

BEGINNERS GUIDE FOR LOCAL SEO



CHAPTER 1

Biggest SEO Challenges faced by Local Business Owners



Local SEO bears very high potential in the era of the targeted local market. More than 50% of visitors seeking to purchase a particular product prefer to find a local store or business.

SEO is the lifeline of any business as it creates awareness about your brand, builds reputation and generates organic traffic for your website. SEO for local businesses helps to convert as much as 60% searches into sales. SEO is a primary tool for digital marketers, but they encounter potential problems in delivering quality results for local businesses.

Let us discuss these problems before trying to overcome them in our effort to maximize sales for local business owners.

Lack of Location-specific Content

High-quality content is the content that is relevant, original, and caters to the local audience. Most websites lack location-specific content, hence cannot compete with heavily funded sites. Targeted customers are unable to find any content that meets their requirements. Hence SEO on such websites does not yield any fruitful results.

Solution

- Location centric keywords- Webmasters should pay heed to keywords that are used by local customers, searching for a particular product or service on the internet.
- Original content- There should not be any duplication of content because Google algorithms dump websites that portray repeated content.
- Alt tags- Alt tags should also incorporate local keywords other than the main content.
- Title tags- Care should be taken to optimize the title tags. Include your business name in the title tags. Do not forget that the internal pages of a website are also very important to make a website visible to search engines.
- Meta tags- Meta tags should contain location-specific content.

Lack of Location-specific pages

Local pages or city pages deal with a specific area your serve. You can have a different version of these pages for every region, city, or country that you work for.

Location-specific pages are crucial for your business as they help target the kind of customers you want for your business. All your digital marketing efforts will go in vain without local pages, and you will lose on leads.

Solution

- Optimize your page title to include not only your brand name but also the elements of a local area, along with your products and services.

- Instead of just focussing on the generic pages such as 'Home,' 'About Us,' and 'Services,' add local-centric terms to your page title.

Inconsistent NAP Details

It is essential for the NAP details i.e., the Name, Address, and Phone Number of your business to be consistent across your pages. Local SEO utilizes this locally centered information to tap targeted customers, and NAP is the primary point of contact for customers to approach you for your product or service.

Solution

- Get your NAP details listed in major Search Directories.
- Check for any duplicate listings in the search directories.
- If your listings contain any inconsistent NAP details, get them rectified by your support representatives.

Multiple or Incorrect Listings on Google

Pages that have multiple or incorrect listings will be ranked low by search engines.

Accuracy and consistency are the two basic criteria used for ranking websites by search engines. Many times the home page entries in your listings may point to a different URL, which is a deterrent for Local SEO.

Solution

- Make different listings point to one URL only
- Claim your website to be listed on Google My Business and other major directories.
- If your business is located in multiple cities or countries, include a separate landing page for each location.

Lack of Social Media Presence

Local Businesses that do not have a good presence in social media channels do not well work with online businesses. Social Media has crept into the lives of people so much so that they will not buy your product or service if you do not show up well on social media.

Solution

- Follow Facebook Marketing Solutions to guide you through increasing your presence on Facebook.
- Utilize the guidelines set by 'Twitter for small Business' to mark your presence felt on Twitter.

Lack of Good citations

Local citations significantly impact local search engine rankings. A local citation is an online reference to the NAP of a business in local business directories, apps, or social media. These citations help online customers unearth new businesses.

Incorrect citations misdirect customers, which results in loss of reputation and revenue.

Solution

- You should discover and build a relationship with the sources from where citations for your business can be generated.
- Placing authoritative content on your website and using relevant keywords is critical for other businesses to cite in their pages.

Absence of good reviews

Lack of good reviews adversely affects local SEO. People purchase a product or service only when they have sufficient trust in the brand. The only source online customers can rely on for building faith in an online product is through other people's reviews and feedback. People will trust a product if they can see positive reviews about the product.

Solution

- Follow guidelines set by Google My Business when you ask your customers to post reviews about your product.
- Posting false or fake reviews can sham your reputation. Refrain from doing so because once proven, you cannot earn back the trust of your customers.
- Include a page on your site for customers to post reviews. A system for managing reviews can be helpful.

Lack of good local SEO service providers

SEO requires a team of technically-skilled people to optimize your website. Local businesses have been suffering from the paucity of SEO service providers. Local business owners have been doing everything on their own, resulting in bad SEO results.

Solution

- Avail the services of a reputed and knowledgeable digital marketing agency.
- To boost your local marketing results in its entirety, the SEO team should also be proficient in content, social media, and mobile marketing.

[Local SEO services](#) are a must for Small and Medium-scale Businesses because they target a local audience. Obstacles are many, requiring reasonable SEO efforts of an expert marketing company. The tips and guidelines presented in this article should prove valuable.

For more details, please refer to chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

How To Use Client Reviews For Local SEO



Why is Local SEO Optimization important?

The key to the success of any business is Local Search Engine Optimization. Listings on platforms like Tripadvisor, Yelp, Foursquare, Facebook, etc. can do wonders for a business. Getting on the first page of Google is a much sought after the aim of SEO. Local SEO encourages traffic of relevant customers to a business directly.

Local SEO delivers results that are more specific. It helps local searchers to locate local businesses. People, nowadays perform local searches for the product that they wish to buy rather than going to the market directly.

Local SEO offers a better conversion rate as the traffic is more targeted. A customer who is in the area of the business he is searching for is more likely to contact your business.

Your website is the virtual office of your business. With the help of local SEO, customers can easily interact with your business.

SEO can be grouped into four main parts

1) On-Page SEO

Non-technical on-page SEO, would consider the following

- Content
- Keyword Selection
- Keyword Placement
- Design
- Layout

2) Technical SEO

The following areas come under Technical SEO :

- Website Structure
- Link Structure
- Meta Tags
- Usability & Friendliness
- Indexability
- Image Optimization
- Site Speed
- Code
- Errors
- Schema

3) Off-Page SEO

Off-page SEO comprises of techniques to improve your website's rank that are done off your website.

There are numerous tactics you can use that help with link building;

- Social Bookmarking
- Blog & Forum Commenting
- Content Marketing
- Social Media
- Link Outreach
- Guest Posts
- Interviews
- Review

You can ask users to provide their reviews on your services (or products). People generally prefer to go through other customers' reviews before making a purchase. A feedback or suggestion section is also desirable. Here anyone can give you suggestions or ideas for further improvement and extension of your business.

4) Local SEO

It is necessary to implement local search strategies in order to make your business visible. Most often, businesses think of local SEO as getting listed on a number of different search directories. Although this is important, it should not be the sole motto.

How are Client Reviews important in local SEO?

It is important for a business to know what their customers think about them. It is only then that a business can pave the way for improvements and innovations.

In order to boost your business's local reputation, you need more and more positive reviews.

Which restaurant would you rather go to? XY&Z with no online profile, a 3-star rated joint with dissatisfied customer posts or a 5-star rated multi-cuisine restaurant with dozens of glowing reviews?

You are most likely to opt for the safest choice and get value for money i.e. the restaurant with plenty of positive reviews of satisfied customers.

Consumers are highly influenced by online reviews.

So the more quality, positive reviews you get, the higher your chances are of convincing customers to choose to spend their money on your business.

You need to prominently display these reviews on your website!

Six ways reviews can help SEO

Fresh user-generated content available

UGC can be in the form of forms, question-and-answer forums, reviews, blogs, social media posts, etc. It provides access to fresh content from users concerning the business and a forum for businesses to respond immediately to issues and concerns of customers. This instills a sense of belief and trust in a business.

Encourages use of long-tailed keywords

People reviewing your site are your actual customers and you know the specific keywords that they are going to text in while seeking a particular service. Hence the more the reviews, the more the customer traffic, and the more the inflow of regular business.

Boosts social conversation

Social media like Twitter, Facebook, etc are an excellent platform to encourage product sales. Reviews posted on such sites are a way to publicize products and services. Positive reviews about a product can boost sales by way of mouth to mouth publicity. Hence social strategy helps a business to yield returns by leaps and bounds.

Local SEO services

The ever-changing nature of SEO has made the task of Search Engine Optimization a complex one. The issues that need to be catered to while optimizing the Search Engine are:-

- A blog that enlists specific aspects concerning the product/services. The blog should also essentially mention the characteristics of the community that the product or service is deemed to cater to.
- The business should endeavor to mark its presence in all local listing pages.
- Use of the most appropriate local keywords and using them optimally all over the site. Using such keywords would reap huge traffic to the site.
- Local newspapers and advertising agencies can help gain access to the local market.
- The website should be compatible to run all platforms and devices, be it mobile, laptops, desktops and so on.

- The customers should be invited and encouraged to post their reviews whenever they visit a page on the website
- All efforts should be made to publicize the product/services on all social media platforms.
- Visual content attracts viewers to a website, so they should be incorporated optimally on websites to increase traffic.
- Regular updation of a website so that they display the most relevant information.

This list might seem trivial but it requires regular monitoring and choosing the best SEO company. You need to be constantly on your toes else you might just lose in the hands of competitors.

Why are Local SEO Services Important for your Business?

Local Search Engine Optimization helps a business mark its presence in the local market. Hence the choice of SEO company is crucial. Customers looking for a specific product or service prefer a local provider over one situated in a different city or State. A good SEO company will help a business to capture all local customers and market the product/services in the most efficient manner.

Some advantages of Local SEO are:

- Local SEO targets the internet savvy customers. Mobiles, laptops are accessible to customers all the time. These devices serve as a planner and guide to them. A single click or search helps them view hundreds of local suppliers from which they need to make a choice.
- The digital revolution has made the tradition phone books obsolete. The internet is the answer to all queries and requirements. SEO takes the lead in all promotional campaigns of a business.
- For Local searches two things hold prime importance-marketing should be targetted and timely. The task of Local Seo is to make a product /service visible to the audience it is deemed to cater to. Local SEO also ensures timely response to user requests and queries.
- The rate of conversion of Local SEO is by any means higher than any print media or other forms of traditional advertisements. Hence Local SEO most efficiently and economically converts potential viewers into customers.

Local SEO strategies

Optimization of local listings and citations

Local SEO services would include optimizing local listings and citations. In order to get listed and have a good ranking on Google, you need to be a legitimate business owner.

These elements are:

- NAP
- Your Name, address, and phone number information should be consistent everywhere. You need to make sure that you enter the same address information across the web.
- Schema

Adding schema markups for NAP helps search engines to have a better idea of your business. With Schema markups, search engines are able to generate good local listings and attracting more relevant users to a website.

For local listings and citations the following information is also required:

- NAP of the business.
- Website URL (list of internal location pages if more than one location).
- A short description (up to 50 characters) which includes your main city name and nature of business.
- A description of up to 250 characters that describes your identity and work.
- Recent photographs related to your business.
- Nature of your business.
- Specific keywords

Local citations are basically the description of a local business which may or may not include a link to the website. There are two strategies to create local citations

1. manually on your own
2. get a third party do the task for you

In the case of small scale local businesses, manually creating local citations is a good practice. In the case of SMB's local strategy is to get these listings:

- Google My Business
- Facebook
- Yahoo! Local (currently requires a payment to Yext)
- Apple Maps
- Bing Places for Business
- MapQuest
- Nokia
- Yelp
- BBB.org
- Superpages
- TripAdvisor
- Foursquare
- Angie's List
- Home Advisor
- Thumbtack

In case you hire a third party to gather local citations, you have to submit details like NAP, URL, etc.

Optimizing your website and its content.

The content on a website should be optimized by take care of these :

- Proper Keyword Research: The choice of keywords should be such that the site attracts the most relevant customers to a site.
- Well written content: Pages that are written well, having good grammar and correct spellings rank better than otherwise.
- Descriptive page titles: The page titles should include keyword phrases and at the same time include a small description. This helps in achieving a better ranking.
- Header tags: The header tags should include keyword phrases.
- Optimized URL's: Use keyword phrases in URLs.
- Page load time: The pages that have a lesser loading time rank better.
- Internal Linking: Linking your content with internal pages on your site helps viewers in navigating your site.
- Mobile-friendly design: Website should be compatible to run on all platforms like mobile etc. Almost all users today have access to smartphones. So, a website that is not able to show up on a mobile device will ultimately result in loss of traffic.

Optimizing and working on the links to your website.

Using link analysis search engines can figure out how one page is linked to the other. Pages within a site should be linked to other pages to facilitate the navigation process.

Reviews can also be managed like this:

- Encourage customers to post reviews.
- A small team to handle reviews can be of great help.
- Incorporate a link on your website where customers can post reviews.
- Add a form or a comment box where customers can leave reviews.

The sales process is all about answering queries, responding to feedback, and planning strategies for a business keeping in mind these reviews and feedback. The more responsive you are to queries, reviews and feedback, the more you can change a prospect into a customer. Hence Client Reviews for local SEO play a vital role in a business.

CHAPTER 3

How to build backlinks for Local Business Website?



Backlinks have been a metric for ranking pages way back since the late 1990s for Google algorithms. Since then, the importance of backlinks has been on the rise, and it will continue to do so for years to come.

The concept behind backlinks is simple and easy to understand. When people read your content and find it of value, they link their blogs and articles to your website. The more the number of links pointing to a website, more significant is its value for Google and thus higher its page rank.

So, an optimized website is similar to a treasure trove because it provides free search engine unpaid traffic to your website. Higher the number of backlinks, more the number of visitors because a heavily linked website implies excellent quality content. After all, why will people link to your piece of content in their blog? Only when your content stimulates their inner monologue!

Building backlinks is not that simple! It demands much hard work on your website to be seen and appreciated by your visitors.

Links were trivial to build some time back, but for 2020, the picture is not so rosy! The whole process requires a lot of creativity, networking, consistent hard work, and strong social skills.

Following a proper strategy can help you acquire backlinks for your local business.

1. Quality content is the key

Posting fresh, original content regularly is at the core of an effective link building strategy for local businesses. Your website holds tremendous value for webmasters if they can read something new and informative. They will link to your sites in their blogs and likewise ask you to link their content in your valuable content. The links that you earn with your quality content are like saved money, which continues to augment your precious resource of backlinks from reputed brands.

2. Blogging and Guest Posting

Guest blogging is one of the best tactics to build essential links. Links add value to a post or blog by furnishing additional information and resources. When we are posting as a guest on somebody else's blog, we are establishing a relationship with him. This relationship serves as a resource for higher domain authority, exposure, and high-quality links.

Google considers links as the primary criterion for ranking websites.

3. Market your content on social media

There are two necessary steps to building authoritative backlinks to your website naturally. First of all, produce high-quality content that people will be tempted to link to. Remember! Your content is your asset. Secondly, develop strategies to promote and market this content.

Your link building efforts should carefully align your content and social media efforts.

The use of content across social media channels increases the probability that more and more people will link to it.

4. Write testimonials and reviews to feature other brands

“92% of people will trust a recommendation from a peer, and 70% of people will trust a recommendation from someone they don’t even know.” —research by Nielsen.

These recommendations can be through testimonials, reviews, or even by word of mouth.

Social proofs have great potential for influencing a purchasing decision online.

As OptinMonster, co-founded by Syed Balkhi, writes:

“Social proof is a psychological phenomenon where people conform to the actions of others under the assumption that those actions are reflective of the correct behavior.”

You cannot just keep your brand overstated all the time. Instead, you should include some social proof in the form of testimonials for other brands as well. These testimonials work to establish a relationship with other brands who are more likely to return the favor to you in the form of backlinks.

5. Blog commenting

Blog commenting can serve as a beneficial tactic for building backlinks, provided they are used correctly and carefully.

Dropping in a few lines as a comment each day can yield a number of advantages for your brand. Start posting comments on blogs that have a significant following and receive much traffic.

Comments help in demonstrating your expertise on specific topics. Thus blog commenting can help you position your stand as an expert.

Commenting on blogs can help you reach your target audience easily.

If you are using your name and face while commenting on blogs, your authority and leadership will eventually be on the rise.

6. Ask for a backlink

Building backlinks is not an easy task. It cannot be done overnight. Hence, you have to speed up the entire process to have an ample volume of required backlinks for your site.

Here, asking for a backlink or backlink outreach proves helpful. Here, we reach out to the webmasters of other sites and ask them to link us on their piece of content.

We can reach out to companies via simple e-mail.

Backlink outreach speeds up the entire process of building backlinks. You do not have to wait for people to appreciate your valuable content. Instead, you can share your content with your peers and prove how worthwhile it will be to their audience.

7. Linking between pages

Internal links are crucial to attaining a high rank and page authority on Google. Internal links are the hyperlinks pointing to pages within the same domain.

A site that is linked internally helps Google to have a better understanding of the pages, and it is found and indexed more quickly by Google.

Links that connect your blog keep viewers engaged and they do not have to switch to another site for more information.

Hence internal links boost SEO and user experience.

8. Use Infographics

Infographics are a visual representation of data. The data should be well researched and provide some useful information if it is to be a deal for a compelling infographic. You can hire an expert or a professional designer to help you design an eye catching design for your infographic. You make this infographic go viral on social media channels or use outreach for promotion purposes.

9. Use Quora

On Quora, your name, website, and knowhow is well presented to an audience who is already interested in your niche topic. There is a higher likelihood that people on quora will follow your links if your link provides useful information to their queries. Quora helps discover a more targeted audience and thus boost your rankings and backlinks.

10. Create your own YouTube channel

Visual learning has always been the most effective and universal means of learning. Nearly 65% of people like to view rather than read about a particular piece of content. Youtube has always been a trendy medium for posting tutorials and informative visuals for people to like and follow.

You can advertise your name and brand in the best possible manner on your youtube channel. You can describe your product to your customers adequately as they can view your product from different angles.

You can add links to your website throughout your video. Thus Youtube is a resourceful place for using backlinks.

Digital Marketing is the best form of marketing your brand. Once you embrace YouTube, you will witness a hike in the number of visitors to your product.

....And Finally....

I hope the methods of building backlinks outlined in this article will prove worthwhile for your brand. However, these methods change with time. What works now might not work tomorrow. Innovation and consistent efforts are required for effective backlink building.