

THE CONNECTOR

A Digital Marketing Guide for Small Business

CAPTURE MORE
EMAIL LEADS

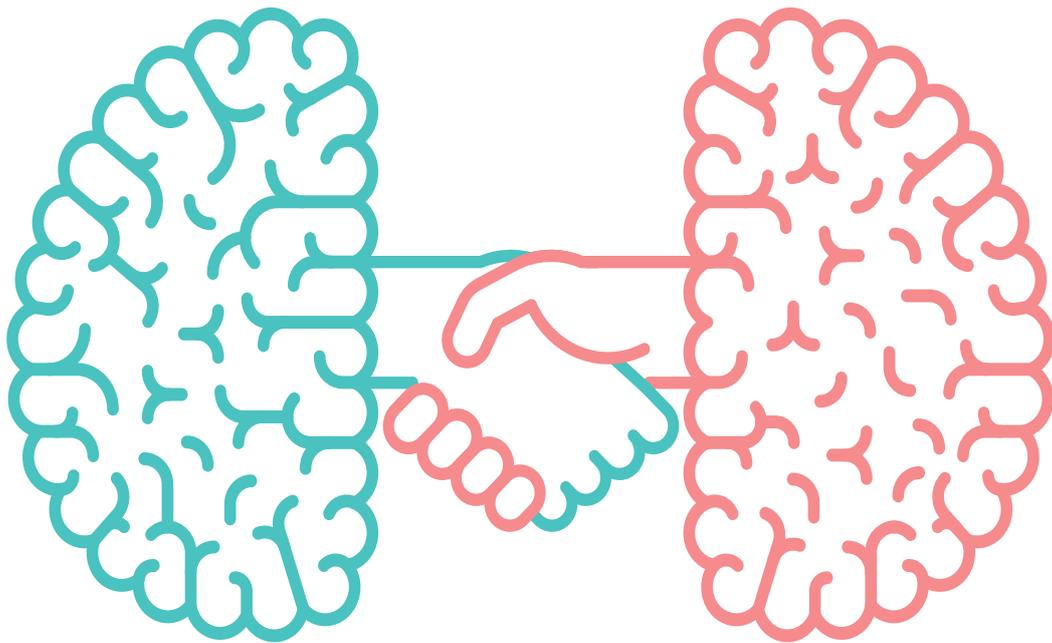
WITH THESE 5 SURE FIRE

STRATEGIES 

CREATE KILLER CONTENT
WITHOUT WRITING

A SINGLE WORD WITH A

CONTENT COLLABORATION



Adwords
IS D-D-DYING...

SAY HELLO 

Google Local Service Ads



LOCAL SEO



NATIONAL SEO

EXPLAINED

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Capture More Email Leads With These 5 Sure Fire Strategies

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Email marketing is old school. But it remains a crucial opportunity to connect with potential leads and turn them into loyal customers. Email marketing might not be new but that

doesn't mean that you can afford to ignore it. And to help you kick your lead generation into high gear, we will cover 5 sure fire email marketing strategies any business can boost their bottom line using.

Create Killer Content Without Writing A Single Word With a Content Collaboration

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What if you could create better content with less work? If you're screaming, "Sign me up!" then you're not alone. Content creation is a lot of work. It takes time, expertise, and attention

to detail. So how can you create great content for your business, without actually doing all the legwork yourself?. The solution is – drum roll, please – NOT DOING EVERYTHING YOURSELF. I'm talking here about content collaboration and it can be a game changer for your business. Here's what you need to know.

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Im sorry that I have to break it to you but... AdWords is dying. Well, I'm not that sorry because Google Local Service Ads are a better option for local businesses than AdWords ever was.

Why? Because it's designed especially for local businesses. So let's talk about it – and about the Google Guarantee Badge.

Local SEO VS National SEO Explained

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You've got your SEO all figured out, right? Well... maybe. Perhaps you've done a ton of research to find great keywords. You've optimized your links and tags. Guess what? If your

business is local and you haven't focused on local SEO, then the chances are good that you're falling behind your competitors without realizing it. All SEO is not created equal and for small businesses, local SEO is where it's at. So if you're a small business owner, this article was written for you!

Welcome To The Connector Magazine

This digital magazine is designed to connect local business owners like you to the most relevant digital marketing strategies available, along with practical tips to help you implement these cutting edge best practices in your business today.

Our goal is simple. We want to help you make better decisions about where you're focusing your time, attention and money - so you can focus on growing your business confidently.

We understand that here's an overwhelming amount of information available on the World Wide Web, and we're committed to curating the most relevant trends, tools and strategies for local businesses. In short, we're here to provide you with the resources YOU need for YOUR business!

To your Success,

Chrissanne Long
CEO - BRIDGE Local

THE CONNECTOR IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY

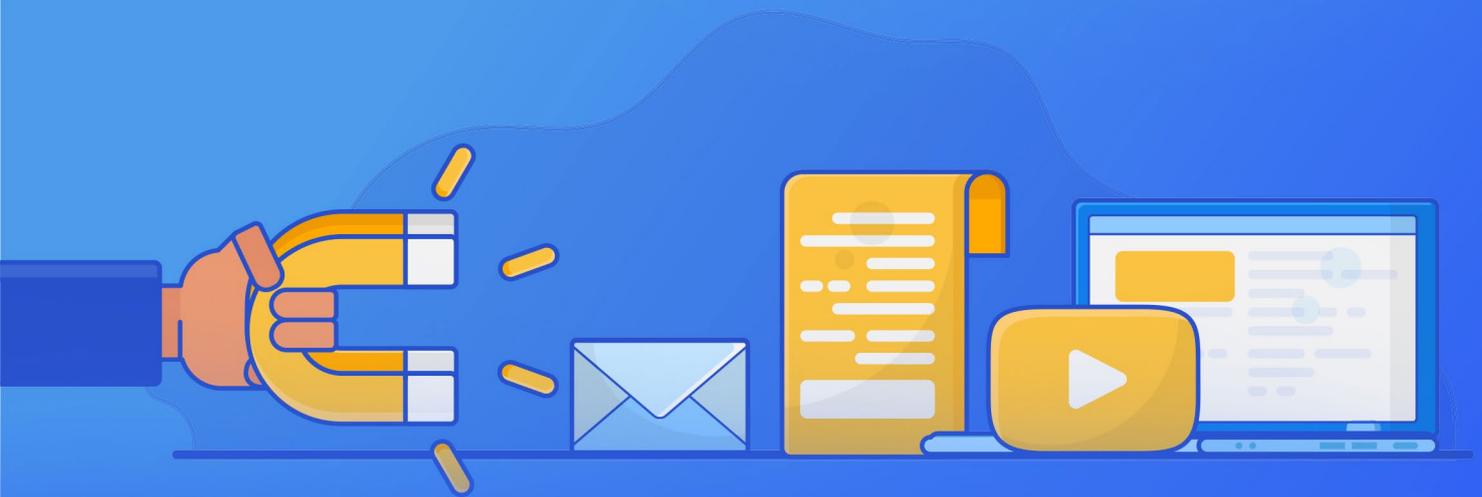
BRIDGE Local is a leader in providing communities with cutting edge technology for the purpose of facilitating meaningful connections, strengthening affiliations and curating accessible resources for the local business and organizations we serve.

Forward-thinking communities understand the importance of embracing new ideas to ensure inclusive, sustainable and shared economic prosperity across all sectors. BRIDGE is Building, Renewing, Inspiring and Developing Generations of Entrepreneurs with a people-first approach to 21st century innovations.

Find out more about how we're bridging the gaps in local communities by visiting BRIDGElocal.com

CAPTURE MORE EMAIL LEADS

WITH THESE 5 SURE FIRE STRATEGIES



Email marketing is old school. Sort of like the kind of corded phone that hangs on your kitchen wall or a dial-up modem.

If that's your thinking, then you are missing out on a crucial opportunity to connect with potential leads and turn them into loyal customers.

Really.

Email marketing might not be new, and it might not be the latest and greatest thing. But that

doesn't mean that you can afford to ignore it.

And if it's been a while since you revamped your email marketing strategies, it's time to wake up and smell the lead generation coffee.

The good news is it's great coffee. Here are five blends – okay, strategies – to help you kick your lead generation into high gear.



#1

Micro-Targeting

Some marketers want to hang on to a “one size fits all” approach when it comes to lead generation. They’ve got a lead magnet that’s been working for them – at least to a point – and they don’t want to try anything new.

But here’s the thing about that. Not every potential lead arrives at your site for the same reason. Some may have been drawn by a specific piece of content. Others might be looking for a service – or a product – to solve a problem they’ve been having.

My point? It’s far more effective to target people with an offer that’s tailored to their interests. Someone who comes to your site because of an authority blog post is highly likely to respond to a lead magnet that is related to the post.

That’s simple, but I’m always amazed at how many people don’t understand it. Dive into some audience research, tailor your lead magnets based on what you find, and watch your subscriptions soar.

#2

Use Pop-ups

I can hear you now. Your brain is screeching at me.

“WHAT? People hate pop-ups! And what about pop-up blockers? It’ll never work!”

What I mean by that is that a generic pop-up that interrupts someone while they’re reading the first paragraph of your killer blog post is only going to be irritating – and probably ignored.

BUT...

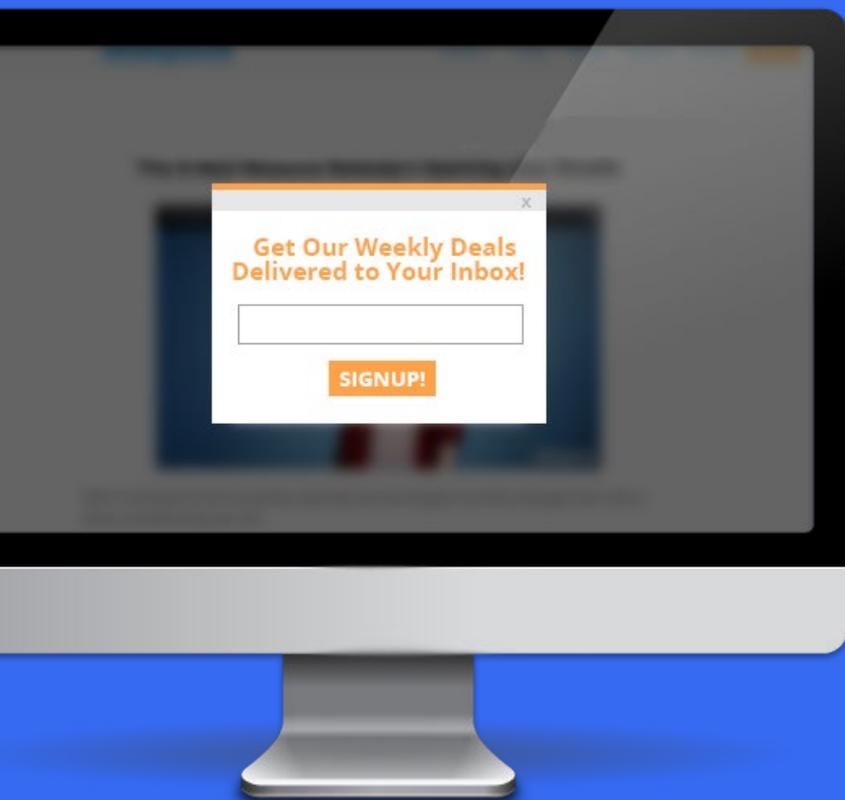
A pop-up that appears as the reader approaches the end of your blog post is a different story. So is a pop-up that’s triggered when the user hits the back button or tries to close the window.

Why? Because these are triggered by behaviors.

Research shows that using an exit pop-up can boost conversions by as much as 1375%! That’s a crazy number – and if you know anything about conversions, you know that it’s beyond impressive.

The moral here is that you shouldn’t rule out pop-ups. The right kind – at the right time – can reduce your bounce rate and help you get more subscriptions than ever before.

I get it. But here’s the thing: pop-ups are effective. In fact, they can be HUGELY effective if you use them in the right way.





#3 Maximize the Value of Your Lead Magnet(s)

We've already talked about lead magnets, but there's another angle I want to mention. The best lead magnets are those that:

- Are targeted directly to the people you want to attract as leads
- Offer massive value in return for something small (namely, the user's email address)
- Provide a solution to a problem
- Provide actionable content that the user can benefit from immediately

In most cases, you're going to want something short. You don't need to give away a 100-page eBook. What users want is something that'll benefit them right away.

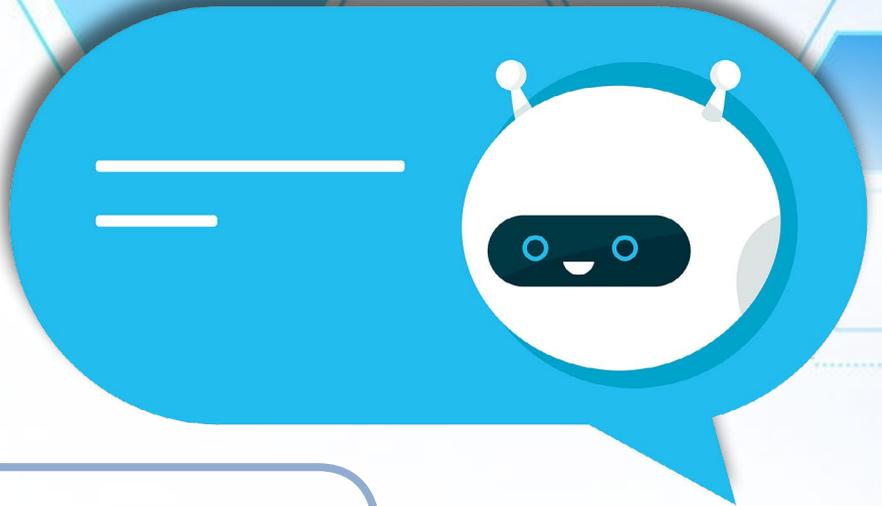
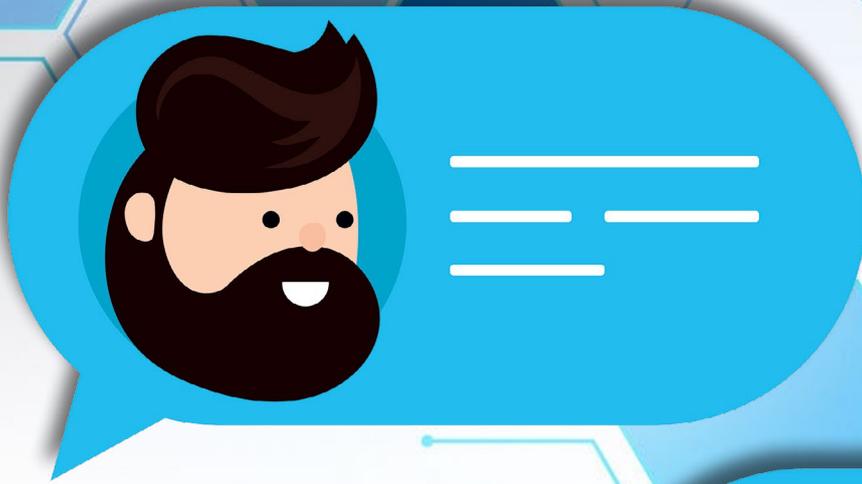
For that reason, I like:

- Cheat sheets
- Discounts
- Checklists
- Free tools
- Resource/template bundles
- Webinars
- Email courses

Of course, you can also offer a short guide or eBook if you want to. I suggest keeping it under 15 pages and use them only if a topic is too complicated to explain in something shorter.

The main point here is that a user should see your lead magnet and experience immediate FOMO (that fear of missing out). You want them to NEED it – so much so that they'll fork over their email address to get it.





“There’s more than one way to skin a cat. And there’s more than one way to capture a lead.”

#4 Choose the Right Lead Capture

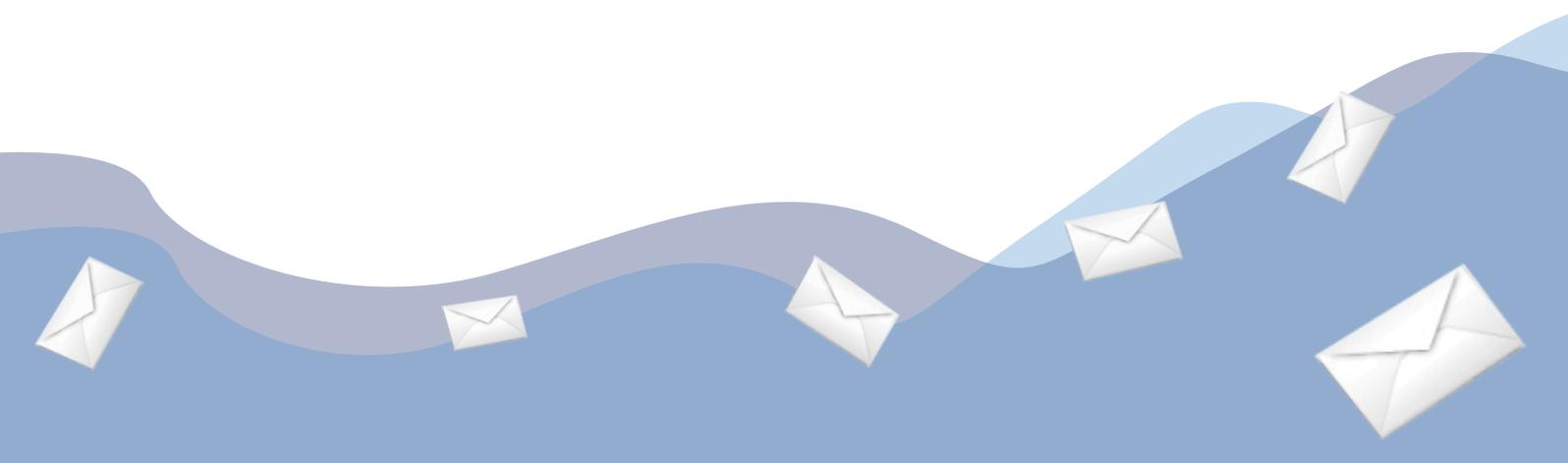
Sure, you could go with the old tried and true web form. But think about your audience. Is that the BEST way?

If your regular methods aren’t garnering the options they once were, here are a few alternatives to consider:

- Surveys and quizzes
- Live chat

- Content upgrades
- Contests and giveaways
- Chatbots
- Pop-up forms (especially exit forms!)

It may take a bit of trial and error to land on the lead capture that works best. I suggest doing a bit of A/B testing to see what gets you the results you want. And remember, what works for one page may not work for another.





#5

Eliminate Friction

Subscribing to your list should be easy. REALLY easy.

You probably know that there's research that shows that every additional field added to an opt-in form decreases the conversion rate. For example, dropping the number of fields from five to four can increase your conversion rate by 50%.

You should ask yourself:

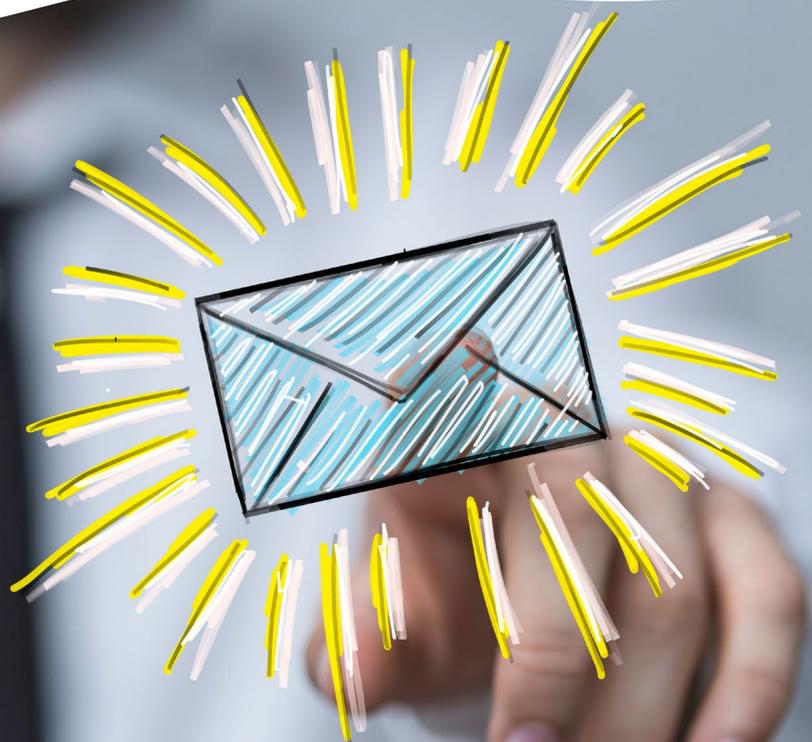
- What information do I absolutely need to follow up with a lead?
- Can I collect additional information later?
- Does my form work on all browsers and devices?
- Which fields are responsible for the most bounces?

You may also want to think about the design of your form. Anything you can do to make it easy to find – like using a contrasting color, putting it in a box, or drawing an arrow pointing to it – has the potential to increase your conversions and generate more leads.

CONCLUSION

Email marketing is an ideal way to nurture leads and convince them to take the next step and buy your product or service.

The five tips I've mentioned here can help you pull your lead generation out of stagnation – and into a brand new world of profits.





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CREATE KILLER CONTENT **WITHOUT WRITING**

A Single Word With a Content Collaboration

The title of this article pretty much steals my opening line:

What if you could create better content with less work?

If you're screaming, "Sign me up!" then you're not alone. Content creation is a lot of work. It takes time, expertise, and attention to detail.

And let's face it: sometimes we have ideas for content but lack the expertise to execute them. Nobody's good at everything, right?

The solution is – drum roll, please – NOT DOING EVERYTHING YOURSELF.

I'm talking here about content collaboration.

Maybe you've never collaborated on a piece of content before and the notion sounds scary. I get it.

But what if a little bit of teamwork and collaboration is just what you need to make your content sing?

What if collaboration could increase your engagement, attract more leads, and bump your profits?

It can. Here's what you need to know.



What is Content Collaboration?

So, what is content collaboration? How does it work?

Simply stated, content collaboration is what happens when more than one person – could be two, could be 10 or more – work together on a piece of content.

The benefit of collaborating on content is that it allows you to bring together people with different experiences, training, and skills to contribute what they know to the finished piece. When it's done well, content collaboration can help you:

- > Be more creative with your content by adding outside expertise and opinions. When people collaborate, they're sometimes able to come up with ideas and creative solutions that they

might not conceptualize on their own. It's a synergy thing.

- > Use your available resources more productively. We all have strength gaps and holes in our knowledge. In a group, you can capitalize on the individual strengths and skills of the entire team and use them, collectively, to make your content sing.

- > Increase your brand recognition and reach. This one's especially true if you include industry influencers and experts in your collaboration. Each one of you can help expand the others' audiences just by your presence on the team.

Content collaboration offers you the chance to create high-quality, engaging, and memorable content that will help you attract new leads. That's a win no matter how you look at it.



Where to Find Collaborators

I'm willing to bet that collaboration sounds good to you now. That makes the next question where to find potential collaborators and how to choose the best ones to help you with your content.

Let's start with the where. There are a few options:

- 1.** Internal contributors. The people who are already working for your company, either as employees or freelancers, may have insights and skills that can make your content more compelling.
- 2.** Customers and clients. The people who use your products or services know them well and might be able to offer tips to potential customers.

3. Suppliers and subcontractors. If your company works with suppliers or outside contractors, they might be able to offer a unique take on your content that potential leads can't get anywhere else.

4. Industry publications, experts, and influencers have expertise that you may not have, and they also have their own audiences that may be interested in your products. Collaborating with them can help you beef up your content and expand your reach at the same time.

You should think about the content you want to create and decide who to approach about collaboration. If you're going to ask people to write a section of content, you should think about their writing skills and whether you'll need to edit or rewrite. Factor that into your decision.

Content Collaboration Ideas to Try

Here are 10 ideas you may want to consider as you undertake your first content collaboration.

1. Write a book. Writing a book all by yourself might seem like a daunting task. But if you gathered 10 collaborators and each of you wrote a chapter, you could be done with the book in no time – and offer your readers far more value than you'd be able to provide on your own.

2. Create a round-up article. You've probably seen round-up articles with titles like, "12 Experts Give Their Best Investment Advice" or something like that. The idea is that each collaborator contributes a tip or trick. All you'll need to do is

edit the whole thing together and you'll have a unique and useful piece of content.

3. Collect reviews. This is an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and create useful or fun lists for your readers to enjoy. An example might be a collection of computer reviews by software users.

4. Conduct interviews. Doing interviews is an easy way to create content. You can simply record them (with audio or video) and then they can be posted in multiple formats. Videos can be shared to YouTube and social media, while audio may be turned into a podcast. You can also post a written version to your blog.





5. Courses and workshops. This type of collaboration is ideal if you want to get customers or clients involved. After all, the people who buy your products may be the best people to ask about creative ways to use them. You can either ask people to teach a segment of a shop or have a group workshop/demo where they demonstrate different techniques and uses for the product.

6. Newsletters. A newsletter is an idea place to collect short articles and contributions from your collaborators. You can send it out via email or post it on your website.

7. Slideshows. When multiple people contribute to a project, you can take each contributor's work and design one or more slides around it. You can even take the slides and turn them into a video presentation.

I hope you get the idea. The content you create with collaborators should go above and beyond what you can do on your own. By incorporating many ideas into one meaningful piece of content, you'll be giving your audience something valuable that may convert them from leads into paying customers.



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Adwords Is D-D-Dying

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Google Local Service Ads



I'm sorry that I have to break it to you but... AdWords is dying.

Well, I'm not that sorry. I'm eager to tell you because Google Local Service Ads are a better option for local businesses than AdWords ever was.

Why? Because AdWords was an advertising tool that could be adapted for local businesses - with the right local keywords, it's been possible to get to the top of Google's SERP. But it was never intended specifically for local service based business.

That's not the case with Google Local Service Ads. It's designed especially for local businesses. Let's talk about it - and about the Google Guarantee Badge.



Why is Local Search a Must?

Simply put, [75% of all local searches result in an in-store visit](#) within 24 hours. This one statistic demonstrates the importance of local SEO. If you can attract a lead through a search, the odds are in your favor that the searcher will come to your business.

As Google focuses more on local SEO and searches, it's natural that they've decided to offer

searchers a way to verify local businesses. And that's where Google Local Services comes in.

Google Local Services got its start as Google Home Services in 2015. It was originally a pilot program in the San Francisco market. It offered consumers some detailed and useful information about local businesses, including:

- ✓ Confirmation that the business is properly licensed
- ✓ Confirmation that the business is properly insured
- ✓ Confirmation that all employees have passed a criminal background check

That last requirement was part of the screening process for any company that made in-home visits. The intent was to provide customers with some peace of mind before they contracted with a business.

Once a business has passed Google's screening, they'll get a badge with a green checkmark next to it and the words "Google Guaranteed." That's a signal to potential leads that your business is trustworthy.

What Does the Google Guarantee Offer Consumers?

The Google Guarantee offers two things to consumers: peace of mind and financial protection. Here's how it breaks down.

The first thing is that, as I mentioned before, the Google Guarantee tells potential leads that your business is licensed and insured and that your employees have passed a criminal background check. That's essential in the home services industry.

The second thing the Google Guarantee offers is [financial protection](#). Google will reimburse money paid for a job when the consumer is dissatisfied.

There's a lifetime cap of \$2,000 and the service must be:

- Booked through Google Local Services
- Unsatisfactory in quality
- Submitted within 30 days of the work being completed

Per Google, "Add-on or future projects, damages to property, dissatisfaction with price or provider responsiveness, and cancellations aren't covered."

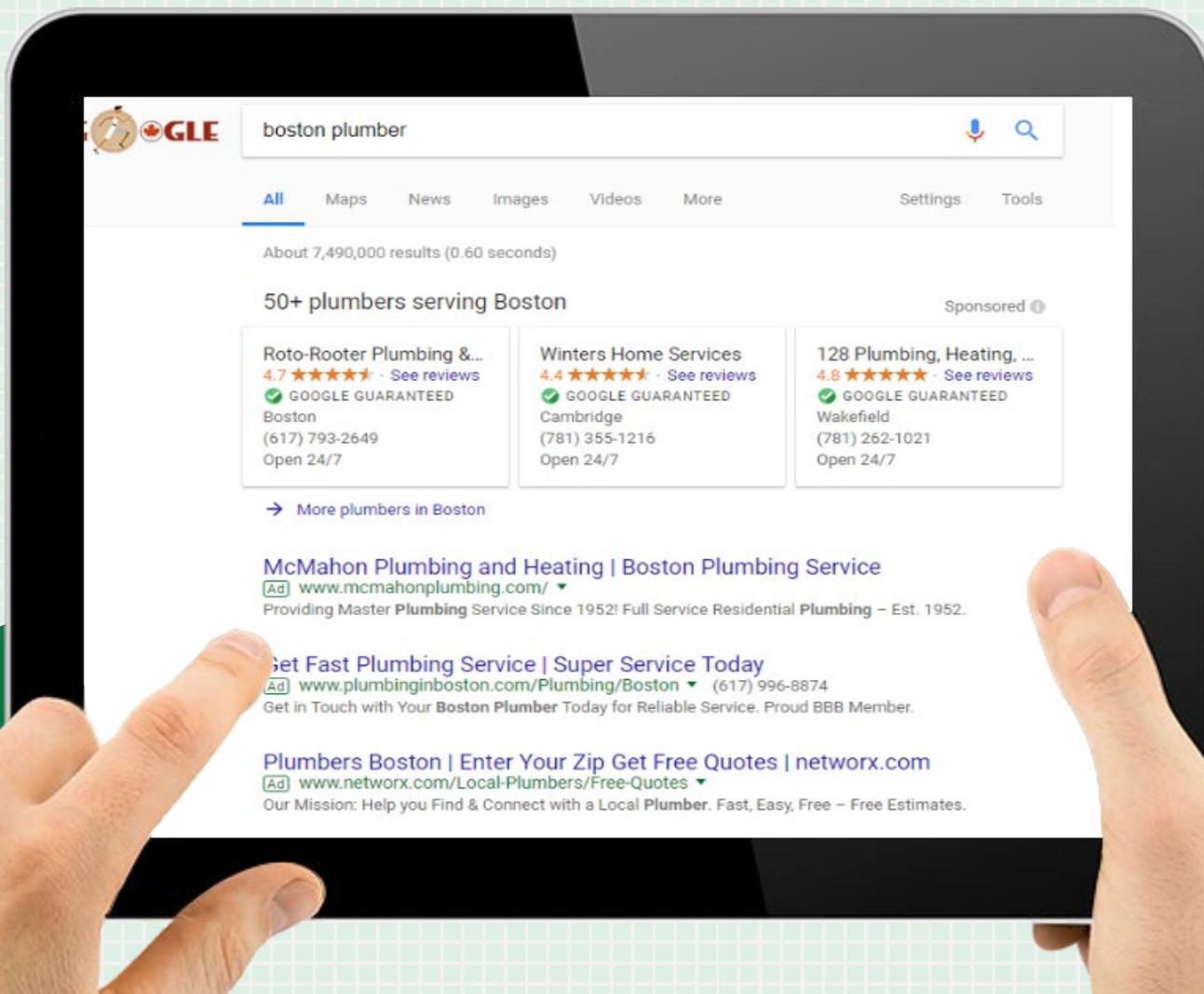
If one of your customers files a claim, Google will contact you to let you know. You'll have a chance to work things out with your customer first. If that fails, Google will reach a verdict about how to handle the claim.

Where Do Google Local Services Ads Appear?

If you haven't taken part of Google Local Service listings yet, you might be wondering "Why do I need to jump through hoops to complete Google's screening process?"

Well, there's a couple really good reasons. Let's discuss.

First, if you're properly licensed and insured, the only other thing you need to do is get background checks for your employees. And frankly, if you're sending your employees into people's homes, that's a good idea for every business.



Second, it's all about the ad placement. Businesses that pass Google's screening process get preferred placement on the SERP on both desktop and mobile devices.

On desktop, business with the Google Guarantee Badge appear in a box above both the traditional Google 3-pack and the regular organic search results.

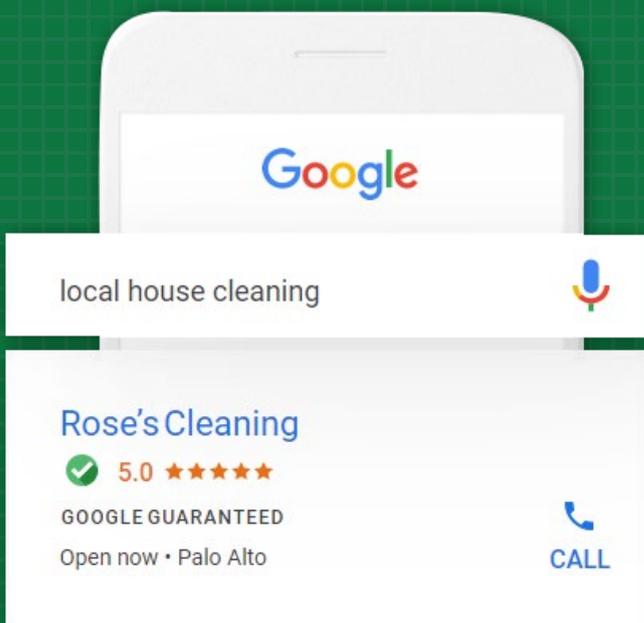
The display will list:

- Your company's name
- Your rating (from 1 to 5 stars)
- Your Google Guarantee Badge
- Your city and state
- Your telephone number
- Your business hours

Typically, the three companies with the highest ratings for the search term will appear at the top of the SERP.

There'll also be a link underneath the top three business that consumers can click to see more businesses.

On mobile devices, the Google Local Services ads appear above the SERP, too. Typically, the top two results will appear along with the name, badge, rating, and a call button that mobile users can click to contact you directly.



How Does Google Local Service Ads Benefit You?

Most people who perform a Google search never get past the first page of search results. In other words, it's incredibly important for local business to rank for search if they want to capture leads and grow their businesses.

Google Local Service Ads and the Google Guarantee Badge can help you do both. If you have good reviews, then your business will be front and center when people search your top local keywords.





"They want to know that you're reliable and that your employees can be trusted.. "

Potential leads will know that your business has been guaranteed by Google. They can access reviews easily and be confident that you're someone they can trust with whatever work they need.

One of the biggest objections when people are looking for home services is safety. The Google Guarantee Badge provides some peace of mind and takes the guesswork out of hiring you.

But here's the best thing - While traditional ads operate on a pay-per-click basis, Local Service ads run on a pay-per-lead basis. That means you're only charged for the leads you receive through your Local Service ad

And, compared to regular search ads, Local Service ads have a pretty simple setup. No keywords, research, or creative to manage.

Are There Any Downsides to Google Local Services?

I can't say that there are any real negatives to qualifying for the Google Guarantee Badge, but FYI not every business can take part of this program. Google's Local Service Ads cater to local service-based businesses in specific industries, such as locksmiths, plumbers, garage door professionals, electricians, and HVAC services. To find out if you can connect to your customers with Local Service Ads, first confirm your business type and location [here](#).

So if you'll jump through some hoops - Google's Local Service Ads can give your business a

big leg up on your competitors and drive more high quality leads to your business.

CONCLUSION

Google AdWords is dying whether you're ready or not. This is the perfect time to embrace Google Local Services, go through the screening process, and get that coveted green checkmark next to your name - so if you own a local service based business - what are you waiting for?



LOCAL
SEO



VS.

NATIONAL
SEO



EXPLAINED

You've got your SEO all figured out, right?

Well... maybe.

Perhaps you've done a ton of research to find great keywords. Maybe you've got terrific, engaging content. You've optimized your links and tags.

Guess what?

If your business is local and you haven't focused on local SEO, then the chances are good that

you're falling behind your competitors without realizing it.

All SEO is not created equal. National SEO – which focuses non-location based keywords – is useful for big corporations.

But for small businesses, local SEO is where it's at.

What are the differences? What do you need to know to make the most of local SEO? Let's talk about it.

THE BIG PICTURE SIMILARITIES

Local and national SEO have a lot in common.

For example, both types of SEO have the goal of improving a website's ranking on Google's Search Engine Results Page (SERP.) The pages with the highest ranks get the lion's share of traffic, which means

they also get more conversions and more sales.

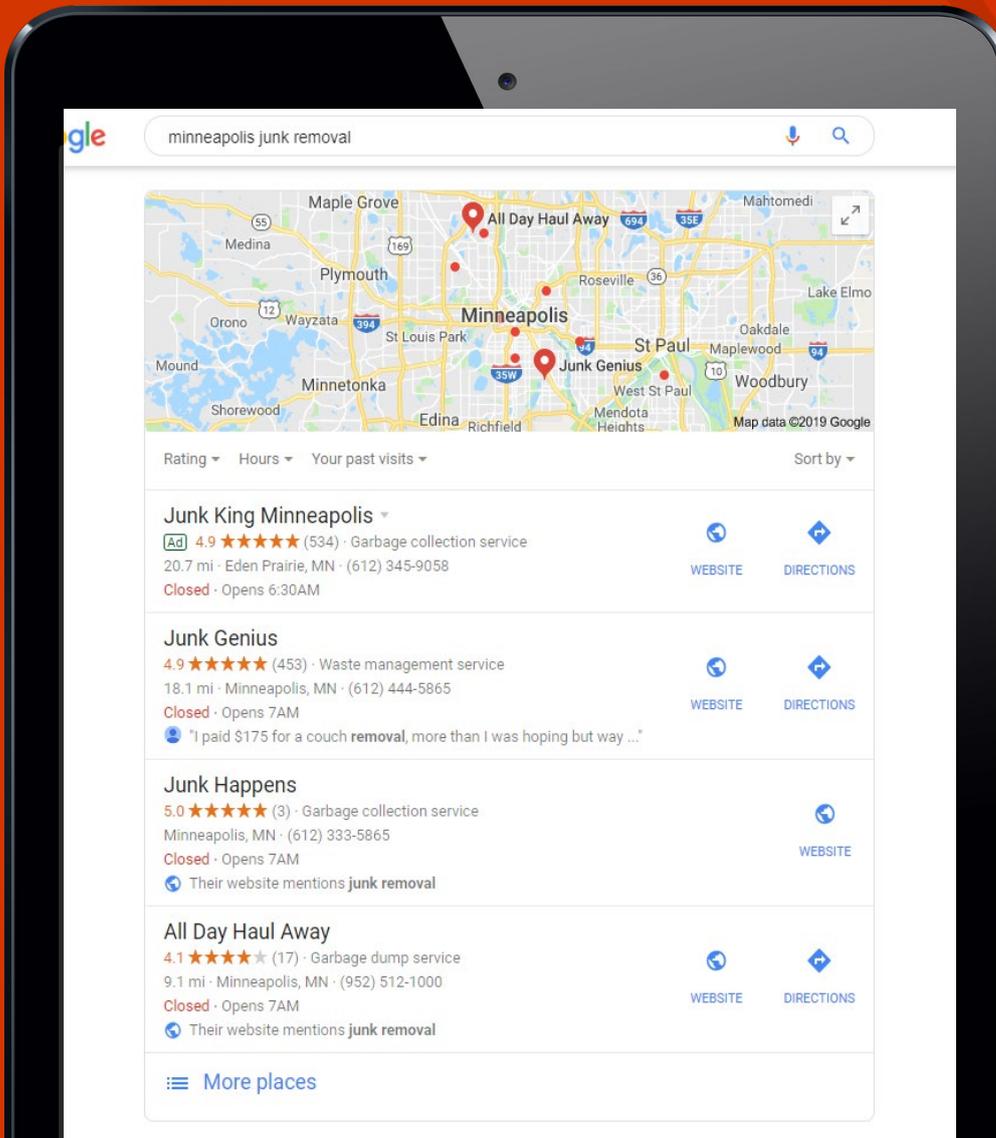
Some general techniques apply to all SEO, regardless of the target audience. I'm talking about:

- Optimizing content with key words
- Using keywords in tags, titles, and meta descriptions

- Link building with authority sites
- Guest blogging

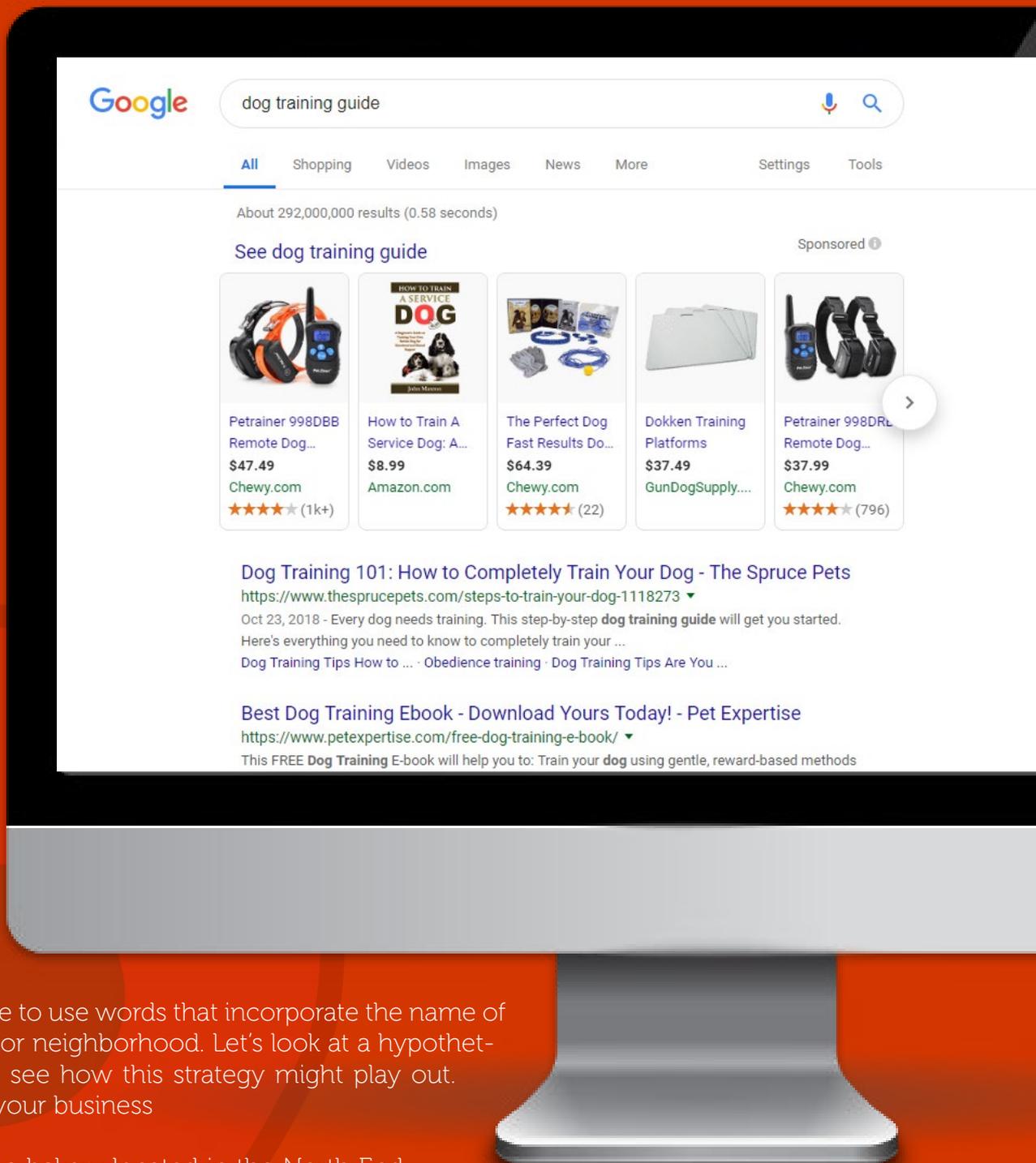
These things are essential because they help Google and other search engines "crawl" your site and index it properly.

NATIONAL KEYWORDS VS. LOCAL KEYWORDS



The biggest difference between local and national SEO is the keywords you'll use. National businesses can use general keywords because they're big enough to benefit from doing so. When customers buy online or can find your business at their local mall, you don't need to worry too much about locational keywords.

Local businesses do need to worry about locational keywords. They help local customers – the ones most likely to frequent your business – find you online.



Google

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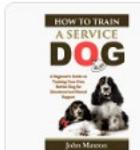
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You may choose to use words that incorporate the name of your state, city, or neighborhood. Let's look at a hypothetical business to see how this strategy might play out. Depending on your business

The business is a bakery located in the North End neighborhood in Boston. Here are a few local keywords that might be useful:

- North End Italian bakery
- Boston bakery

- Italian bakery North End Boston
- Massachusetts bakery

You get the idea. You can come up with variations that use the locations that are most likely to help your customers find you.

Choosing the right local keywords also helps you with Google. When someone in the area searches "best North end bakery," Google will return results based on the GPS on the searcher's phone or device.

In other words, local keywords help Google include your business in local searches, making it more likely that people in your area will learn about your business.



THE BENEFITS OF LOCAL SEO

Local SEO offers some significant benefits to small and medium-sized companies. A small company is unlikely to be able to compete with a large national brand. They won't have the budget or the reach to do so.

Here are some of the key benefits of local SEO as I see them:

- Local SEO is more targeted than national SEO and thus more likely to help you reach the people who are the most likely to become regular customers.
- Local SEO is almost always less expensive than national SEO because there's less com-

petition for local keywords and you'll be targeting a smaller audience than you would if you were using a national keyword.

- In many ways, local SEO is easier to conceptualize, implement, and manage than national SEO. You won't need a large marketing team to make a big impact in your local market.

For most small and medium-sized businesses, local SEO just makes sense. Why would you throw money away chasing general or national keywords when you can get better results by spending less money?



Local SEO isn't difficult, but you'll need to be methodical and practical in how you approach it.

TIPS TO PERFECT YOUR LOCAL SEO

What's the best way to perfect your local SEO? Fortunately, it's not that hard to do. Here's what I suggest:

1. Start by claiming your business listings. Anywhere your business is listed online, whether it's on the website for your local Chamber of Commerce, Yelp, or a city directory, should be something you control. Claiming your listings makes it easy for you to correct errors and ensure that it's easy for people to find your business.
2. Next, you'll need to standardize your NAP (name, address, phone number) listings. To get the best results with Google and other search engines, you'll need to make sure that all NAP listings are identical. That means everything, from the abbreviations you use for your street address to the phone number you list, must be the same.
3. Consider adding location pages to your website if you have more than one location. It's easier to get local SEO right when you're specific – and when you make it simple for people in your area to find you.
4. Update Google My Business for your business. Because it's owned by Google, this is the one listing you can't afford to ignore. Make sure you've got a link to your URL and that you use local keywords in your descriptions.
5. Research the local keywords with the most traffic and use them in your content. Remember that people in search of local businesses are highly likely to use local keywords. Choose your keywords accordingly.
6. Create compelling and useful local content that will attract people to your site. Make sure to use your keywords in your tags and link out to authority sites. You should also include a system of internal links.
7. Encourage your customers to write reviews – and respond to all reviews, positive and negative.
8. Do some local link building by reaching out to other businesses and directories in your area and getting them to link back to your site.
9. Use local keywords on your social media sites. Add maps, use Facebook's mobile options to allow mobile users to click to call you, and allow customers to leave reviews.



CONCLUSION

If you want to attract local customers, you need local SEO. It's as simple as that. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to focus on identifying the local keywords and strategies that will have customers flocking to your door.

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BRIDGE Local takes word of mouth to the next level by making it fun and easy for businesses to be seen by local customers while strengthening their professional network!