ULTIMATE

Local SEO

Checklist

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Introduction

Local search engine optimization (aka Local SEO) is the process of getting your business to appear on the first page of Google's local search results. The Ultimate Local SEO Checklist outlines the key actions you'll want to take to rank higher in the local search results so you attract more local customers every month.

Keyword Research

The first critical step to achieving success with Local SEO is to first determine which keywords you want to rank for in the first page.

- Brainstorm keyword variations, including synonyms and geographic modifiers

- Ask friends and clients (customers, patients) what they would search for to find your type of business in Google

- Use Google's Keyword Planner Tool to check search volume (must log into Google AdWords first)

- Grade/prioritize keywords based on relevance and "hiring intent"

Competitor Research

In order to outrank your competitors, you'll want to study them...

- Analyze your competitors' title tags for any extra keyword opportunities

- Analyze your competitors' Google My Business categories

- Research where your competitors are getting citations (a good starting point is to search their address in Google)

- Analyze your competitors' links using opensiteexplorer.org, ahrefs.com and other tools

- Use a tool like SpyFu (www.mainstreetroi.com/spyfu) or KeywordSpy (www.mainstreetroi.com/keywordspy) to see which of your competitors are advertising in Google, and note which keywords they're advertising on

Setup Your "Google My Business" Local Listing

If you haven't already, set up and claim your Google My Business listing…

- To set up your Google My Business listing, go to
  https://www.google.com/business/

- Verify your address if you haven't already

- Complete ALL available fields

- Do NOT keyword stuff in your company name!

- Make sure to add all relevant categories

  o List of categories: http://blumenthals.com/Google_LBC_Categories

- Add a description to your listing, including relevant keywords as well as a strong call-to-action

- Be sure to set up a separate listing for each geographical location

- Check to see if you have any duplicate listings; if so, merge them as needed

Edit Your Website for Local SEO

With Local SEO, your Google+ Local profile will usually rank at the top of the page. But it's also important to optimize your website…

- Assign 1 core keyword to each page on your website

- Edit title tags to be unique and descriptive on all pages

- Title tags should be roughly 50-55 characters in length

- Edit your homepage title tag to include your location and primary service

- Create separate pages for each service

- Edit your service page(s) titles to include relevant keywords

- Make sure all pages you want to rank in organic results have sufficient copy

- Add your full address and contact information on contact page, homepage, and ideally in your footer of all pages

- Edit meta descriptions to be unique and descriptive on all pages, with 150-160 characters length

- Edit header tags to include relevant keywords (but don't keyword stuff)

- Add a blog to your website, ideally in a sub-directory (website.com/blog)

- Fix canonicalization so your pages only load at 1 location

- Images: Use relevant, descriptive keywords in the Alt text and image file names

- Implement Google authorship

- We recommend using https protocol on all pages

- Check website load speed with Google's Pagespeed Insights tool, and make necessary improvements

- Make sure your website is mobile friendly (ideally mobile responsive vs. mobile redirect)

- Install an XML sitemap

- Implement Local Business Schema

- Check for duplicate content on your website using a tool such as siteliner.com

- If you have multiple locations, consider adding webpages for each location (and/or geographical area served)

Get Citations

One the biggest factors to improve your Google+ Local listing is to build citations. Citations are mentions of your Name, Address and Phone Number on the web. The more citations you have, and the more consistent they are, the better...

- Use the MozLocal citation scoring tool to audit your citation accuracy

  - https://moz.com/local

- Register with data provider such as

  - http://ww.acxiom.com

  - https://www.neustarlocaleze.biz

  - https://www.factual.com/products/global

- Register on national business directories

  - Resource: Top 50 Local Citation Websites (US, UK, Canada)

    - https://www.brightlocal.com/2013/09/11/top-50-local-citation-sites/

- Research and submit your business info to local directories in your city/state

- o Resource: Local Citation Websites for Top 100 USA Cities

    - https://www.brightlocal.com/2015/03/31/local-citation-sites-for-top-100-usa-cities/

- Research and submit your business info to niche directories for your industry

  - o Resource: Best Niche Citation Websites for 41 Business Categories

    - https://www.brightlocal.com/2014/10/09/top-citation-sites/

- Research where your competitors are getting citations, and get those too

Get Links

Links (hyperlinks to your website, from other websites) are critically important for demonstrating your authority and improving your search engines rankings.

- Register on directories (many of these provide a link, as well as a citation)

- Review your personal and business contacts, and see how you can use those relationships to get links (e.g. associations, business partners, sponsorships)

- Guest blogging – offer to contribute an article to another website, along with a link in your byline

- After reviewing your competitors' links, see which of those links you can get too

- Provide valuable comments on other relevant blogs

- Create profiles on social media websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest (and often these will include a link)

- Develop useful content on your website and promote it via social media and email (this can help attract natural editorial links)

Get Google Reviews

Reviews are another major factor in local search rankings. Google and other search engines want to feature local businesses they know will provide quality services…

- Never, ever, EVER publish fake reviews

- Put processes in place to ask customers for Google My Business reviews

- Develop a "review request" email to send to customers, so it's easy for them to click and leave you a review on Google

- In addition to customer reviews, solicit reviews from peers in your industry

- Do some basic "Reputation Management 101" work

    o Publish branded content to own the Top 10 results for your brand keywords

    o Monitor your reputation on an ongoing basis

    o Identify the root cause of any complaints and take necessary action to prevent any future complains

Secure Your Rankings

In order to secure your rankings over the long-term, we recommend maintaining an ongoing investment in Local SEO and social media activities…

- Make regular posts to your Google+ Local page (at least 1X/month)

- Publish blog posts on your website frequently (at least 1X/month)

- Continually build your social media audience

- Post regularly to your social profiles (at least 1X/month)

- Reply quickly to any negative reviews you may get

- Continually build more citations

- Continually build more links

- Continually get more reviews

Track Your ROI

If you want to ensure you're profiting from your Local SEO investments… and you want to make continual improvement… it's critical that you're tracking your rankings, traffic, leads and sales…

- Set Up Google Analytics

- Use a tool like RankRanger to track your local rankings

- Use Google Analytics to monitor your SEO traffic

- Setup/sync Google Search Console and Google Analytics to track SEO traffic by keyword

- Review Google My Business Dashboard insights report

- Setup Goals in Google Analytics to track SEO web form conversions

- Setup Dynamic Number Insertion to track phone calls from SEO (but do NOT use tracking numbers for directory listings!)

- Setup CRM tracking to track which offline leads close into sales

- Track your Local SEO Return on Investment (ROI)

    o Add up your SEO costs

    o Add up your SEO revenue

    o ROI = (Revenue – Costs) / Costs

Want Help with Your Local SEO?

Request a Free SEO Quote to get details on our SEO packages and pricing:

http://www.mainstreetroi.com/seo-quote

To Your Success!

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Main Street ROI