Introduction to Local Search Marketing

The Basics

It's blatantly obvious that phone books have been made obsolete by the Internet. Every month in the United States, 10 billion searches are conducted and 43% of these searches have "local intent". **In other words, people are spending almost half their time online looking for services in their local area.**

The statistics speak for themselves:

THE LOCAL WEB

THE SINGLE LARGEST OPPORTUNITY FOR NATIONAL BRANDS
The Local Web is a growing ecosystem of online media channels driving local awareness & sales.

43% of all search queries on Google carry a local intent.[1]

55-61% of businesses running daily deals make money on the promotions.[10]

74% of smartphone owners use location-based services, and **18%** "check in" to locations.[5]

71% of social media participants say they are more likely to purchase from a brand they follow online.[2]

95% of smartphone users have looked for local information. **61%** call a business, **59%** visit a business, and **44%** actually make a purchase.[3]

59% of consumers say they trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations, while **52%** said that positive online reviews make them more likely to use a local business.[6]

LOCAL SEARCH   YAHOO! Google bing

SOCIAL MEDIA

LOCAL REVIEWS yelp   citysearch.com

DAILY DEALS

LOCATION BASED

LOCAL WEBSITES
THE HUB FOR ALL LOCAL MARKETING

MOBILE admob

LOCAL MARKETING MATTERS
Digital media is expected to represent **27.6%** of advertising by 2017[12]

Local Search Marketing & Its Main Purpose

Local search marketing (also known as local SEO) utilizes a variety of tactics to make your business more visible to local users searching for the services you provide. These tactics include:

- Claiming your main online listings (Google, Bing, Yahoo, Yelp, Yellow Pages, etc.) and optimizing them with informative descriptions and the correct contact information.
- Creating high quality citations (additional listings that contain your business's name and contact information) throughout the Internet, especially in industry and local directories.
- Eliminating duplicate or incorrect listings, particularly those at former addresses.
- Encouraging and monitoring customer reviews.

The overall goal of local SEO is to improve your website's search engine rankings. **75% of users never scroll past the first page of search results, so being on the second page of a search engine is a huge disadvantage**. The more high quality listings you have, the more Google trusts your website. Increased trust leads to higher rankings. This is why local search marketing is a vital part of any SEO strategy.

The Importance of Local SEO

Location Matters: Search engines take a user's physical location in account to find the closest services. Even if a user doesn't enter a geographic location (city, ZIP code, etc.) after a search query, the search engine will still provide the closest results:

In the above screenshot, I searched for "Chinese delivery" and didn't specify a city or a ZIP code. Google only provided results that were in my area (New Haven, CT). This is important to remember when considering 61% of Americans own smartphones and 50% of all smartphone searches have "local intent".

No Confusion: Your business's online listings must contain the correct contact information. Incorrect information, besides causing confusion, will lower your business's overall search engine rankings. Listings in important directories, especially Google My Business (formerly Google Places), can be even be deleted if contact information is inconsistent throughout the Internet. Local search marketing ensures that these problems will never happen in the first place.

Make Changes Easier: When you control your listings, you're able to make changes to the information anytime you want. You can change your business's name, address, etc. and these changes will take place instantaneously. This is especially useful if your business moves in the future.

Enhanced Marketing: You can add coupons and other promotions to your local listings with ease. You can also take advantage of the video and photo features that some local search directories offer.

Reputation Management: Users tend to trust online reviews, especially from people in their own area. This is why you should encourage your customers to leave reviews. When it comes to nasty customer reviews, a lot of them are not necessarily true but simply embarrassing. With local SEO, you can address these reviews by getting them changed or deleted. In addition, you can respond to both positive and negative reviews, showing you are engaged with your customers.

Case Studies

These are scenarios that we have faced in the past. With local search marketing, you can prevent these problems from ever occurring in the first place. All names have been changed.

The Danger of an Unclaimed Profile

Our client was a pizza delivery business named Hamden Pizza. When a customer searched for "pizza delivery Hamden", Hamden Pizza was the first listing. But the company never claimed its Google My Business profile. A competitor, North Haven Pizza, wanted to expand into Hamden and steal customers from Hamden Pizza. They hired a savvy local search marketer who claimed Hamden Pizza's Google My Business profile and changed the phone number to North Haven Pizza's. Customers, who thought they were calling Hamden Pizza, were now calling North Haven Pizza.

The Solution: We informed Google about the problem. Hamden Pizza's number was changed back in a few days. In addition to claiming the Google My Business listing, we claimed the business's other listings

so they could never be tampered with. North Haven Pizza was issued a stern warning and never did anything like this again.

Bad Reviews Left Unattended

This story is about a basement waterproofing company in Vermont. A disgruntled ex-employee posted disparaging comments about the business and its owner on Google, Yahoo, Yelp, and several other websites. He accused the company of engaging in unethical business practices. He also wrote about the owner's controversial political opinions and malicious personality. The business soon closed. The nasty comments about the company were most likely not the closure's main cause, but they didn't help.

The Solution: We learned from this incident and now instruct our clients to regularly monitor their reviews. When a client gets a bad review, we advise them on how to satisfy a disgruntled customer. This often results in the customer changing the review to a more positive one. When clients receive reviews that are against directory guidelines (inappropriate language, baseless accusations, etc.) we help them flag these reviews to get them deleted.

A Business That Moved and Lost Its Listing

Our client was a painting supply store in Monroe, CT. The business moved across town, changed the address on its website, but never made any changes to its local listings. This resulted in a catastrophic confusion online. Directories listed the business at one location, despite it being at another. Eventually the company fixed their Google listing, but it was soon deleted. When people searched for "paint store Monroe", our client's listing was nowhere to be seen. As a result, the business took a huge financial hit.

The Solution: We figured out that the problem was not because of Google, but because of a data aggregator. Data aggregators are huge databases of business listing information that Google regularly verifies its local listings against. Google had the new address while the data aggregator had the old one. This inconsistency was why the client's Google listing was deleted. Once the information in the data aggregator was fixed, Google made the listing reappear. We always make sure the data aggregators contain the correct information so a problem like this never happens.

An Ad Deal Confuses and Annoys

In the past, local search directories were much more unregulated and with lower standards. A client was located in Woodbridge but serviced other towns in the Greater New Haven area. They made an ad deal with a large Internet marketing agency that made multiple listings on Yellow Page's website, using fake addresses. This was done to make it look like the business had branches in other towns, to help attract more local customers. So our client, with only one location in Woodbridge, now appeared to be located in Guilford, Wallingford, Hamden, and several other towns.

Each of these listings was assigned a unique phone number in order to track the leads these listings generated. The ad deal eventually ended but the listings still remained. Most of the phone numbers also went dead. As a result, potential customers assumed the business was closed. This debacle resulted in our client losing a lot of valuable leads.

The Solution: We worked with data aggregators and local directories over a course of several months. It was a long and difficult process. Not only did we have to prove the company was located in Woodbridge, we had to prove it wasn't located in the other towns. The listings were eventually removed. From this experience, we observed how ad deals create inconsistent information (numerous addresses and numbers) and how this will hurt your online visibility instead of helping it.

Why Work With 3PRIME?

For over a decade, 3PRIME has approached Internet marketing and web development with professional expertise and an unrivaled dedication for success. . Employing a wide range of technical competencies, we know how to help businesses handle online marketplace issues and take advantage of opportunities before they go mainstream.

As a local business, we can help you in ways that larger marketing companies can't. We are able to meet with you face-to-face and answer any questions you have. No matter what your issue is, we're only a phone call away. We understand the challenges you face because we've faced them ourselves.

We urge you to entrust 3PRIME with executing your local marketing strategy, as we have with hundreds of businesses before. We promise to be the best web partner you'll ever have!