KHUMALO TECH SOLUTIONS

Get Found on Bing

A basic SEO guide for your website

Overview

This guide covers the essential first steps to get a website indexed on Bing: creating a sitemap, setting up **Bing Webmaster Tools**, and claiming a listing on **Bing Places for Business**. Bing also supplies results to other search tools and to Microsoft Copilot, so the extra half hour is worthwhile. Allow roughly 45 to 60 minutes. Bing can take anywhere from a few days to several weeks to start showing your pages.

Before you begin

- Your website is live and loads at its public address (for example `https://www.yourdomain.co.za`).
- A Microsoft or Google account you will keep long term. A dedicated business account is better than a personal one, so access is not lost if someone leaves.
- Access to your hosting control panel (cPanel), or to whoever manages your domain.
- Your business details ready: name, address, phone number, website and opening hours, written exactly as you want them to appear.

Step 1: Create your sitemap and robots.txt

A sitemap is a simple file that lists the pages you want search engines to find. A robots.txt file sits alongside it and points crawlers to the sitemap.

Check whether you already have one

Type your website address followed by `/sitemap.xml` into your browser (for example `https://www.yourdomain.co.za/sitemap.xml`). If you see a list of your pages, skip ahead to the next step. If you see an error or a "page not found" message, follow the steps below.

Create sitemap.xml

1. Open a plain text editor (Notepad on Windows, or TextEdit in plain-text mode on a Mac).
2. Paste in the template below, replace `www.yourdomain.co.za` with your own web address, and add one `<url>` block for every page on the site.

3. Save the file as **sitemap.xml**. Make sure it is not saved as sitemap.xml.txt.
4. Log in to your hosting control panel (cPanel), open **File Manager** and go to the **public_html** folder. This is the folder your website lives in.
5. Click **Upload**, select your sitemap.xml file and wait for it to finish.
6. Open your sitemap address in the browser again to confirm that it now displays.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<urlset xmlns="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9">
  <url>
    <loc>https://www.yourdomain.co.za/</loc>
    <lastmod>2026-10-03</lastmod>
  </url>
  <url>
    <loc>https://www.yourdomain.co.za/contact.html</loc>
    <lastmod>2026-10-03</lastmod>
  </url>
</urlset>
```

> **TIP** Use your web address exactly as it loads in the browser, including https:// and whether or not it has www. Mixing versions is a common cause of indexing problems. Only the `<loc>` tag is required; the `<lastmod>` date is optional but helpful.

Create robots.txt

Repeat the same process with a new text file named **robots.txt** containing the lines below, and upload it to the same public_html folder.

```
User-agent: *
Allow: /

Sitemap: https://www.yourdomain.co.za/sitemap.xml
```

Whenever you add or remove a page, update sitemap.xml and upload the new version over the old one.

Not using cPanel? The upload steps above assume traditional web hosting. If your site was built on a platform such as Wix, Squarespace or Shopify, the sitemap and robots.txt are usually created for you, so open yourdomain.co.za/sitemap.xml first to check. WordPress normally does this through its built-in feature or an SEO plugin, and the address can differ (for example /wp-sitemap.xml). If your site is hosted through a developer tool such as GitHub Pages, Netlify or Vercel, add sitemap.xml and robots.txt to the project files, in the same place as your home page, and publish the update as you normally would. The same applies to the verification file in Step 2: where there is no file upload, use the HTML meta tag or DNS method instead. If you are unsure, ask whoever built your site.

Step 2: Set up Bing Webmaster Tools

Bing Webmaster Tools is Microsoft's free tool for telling Bing your site exists, and for seeing how it is performing in search.

2.1 Add your website

1. Go to **bing.com/webmasters** and sign in with your Microsoft or Google account.
2. Choose how to add your site. **Import from Google Search Console** is the fastest if you have already set that up: sign in with Google, allow access and select your site. Otherwise, choose **Add your site manually**.
3. For a manual add, type your full web address exactly as it loads, for example `https://www.yourdomain.co.za/`, and click **Add**.

2.2 Verify that you own the site

If you imported from Google Search Console, verification is usually automatic and you can skip this step. For a manual add, Bing offers three methods. The XML file method is the simplest on cPanel hosting.

1. Choose **XML File** and download the verification file (named `BingSiteAuth.xml`).
2. In cPanel File Manager, upload that file to the **public_html** folder.
3. Open the file's address in your browser to confirm it loads.
4. Return to Bing Webmaster Tools and click **Verify**.

> **NOTE** Leave the verification file in place permanently. Alternatives are an HTML meta tag pasted into the `<head>` of your home page, or a CNAME record added through cPanel's Zone Editor.

2.3 Submit your sitemap

1. In the left-hand menu, open **Sitemaps**.
2. Click **Submit sitemap** and type the full address, for example `https://www.yourdomain.co.za/sitemap.xml`.
3. Click **Submit**. The status should change to **Success** once Bing has processed it. If you imported from Google, your sitemap may already be listed.

2.4 Ask Bing to index your key pages

1. In the left-hand menu, open **URL Submission**.
2. Click **Submit URLs** and paste in your home page and other key pages, one address per line.
3. Click **Submit**. Bing limits how many addresses you can send each day, and the remaining allowance is shown on screen.

2.5 IndexNow (optional)

IndexNow lets a website tell Bing instantly when a page is added or changed. It is not required for a small site, but many website platforms offer a plugin for it, and your web developer can enable it if you want faster updates.

2.6 Give your web developer access (optional)

Open **Settings**, then **Users**, and add their email address with the permission level you are comfortable with.

Step 3: Set up Bing Places for Business

Bing Places is Microsoft's equivalent of Google Business Profile. It puts your organisation on Bing Search and Bing Maps, with your address, hours and photos.

> **ELIGIBILITY** Like Google, Bing Places is intended for businesses that meet customers in person, either at a physical address or by travelling to them. A one-off or annual event with no staffed location may not qualify. If that applies to you, rely on Bing Webmaster Tools and consider listing on relevant directories and event listing sites instead.

1. Go to **bingplaces.com** and sign in with your Microsoft, Google or Facebook account.
2. Choose **Import from Google Business Profile** if you already have one, which is the fastest option. Otherwise choose to **add a new business** manually.
3. Enter your business **name, address, phone number, website, category and opening hours**.
4. **Verify** the listing. If you imported from a verified Google profile using the same login, verification may be instant. Otherwise Bing offers options such as phone, email or postcard.
5. Complete the listing: add a description, a logo and good-quality photos.
6. Keep it up to date whenever your details change.

Step 4: Check that it is working

What to check	Where	What to expect
Sitemap	Bing Webmaster Tools, Sitemaps	Status shows **Success** and the discovered URL count matches your sitemap.
Indexed pages	Bing Webmaster Tools, Site Explorer	Your pages appear in the list over days to weeks.
Quick search	Bing search for `site:yourdomain.co.za`	Your pages appear once indexed. No results at first is normal.
Business listing	Bing search for your business name	Your listing appears in search and on Maps after verification.

New websites often take from a few days to several weeks to appear. Submitting URLs speeds up discovery but does not guarantee a page will be listed or where it will rank. Bing Webmaster Tools also offers a **Site Scan** that checks a site for common technical issues.

Step 5: Quick wins on the website itself

Submitting your site gets it noticed. These basics help it rank once it has been found.

- **Secure, single address:** make sure your site loads with https:// (look for the padlock in the browser) and that the versions with and without www lead to the same page, rather than two separate copies. Your hosting provider or web developer can set up a free security certificate and a redirect if needed.
- **Page titles:** give every page its own descriptive title of roughly 50 to 60 characters, with the name and location near the front.
- **Meta descriptions:** write a unique summary of about 150 characters for every page. It is the text people see under your link in search results.

  Example for a plumber in Durban. Weak: the title “Home” with no description.
  Better title: Dlamini Plumbing | 24-Hour Emergency Plumber in Durban
  Better description: Licensed Durban plumbers on call 24 hours a day for burst pipes, geyser repairs and blocked drains. Call us for a free quote today.

- **Headings:** use one clear main heading (H1) per page and sub-headings beneath it.
- **Real text, not just images:** put key details such as your name, dates, location and what you offer in written text, since search engines cannot read text baked into pictures.
- **Image descriptions:** add short alt text to every image.
- **Speed and mobile:** compress large images and check the site on a phone, because most visitors will arrive on one.
- **Consistency:** keep your name, address and phone number identical everywhere they appear: website, social media and business listings.
- **Links in:** link to your website from your social media profiles and from partners and sponsors.

Troubleshooting

Problem	What to do
Sitemap will not process	Open the sitemap address in your browser. If it does not load, check the file name and that it sits in public_html. If it does load, wait a few minutes and resubmit using the full address.
Verification fails	Confirm the verification file or tag loads in the browser, and that the site address (with or without www) matches your live site. Do not edit the file.
URL submission limit reached	Wait until the next day. Submit only your most important pages and rely on the sitemap for the rest.
Pages still missing after a few weeks	Make sure each page has useful, unique content, is linked from other pages and does not carry a `noindex` tag, then resubmit the page.
Bing Places verification problems	Check your details against Bing Places guidelines, then contact Bing Places support through the help section.

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