



# Your Local Business Guide to Digital Marketing

By Isabella Andersen

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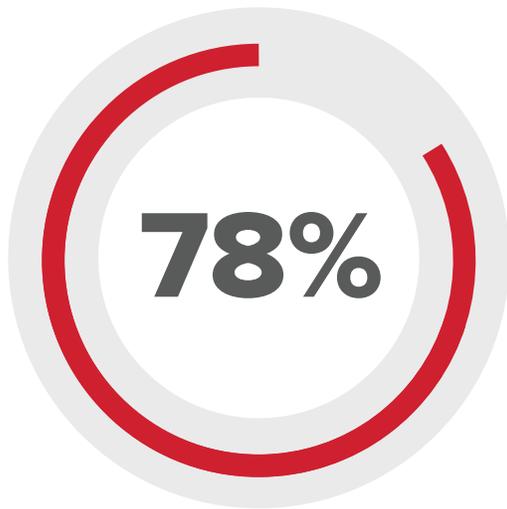
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# 1 Introduction

**D**id you know that 78 percent of local mobile searches result in an in-store purchase?<sup>1</sup> Consumers search online for businesses like yours every day, but are you showing up?



of local mobile searches end with an offline purchase.

If your business has no online marketing strategy, you will quickly fall behind the competition. It's time to build a digital footprint that drives foot traffic and sales and puts your business on the map.

We created this guide to help you put your business in front of the right consumers wherever they're searching.

# **2** **What is Local Search Marketing?**

**S**ome people call it local SEO. For others, it's map marketing.

Whatever you call it, local search marketing is all about putting your business on the map and into local search results online.

It's more important than ever that your business appears in the local results, since 72 percent of consumers who performed a local search visited a store within five miles.<sup>2</sup>

How can you do that?

### **Provide Consistent, Correct Information**

You have to tell search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo! where your business is located, what you do and that you're trustworthy, among other things.

In order for a search engine to trust your online information, it needs to be consistent across the web. This means your online info should be the same everywhere. Otherwise, you risk not showing up at all or having confusing, duplicate listings for your business in search results.



When we talk about online information, we're usually talking about your business's NAP (name, address and phone number) or NAPU (name, address, phone number and website URL).

Search engines will find your NAPU across online directories and websites that mention you. If they find incorrect or conflicting information on different websites, that info will have a negative impact on your search ranking.

If it's bad enough, your business won't show up at all in search results, and consumers will find a competitor instead of you if they search for businesses within your industry and location.

### **Wondering Where to Start With Local Digital Marketing?**

Here are a few business pages you'll need to claim and optimize:



**Google My Business**



**Yahoo!**



**Yelp**



**Bing Places for Business**

Those websites are extremely important, because each search engine (Google, Yahoo! or Bing) places a lot of importance on the information you add to your business page on their site.

Yelp is on this list because it shows up near the top of the search results in many locally focused and business-related searches.

Search engines like Google and Bing don't just take the information you give them as the only truth, though. They use information from four main sources: Infogroup, Acxiom, Localeze and Factual.

Put your business on the map today!

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To make things even more complicated, those four sources get their information from hundreds of online business directories. If you business's information is different in many directories, that will

confuse the search engine, and it won't know where or when to list your business in search results.<sup>3</sup>

But again, this is just a piece of what search engines need to know about your business. They also need correct categories.

### **Provide Correct Categories**

Don't forget to add appropriate, relevant categories for your business. For instance, restaurant is too general when adding categories to Google My Business. You need to be specific so that the search engine knows exactly what you do. This will help your business show up in the right searches at the right time for the right consumer!

### **Perform a Local Search Audit**

Now, let's go through a 5-step process to audit your local search ranking.

- 1** Clear your browser history and cache.
- 2** Open an incognito window and go to Google.com or Bing.com (Google is the most popular search engine).
- 3** Search for your industry and city (example: pizza Columbus Ohio). Did your business show up in the local search results? If so, were you at the top, or did you have to click “view more” and scroll to the bottom to find your business?
- 4** Search for your business’s name and location or phone number (example: RevLocal Granville Ohio).
- 5** Sort through the directories. Claim, complete and/or correct your NAPU. Some directories are free, but you have to pay for others.

If this is a little overwhelming, you can also pay for a directory clean-up service (or find a locally focused digital marketing agency, wink wink) to do this for you!

# **3** **Review & Reputation Management**

**N**ow that you've worked on your local search ranking, let's take a look at online reviews.

Did you know that 84 percent of consumers trust reviews more than they trust recommendations from friends and family? <sup>4</sup>

Here are a few more reasons online reviews are more important than you think:

- Reviews can boost your local search ranking, since they show search engines that your business is trustworthy <sup>5</sup>
- Customers will spend 31 percent more on a business with excellent reviews <sup>6</sup>
- 82 percent of consumers visit review sites because they want to make a purchase <sup>7</sup>

What are consumers looking for when they read your business's reviews? Here's a list of the most important aspects of online reviews for customers:



**Star Rating**



**Number of Reviews**



**Recency**



**Review Sentiment**

## **How to Get More Reviews**

So, how do you continuously get new reviews? It's easier than you think. All you have to do is ask. A whopping seven out of 10 consumers would leave a review if asked.

If you're hesitant to ask customers in person, ask for an email address at check-in or check-out and send out an email a week or so after the customer's visit.

Ask if they'd like to leave a review to help you out, and add links to your Google or Facebook profile (or an industry-specific site such as Angie's List or TripAdvisor, if your business is in need of more reviews on those sites). It's best to give the customer a few options so they don't have to create a new account.

If you make it as easy as possible to review your business, you're more likely to get a review. Consumers are lazy. I know. I'm one.



7 out of 10 consumers would  
leave a review if asked.<sup>8</sup>

### **How to Track Your Online Reviews**

There are tons of review sites out there, and it's impossible to keep track of every single website a customer could use to review your business.

The best way to go about tracking your reviews is to have a reputation management tool. We use a review and reputation platform called Renown to monitor, ask for and share new positive reviews.

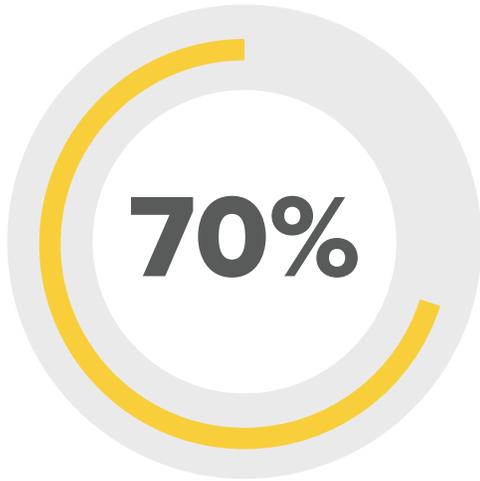
## What to Do With Negative Reviews

Negative reviews. Don't they make you want to go all Office Space on your computer? Still, if you respond angrily to a negative review, that makes your business look bad.

So, let's remove the emotion and go through this together step-by-step.

- 1** While it's hard, the best thing you can do is walk away. Take a few moments to breathe or drink a coffee or go for a run or call a friend to complain.
- 2** After you've had your break, re-read the review. Try to see it from the customer's perspective.
- 3** Start with "Hey [name]" and add in something that validates the customer's feelings. Here are some options:
  - "I'm sorry to hear that you had a bad experience"
  - "Looks like you didn't catch us on our best day"
- 4** Extend the olive branch:
  - "We'd love to make this right"
  - "Would you like to come in and talk about your experience?"
  - "Could you email us so we can discuss further?"
  - "Stop in tomorrow for a coupon for your next purchase"

Don't offer them compensation to change their review. Instead, genuinely try to make things right with the customer. While 91 percent of customers won't do business with you again after a bad experience, 70 percent of customers will return to your business after you resolve their complaint.<sup>9</sup> No need to give them your first born, but do what you can to make it right.



of the time a customer will return to your business after you resolve their complaint.

Print that checklist or save it to your desktop. Do whatever you need to do to have it handy in the unfortunate occasion that you get a less than stellar review. Follow my steps and you're on the right track to a sound review and reputation management strategy.

And if you don't have time to manage your reviews, you're in luck. That's something we can help you do!

Build a better online reputation now!

DISCOVER RENOWN

Check out [Renown](#), our automated review marketing platform that can help you get more reviews, manage negative reviews and share your reviews across Facebook, Twitter, and your microsite.

We love it. We think you will too.

# **4 Reach New Markets With Paid Advertising**

**W**e hear from plenty of businesses that have had not-so-great experiences with online advertising. In fact, 40 percent of small business owners think AdWords advertising is ineffective.<sup>10</sup>

While it's no fun to blow your budget on paid advertising only to see no ROI, it isn't surprising that this happens.

Online advertising, like many aspects of digital marketing, can be difficult if you lack the skills and experience to do it right. But, we still think you should give paid ads a try. Here's why:

### **Online Ads Can Be Extremely Beneficial**

Paid Advertising gives you the opportunity to put your business at the top of Google when leads are searching for your products or services. It also allows you to reach potential customers on multiple channels and multiple devices.

**PPC:**

A form of online advertising in which you are charged only when someone clicks on your ad.

Paid ads can also help drive sales and brand awareness.

Wondering what kind of ads you can create? In this guide, we'll discuss search ads, ads on social media and retargeting ads.

### **Search Ads**

Search ads show up in search results in browsers like Chrome, Internet Explorer or Firefox. So, if I Google "oil change," the first result to show up is an ad, and the organic (non-paid) results show

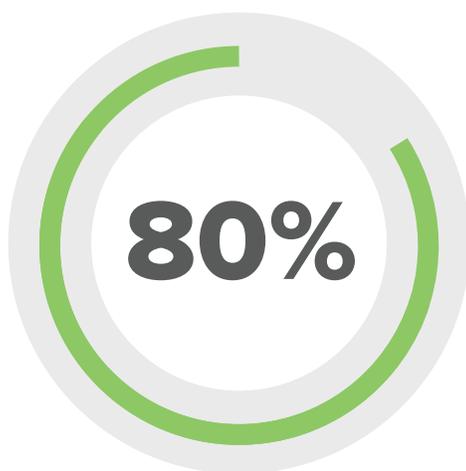
up after the ads.

That's probably why the top three ads also get 41 percent of the clicks in search results. They're the first thing a searcher sees. And since more people search on mobile devices than on desktop computers, they'd have to scroll down pretty far on their phones to get to an organic listing. They're probably going to click those ads at the top before they get the chance to see your organic listing.

Search ads are also a great way to build brand awareness. If you keep showing up in search results, even if the searcher doesn't click your ad the first couple of times during their research, they'll probably remember you anyway.

Search ads can show up in Google, Bing, Yahoo! or a number of other search engines. Ads can also show up in local map results!

That means that your business could show up at the top of the local search results even if you're still perfecting your local marketing strategy.



Ads in search results can increase brand awareness by around 80%.

## **Ads on Social Media**

Social media advertising can be a great way to drive traffic to your website, get more followers and build local awareness. Facebook and Instagram are great places to start, since Facebook is still the most popular social media platform (with more than 5 million active advertisers). Plus, Facebook owns Instagram, so your ads could show up in your target customers' Instagram newsfeeds too.

Get more clicks, calls and customers!

[SEE HOW](#)

## **Retargeting Ads**

Retargeting ads are a great way to target customers who have already been to your website and left. Retargeting ads keep your business at the forefront of your customers' minds while they are researching and making purchase decisions.

# **5** **Get Started With Social Media**

**W**hile there are more social media platforms than you could count or keep up with, there are a few you should post to at least once a week to keep an active social presence.

Your business needs to have an active social presence to engage followers, monitor brand mentions and provide online customer service. This will help validate your business to consumers.

If a consumer searches for your business, stumbles across your Facebook page and sees that you're not active, they'll move on to the next business.

Read on and you'll learn how to create a comprehensive strategy on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Google+.

## **Facebook**

Your business should have an optimized Facebook profile with accurate business information and high-quality images.

You should be posting at least once a week (up to twice a day if you're really ambitious) about your business, local events or industry-related news.

For instance, if you own a burger restaurant, you should be posting photos of your burgers, information about events in your city or curated content (like a blog post you read about the perfect burger and fry pairings).

## Quick Facebook Tips

- 1 Don't forget that customers can leave reviews on Facebook, so make sure to reply to those.
- 2 Social media can be your best customer service tool, if you monitor your social profiles as well as mentions and reply promptly. Reply to social media comments on your timeline as well as comments on status updates & pictures.
- 3 Download Facebook Pages Manager to make this easier, and don't forget to reply to messages within 24 hours, ideally. If a customer wants to know about products, pricing, hours, availability, etc. but you don't reply to their messages, they'll go somewhere else.

## Instagram

Instagram is great for businesses with lots of visuals, like retail stores and restaurants. With around 700 million monthly users, Instagram is a great way to connect with customers and show off what makes your business great.<sup>11</sup>

Feel free to post on Instagram once or twice a day. Make sure you're sharing high-quality photos, though. Your followers won't appreciate blurry images. It's a good idea to download a free photo editing app on your phone to make sure your photos look crisp and professional.

Your Instagram posts should consist of images of your business, seasonal displays or promotions, behind the scenes photos and even quick videos.

Don't forget that you can post to Instagram Stories a few times a day without annoying followers. Instagram Stories is similar to Snapchat stories in that you upload a series of photos and videos to your story, and the story is available for 24 hours.

Stories don't have to be too polished. They can be as fun as you want them to be, and if you post to your story, it will auto-play as followers watch other stories.

## **Twitter**

Plenty of experts have predicted the death of Twitter over the last couple of years, but we're still waiting. Twitter is still a great way to connect with local consumers as well as current customers and provide updates about your business.

Tweets have a lifetime of around 18 minutes. That means you can post several times a day on Twitter without feeling like you're spamming your followers.



The average lifetime of a tweet is 18 minutes.

Just try not to go overboard with the hashtags or with posting the same thing over and over. For instance, if you're sharing the same blog post four or five times in the same day, make sure you have different photos or graphics to share with it so that you're not sharing the same picture over and over.

If you do that, your profile will show the same picture five times, which doesn't look good to followers or people who see your tweets and are considering following you. No one wants to have to see the same image in their feed four times in one day.

## **Google+**

While Google+ isn't the most popular social media platform, it's owned by Google, which means you should post to Google+ every so often to show that your business is active on social media.

You don't need to go crazy with Google+, but make sure your profile is complete with correct NAPU and that you have uploaded some high-quality photos of your business. We make sure our clients post at least monthly to Google+ so they stay relevant and Google can see that they're active on the platform.

Let's turn your followers into customers!

[GET STARTED](#)

## **What to Post on Social Media**

Not sure what you should be sharing on social media?

At first, you can keep it simple. Share photos of your business with a quick caption.

If you're running a special, make sure to take a photo of the special in action or share a photo of the flyer or menu promoting that special. That will tell your followers how long they have to take advantage of this particular promotion. This will create a sense of urgency and make them aware that this is only available for a limited time, so they'd better hurry up.

If you write blog posts, you should share those on social media too.

Don't forget to share fun, behind the scenes photos to make your followers feel like they're getting a special sneak peek of what goes on when no one is around. Talk about local events, and give business updates as well. If your hours change for the holiday season, social media is the perfect place to announce that.

## How to Get More Followers

Here are some things you can do every day to get more followers.

### 1 Follow more people.

If you follow more people, they will often follow you back.

### 2 Post more often.

If your social media is a ghost town, people are less likely to follow you. Make sure you're posting frequently.

### 3 Use Facebook Ads.

Did you know you can create ads specifically designed to get new Facebook followers? You can pay per like or interaction, increasing brand awareness and gaining new followers.

### 4 Use hashtags (within reason).

Feel free to use a trending hashtag if it relates to your business (think #smallbizsaturday for small businesses or #mondaymotivation, a trending Twitter hashtag on Mondays, for gyms or smoothie shops).

### 5 Comment on others' statuses.

Interacting with other people will help drive engagement on your page and can help you get followers!

### 6 Curate content.

Share content others have posted, or content from an industry blog. If you share others' posts, they may follow you or share your post, which will put your business in front of their followers.

Whatever you do on social media, chose a few important social platforms for your business and keep it fun and informative.

# 6 Tips, Tricks & Trends

**A**s far as digital marketing goes, if you're following the tips in this guide, you've got a good foundation. But, we put together a few more tips to help supercharge your marketing efforts.

**1 Track your analytics.**

From Facebook to Google My Business to website analytics, you should be tracking the success of your marketing efforts.

**2 Try video marketing.**

Video is huge right now. It dominates social media, and live video has taken off in popularity.

**3 Optimize for mobile and voice searches.**

Make sure your website is optimized for mobile. If a site takes more than three seconds to load on mobile, 40 percent of all users will abandon the site.<sup>12</sup>

To optimize for voice search, we suggest using a long-tail keyword suggestion tool like Ubersuggest to search for long-tail keywords.

**4 Take advantage of trends.**

Trends can be a great way to interact with followers, make a few more sales and show your human side.

Trends can help drive foot traffic and campaign performance. When Pokemon Go was huge, businesses were advertising Pokestops and Pokemon that were available near their businesses to help drive foot traffic.

Digital marketing can be complicated, but businesses need an online presence to survive today! Don't fall behind in the competition. Get started with digital marketing now to build a better digital footprint and bring in more customers.

# Build a Better Online Presence

Your customers and your competitors are going digital. Don't fall behind the competition in today's digital world. Put your business on the map with a personalized digital marketing strategy.

[LEARN MORE](#)

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