

*Start Thinking Local!
Why a Local Search Strategy
Is No Longer an Option.*

LOCAL SEARCH MARKETING





Why a Local Search Strategy Is No Longer an Option

Anyone with even a little experience in the SEO industry knows that, when Google changes direction and tweaks their algorithm, the entire online marketing world must adjust accordingly.

Google's goal is, and always has been, to provide users with as seamless a search experience as possible. And, with each and every tweak and shift in that direction, be it major or minor, there are resulting, and sometimes drastic effects on the way users search, and the way marketers must market.

Last year saw a seemingly endless list of changes and adjustments, but there were a couple that had particularly significant effects on local search. The first was the release of Google My Business, a service that makes it easier than ever for local businesses to add photos, check out reviews, and update all their information across Google search, maps, and Google+. It puts it all in one manageable location.

Another tweak that affected local search was the release of Pigeon, Google's new local search ranking algorithm, which brought with it new levels of accuracy and specificity.

Google wanted to give users performing local queries a more useful, relevant experience, so they improved their distance and locations ranking parameters and modified how they process and interpret location cues.

Pigeon displays virtually the same results in both the search and map areas, where results used to typically differ. The new algorithm also allows Google to provide users with information about local spots just outside of the searched-for neighborhood too. More and more, search engines are losing their robotic feel and becoming somewhat intuitive.

Overall, recent changes like these have made it easier for users, potential customers, to find local businesses, and for those businesses to create and maintain a solid and meaningful web presence. But make no mistake. Although these changes had particularly drastic effects on local search, they also present incredible incentives to bigger brands, brands focused more on their national presence than their local one.

While you may have little concern for attracting local foot traffic, that doesn't mean you can't benefit from these changes too. So, do whatever it takes to ensure your brand finds its way onto the local search landscape, and try to take advantage of all the traffic generated from local search, or you'll be missing out.

Important Ranking Factor Changes Over the Past Year

Local search ranking parameters, like everything else in the SEO industry, are in a constant state of motion. A lot of it stems from the fact that, when any tweak is made to an algorithm, there are always some inevitable backfires that need to be remedied. But no matter the reason, you need to keep up regardless.

Every part of search is affected by these changes; there are no exceptions. General ranking factors, negative ranking factors, Pigeon-affected factors, the factors with the heaviest influence on local results, etc., they're all part of the domino effect that results from that initial adjustment.

All this past year's changes show a clear indication of the increasing value in:

- Behavior signals such as click-through rates and social shares
- Gaining authority through quality inbound links

- Local directory listings ranking above a business's website in local and major results
- Proximity of searcher to products, services and businesses being searched for

Every Business Needs These Local Search Basics To Find Success

Local search, from a marketing perspective, is really just local in name. Of course, there are some tools and practices that will work better for local campaigns than national ones, but they both require the same fundamental elements. A local search optimization plan should have the same endgame in mind as a national campaign. The essentials shouldn't change, which are maintaining brand consistency, promoting productive user behavior, and enhancing your web presence.

Maintaining Brand Consistency

In this day and age, there's more competition than ever. The consistency in your brand message and tone is often the best way to give your target audience some much needed confidence in your business. Many companies play it a little too fast and loose when it comes to certain aspects of their marketing plan like logos, colors, slogans, jingles, or even their core beliefs and values.

Regulating and maintaining online brand references, ensuring your information is consistent across all business directories, establishing firm values, and using all your assets consistently to unify your brand, all help to establish your identity. Setting up an area to store all these types of brand assets so that your team is drawing from the same well can be helpful. Then, as your target audience's preferences evolve, it comes down to how well you can adapt to keep up with the times, yet still maintain some semblance of the personality and voice you've had to work very hard to establish.

The best brands can be recognized when the usual giveaways, like a logo or slogan, aren't even present.

Enhancing Your Web Presence

Just like with establishing your brand identity, the consistency of your business information in directory listings, and the elimination of duplicate listings, are crucial to enhancing your brand's online presence. These kinds of listings are often a business's first point of contact, its first impression, with potential customers. Make sure all the information is accurate and current.

Nowadays, though, occasionally updating your information is not enough. To build a genuinely meaningful web presence, you'll need to widen your digital footprint to the various social media platforms out there like Facebook, Twitter, and Vine.

Too many people are flocking to these kinds of platforms to ignore. They go to find new and interesting content and to be a part of a community. You need to put your business in the right places, connect with the right communities, in order to truly build your web presence.

Promoting Productive User Behavior

Studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between user signals and search engine ranking. Promoting useful and productive user behavior is crucial. Productive user behavior consists of solid click-through rates, low bounce rates, and a relatively high average of time users spends on the website. You need to use analytics to track the path users take and find out where you're typically losing them. From there, as always, high-quality relevant content is the best way to increase your visitors' time on site.

Another aspect of user behavior that's becoming increasingly important is the value of social signals, generated through elements like social media engagement and online reviews. Reviews and testimonials are often the most important part of the research phase for many potential customers during the purchase process. You can display local relevance by including geographical information near the customer reviews or testimonials.

So, no matter if you're casting your net locally or are planning a national campaign, and no matter how Google tweaks their algorithm, there are some fundamental marketing practices that are crucial to any search strategy. You must maintain brand consistency, enhance your web presence, and promote productive user behavior.

Search Knows No Such Thing As Segregation

A clear sign that came with Google's Pigeon update indicated they're continuing their efforts to level the playing field for local businesses. Their main algorithm and local search algorithm are more closely linked than ever before. That means that, no matter who your business is targeting, or where, your search strategy needs to include a thorough testing phase in which you can find out which tools and practices are best for your business and industry.

When all else fails, check out the competition. See who's ranking the highest and find out how they did it. Not just how they got there initially either, but find out what they do to stay there. Then, don't just steal their ideas and tactics; build on them. Take the elements of your competitor's plan that seem to be working and do everything you can to take them to another level when applying them to your search strategy.

The way Google constantly tweaks their algorithm, it's easy to get overwhelmed, but try to remember that the goals of the search engines remain the same. So, the goals of any search strategy should remain the same too. You want to establish your brand presence online and promote your website and message so that users can easily find you when they search within your industry. Like any marketing strategy, it's imperative to consistently measure and track the results of your efforts to gain an understanding of how you're generating leads and where they're coming from. Then, you can do some tweaking of your own, evolve accordingly, and reach more potential customers than ever before.

Let's talk about your marketing.

It's hard to stay on top of things when it comes to finding and maintaining a prominent position in the search rankings. The rules are constantly changing. That's where we come in. We at Climb The Search are always here to help.

So, whether you're trying to generate more leads, increase traffic to your site, enhance your web presence, improve your overall online visibility, or you're looking for some assistance in all categories, we can make it happen.

We truly listen and learn the ins and outs of every business we work with. We genuinely believe that... Your Success Is Our Success.

[REQUEST YOUR FEE
CONSULTATION](#)