



THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO LOCAL SEO

Learn How to Win Local Search

WebSuited

The Definitive Guide to Local SEO for Small Businesses

Local SEO has become an important piece of digital marketing for small businesses for improving their online presence, while simultaneously attracting new customers and leads. Here is a guide of helpful tips to help you have a better understanding of local search and SEO for your small business.

What is Local SEO for Small Businesses?

Local SEO is a type of SEO strategy that helps small businesses have more visibility in Google search results. It has become an essential part of digital marketing in our world today. There are many different strategies within the huge umbrella of SEO including traditional SEO, technical SEO, and more.

For small businesses who are trying to make an impact in their area specifically, local search is the best strategy to use. Local search practices commonly include managing a Google Business Profile, researching local keywords, and building citations to raise your brand awareness and reach using the proper directories. By utilizing Local SEO in your small business, you can help increase your online presence within your local community while simultaneously promoting your products and services to a local audience who are more likely to interact with your business.

What is the Difference Between Local SEO and Traditional (Organic) SEO?

The main way that these two strategies differ is with the types of audiences they focus on. Traditional SEO focuses on a national audience. While Local SEO is specific to a certain geographic area or multiple areas, depending on how many locations a business has.

Several practices and strategies apply to both local and traditional SEO, but the ranking factors are what differs between the two. There are ranking factors in local search that hold more weight than they do in traditional SEO. Local SEO uses location-based keywords and geographical elements to help sites show up on the search engine results page (SERPs) so they are able to capture the local audience to sell their products or provide their services.

Why Does Local SEO Matter?

Even for small businesses, if you have a local audience who can visit your physical store or a

website, Local SEO is important. Especially in a competitive industry, Local SEO could generate quicker results when compared to traditional SEO for more general terms. This is backed up by data results that show:

- 82% of individuals use their mobile phones to conduct “near me” searches
- 46% of Google searches are for a local business or a local service
- “Near me” mobile searches increased by 136% this past year
- 29% of all Google SERPs contain a local pack in the results

With the constantly increasing use of cellphones and audio searching capabilities, people are changing the way they search for answers and information about new products or services. To follow suit, ***search engines are therefore improving the way they deliver these search results to consumers.***

Local SEO is a factor that *has* to be taken into consideration by small businesses if they want to be successful in their local markets. Data shows that 97% of users are searching online to find local businesses and the demand is continuing to grow quickly. Therefore, businesses must take advantage of these new trends to gain as much visibility in their local markets as possible.

When small businesses implement a local SEO strategy, it helps create an opportunity for their business to be viewed in multiple locations on the search engine results page (SERPs). On Google in particular, there is the **local organic SERP** and the **local map pack**.

Local Organic SERP

This tool is the same as traditional SEO in which websites rank on the search engine results page in the spots that are not occupied by advertisements or featured snippets. Featured snippets are typically shown in many different formats including “People Also Ask” questions and answer boxes that show at the top of the SERPs. Each of these features play an important role in having a successful SEO Campaign.

Local Map Pack

The local map pack shows the Google Business Profiles at the top of the SERP, usually in groups of three at a time. This is also called the “Local 3-pack”. In this feature, there is an option to select the “View All” button to see all of the businesses in close proximity that satisfy the search query.

dry cleaning near me

All

Maps

Shopping

News


Images

More

Tools

About 696,000,000 results (0.69 seconds)

Dry Cleaners



Rating

Hours

Trailside Dry Cleaning

4.8 ★★★★★ (32) · Dry cleaner

7+ years in business · 129 13800 S A9 · In Harmons Grocery - Bangerter C...

Open · Closes 7PM

Website

Directions

Trailside Dry Cleaning

4.7 ★★★★★ (72) · Dry cleaner

3+ years in business · Lehi, UT · In Outlets at Traverse Mountain · (385) 33...

Open · Closes 7PM

Website

Directions

Mr. Dry Cleaners

3.2 ★★★★★ (48) · Dry cleaner

126 W 12300 S #E · (801) 984-8954

Open · Closes 6PM

Website

Directions

What are the Benefits of Local SEO for Small Businesses?

1. Higher Rankings Within the Local Community

Local Search results have become critically valuable to small businesses over the past few years. When you choose the right keywords to put within your website content, it helps your business show up to your targeted customers who are searching for the products and services you can provide. Today, more people are searching for products and services online before they go buy them and even before purchasing them online. When small businesses want to help customers meet their search needs, implementing local SEO strategies can be the best way to do so. This strategy helps add another layer of trust and value to invest in your business.

Businesses are increasingly focusing their efforts on effective local SEO strategies as a way to get ranked higher in their local community's search engines. Small businesses can truly utilize local SEO to get better recognized by their community and make themselves known to customers.

2. Gets you in Front of the Right People

Local SEO is a fantastic way to get your product or service in front of those who are seeking that product or service right now. Data shows that 97% of search engine users searched online to find a local business and 50% of local searches end in a store visit within a day. When you optimize your business for local search, it can help to increase your ranking and get your products and services in front of individuals who are looking to purchase it now.

Most individuals searching online are trying to find the quickest, easiest, and most recent solution to their search query. That is why it is so important for your business to show up on the first page of Google because if not, your small business can be pushed aside. Becoming visible and ranking high on the SERP is accomplished through implementing a successful local search strategy for your website, so it can be one of the first ones your target audience clicks on.

Note: When implementing an SEO strategy, it takes time to generate visible results and is not immediate. While there are quick and “easy” ways to see results faster, specific time frames depend on numerous factors including competition levels, website health, and available resources that can be dedicated to enhancing the site. Even though SEO can take some time to generate results compared to quick fixes, like Paid Advertising, it is a more sustainable and effective solution for the long-term growth of your business.

3. Bringing in New Customers and Leads

Local SEO for small businesses can be a beneficial strategy in attracting new customers and leads within the local community and also those in the community who are already looking for businesses that can meet their needs as soon as possible. Additionally, having a physical business location that people can visit to purchase your goods and services can be advantageous with the increasing delivery times for online orders. Data shows that 74% of consumers prefer a hybrid shopping experience with both online and in-store shopping options.

There are many different techniques and methods that attract new leads and customers in the local community. Showing your business in a positive and inviting light can encourage customers to become more interested in your business. Constantly updating

and maintaining your Google Business Profile and other directories that consumers use to find information about your business helps give people confidence in your business. Doing this also demonstrates Prominence and Relevance for search engines which can help to increase your business ranking on the SERP.

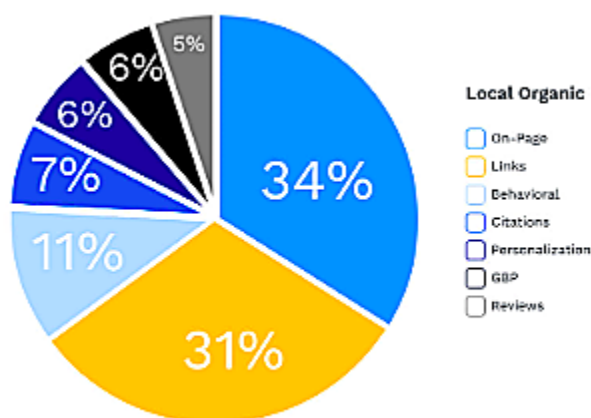
4. Brand Image and Trust

Your brand's image, and consumers' trust go hand in hand. When consumers see that your business has a strong and positive online presence through branding or reviews, it makes them more willing to trust your small business. When it comes to improving your online presence and website, User Experience has become one of the most important SEO factors to consider. Having a quick and easy-to-access website, with user-friendly capabilities, presents your business in a positive manner to customers. This includes having a cohesive and appealing online presence that will help customers to trust your business more. Another piece is making sure to respond back to reviews that people are leaving for your business, both good and bad. Always thank those who leave good reviews because this small act can make a huge difference for your brand and reputation. For the bad reviews, use this as an opportunity to convert a bad experience into a more positive one.

What are the Local SEO Ranking Factors?

Local Organic SERP

Traditional SEO has over 200 ranking factors. Many of these overlap with Local SEO, however, it can become very overwhelming to try and execute every single tactic. For the local organic search engine results page (SERP), these are the top three ranking factors that small businesses can begin optimizing their website for:



1. On-Page Signals:

This is the most important ranking signal for local organic SERPs. There are many types of on-page strategies that can be implemented on a site, such as placing relevant keywords within the content. Search engines will seek out these keywords and look at their placement within the website content. If the keywords are placed strategically, this can help to improve your website ranking in specific areas of your industry. An additional factor is mobile-friendliness and user experience. When your website is responsive, easy to navigate, and quick to load, it can make users' experience easier and more positive, which is then beneficial to your local SEO strategy.

2. Local Link Building:

The second most essential local SEO ranking factor for organic SERPs is the number of backlinks your small business has. A vital part of any organic local SEO strategy is building quality, relevant, and natural backlinks. When discussing local SEO ranking factors, quality is more important to keep in mind than quantity. By including more trustworthy and authoritative links in your content, the more positive of an impact your website will have in local ranking factors. Doing this should be an ongoing practice in order to continue growing the number of backlinks and linking domains.

3. Behavior Signals:

These are the third most important ranking factors for local organic SERPs. Behavior signals explain how people are interacting and engaging with your organic listing. There are plenty of behavioral signals, but these are the more common ones:

- Click-through-rate
- Clicks
- Mobile clicks-to-call
- Check-ins

Local Map Pack

The local map pack has many different ranking factors, but the three main factors you should focus on are:

1. Google Business Profile:

While having a website for your small business is very important, it is even more important in today's world to have a Google Business Profile (GBP) set up. It is said to be the #1 ranking factor for local map packs. It is important to be consistent with your business information and

constantly optimize your profile to increase your local rankings within the local pack. When people search for information about your small business, it is important to have accurate and updated information on your profile.

2. Reviews:

Reviews are the third most essential ranking factor for the local map pack. Receiving as many positive reviews as possible, preferably 4 to 5 stars, can be a huge booster for your local rankings. The more positive reviews you get, the better it is for your business. Small businesses rely on positive reviews, but of course, negative reviews will appear at some point. However, these negative reviews can actually help you to build trust with your customers and search engines, particularly when you respond to these negative reviews with a resolution.

3. On-Page Signals:

The same information listed above under 'Local Organic SERP' also applies to the local map pack.

What are Local SEO Services?

1. Location-Based Keyword Research

This is the method of determining what keywords are being searched for in a local community. These can be keywords that contain a geographical location, such as "tile company in Vero Beach, Florida". Now, with data showing that 82% of people use their mobile phones to conduct "near me" searches, it is important to incorporate those keywords into your keyword research strategy. An example of this would be "tile company near me". A beneficial spot for this keyword would be in the meta title of your webpage.

Local SEO Tips for Small Businesses: Keyword Research

Tip #1: Use tools designed to help you find what people are searching for and choose the right target and supporting keywords associated with your business. **Keyword intent** is the most significant factor here. It will be very difficult, if even possible, for a web page to rank if its content does not match up with the intent of the chosen keywords. Conduct a manual search of the chosen keywords and look at what Google is rewarding for those queries. If these keywords make sense for the business and its target audience, then create content for your page that is superior to what is currently ranking on the SERPs and additionally aligns with the intent of the searcher.

Below is a list of free and paid keyword research tools:

- Google Search Console: Every business should be taking advantage of this free tool that collects valuable data and provides insight on how to enhance your marketing strategy. Learn how to set up your Google Search Console account with our easy step-by-step guide. Google Search Console (GSC) does not list the average search volume for keywords, but it does show impression, click, and positioning data for various date ranges. GSC is a great keyword research tool because it shows what people are actually searching for that your website shows up in the SERPs for in some way shape or form.
- Keyword Planner: A featured tool within Google Ads, Keyword Planner is technically free. In order for it to work properly and generate a specific number instead of a wide range for the average search volume of a keyword, a card must be on file. But unless you are running a Google Ads campaign, you will not be charged.
Keyword Planner is helpful because it provides helpful data on average search volume, average competition associated with the keyword, and various keywords that people are searching for to make your strategy diverse and holistic.
- Google Suggest: This isn't exactly a tool, but it should still be mentioned because it's helpful. We like to incorporate this in our strategy in addition to using other tools just to make sure we're not missing any important keywords! If you're not familiar with what this is, it's as simple as starting a search query in Google (or other search engines) and seeing what populates at the end of it as a suggested search.
- Related Searches: Similar to Google Suggest, the Related Searches are useful in showing what related keywords people are searching for that specific topic and which ones are popular among searchers. Check the search volume in your other tools for the appropriate keywords.
- Listen to and speak with other people: This seems like common sense but it's often overlooked! A good way to be proactive in changing keyword trends is to ask people what they would call a specific product or service, or what they search for when looking for something. You may be able to uncover some golden nuggets that you can start incorporating into your website now before other competitors do.

Paid Keyword Research Tools

- Semrush: Using this paid keyword research tool allows you to discover and show what specific keywords your competitors are ranking for. What you would do is insert a competitor's domain or individual page URL into the search bar on the page. What's unique about Semrush is that it will give you a list of the top organic keywords that the specific URL ranks for.

Just like other keyword research tools, it has a keyword magic tool that helps give you different ideas on different keywords you could use. But overall, Semrush helps give you an idea on what keywords your competitors are ranking for.

- Ahrefs: This paid keyword research tool helps give you in-depth information on each keyword you're looking at. Along with most of the data you would expect, it includes a breakdown of first-page competition and how many searchers actually click on a result. They also include how many backlinks you'll need to include to rank on the first page of Google. While Ahrefs is mainly known for backlink analysis, it has great keyword research tools that can help your business.
- Moz: One of the best features that make Moz's paid keyword research tool unique is that it gives you more of a variety of keywords related to a specific topic. For example, if you had the keyword "weight loss" it could give you additional keywords such as, "weight loss pills" and, "weight loss calculator".
With Moz, they would provide creative keyword suggestions such as, "foods that help burn fat for men" or, "best belly fat burning foods for men". You usually wouldn't find these unique suggestions from other keyword research tools. The only downside to Moz is that you have to pay for the entire suite of SEO tools to utilize this function.

Tip #2: By using the tools listed above, you can analyze the keywords your competitors are using and determine which ones make sense for you to utilize or avoid.

2. On-Page SEO

Based on the local keyword research method, the next thing to do with a local SEO strategy is to create localized content that will capture the target and supporting keywords that the business is trying to rank for. This varies and can include different types of content, such as:

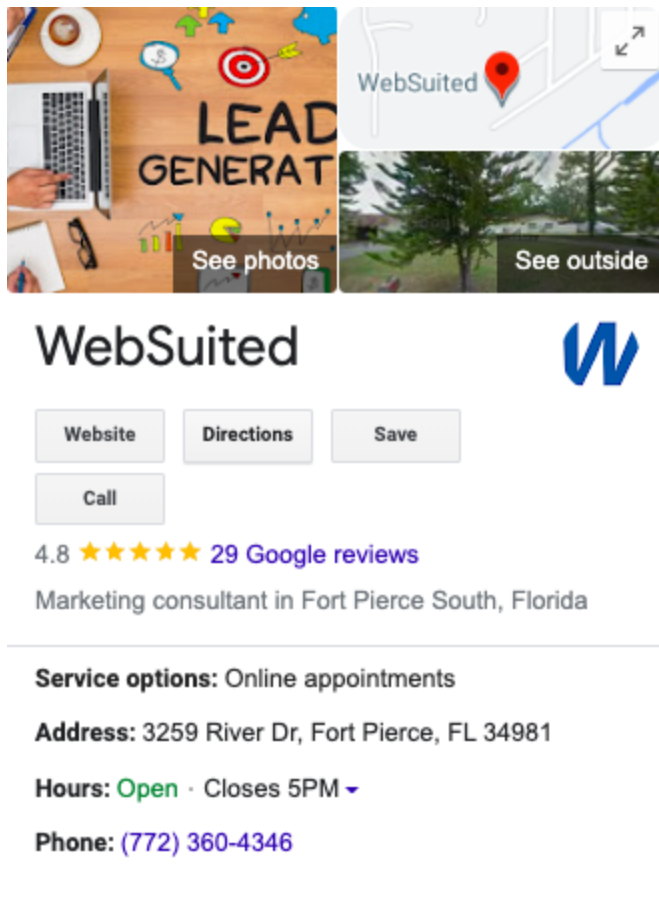
- Blog articles

- A page dedicated to location which contains important contact information and directions to the business's physical location
- Service Pages (ex. Dry Cleaning Services in Vero Beach, Florida)
- Header tags
- Image alt text
- Meta titles and descriptions

It is also important to remember that this process is continuous and is not done only once. Content must be repurposed every now and then to keep information relevant and updated.

3. Google Business Profile

Formerly known as Google My Business (GMB), has now taken on the name Google Business Profile. This is a free business directory tool that all businesses, especially small businesses, should take advantage of because of the benefits it can provide. Since Google has the largest market share in comparison to other search engines, it is very important for local businesses to create and maintain one or more of these listings. In order to rank in the local map pack, you must have a Google Business Profile listing. Websites can rank in the local map pack and the local organic search engine results page (SERP), which gives a business double visibility.



Google determines local map pack rankings based on: **Relevance, Distance, and Prominence.**

- **Relevance:** This is measured by how well the Google Business Profile listing matches a searcher's intent, further emphasizing why **keyword intent** is so important. Try to make your listings as thorough, well-crafted, and keyword optimized as you can.
- **Distance:** This is related to how close or far in distance the listing address is to the location sought in the search query. Even if a location is not provided in a search query, Google will determine this based on the location their bots or spiders are able to pick up on.
- **Prominence:** This last factor is based on how well a business is known, which majorly comes from online reviews and references throughout the web. This also comes from backlinks, articles and content, and directories.

Google Business Profile listings provide important business information such as a description of what a business offers, contact information, website links, business hours, amenities offered, special accommodations a business can deliver, and more. This also improves the user experience of a website. Today, businesses that don't utilize a Google Business Profile or those that do not update and maintain their profile listing, can be

pushed aside.

4. Build Out Directories and Citations

Along with Google Business Profile, there are many other highly considered and popular directories available online. A well-rounded local SEO strategy should also incorporate directory and citation development across other platforms outside of the Google Business Profile. It is important to ensure that your business's name, address, and phone number (NAP) remain uniform and consistent across all platforms. When this valuable business information is not consistent, you risk confusing customers about your brand and diminishing people's trust in your business.

Local SEO Tips for Small Businesses: Directories and Citations

Tip #1: If you aren't sure of which directories are relevant to your client's industry, start with searching for "near me" or a review-based keyword, like "best dry cleaner near me", keywords that pertain to their business. The organic listings underneath the local map pack often include directories that their business may or may not be listed in. If not, submit their website to those directories if it's applicable to the industry.

Tip #2: There are tools that can help you get listed in various data aggregators* and directories, and can help you manage your citations more effectively, such as BrightLocal and Yext. These tools can save you time by making it more efficient to update listings across the board saving you the stress of updating each individual listing that's on the internet. And they distribute the citations to additional directories getting the business even more exposure!

*Note: Data aggregators are data mining systems that distribute your business information across the internet into other directories. The three main data aggregators are: Foursquare (Factual merged with Foursquare), Neustar Localeze, and Data Axle. Get your business submitted to these data aggregators first so you can make the most impact as soon as possible (most tools will do this for you).

5. Local Link Building

Link building serves as an authority signal for search engines and has a great deal of power as one of the multiple SEO ranking factors. This includes both national and local SEO. Link building is when a third-party website links back to another third-party website and in the process, it transfers "link juice" (value) along with it. This demonstrates why it is important to obtain backlinks from websites with a trustworthy reputation. If a well-reputable website is willing to link to your website, Google views this as a reflection of

your website being worthy of the same authority and trust as the other site.

Link building is a very advanced method that can be a very time-consuming and ongoing process. There are many different tactics that should be tested out for each type of industry to see what works best. This can vary between different types of industries, what works for one business may not work for another. In your local search strategy, try to get as many trustworthy and good-quality backlinks from local businesses around the area!

6. Online Review Generation

As previously discussed, reviews are a key factor that *Prominence*, a ranking factor for the local pack, is based on. It is also a crucial part of developing trust and authority with potential customers and search engines to improve your visibility. Data has shown that having authentic and detailed 4 to 5-star reviews can positively influence SERP rankings.

Generating reviews is one of the continuous SEO maintenance tasks and has to be a priority. With these reviews, both quality and quantity matter. There are certain rules for review generation and maintenance that are simple but must be followed to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of your business. One of these rules is that reviews must be legitimate and asked for, but they cannot be paid for.

7. Use Structured Data

Structured data, or schema markup, is not included as a direct ranking factor for websites. Structured data does however help search engine crawlers have a better understanding of what the business is, and therefore how to show it among searchers. There is a [LocalBusiness schema markup](#) that can be added to your local businesses website.

It's so widespread that there are structured data generators that can help you generate the code without having to know web development yourself. All you need to do is input the fields it requires and place it in your website's header file. JSON-LD is the best practice nowadays, not microdata. Test out a few schema markup generators below!

- Merkle Technical SEO
- Microdata Generator (the name is misleading but it generates JSON-LD schema)
- Incrementors

Local SEO Tips for Small Business: What you Can Do Now

Since there are so many different strategies involved in a quality local search campaign, it can be easy to become quickly overwhelmed and unsure of where to begin. However, it is better to start sooner than later because SEO is a long-term continuous strategy. These are some proven local SEO tips that can help give your small business an advantage with local searches:

1. Make the Website Responsive and Mobile-Friendly

Search engines have transferred to mobile-first indexing, which means that regardless of how well the user experience of a website is on a desktop, the mobile version of a site will be crawled and indexed first. This applies even if most of the traffic on a website comes from desktop rather than mobile devices.

This demonstrates why it is so crucial to ensure that your website has the best possible user experience across all types of devices. You can test out individual web pages using the [Mobile-Friendly Test](#) from Google Search Console to receive insights on how to take action and fix a webpage if it doesn't meet certain standard requirements.

2. Identify Target Location-Based Keywords

It is important to remember to check your keyword intent and select keywords that match up closest with what your business offers. You can search the terms incognito mode to see each of the ranking organic results on the first page of the SERPs. This will help demonstrate what Google is rewarding and displaying for those specific keywords. This process may take some time, but it is very beneficial.

3. Optimize Meta Titles and Descriptions for Local Keywords

Meta titles and descriptions, also known as metadata or meta information, are how Google displays a webpage within the search engine results page (SERP).

<https://villagecleaners.com> > location > draper-dry-clea... :

Draper Dry Cleaners

Our Draper dry cleaners location is located off of 12300 South and 138 East. We offer FREE pickup and delivery. Visit our site to learn more!

<https://tidecleaners.com> > en-us > location :

Draper, UT Dry Cleaners

Visit our Draper Tide Cleaners location and see how we strive to be the best dry cleaners and laundry service in the Draper, UT area.

When using meta titles and descriptions for local SEO, try to use localized and “near me” terms. These meta titles hold a lot of weight in keyword placement value, therefore you should ensure that one of these terms is included in there.

Note: Google announced in September that they can override meta titles and descriptions in order to improve user experience. Check back on your meta information every so often and keep track of any keyword positioning or traffic changes that can result after a change like this.

4. Create Pages Targeting the Local Keywords

These can be service pages with the location tagged on the end, such as “kitchen remodel in vero beach”, or they can be location pages that display details on how customers can find the physical store. These should include the business’s name, address, and phone number (NAP), along with other information such as directions or images of the interior and exterior of the building, so customers know what they are looking for.

If a business has more than one location, creating multiple pages highlighting specific features for each location can help search engines place the right storefront in front of customers based on their geo-targeted search queries. This can be writing about geographical landmarks near the business, offering detailed directions to the business, and embedding a Google or Apple Map directly onto the webpage.

Additionally, while creating new content for the website, make sure to optimize the content for voice search. Data shows that 20% of all Google searches are now conducted on mobile devices using voice search. One way to do this is to include questions into the headers of your content to improve visibility and indicate high importance to search engines.

5. Create a Google Business Profile and Additional Directory Listings

Ensuring your small business has a Google Business Profile listing is nearly as

important as having a website. Make sure to constantly add updated and relevant information to your business's Google Business Profile listing for individuals to locate and refer to.

There are other directories that are just as beneficial as having a Google Business Profile. For certain industries, there are directories that may be even more valuable than a Google Business Profile, such as Avvo for attorneys. Ensuring your business is in as many relevant and valuable directories as possible gives your business even more exposure to potential customers or clients.

6. Ask for Reviews from Satisfied Happy Customers

Reviews are a continuous process and a high priority for local SEO. It is very important to remember that quantity and quality matter, which means you must continue generating new reviews that are **authentic**. If you find any reviews within your profile that seem to be fake or spam, try to remove them as quickly as possible so they do not harm your business's reputation or local search campaign.

Some additional rules to keep in mind are:

- You are not allowed to pay for reviews, instead, you can ask customers to leave them.
- Ask people to leave reviews on other directories that your business listing is on, not just your Google Business Profile.
- It is important to engage and respond to incoming reviews, good or bad. If they are negative reviews, be sure to use it as an opportunity to remedy the situation as best as possible and do not ignore them. Also don't forget to thank those who leave positive reviews for your business, this doesn't go unnoticed!

7. Ask Local Business for a Backlink

Backlinks serve as an authority signal for search engines and are a very valued strategy. Backlinking is typically difficult and very time-consuming, but when it is done correctly, it can be very rewarding for websites and can help improve online visibility for many local keywords.

Here are some tips on where to start with small business clients:

- The local chamber of commerce
- Send out local press releases to radio station and local news websites
- Do a Google search for the brand to find unlinked mentions and reach out to the page owner for a backlink where the business is mentioned in a positive light
- Sponsor a charity, event, or scholarship (the contributing organization will typically link back to the website)

8. Use Social Media to Enhance the SEO Campaign

In order to have a successful SEO campaign, you must get more visibility and traffic to a website or specific webpage. Social media is a very effective way to do this! Social media agencies have the advantage of knowing how to target the right audience with content that interests them. The target audience for social media channels is usually the target audience for the entire business.

Within social media platforms, there are so many capabilities and features to help identify target market opportunities as well. Local SEO strategies and Social Media strategies can work hand in hand to help generate twice the value and growth, which results in higher client retention.

Our WebSited team uses the tools and strategies mentioned above daily. We work closely with our clients to build the most successful SEO campaigns with their business goals in mind. Let us help you with your digital marketing needs so you can focus on what really matters, YOUR clients. Contact [WebSited](#) today!

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