

2015 local search ranking factors you need to know about

Since its inception, Search Engine Optimization or SEO has been a challenge for online marketers and webmasters. A website's search ranking, particularly its placement on search engine results pages, or SERPs, can have a drastic affect on the traffic it receives. But the precise factors that affect search ranking aren't completely clear. They are determined by the search engine's algorithm, which is in a constant state of flux.

Improving a website's search ranking isn't easy. It requires a marketer to stay on top of the very latest search engine optimization tactics, including link-building (making sure that as many sites, particularly high-authority and well-trafficked sites, link to your website) and on-page SEO factors (optimizing the website's content) and to put them to effective use on their website, doing their best to gain and maintain a high search ranking. This is even more of a challenge when the website in question is a business that, in addition to having a traditionally optimized website, also needs to maintain a high search ranking in its local geographical area. This type of SEO, known as local SEO, requires different considerations than traditional SEO.

With local SEO, link-building and optimizing on-page SEO factors is still extremely important. The difference is that instead of focusing solely on obtaining links from high-authority websites, it's also important that those links are from local sites that are relevant to your business's industry and that have local influence and rank.

Additionally, local search ranking is greatly affected by what are known as citations. In order for your business to reap the full SEO benefits of local inbound links from relevant and influential local sites, the sites need to contain a citation or reference to your business's exact name, street address, and phone number, and all local inbound links need to contain citations that are consistent in their formatting. The business name, address, and phone number must be the same from site to site. However, experts are now questioning whether or not citations are as crucially important to local SEO as they were in previous years, so it's best to diversify your local SEO campaign. Be sure not to focus on obtaining local citations to the exclusion of all other local SEO tactics.

One more local SEO tactic that remains as important as ever is obtaining local online reviews of your business. Businesses that have received a significant number of genuine local reviews, whether through their own sites or through third-party review sites such as Yelp, rank higher on local search engine results pages, and this high-ranking can drastically affect how much traffic your website receives, local traffic in particular. Since local traffic is the ultimate goal when it comes to local SEO

campaigns, it's wise to focus significant time and effort on obtaining these reviews. Doing so will greatly impact how visible and popular your business's website is in local search results.

Running SEO campaigns and optimizing your website for search engine algorithms is always challenging and time-consuming. And running a local SEO campaign on top of a standard campaign is doubly challenging. But being aware of the latest tactics and best practices will make your local SEO campaign as easy as possible, and, more importantly, as effective as it can possibly be.