

The Power of Local Search: An Essential Online Marketing Strategy for your Business

What's the most important recent development in small business marketing? YouTube videos, Facebook fan pages, Twitter updates, business blogging?

Nope. For local brick-and-mortar businesses, the most important development, the really big news, is an unprecedented marketing channel called **Local Search**.

What's Local Search?

Imagine this: take all the business information in every phone book, match it to detailed maps of every location, and mix-in consumer reviews and ratings. Then, make it all super-easy for customers to find in a few seconds on the major search engines. That's local search in a nutshell.

Here are some local search listings in Denver for *computer repair* . . .

The image shows a Google search interface for "computer repair". The search bar contains "computer repair" and the "Search" button is visible. Below the search bar, it indicates "About 4,550 results (0.14 seconds)".

The search results list three businesses:

- Action Computers, Inc. - We Buy Used Computers!**
We understand how difficult it is to be without your computer and are proud to offer the fastest turnaround of any high-volume service center in Denver. ...
The Denver Store - Arvada Store - Notebook Blowout - Contact Us
www.actionpc.com/ - Cached - Similar
2890 S. Colorado Blvd, Denver - (303) 759-1668
"The staff and owners of Action Computers are the best in town...." - citysearch.com (18)
superpages.com (2) - yelp.com (1) - judysbook.com (1)
54 reviews, Place page
- Techno+Rescue - Computer Recycling Denver | Computer Repair Denver ...**
Techno+Rescue, a Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB), VOSB, located in Commerce City, CO, offers computer repair, computer recycling, laptop repair, ...
www.technorescue.com/ - Cached - Similar
6150 E. 49th Ave, Commerce City - (303) 482-2207
"Their service was easily above and beyond and their rates beat the competition." - insiderpages.com (2)
dexknews.com (3) - citysearch.com (1)
14 reviews, Place page
- Home - TotalTech LLC. Colorados Premier Computer Service & Repair ...**
Computer Repair Denver. ... Recycle your old Computers or Electronics With us and you'll be helping someone in need! Click image to find out more! ...
www.totaltechnow.com/ - Cached - Similar
4984 Hooker St., Denver - (720) 205-1812
"I really enjoyed having Total Tech work on my computer. They did a great job." - citysearch.com
judysbook.com (6) - dexknews.com (4) - insiderpages.com (3)
43 reviews, Place page

To the right of the search results is a map of Denver with several red location pins labeled A through J. Below the map, there is a "Sponsored links" section with an advertisement for "We Fix It Or It's Free" with the text "Fast, Affordable, Professional No such thing as a dumb question" and the website "www.tektrkcomputerrepair.com".

Every business with a street address is affected. It doesn't matter what trade or profession you practice, or which products you sell — your business is already being categorized under at least some keywords that generate local search results for your potential customers.

But that does **not** mean your business now magically enjoys new visibility on the Web.

To succeed in the hotly competitive local search environment, your business must proactively **maximize its visibility** and **manage its reputation** by optimizing its listings and laying the groundwork for positive consumer reviews. That's what we do.

Why Is Local Search Hot?

Local search use is growing exponentially because savvy, informed customers, the people that support your business year after year, love the convenience and sheer coolness of the local search experience.

Local search gives your potential customers critical decision-making information at the **exact time they are ready to buy, with almost no effort.**

In a few seconds, they can find, understand, evaluate, and contact your business. Most importantly, they can **read what others think about your business.**

Why is that good news?

Because local search reviews and ratings are the foundation of a deep trend called *consumer-powered marketing*: the online version of “word-of-mouth” referrals. The combination of first-page online visibility and informative reviews means **local search is a magnet for your ideal customers.**



The Local Search Cycle

Here's how it works: our optimization program leads to greater online visibility (local search listings), which are supported by positive reviews. More visible listings attract new (and more loyal) customers, who then refer others, which in turn lowers your customer acquisition costs, and increases your potential revenue.

With enhanced visibility and strong reviews, even a micro-business with no advertising budget can enjoy highly-influential first-page results on the major search engines and profit from a stream of ideal clients in its community. **That's never been possible until now.**

What about negative reviews? Aren't those a problem? If you provide a good consumer experience, they won't be. In fact, 87% of reviews are "positive in tone". A small percentage of negative reviews are not the kiss of death and certainly not a reason to avoid local search. In fact, the occasional negative comment is an important source of customer service feedback, and an opportunity to turn that unhappy customer into an ally. Public commentary will happen regardless of your participation; so it's far better to get involved, and manage your online reputation proactively. We'll show you how to do it.

Why have tens of millions of consumers become instant fans of local search? Because it gives them a degree of control and power they have always wanted: more confidence their expectations will be met, less risk of choosing the wrong business, less irrelevant commercial messages to endure, and by writing reviews, a role in influencing the future experience of other consumers just like them.

As a business owner, this shift in power to the customer may seem a little scary, but in a sense, it's the way things have always been. The difference now is that the consumer's voices are greatly amplified and widely distributed by the power of the network. The key is to use this shift to your advantage.

After all, no one wants to waste time or money, or to have a disappointing experience. From a customer's viewpoint, the answer is to find out what previous customers experienced . . .

- *Are your tacos really the best in town?*
- *Are your surgery patients happy with their outcomes?*
- *Is your contracting service trustworthy?*
- *Can I conveniently drive to your office?*

These are the types of questions customers are asking, and they are finding their answers online, in local search ratings and reviews.

Consumer-powered, reputation-based marketing, combined with the speed and appeal of local search, is here to stay. You cannot ignore this trend. Our advice: take action now before your competitors do, and prosper with a smart local search strategy.

Are My Customers Really Using Local Search?

Yes! Google recently reported **over 2 BILLION local searches per month**. That doesn't count Yahoo, Bing, Yelp, Insider Pages, CitySearch, and dozens of other players. The latest *ComScore Local Search Study* (October 2010) shows 57% of respondents thought online ratings and reviews were an important part of choosing a local business. Yes, the traffic is there and people are absolutely using local search to make both on-the-spot and long-term buying decisions.

We've already reached the tipping point when most new customers simply won't call or drop-by without first doing a quick local search to confirm your business is **open, convenient, relevant (a good fit for their needs), and of course, reputable**.

This preference for personal relevancy helps explain why traditional print ads, direct mail, and cable TV advertising are in trouble. A study by Yankelovich Partners found that two-thirds of Americans feel "constantly bombarded" by advertising and nearly as many felt that these ads have little or no relevance to them.

Customers want the relevant, timely insights that only local search delivers, which is why local search use growing at 50% per year. Businesses that engage local search will have a huge advantage over those that don't.

Here's another important trend: Web-enabled "smart phone" sales now exceed 250 million units per year, and sales of similar "smart devices" are expected to overtake personal computer sales by 2013. What will many of those users do with their snazzy new toys? You guessed it: local search.

How Can Local Search Grow My Business?

Your company can use local search to **increase visibility** in your community, **differentiate your services or products**, and to **level the playing field** with larger or more-entrenched competitors. The result: more business from ideal customers.

But to succeed in local search, your business needs to **maximize its first-page local search results** for as many relevant keywords as possible. We take care of that for you by properly submitting your listing across more than 30 of the most important search, social networking, and data aggregation sites, using keyword-rich category selections and business descriptions. These in turn propagate to hundreds more distribution partners, directories, local search sites, and mobile navigation providers.

Then, we provide guidance to the very important "other half" of local search: **how to attract, monitor, and respond to reviews and ratings which define your online reputation**.

Any business with a physical address can benefit from local search optimization, but those selling high-value or recurring services may stand to benefit the most — physicians, attorneys, veterinarians, contractors, auto repair shops, dentists — simply because each new customer acquired (and subsequent referrals) may mean thousands of dollars in revenue to the company.

Local search makes first-page visibility a reality without spending on small fortune on advertising.

UPDATE. October 27, 2010. Google formally launched *Place Search*, a greatly enhanced version of its local search service. It means Google has now made a **comprehensive commitment to local search**, giving *Place Search* results more prominence and importance than ever before on google.com and by fully supporting mobile devices.

Why Does My Business Need Local Search Marketing?

- Prosperous, informed buyers — your best customers — prefer using local search.
- Local search traffic is FREE. There are no per-click charges to pay, or bids to manage.
- Local search results are featured prominently on the first page of Google, Yahoo, and Bing, as well as Yelp, Insider Pages, CitySearch and other major sites.
- Local search works even without a web site (although we recommend you have one).
- The price is right. Other marketing methods either cost more or take more of your time.
- Save money by scaling-down or phasing-out expensive Yellow Page ads.
- Without a professional local search marketing program, your business is losing customers to better-positioned competitors.

Compared to cable TV, radio, print, direct mail, and online ads, local search is . . .

- **Easy:** Answer our questionnaire, and if you like, provide some images. That's it!
- **Fast:** Your online visibility will start increasing within 30 days.
- **Low-Cost:** No other method costs so little yet provides such long-term value.
- **Effective:** Our clients tell us their best customers often come from local search.
- **Flexible:** No contracts.

What Is Included In This Program?

- We claim your online business identity on your behalf. You will be the owner of record and will have permanent access to your listings.
- We add, update, and match your business information across the most important search, social networking, and data aggregation sites.
- We research and submit your business to select directories including specialized industry and area directories (to optimize your inclusion in the local search results).
- We provide links (URL's) to your business' review pages (so your clients can review your business with one click!)
- Updates to your listings are free for the length of your subscription (we do not update coupons or other information that changes continually, although you'll have access do this yourself.)
- You'll receive valuable marketing insights from Alta Publishing, online marketing experts, enhancing your visibility, conversion, and retention of clients.
- Free Bonus #1: *What You Must Know About Your Online Reputation.*
- Free Bonus #2: *How to get a Torrent of Positive Reviews.*
- Free Bonus #3: Google Alerts and Yext accounts to help monitor your online reputation.
- Free Bonus #4: [Google QR code](#) image to display on your premises. (Smart phone users scan the code to access your business information.)

Get Started in 30 Minutes or Less.

To attract and retain high-value customers in your community, your business needs a strong local search presence. We're here to guide your online marketing efforts, to help you optimize and submit your listings, and to lay the groundwork for managing your reviews. It's the future of local marketing.

To learn more or to start your program, please visit this link:

<http://www.alta-publishing.com/local>

Contact Information:

Michael Charvet
Alta Publishing
242 Broadway, Suite 8
Chico, California 95928
415-894-5040