🏪 Business Owner Guide

Everything you need to manage your business listing, ads, and subscriptions through the Business Portal.

⚡ Walkthrough — do this, in this order

From an unclaimed listing to a live, loyalty-enabled profile — the order that gets you visible fastest.

1. **Find your listing.** Search zaarhub.com for your business name and open it. If it does not exist yet, add it from `/submit-business` first.

2. **Claim it.** Click **Claim This Business** on your listing (or open `/claim`), fill in your details and submit. An administrator reviews the claim — this is the step that unlocks your dashboard.

3. **Sign in. Sign In** with the same email you claimed with. One login covers your visitor and business roles — see the Sign-In & Account Guide for the Role Switcher.

4. **Open your dashboard.** Go to `/portal`. The panels you will use are **Dashboard**, **Profile**, **Ads**, **Reviews**, **Offers** and **Settings**.

5. **Complete your profile.** Add photos, opening hours, categories and a description — the fields customers actually search on — then save. An empty profile is invisible in near-me and category search.

6. **Turn on loyalty.** Sign up to the programme in the loyalty tab so your listing carries the 💎 **ZaarCash badge**, and check what your customers earn and can redeem.

7. **Give people a reason to click.** Post a deal or an event, then submit an advert in **Ads** for extra placement.

8. **Run the counter.** Open `https://zaarhub.com/scanner` on the shop phone, sign in, and scan customers with 💳 **Purchase**, ✅ **Check-in** or 🎁 **Redeem**.

9. **Close the loop.** In **Reviews** reply to what customers wrote, and in **Ads** check the status of what you submitted.

10. **See the result.** Your listing now shows the badge, your deals, your reviews and your photos — and every scan is in your dashboard.

✅ **You're done when:** your listing shows the ZaarCash badge and your deals, a customer has been scanned at the counter, and the transaction is visible in your dashboard.

1. Introduction

The **Business Portal** at `/portal` is your command center for managing your business listing. From here you can update your profile, track performance, manage your subscription, submit ads, and respond to customer reviews.

📊 Dashboard

See visits, reviews, and subscription status at a glance.

📢 Advertising

Submit ads for admin approval and track earnings.

⭐ Reviews

Respond to customer reviews and manage your reputation.

⬆️ Subscriptions

Upgrade your plan for premium features and visibility.

💡 **First time here?** Visit `/grow` to see feature tiers, plan comparisons, pricing, and testimonials from other business owners. Then use `/claim` to start the 3-step claiming process or `/biz/:slug/:id` to view your live business detail page with gallery, maps, and reviews.

2. Claiming Your Business

If your business is already listed in the directory, you need to claim it before you can access the Business Portal. If your business isn't listed yet, contact the directory admin or submit a new listing through the directory's submission form.

How to Claim

Two ways to claim your business:

Option A: Inline Claim (from business detail page)

1. Visit your business's detail page at `/biz/:slug/:id`.
2. Click the **Claim This Business** button near the top of the page.
3. Fill in the claim form with your contact information and submit.
4. Wait for admin approval. You'll receive an email once approved.
5. Set up your Business Portal password and log in at `/portal`.

Option B: Dedicated Claim Flow (`/claim`)

1. **Search** — Go to `/claim` and search for your business by name or URL. Results span all directories.
2. **Verify** — Select your listing and provide verification (email domain matching business website, phone number on file, etc.).
3. **Confirm** — Review the claim summary, agree to terms, and submit. Track status from your portal.

3. Signing In

1. Open your browser and navigate to `https://your-platform.com/portal`.
2. The login screen shows tabs for **Login** and **Register**.
3. If you've already claimed your business, click the **Login** tab.
4. Enter your email and password.
5. Click **Sign In**. Your dashboard loads automatically.

💡 **Tip:** If you manage multiple businesses, you'll see a business selector after logging in. Select the business you want to manage from the dropdown.

First-Time Registration

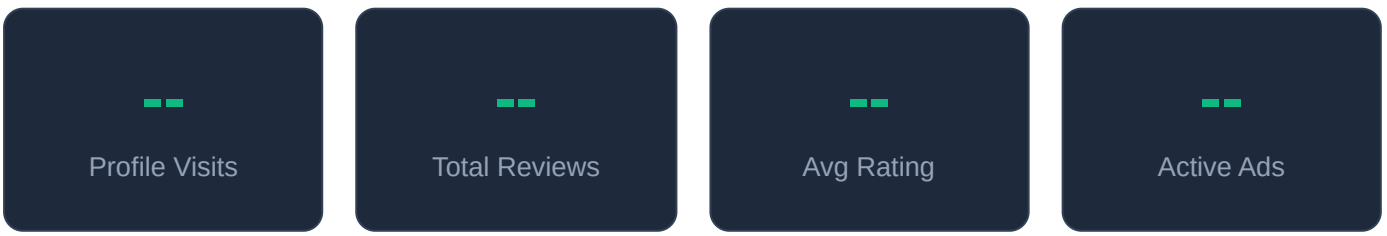
If you haven't claimed your business yet but want to pre-register:

1. Go to `/portal` and click the **Register** tab.
2. Create your account with name, email, and password.
3. After registration, you'll be prompted to link an existing business (search by name) or request a new listing.

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4. Dashboard Overview

Once logged in, the dashboard shows key metrics for your selected business.



Dashboard Sections

📈 Profile Visits

See how many times your business profile has been viewed over time. Updated daily.

⭐ Reviews Summary

Total review count, average star rating, and the latest 5 reviews.

⬆️ Your Plan

Current subscription tier and feature limits. Quick link to upgrade.

📢 Active Ads

Number of approved ads currently running and their earnings.

📦 Find Suppliers

Browse the **Supplier Directory** — a browsable card grid of farms, wholesalers, distributors, manufacturers, and associations, with filters by type, city, and search. Click any supplier card for full contact details. Locked to logged-in business owners.

5. Managing Your Plan / Subscription

Your business subscription determines the features available to you. The directory admin defines available tiers.

Viewing Your Current Plan

Your current plan is displayed in the dashboard header. It shows:

- **Plan name** — e.g., Free, Basic, Premium, Enterprise
- **Status** — Active, Expired, or Trial
- **Feature limits** — Number of listings, photos, deals, etc.
- **Badge** — Some plans include a premium badge on your listing

Upgrading Your Plan

1. Click **Upgrade Plan** from the dashboard or the subscriptions section.
2. Browse available tiers and compare their features and pricing.
3. Select a plan and choose monthly or annual billing.
4. Complete payment. Your plan upgrades immediately.

Available features that may require a paid plan:

Unlimited Listings	Premium plan+
Unlimited Photos	Premium plan+
Deals & Coupons	Basic plan+
Spotlight Eligible	Premium plan+
Advanced Analytics	Premium plan+
Ad Submissions	All plans
Review Responses	All plans

6. Submitting Advertisements

As a business owner, you can submit advertisements to promote your business. Ads go through an admin approval process before being displayed.

How to Submit an Ad

1. Log into the Business Portal at `/portal`.
2. Select your business from the dropdown (if you have multiple businesses).
3. Scroll to the 📢 **Promote Your Business** section.
4. Click **+ New Ad** to open the ad submission form.
5. Fill in the following fields:

Ad Name	A short, descriptive name for your ad (e.g., "Summer Special")
Slot Size	Select from available ad zones (Hero Banner 728×90, Sidebar 300×250, Footer 468×60)
Image URL	URL to your ad image. Must match the zone's dimensions.
Target URL	Where visitors go when they click your ad (optional).

6. Click **Submit Ad for Review**. Your ad enters the approval queue.

⚠️ **Image Requirements:** Your ad image must match the selected zone's exact dimensions. A 728×90 image is required for the Hero Banner zone, 300×250 for Sidebar, and 468×60 for Footer. Images that don't match will be rejected.

Available Ad Zones

Zone Name	Dimensions	Location	Price
Hero Banner	728 × 90 px	Top of directory pages	Per admin pricing
Sidebar	300 × 250 px	Side panel on search results	Per admin pricing
Footer	468 × 60 px	Bottom of directory pages	Per admin pricing

Available zones and pricing are displayed in the slot size dropdown when you create an ad.

7. Ad Status & Earnings

Viewing Submitted Ads

After submitting ads, they appear in the **My Ads** list section. Each ad shows:

- **Ad Name** — The name you gave the ad.
- **Zone Info** — Which slot size and location.
- **Status** — One of three statuses:

⏳ Pending Review	Your ad is in the approval queue. The admin needs to review it.
✅ Approved	Your ad is approved and live on the directory. 🎉
❌ Rejected	Your ad was rejected. The rejection reason is shown next to the status.

If rejected, review the reason, fix the issue, and submit a new ad.

Viewing Ad Earnings

Once your ads are approved and running, you can track earnings:

1. Navigate to the 📢 **Promote Your Business** section in the portal.
2. Locate the 💰 **Ad Earnings** box (it appears automatically when you have active schedules with earnings).
3. The earnings box shows:
    - **Total Earned** — Cumulative earnings from all your approved ads.
    - **Active Schedules** — Number of ad schedules currently running.

💡 **Tip:** Earnings update periodically. Check back regularly to see how your ads are performing. Create multiple ads for different zones to maximize visibility.

8. Managing Reviews

Customer reviews build trust and help your business stand out. You can view all reviews and respond to them from the portal.

Viewing Reviews

Your reviews are displayed in the **Reviews** section of the portal.

- Each review shows the reviewer's name, star rating, text, and date.
- Reviews are sorted by date, newest first.
- The dashboard header shows your total review count and average rating.

Responding to a Review

1. Go to the **Reviews** section in the portal.
2. Find the review you want to respond to.
3. Click **Reply** below the review.
4. Type your response and click **Submit Reply**.
5. Your reply appears publicly below the review on the business detail page.

💡 **Tip:** Always respond professionally to both positive and negative reviews. Thank customers for positive feedback and address concerns in negative ones. A thoughtful response shows you care about customer experience.

Review Best Practices

- **Respond quickly** — Aim to respond within 24-48 hours.
- **Be professional** — Keep responses courteous and helpful.
- **Address specifics** — Reference what the reviewer mentioned.
- **Take it offline** — For complaints, offer to discuss further via phone or email.
- **Don't argue** — If a review is unfair, respond professionally without being defensive.
- **Encourage reviews** — Ask satisfied customers to leave a review to build your rating.

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9. ZaarHub Loyalty Program & Scanner

As a ZaarHub business, you can sign up to the **ZaarCash loyalty programme** — ZaarHub's own loyalty programme, native to the directory (not a third-party service). Customers earn ZaarCash at your business and redeem it for real savings — driving repeat visits. Your staff process transactions using the mobile **Scanner PWA**.

ZaarCash in one breath: members earn **1 ZaarCash per $1.00** of earnable spend and **100 ZaarCash = $1.00** (1 ZaarCash = 1¢). Redemption is capped at **10% of a bill**, a member must bank at least **100 ZaarCash** before redeeming, and **free or fully discounted items earn nothing**. The wallet is **network-wide** — earned and spent in every ZaarHub city, with new cities joining the same programme automatically. Only businesses that **sign up** participate; participants show the **ZaarCash 💎 badge**.

Exactly What You Pay & What You Get Back

Your one cost: the issuance buy-in. When you reward a customer with ZaarCash, you pay **$0.01 (1¢) per ZaarCash** (1 ZaarCash = 1¢ of customer value). There are no monthly fees, no hidden per-transaction charges, and no cost just to be listed as participating.

Issue 1 ZaarCash (on a $1.00 purchase)	**You are billed $0.01**
Typical $25.00 sale → 25 ZaarCash	**You are billed $0.25**
$50.00 sale → 50 ZaarCash	**You are billed $0.50**

When you accept ZaarCash: if a customer pays you with their ZaarCash, you are reimbursed **$0.008 per ZaarCash** honored.

Honor 1 ZaarCash of customer value	**You are reimbursed $0.008**
Customer redeems 10 ZaarCash ($0.10 off)	**You are reimbursed $0.08**
Customer redeems 100 ZaarCash ($1.00 off)	**You are reimbursed $0.80**

Your monthly ledger tracks both sides. If you issue more than you accept, your net position is negative (you paid out). If you accept more than you issue, it's positive (you're owed money). Your operator can pull the exact ledger anytime. Note that a member can pay at most **10% of a bill** with ZaarCash and must hold at least **100 ZaarCash** first — so your reimbursement per sale is naturally small.

> 💡 **Think of it as targeted marketing:** the $0.01 per ZaarCash you issue puts real buying power in a customer's wallet — power they're encouraged to spend at participating businesses like yours. ZaarCash earned at one partner brings customers to every partner, including you, in every ZaarHub city.

Redemption Rules

ZaarCash redemption is governed by the programme rules — the same for every participating business, whatever the category:

Redemption cap	at most **10% of a bill** may be paid with ZaarCash — on a $40 bill that is $4.00
Minimum balance	a member must hold at least **100 ZaarCash ($1.00)** before redeeming any
Free items	**earn nothing** — only the paid subtotal of a bill earns ZaarCash

Why it matters: the 10% cap and the 100-ZaarCash minimum keep the programme's exposure small and predictable, and they apply automatically at redemption — no category exemptions, no manual work at the register. Earn rate, cap %, minimum balance and the free-items rule are all programme settings the directory operator controls.

> 💡 **ZaarCash expires after 365 days** on a rolling basis, which keeps unredeemed liability healthy and encourages customers to redeem at the register — benefiting you.

How Loyalty Appears on Your Profile

Every business profile page at `/biz/:slug/:id` includes a **"ZaarHub Rewards"** section that shows:

- **Your program details** — Currency name (ZaarCash 💎), earn rate (1 ZaarCash per $1 spent)
- **Customer's loyalty status** — When logged in, customers see their ZaarCash balance and scannable QR code
- **"Join ZaarHub Rewards"** button for new customers who haven't enrolled yet
- **"🔍 Scan to Earn"** button linking to the scanner for your staff

The loyalty section fetches live data from the directory's own native loyalty engine. No separate app needed — it renders inline on your business listing.

Using the ZaarHub Scanner for Transactions

The scanner at `https://zaarhub.com/scanner` is your staff's point-of-sale loyalty tool. It works on any device with a camera — phone, tablet, or laptop.

Quick setup:

1. Go to `zaarhub.com/scanner` on your device
2. Sign in with your business credentials
3. The scanner auto-detects your business name and category
4. Add it to your phone's home screen for instant one-tap access (it's a PWA)

Three scan types available:

✅ **Check-in**	Award a check-in bonus in ZaarCash for visiting (10 ZaarCash by default). No purchase amount needed.
💳 **Purchase**	Customer earns ZaarCash on the purchase total (1 ZaarCash per $1). Enter the amount.
🎁 **Redeem**	Customer uses their ZaarCash balance. ZaarCash is deducted up to the programme's **10% bill cap**, and only once they hold at least **100 ZaarCash**.

Transaction flow: Select scan type → Scan customer's QR code → Enter amount (for Purchase/Redeem) → Click Process → ZaarCash awarded instantly.

> 💡 **Tip:** The scanner auto-generates a unique transaction ID for every scan — great for audit trails and dispute resolution. All data flows to the MultiDirectory clearinghouse for accurate billing and reimbursement.

💎 Your ZaarCash programme terms — the business view

The rules above are the network's defaults. What matters most is that **you own your numbers**: earn rate, redemption cap, minimum balance and whether free items earn are *your* settings — the terms your customers see. Another business in the same network may run different numbers, and ZaarCash is the programme's currency (💎) — never "points", never "credits".

🏪 What the programme does for you

- **Repeat footfall:** a customer balance with your name on it is a reason to come back, and the wallet is network-wide — visitors from other ZaarHub cities bring balances with them
- **You set the economics:** earn rate, 10%-style redemption cap, minimum balance and free-item treatment are all yours, so nothing pays out beyond your ceiling
- **Optional and reversible:** participation is opt-in and you may change your rates at any time
- **Auditable:** every scanner transaction carries a unique ID, so earned and redeemed value is traceable when you reconcile
- **Zero development:** a 💎 badge on your listing, the scanner PWA, and your settings in the Business Portal

Read the full ZaarCash programme guide for businesses →

⚠️ **DISCLAIMER — FOR BUSINESSES**

Participation is optional and you control the numbers — earn rate, redemption cap, minimum balance and whether free items earn. ZaarCash you issue is funded by you: ZaarHub does not reimburse redeemed value, and the discount comes out of your margin, so treat it as a marketing cost and account for it as such.

You are responsible for honouring redemptions validly issued under your settings and for the tax treatment of the discounts you give. You may change your rates at any time; balances already earned remain redeemable under the rules in force when they were earned.

ZaarHub does not guarantee any increase in sales, footfall or retention, and may suspend a business that abuses the programme or repeatedly fails to honour redemptions.

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9. Updating Business Profile

Keep your business listing accurate and up to date. A complete profile attracts more customers.

What You Can Edit

Business Name	Your official business name
Address	Street, city, state, zip code
Phone	Primary contact number
Website	Your business website URL
Hours	Days and hours of operation
Description	Rich text description of your business
Photos	Upload up to 10 images
Categories	Select or change your business category

Editing Your Profile

1. From the portal dashboard, locate the **Business Info** or **Profile** section.
2. Click the **Edit** button next to the field you want to update.
3. Make your changes in the form that appears.
4. Click **Save** to apply changes. They appear on the public listing immediately.

Uploading Photos

Photos can be uploaded from the profile editing section:

- Click **Add Photo** and select an image from your device.
- Supported formats: JPG, PNG, WebP (max 5MB each).
- You can reorder photos by dragging them.
- Click the delete icon to remove a photo.

💡 **Tip:** A complete profile with photos, updated hours, and a detailed description gets up to 3× more views than a basic listing.

10. Verification Badges & Trust Signals

Once your business is claimed and verified, you earn trust badges that help visitors identify your business as legitimate and reputable. These badges display prominently on your listing card and detail page.

Available Badges

✅ Verified Owner

Automatically awarded when your claim is approved. Shows you're the legitimate owner. This is the most important badge — it tells visitors the listing is maintained by the real business.

⭐ Top Rated

Awarded when your business maintains a 4.5+ star average rating across a minimum number of reviews. Updates automatically as new reviews come in.

🏆 Editor's Pick

Hand-selected by directory admins for quality, uniqueness, or community value. Not every business gets this — it's a mark of distinction from the curation team.

💡 **Tip:** The Verified Owner badge appears automatically after claim approval. For Top Rated, focus on providing great service and politely asking satisfied customers to leave reviews. Editor's Pick is earned through consistent quality and community engagement.

11. Posting Deals & Events

Drive foot traffic and engagement by posting deals and events for your business. These appear on your listing, in the ZaarHub carousel, and in the community events feed.

Creating a Deal / Coupon

1. Log into the Business Portal at `/portal` and go to the **Deals** tab.
2. Click **+ New Deal** and fill in the deal details: title, description, discount type (percentage or fixed amount), original price vs. deal price, and optional coupon code.
3. Set the **start and end dates**. Deals auto-activate and auto-expire — no manual management needed.
4. Toggle **Featured** if you want the deal highlighted in the ZaarHub carousel and directory spotlight section.
5. Click **Publish Deal**. It appears on your listing and in the deals feed immediately.

Creating an Event

1. Go to the **Events** tab in your portal dashboard.
2. Click **+ New Event** and enter the event name, date/time, location, description, and optional image.
3. Select a category (e.g., Workshop, Sale, Community, Networking) to help visitors find it.
4. Click **Publish Event**. It appears in the community events feed and on your business listing.

💡 **Tip:** Featured deals get priority placement in the ZaarHub carousel. If you're running a limited-time promotion, mark it as Featured for maximum visibility. Events with images get 2× more RSVPs than text-only event listings.

12. Data Freshness on Your Listing

Visitors see a **Data Freshness Timestamp** on your business listing that shows when your information was last verified. This builds trust by showing visitors that your data is current.

- **What visitors see:** A small badge or text on your listing like "Data last updated: August 2026 from Google Places" or "Verified 2 weeks ago."
- **Automatic updates:** When the directory platform enriches your listing from third-party sources (Google Places, Yelp), the timestamp is updated automatically.
- **Manual refresh:** After you update your profile in the Business Portal, your data freshness timestamp updates to reflect the most recent change.
- **Why it matters:** Listings with recent freshness timestamps get more clicks, calls, and visits. Visitors trust active, maintained listings more than stale ones.

💡 **Tip:** Keep your listing data accurate. Update your hours before holidays, add seasonal photos, and verify your phone number regularly. Every update refreshes your data timestamp, signaling to visitors that you're an active business.

13. URL Cleanliness

The platform automatically cleans your website URL to keep it tidy and professional. When you submit your website during claiming or profile editing, the system strips tracking parameters before storing it.

- **What gets removed:** Over 30 tracking parameters including `utm_source`, `utm_medium`, `utm_campaign`, `fbclid`, `ref`, `gclid`, and more.
- **How it displays:** On server-rendered pages, your URL shows as a clean domain name — e.g., "aspendental.com" instead of a long UTM-laden URL. It looks professional and is easier for visitors to read and remember.
- **No action needed:** URL cleaning happens automatically. You don't need to do anything — just submit your normal website URL and the system handles the rest.
- **What stays:** The core domain and path are preserved. Only tracking/analytics query parameters are removed.

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14. Near-Me Visibility

Visitors can search for businesses near their current location using the **Near-Me Geolocation** feature. This helps nearby customers find your business when they're in the area.

- **How it works:** Visitors click the "Near Me" button or allow location access in their browser. The directory shows businesses sorted by distance from their current position.
- **What you need to do:** Make sure your business address is accurate and complete. The geolocation feature uses your listed address to calculate distance — an incomplete or outdated address means you won't appear in near-me results.
- **Impact on visibility:** Businesses with accurate addresses appear in near-me results for visitors within the search radius. This is especially valuable for restaurants, retail, and service businesses where proximity matters.

⚠️ **Important:** If your address changes, update it immediately in your Business Portal. A wrong address means you'll show up in near-me results for the wrong location — or not show up at all for visitors near your actual location.

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15. Role Switcher

The header navigation includes a **Role Switcher** dropdown that lets you toggle between different platform views without logging out and back in.

- **Visitor view** — Browse directories, search businesses, and save favorites as a regular user.
- **Business Owner view** — Access your Business Portal, manage your listing, post deals and events, and track performance.
- **Supplier view** — If you're also registered as a supplier, switch to manage your product catalog, orders, and business connections.

Look for the role switcher icon in the top-right header area. Click it to see available roles based on your account. No need to maintain multiple logins — one account, multiple roles.

💡 **Tip:** If you manage both a business listing and a supplier account, the role switcher makes it easy to jump between managing your business profile and your supplier catalog. All from the same account.

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16. Your Business on the Notifications Ticker

When you post a deal, get verified, or receive a glowing review, your business may appear in the **Notifications Ticker** — the scrolling activity bar on the directory and ZaarHub frontends. This is free visibility driven by your platform activity.

📡 What Triggers an Appearance

🏷️ **New Deal Posted**	Each time you post a new deal or promotion, it can appear in the ticker. Include clear deal titles — they become the ticker text.
✅ **Claim Verified**	When your business claim is approved, a ticker entry announces your verified status to visitors.
⭐ **New Review**	High-rated reviews (4+ stars) may trigger a ticker mention, bringing attention to your positive customer feedback.
🔄 **Profile Update**	Major profile updates (new photos, changed hours, new services) can generate a ticker entry to let visitors know your listing is current.

📈 Maximizing Ticker Visibility

- **Post deals regularly** — Each new deal is a potential ticker entry. Rotate promotions weekly to stay visible.
- **Keep your profile fresh** — Update photos, hours, and services seasonally. Profile updates signal activity and may trigger ticker mentions.
- **Encourage reviews** — After a great customer interaction, politely ask them to leave a review. High-rated reviews get ticker exposure.
- **Respond to reviews** — Active engagement shows visitors you're attentive and may increase the likelihood of review-based ticker appearances.

💡 **Tip:** The ticker is fully automatic — you don't need to submit anything or pay extra. Just run your business well on the platform and the ticker picks up your activity naturally.

⚠️ **Note:** Ticker appearances are not guaranteed for every event. The ticker has a limited number of slots and prioritizes recent activity. An older entry may rotate out before all visitors see it.
