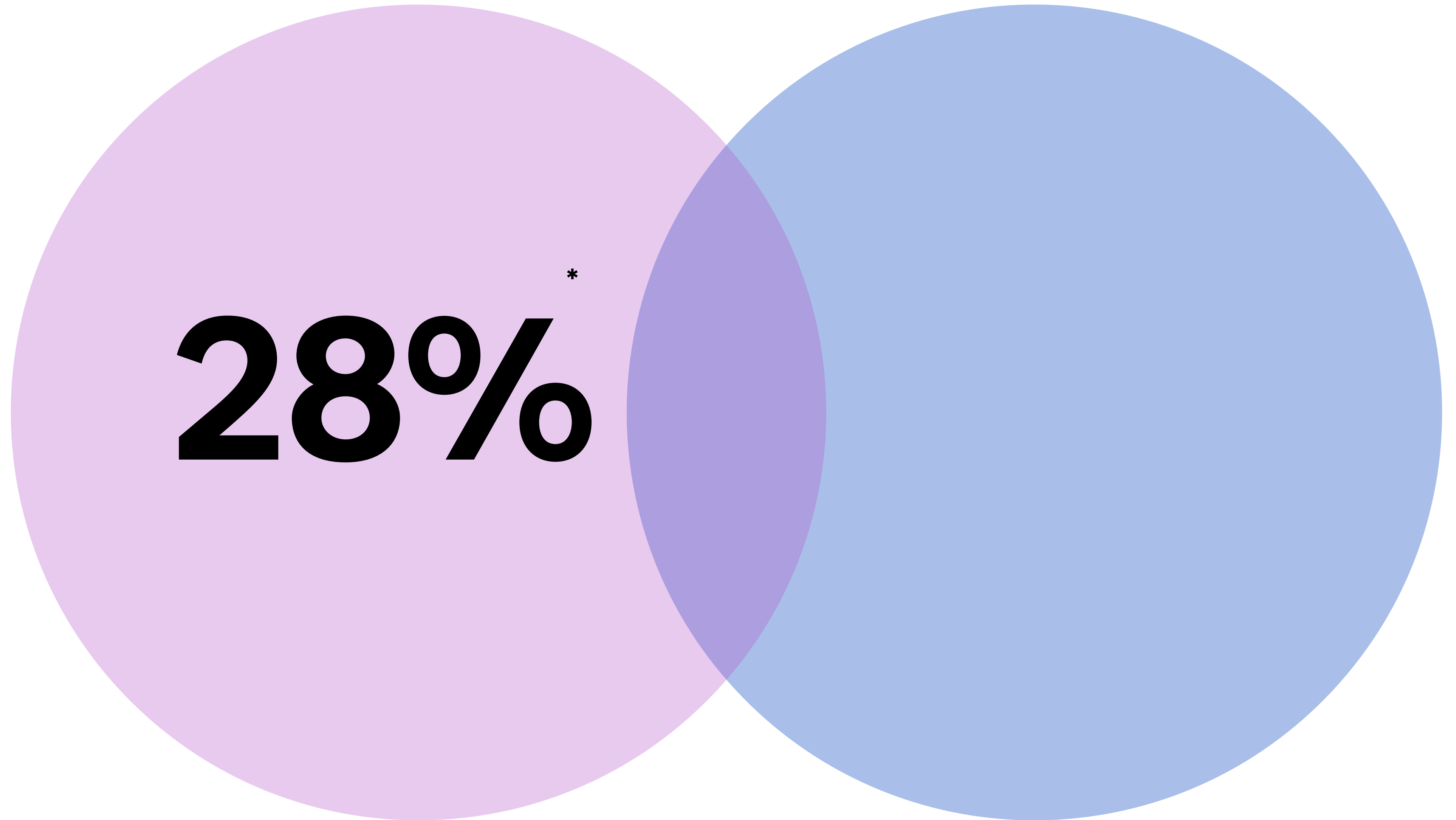
**How
many of
these
searches
are
local?**



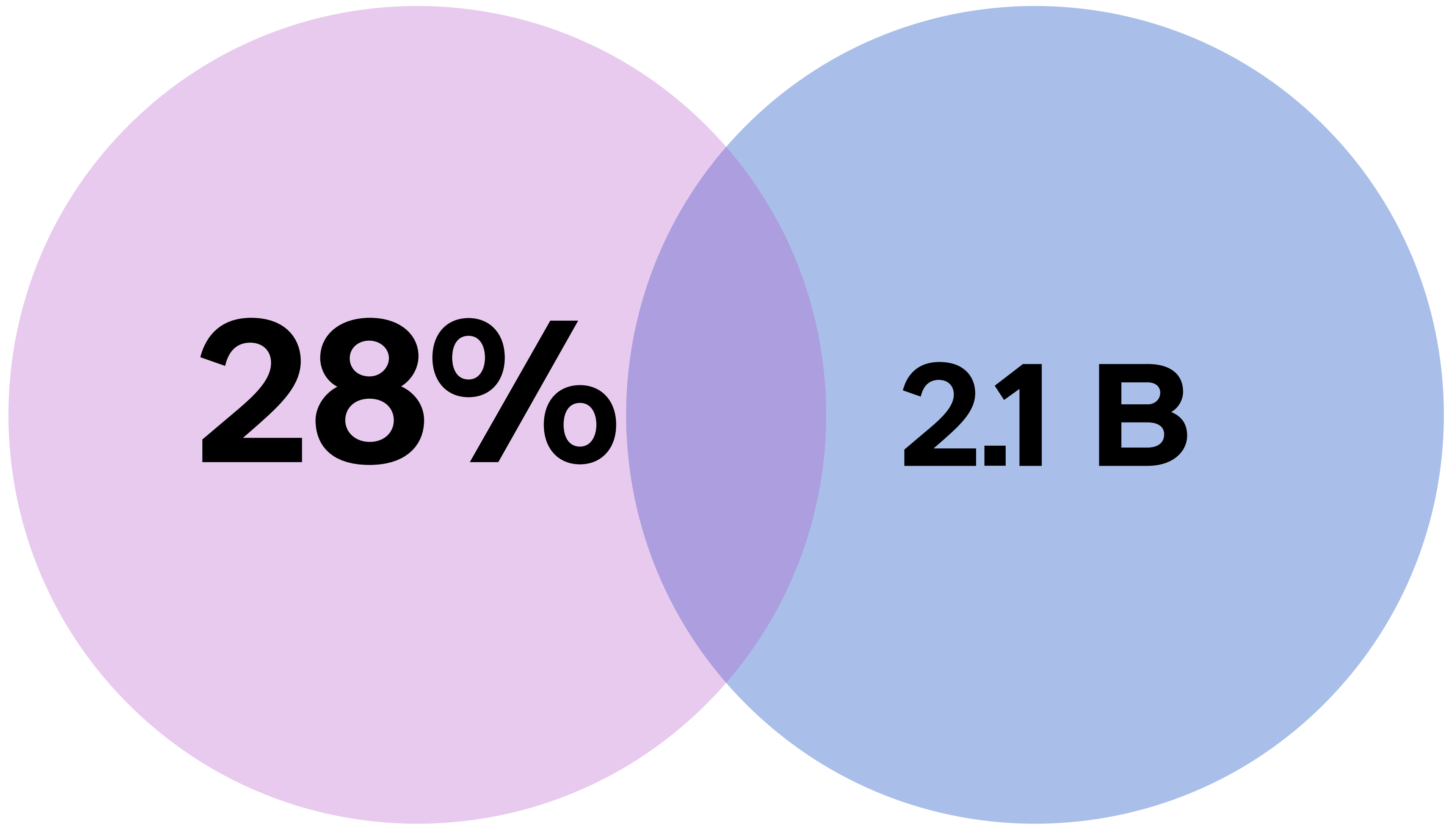
**How
many of
these
local
searches
turn into
a sale or
service?**



**How
many of
these
local
searches
turn into
a sale or
service?**



**How
many of
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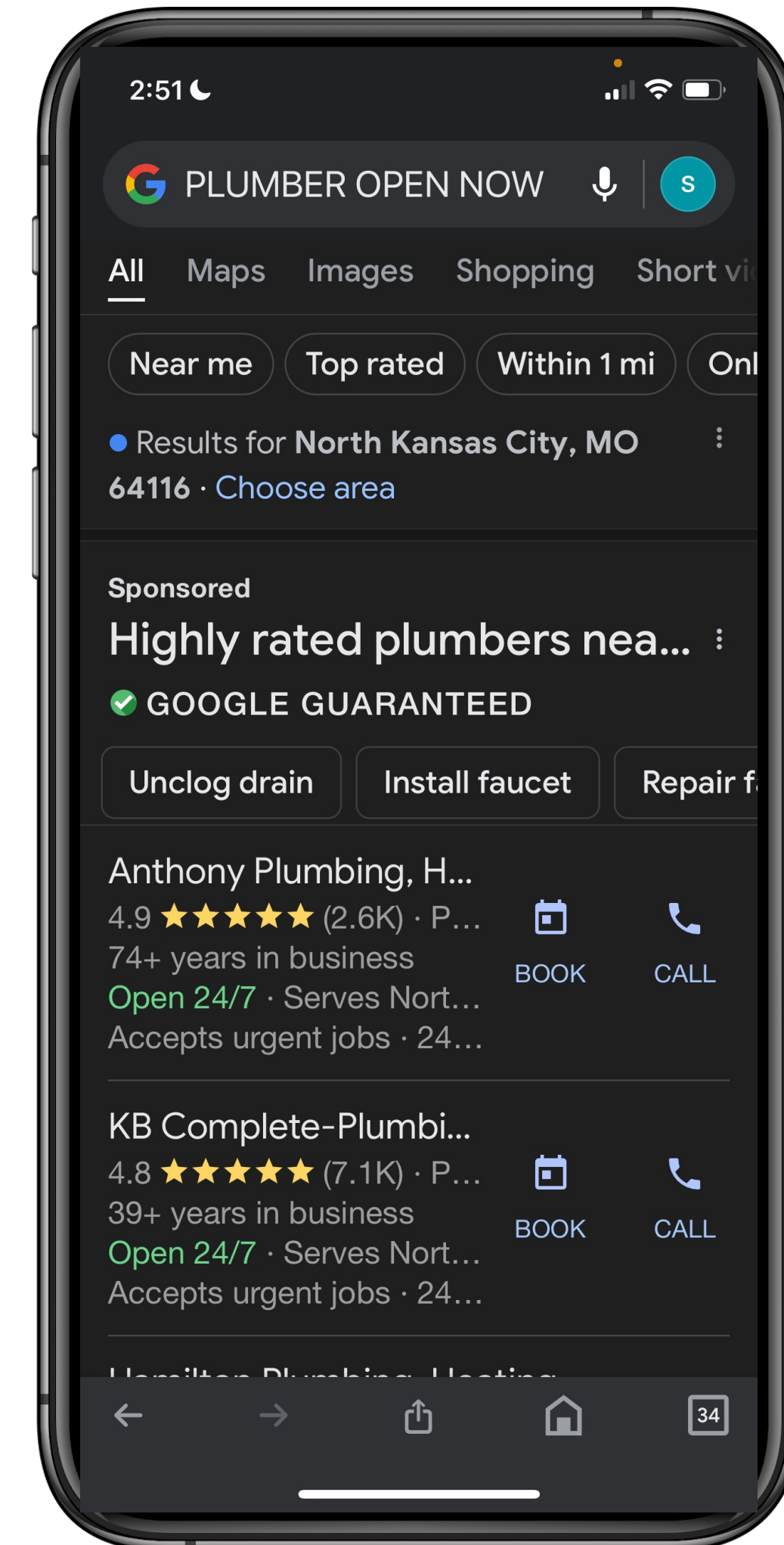
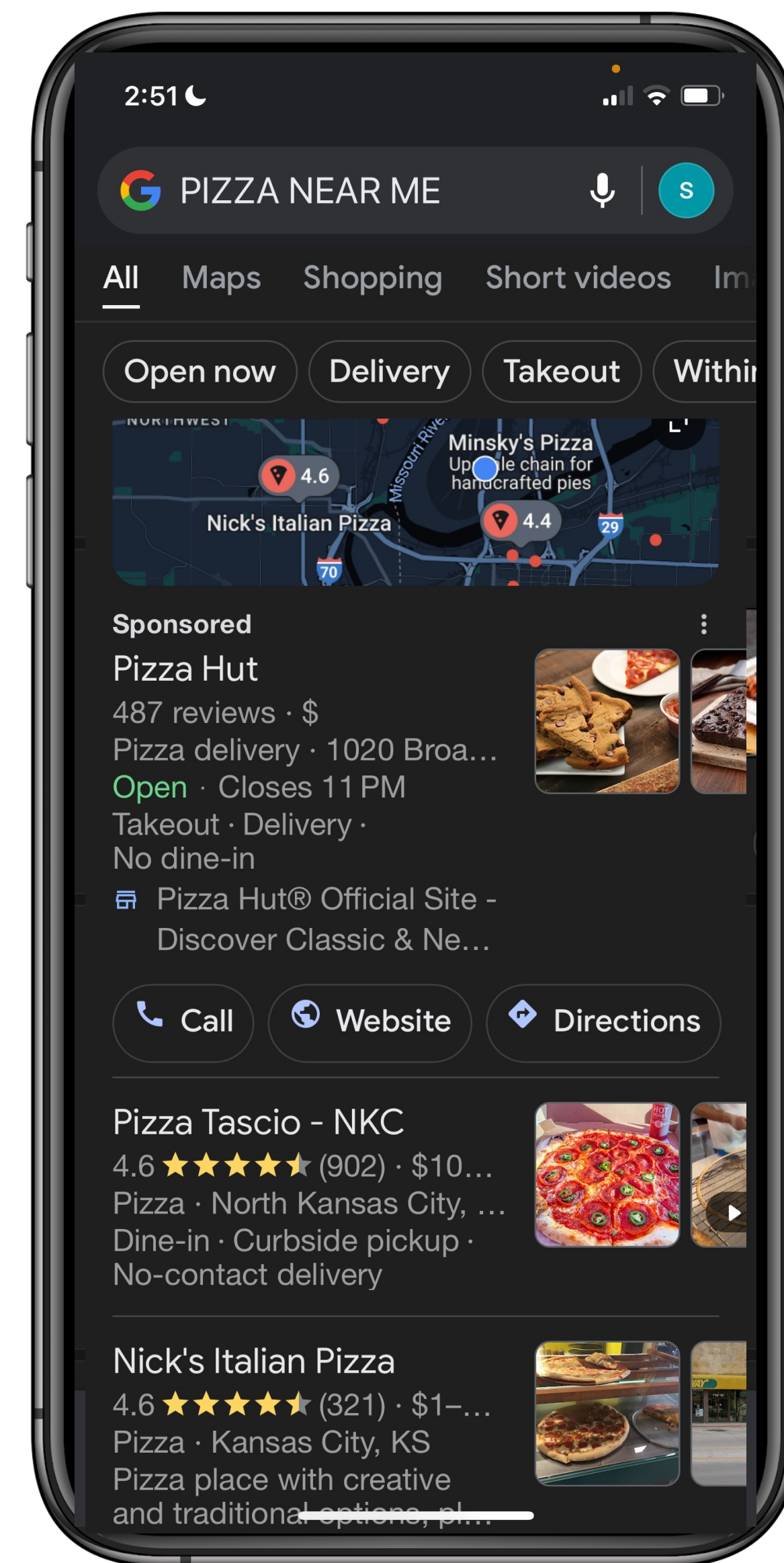


What factors into this conversion the most?

Every Local Search is a Race Against Time

88% of local searches that result in a purchase happen within 24 hours of the search.

Near Me: **72%** of consumers that did a local search visited a store within five miles.



3.0

From Global Numbers to Local Impact:

What This Means for *Your*
Business

**So how
to we
break
that
down
into
“real”
numbers?**



???

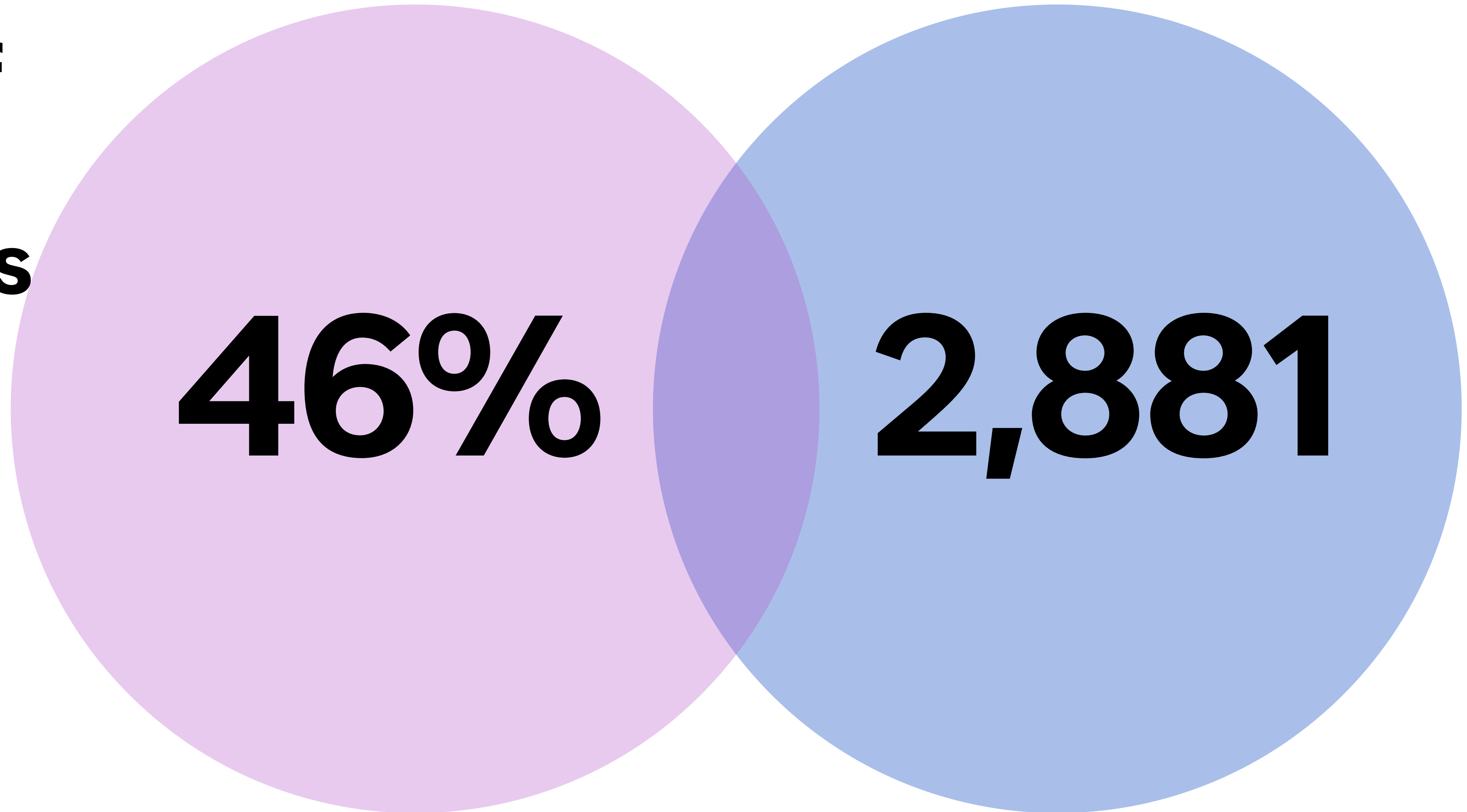
**How
Many
Google
searches
happen
every
day?**



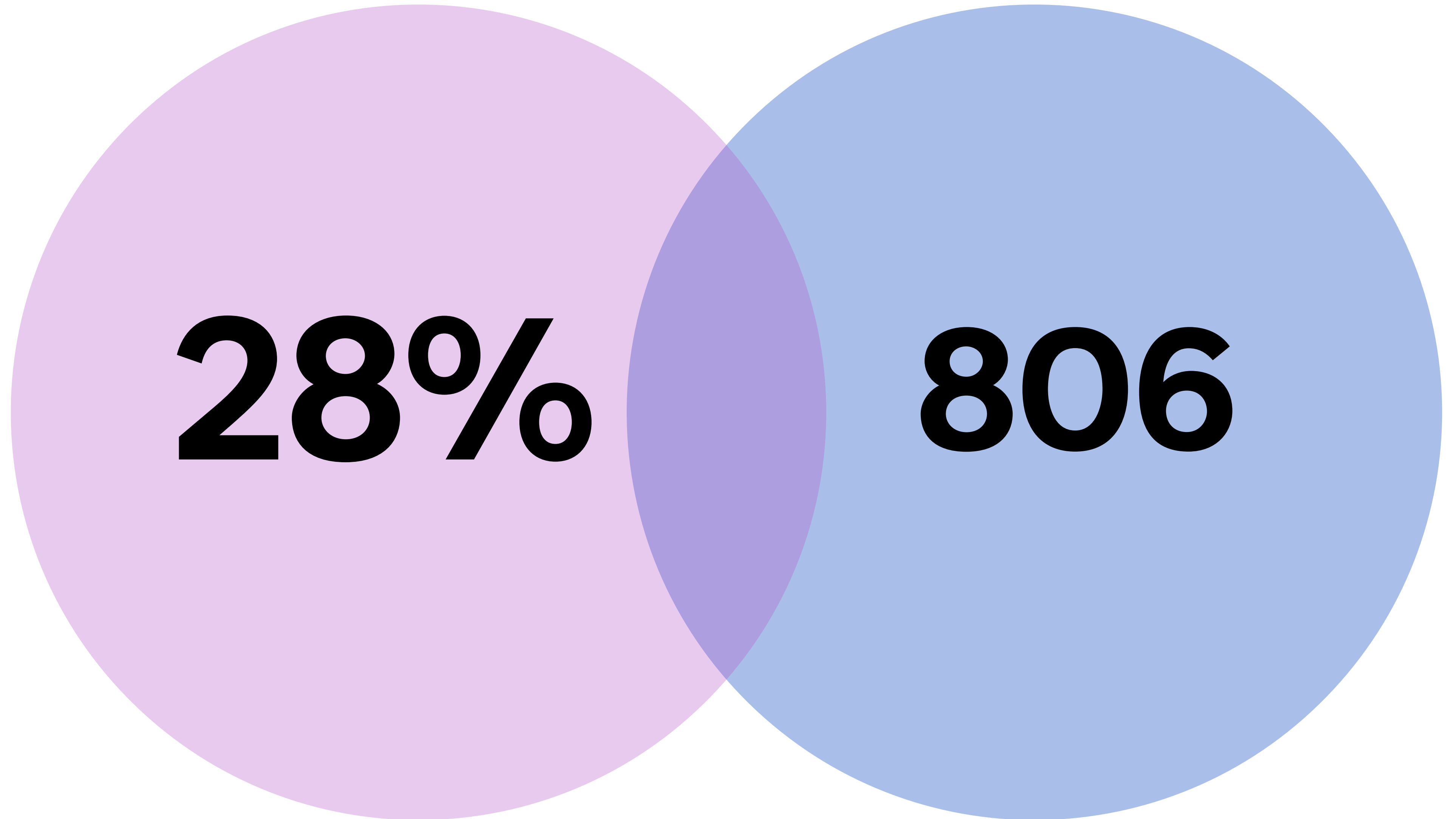
**City
population
6,264**

**The average Google user performs 4.2 searches per day.*

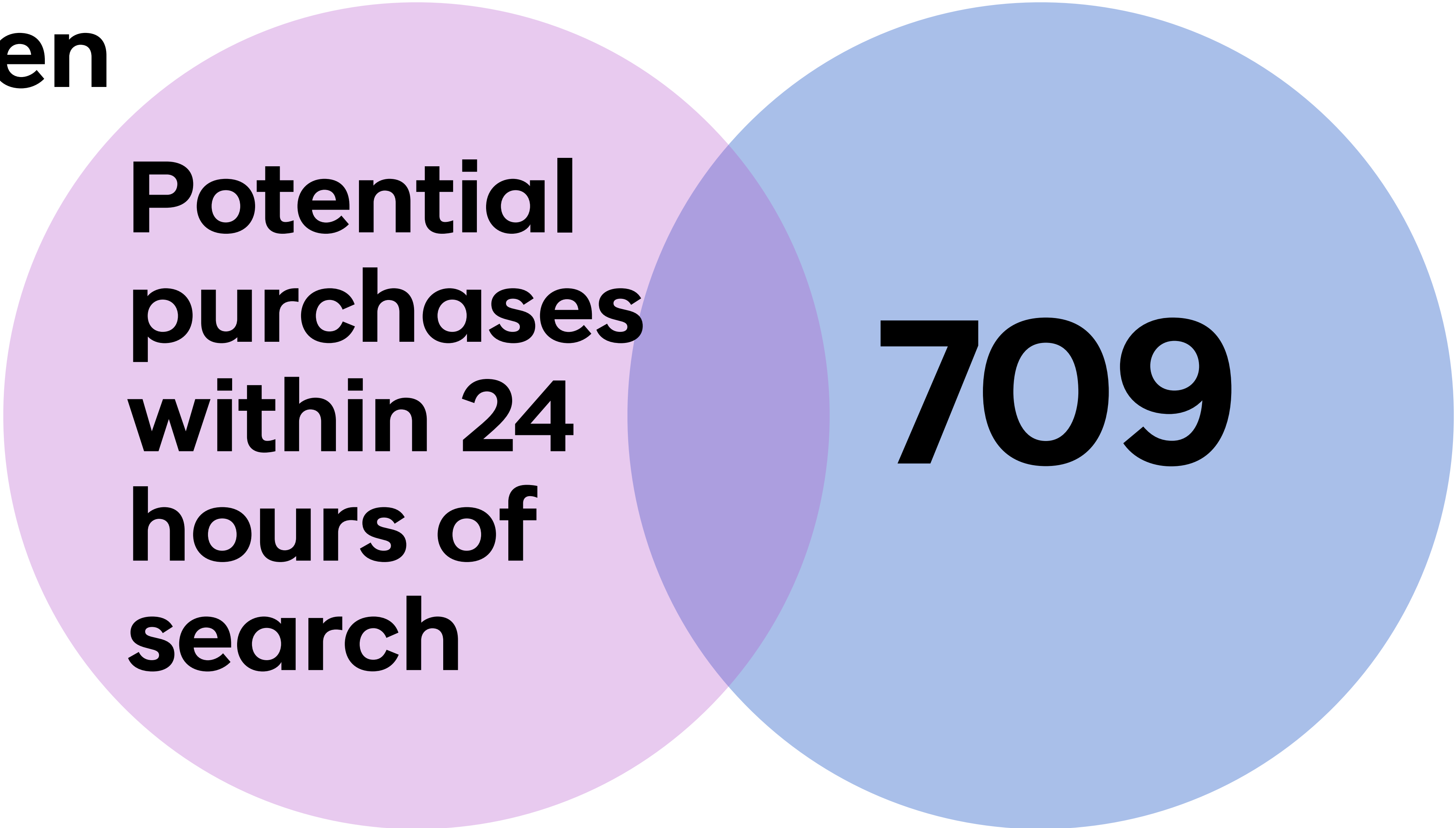
**How
many of
these
searches
are
local?**



**How
many of
these
local
searches
turn into
a sale or
service?**



**If stats
hold, then
that
would
mean...**



**Potential
purchases
within 24
hours of
search**

709

Out-of-market visitors: 136.8K (YoY) *(just under 384/day, adding approximately 44 more purchases/visits)*

Other Stats of Interest:

- **Google Dominates Search:** Over 90% of all searches (Trillions world-wide)
- **Online Presence Matters:** 97% of people learn more about a local company online over anywhere else. - *SEO Tribunal*
 - 61% of mobile searchers are more likely to contact a local business if they have a mobile-friendly site. - *HubSpot Marketing*
- **Page One:** 92% of searchers will pick businesses on the first page of local search results. - *SEOExpert*

4.0 Your Digital Front Door:



Navigating the Path to Local Discoverability

Tools

whitespark



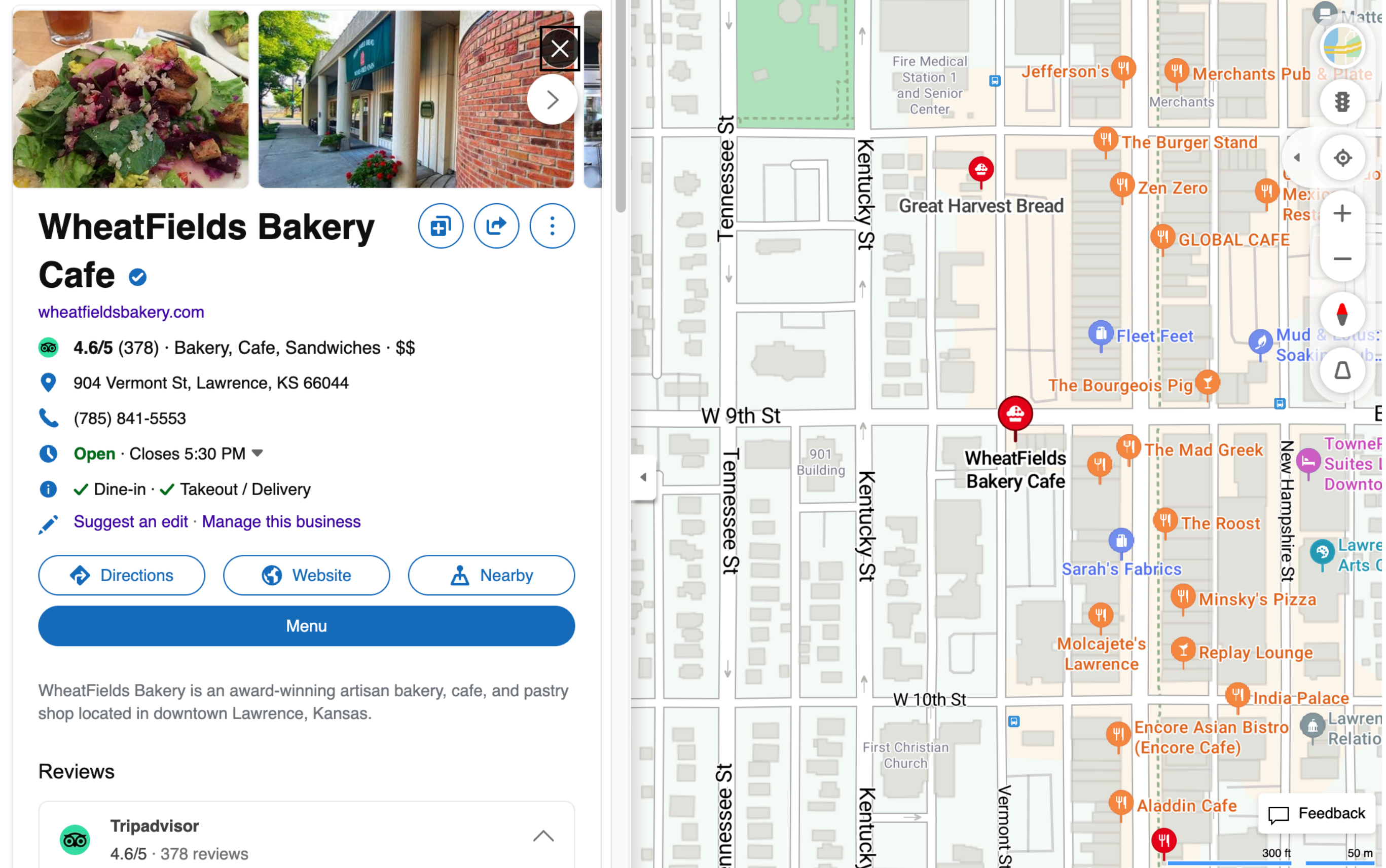
Google
Business Profile

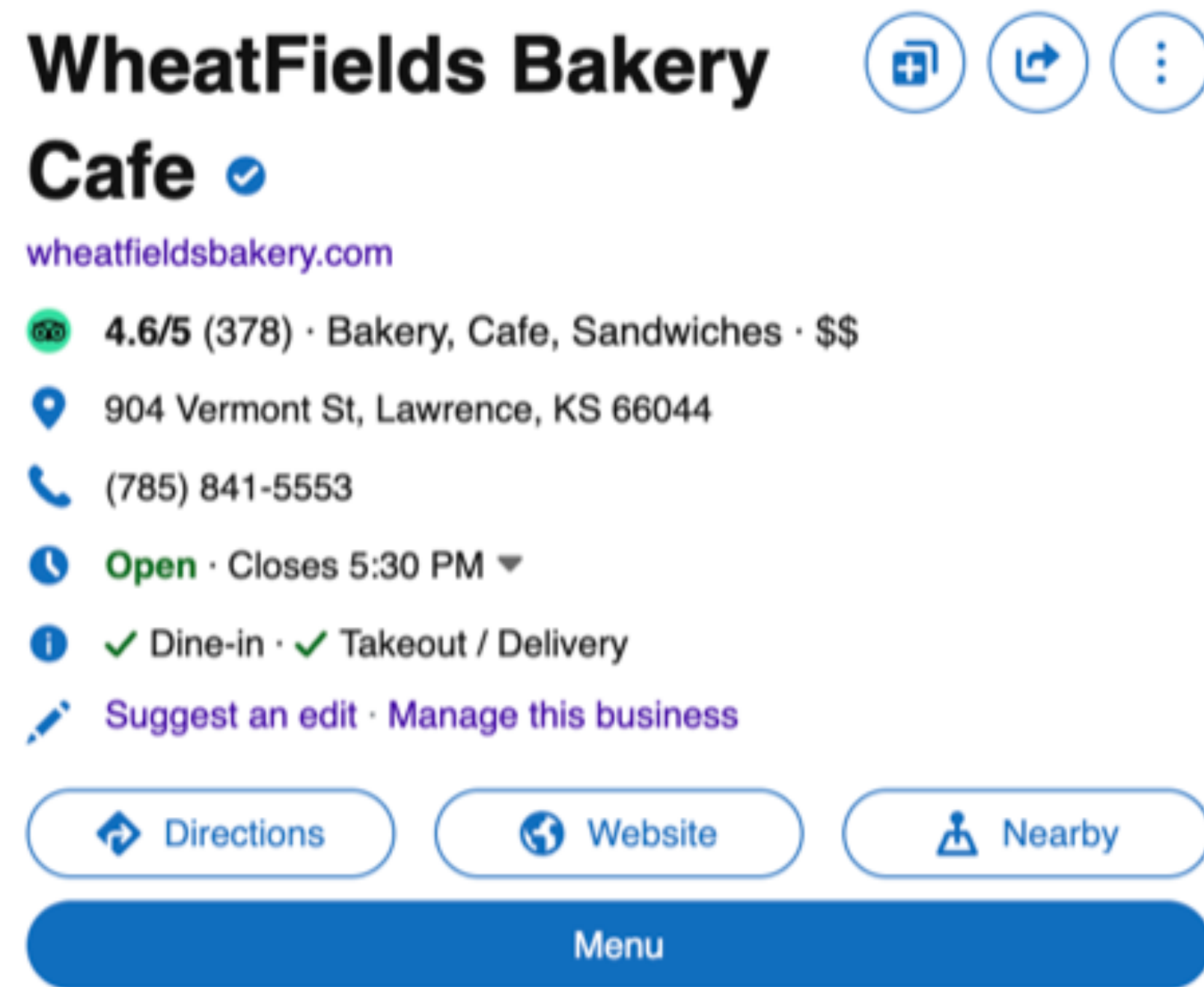


What is a Google Business Profile?

Google Business Profile (GBP) is a free tool offered by Google to help businesses manage their online presence. It allows you to create and optimize a business listing that appears in Google Search and Google Maps when people search for your company or relevant services in your area.

Search: "Lawrence, KS bakeries"





Foundational Information (Accuracy & Completeness):

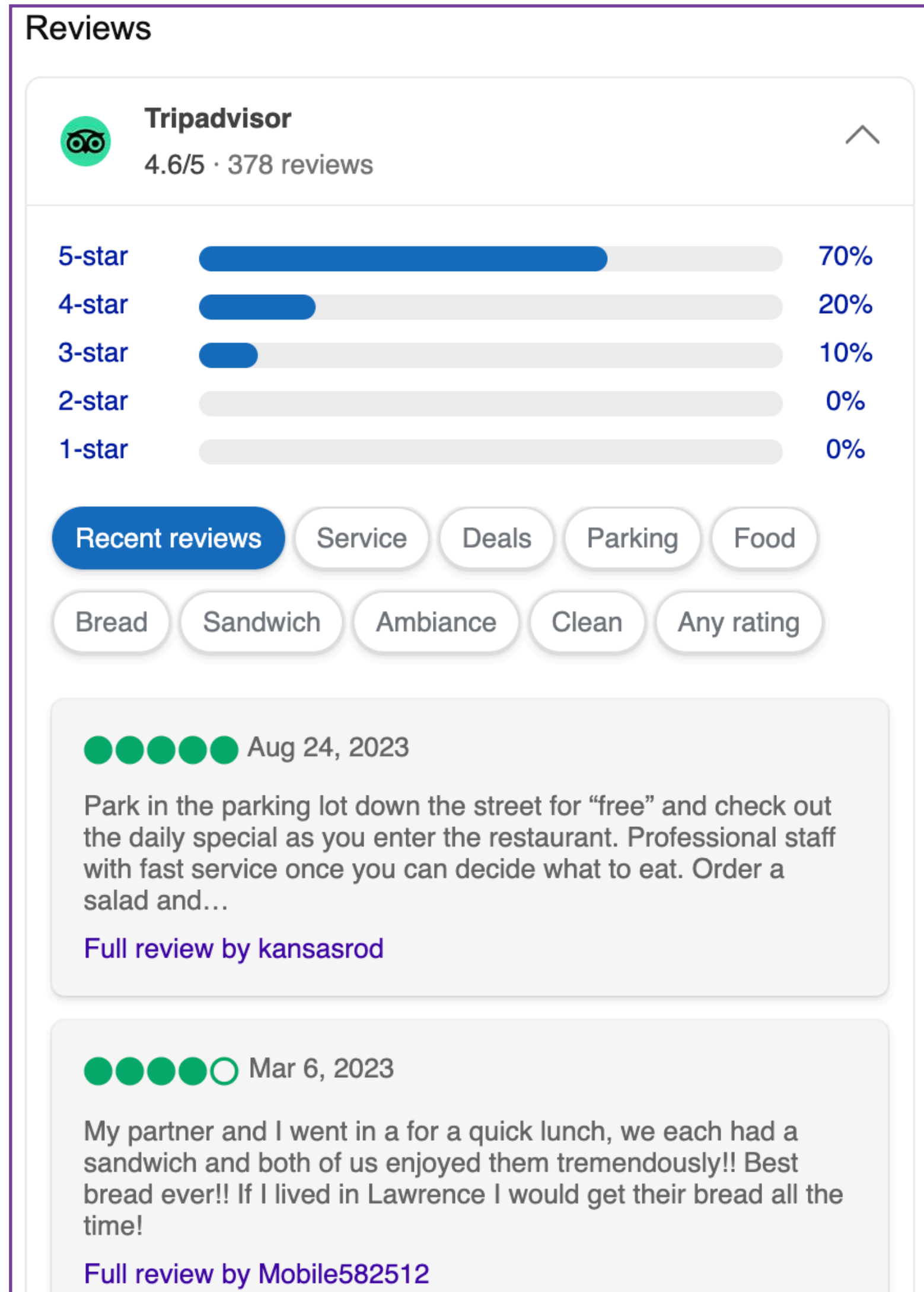
- **Accurate Business Name:** Use your legal business name. Avoid keywords or unnecessary additions.
- **Precise Address:** Use your physical address. If you serve customers at their location, you can hide your address but still specify your service area.
- **Correct Phone Number:** Use a local phone number that you actively monitor.
- **Primary Business Category:** Choose the *most accurate* primary category that describes your core business. This is crucial for relevance in search results.
- **Additional Categories:** Add relevant secondary categories to further refine your business description. Don't overdo it; stick to categories that genuinely apply.
- **Business Hours:** Maintain accurate and up-to-date business hours, **including special hours for holidays or events.**
- **Website URL:** Link to your official website. Ensure the website is mobile-friendly and loads quickly.

Compelling Content (Engagement & Information):

- **Detailed Business Description:** Write a compelling and keyword-rich description that highlights your unique selling points, services, and target audience. Focus on benefits, not just features. Avoid keyword stuffing.
- **High-Quality Photos & Videos:**
 - **Exterior Photos:** Show the outside of your building, making it easy for customers to find you.
 - **Interior Photos:** Showcase your business's atmosphere and ambiance.
 - **Product/Service Photos:** Display your offerings in an appealing way.
 - **Team Photos:** Introduce your staff to build trust.
- **Products/Services Sections:** Utilize the Products and Services sections to list your offerings with descriptions, prices (if applicable), and photos. This helps customers quickly find what they're looking for.



WheatFields Bakery is an award-winning artisan bakery, cafe, and pastry shop located in downtown Lawrence, Kansas.



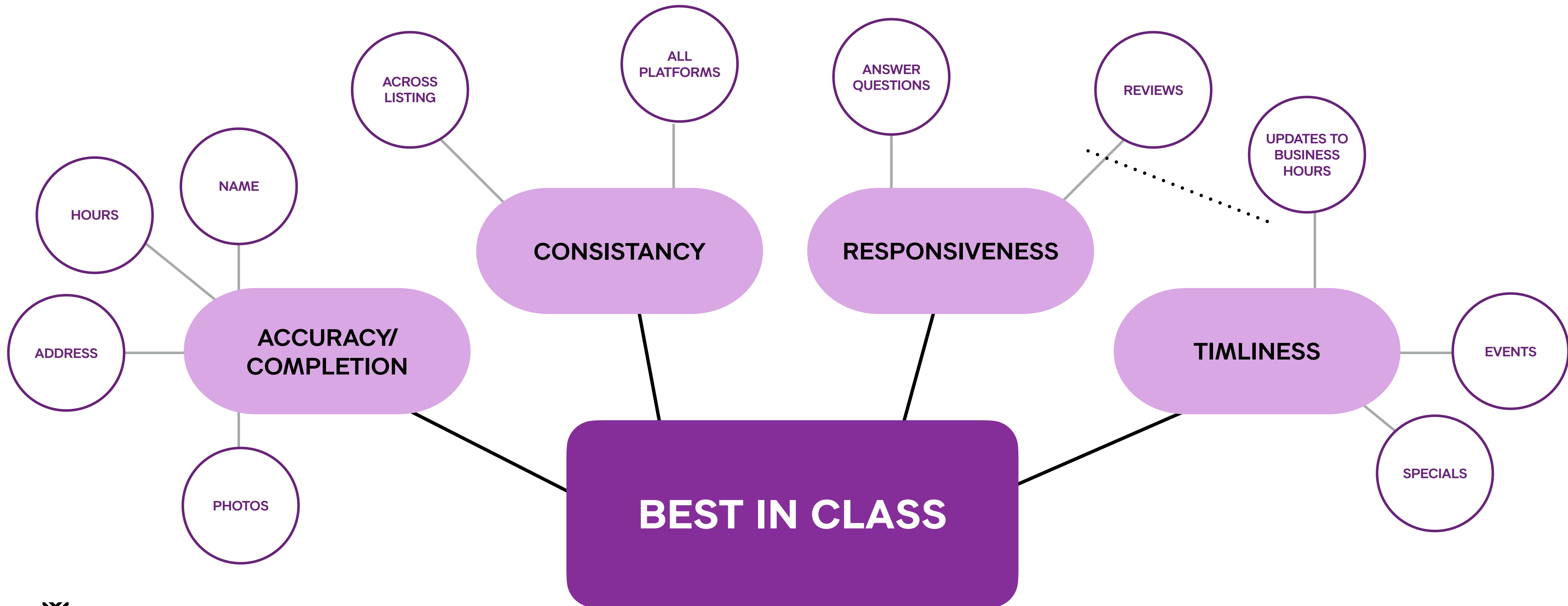
Reputation Management (Trust & Authority):

- **Encourage Reviews:** Actively ask satisfied customers to leave reviews on Google.
- **Respond to Reviews (Promptly & Professionally):** Respond to *all* reviews, both positive and negative. Thank customers for positive feedback and address concerns constructively in negative reviews. Show that you value customer feedback.
- **Monitor Your Reviews:** Regularly check your GBP for new reviews and mentions.

Google Business Profile Management

- **Accountability:** It should be a line item in someone's actual job description to be responsible for timely monitoring of your profile.
 - **Monitor and Respond to Reviews:** *Respond to all reviews, both positive and negative. Thank customers for positive feedback and address concerns constructively in negative reviews. Show that you value customer feedback.*
 - **Answer Questions:** *If someone is asking you about your products and/or services online, make sure you're there to answer those questions. Timely responses build trust.*
 - **Update for Specials and/or Events:** *If you participate in or sponsor any local events, or offer any daily/weekly/monthly/holiday specials, make sure that is promoted.*
 - **Update your Business Hours:** *Make sure that your business hours are accurately represented on your profile. If you close early for any reason, make sure that your profile reflects that information.*

The Anatomy of Discoverability: *Building Best-in-Class*



SCAN for Step-by-Step instructions to set up your Google Business Profile



Thank you for your time



Sheri Hart

Group Discoverability Director - VML

Sheri.Hart@vml.com

Setting Up a Google Business Profile

Step 1: Access Google Business Profile

1. **Go to the Google Business Profile Website:** Open your web browser and go to: <https://www.google.com/business/>

Step 2: Sign In or Create a Google Account

1. **Sign In:** If you already have a Google account (Gmail, YouTube, etc.), click the "Sign In" button in the top right corner.
2. **Create an Account:** If you don't have a Google account, click "Create account" and follow the instructions to set one up. It's best to use a business email address if you have one, but a personal Gmail address will also work.

Step 3: Find or Add Your Business

1. **Search for Your Business:** In the search bar, type your business name and address. Google will try to find if your business already exists in its database.
2. **Select Your Business (If Found):** If your business appears in the search results, select it. Double-check that the address and other details are correct.
3. **Add Your Business (If Not Found):** If your business *doesn't* appear, click "Add your business to Google."

Step 4: Enter Your Business Name

1. **Type Your Business Name:** Carefully enter the exact name of your business. Be consistent with how you use your business name everywhere online (website, social media, etc.).

Step 5: Choose Your Business Category

1. **Select a Primary Category:** Start typing a word or phrase that describes your business (e.g., "Restaurant," "Plumber," "Hair Salon"). Google will suggest categories. Choose the *most accurate* primary category. This is very important for search visibility.
2. **Add Additional Categories (Optional):** You can add up to 5 categories to further describe your business. Choose categories that are relevant but not redundant.

Step 6: Add Location (If Applicable)

1. **"Do you want to add a location customers can visit, like a store or office?"**
 - **Yes (Physical Storefront):** Select "Yes" if customers can visit your business at a physical location. You'll be prompted to enter your address.
 - **No (Service Area Business):** Select "No" if you provide services at customers' locations (e.g., plumber, mobile dog groomer). You'll be prompted to define your service area.

Step 7: Enter Your Address (If Applicable)

1. **Enter Your Street Address:** Provide your full and accurate street address.
2. **Verify Your Address on the Map:** Google will try to pinpoint your location on a map. Adjust the marker if necessary to ensure it's accurate.

Step 8: Define Your Service Area (If Applicable)

- 1.**Choose Your Service Area:** If you selected "No" in Step 6, you'll need to define your service area. You can do this in a few ways:
 - **List the Cities, Postal Codes, or Regions You Serve:** Enter the specific areas where you provide your services.
 - **Define a Radius Around Your Business:** Specify a radius (e.g., "20 miles around [your address]") that represents your service area.

Step 9: Add Contact Information

- 1.**Enter Your Phone Number:** Provide a phone number that customers can use to contact you.
- 2.**Enter Your Website URL:** If you have a website, enter the full URL (e.g., <https://www.example.com>). If you don't have a website, you can choose the option to get a free website from Google (it's a very basic website).

Step 10: Verification

- 1.**Choose a Verification Method:** Google needs to verify that you are the legitimate owner of the business. The most common method is:
 - **Postcard Verification:** Google will mail a postcard to your business address with a verification code. This usually takes a few days to a couple of weeks. *Do not skip this step!*
 - **Phone Verification (Sometimes Available):** In some cases, Google may offer phone verification, where they send you a code via SMS or automated call.
 - **Email Verification (Less Common):** Sometimes, Google will allow verification via email, especially if you're using a business email address associated with your domain.
 - **Video Recording (Increasingly Common):** Google may ask you to record a short video of your business location, signage, and proof of operation.
- 2.**Follow the Verification Instructions:** Carefully follow the instructions for the verification method you chose. If you chose postcard verification, *wait* for the postcard to arrive before proceeding.

Step 11: Enter the Verification Code (Once Received)

- 1.**Sign In to Google Business Profile:** Go back to <https://www.google.com/business/> and sign in.
- 2.**Enter the Code:** You should see a prompt to enter the verification code from the postcard (or the code you received via phone/email). Enter the code exactly as it appears.
- 3.**Submit the Code:** Click the "Verify" or "Submit" button.
- 4.**ging (Optional):** Enable messaging to allow customers to contact you directly through your Google Business Profile.
- 5.**Answer Questions:** Monitor the "Questions & Answers" section of your profile and answer any questions that customers ask.
- 6.**Encourage Reviews:** Ask your satisfied customers to leave reviews on your Google Business Profile. Positive reviews can significantly improve your search ranking and attract new customers. Respond to reviews (both positive and negative) in a professional and timely manner.

Step 12: Complete Your Business Profile

Once your business is verified, you can now fully optimize your profile. This is *crucial* for attracting customers.

- 1.Add Business Hours:** Enter your accurate business hours for each day of the week. You can also specify special hours for holidays or events.
- 2.Write a Business Description:** Write a compelling and informative description of your business. Include relevant keywords that customers might use to search for your services. Focus on what makes your business unique and valuable. Keep it concise and easy to read.
- 3.Add Photos:** Upload high-quality photos of your business, including:
 - **Logo:** Your business logo.
 - **Cover Photo:** A visually appealing photo that represents your business.
 - **Interior Photos:** Show the inside of your business (if applicable).
 - **Exterior Photos:** Show the outside of your business.
 - **Product/Service Photos:** Showcase your products or services.
 - **Team Photos:** Introduce your team members.
- 4.Add Attributes:** Select relevant attributes that describe your business (e.g., "Wheelchair accessible," "Free Wi-Fi," "Serves alcohol").
- 5.Add Products or Services:** List your products or services with descriptions and prices (if applicable).

Step 13: Keep Your Profile Updated

- 1.Regularly Update Information:** Keep your business hours, contact information, and other details up-to-date.
- 2.Post Updates:** Share news, promotions, events, and other relevant information with your customers by creating posts on your Google Business Profile.
- 3.Monitor Performance:** Use the Google Business Profile dashboard to track your profile's performance, including:
 - **Search Views:** How many times your business appeared in search results.
 - **Map Views:** How many times your business was viewed on Google Maps.
 - **Website Clicks:** How many people clicked on your website link.
 - **Phone Calls:** How many people called your business from your profile.
 - **Direction Requests:** How many people requested directions to your business.

Important Tips:

- **Be Accurate:** Ensure all the information you provide is accurate and up-to-date.
- **Be Consistent:** Use the same business name, address, and phone number (NAP) everywhere online.
- **Be Responsive:** Respond to customer inquiries and reviews promptly.
- **Be Patient:** It can take time for your Google Business Profile to rank well in search results.
- **Follow Google's Guidelines:** Make sure you comply with Google's guidelines for representing your business on Google. Violations can lead to suspension of your profile.