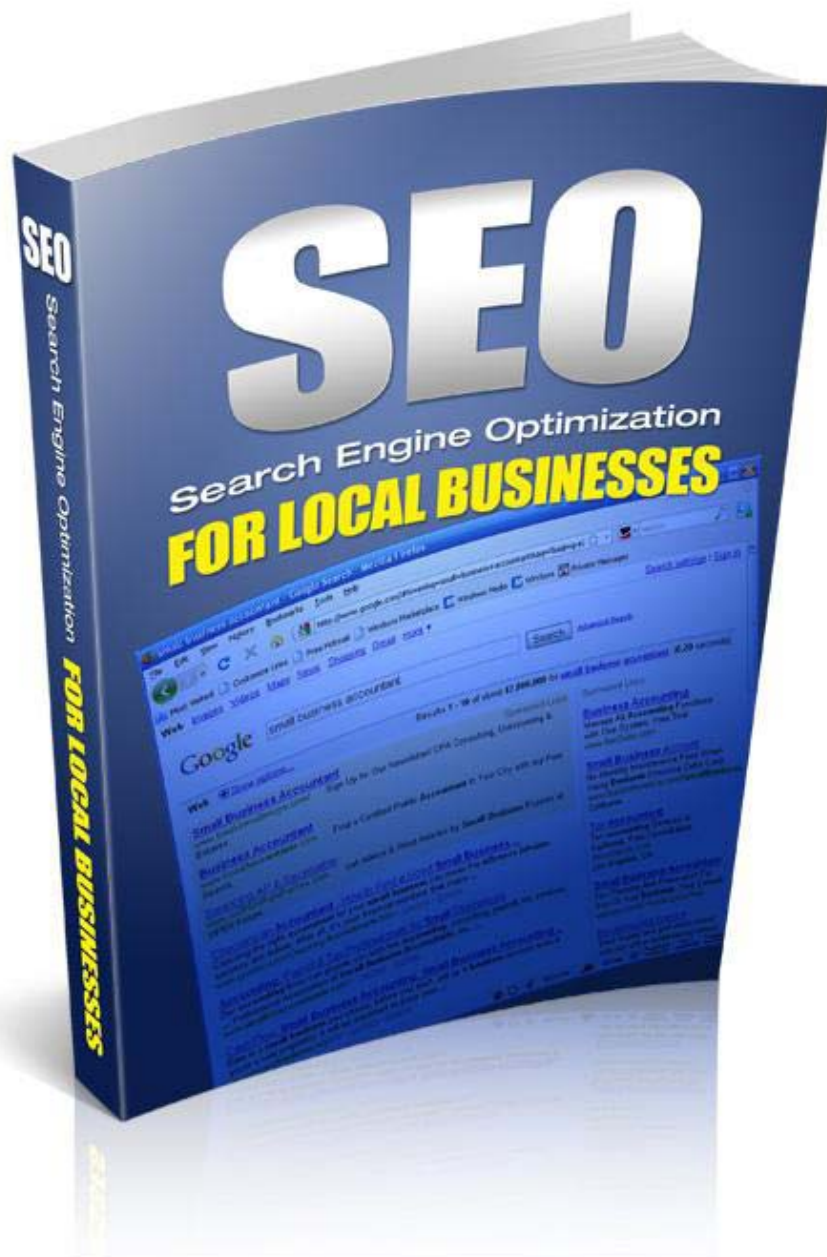


Search Engine Optimization For Local Businesses

by Barak Granot



Disclaimers / Legal Information

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations for the purpose of writing critical articles or reviews.

Notice of Liability

The author and publisher have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information herein. However, the information contained in this book is presented without warranty, either express or implied.

Trademark Notice

Rather than indicating every occurrence of a trademarked name as such, this book uses the names only in an editorial fashion and to the benefit of the trademark owner with no intention of infringement of the trademark.

Copyright Information

©2011 Barak Granot / Unique Web Consulting

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	Page 4
What Is Search Engine Optimization?.....	Page 6
On-page SEO Tactics.....	Page 8
Off-page SEO Tactics.....	Page 10
Google Places.....	Page 12
Traffic Generation Strategies.....	Page 15
Social Media.....	Page 16
Where Do We Go From Here?.....	Page 17
About The Author.....	Page 18

Search Engine Optimization for Local Businesses

Introduction

As a fellow business owner, you already know that marketing is important for business growth and in today's climate that's especially true.

More and more, your prospects are turning to the Internet to locate businesses in their own backyard. In fact, according to a Piper Jaffray 2008 research paper, 30 percent of all search engine queries contain a city, state or zip code.

With approximately 2.6 billion local searches performed each month, the Internet has now surpassed print Yellow Pages and newspapers as a primary source for local consumer service information and that trend is on the rise.



The popularity of web-enabled phones (like the iPhone and Android) will only add to these numbers as 27 percent of all mobile searches are for local information.

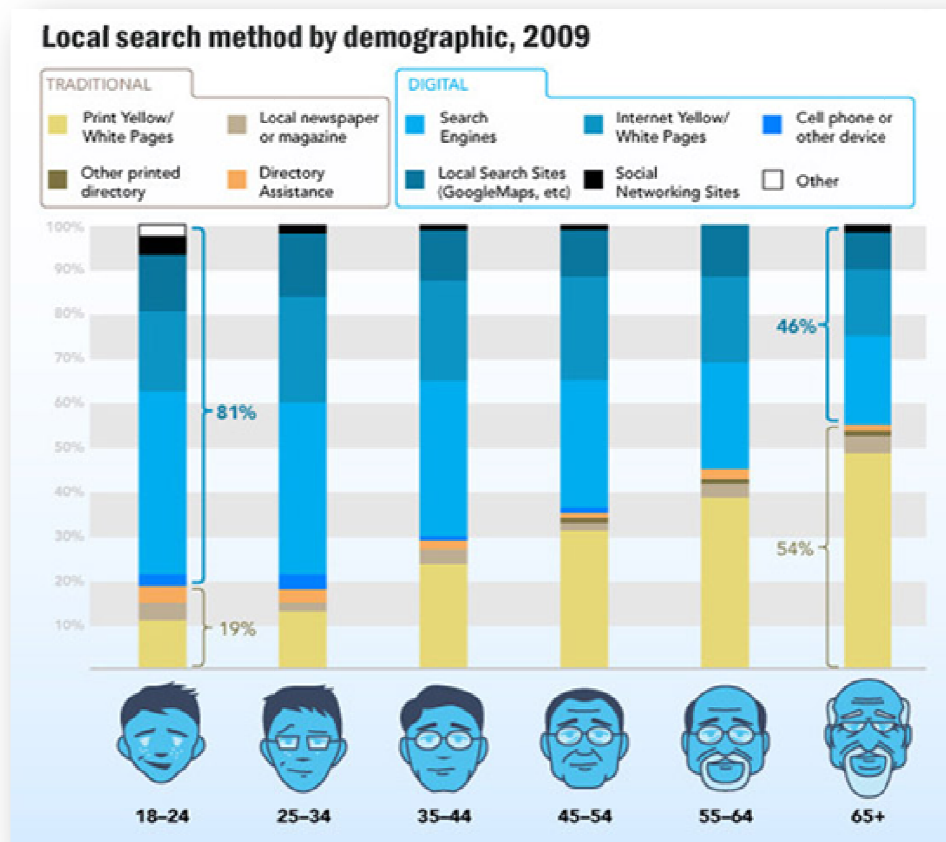
Here are some interesting statistics:

- 66% of Americans use online local search
- 61% of local searches result in purchases (TMP / comScore)
- 74% of internet users perform local searches (Kelsey Group)
- 73% of online activity is related to local content (Google)

Search Engine Optimization for Local Businesses

- 82% of local searchers follow up offline via an in-store visit, phone call or purchase (TMP / comScore)
- 80% of budgets are spent within 50 miles of the home (DMA / proprietary)
- 54% of Americans have substituted the internet and local search for phone books (comScore networks)

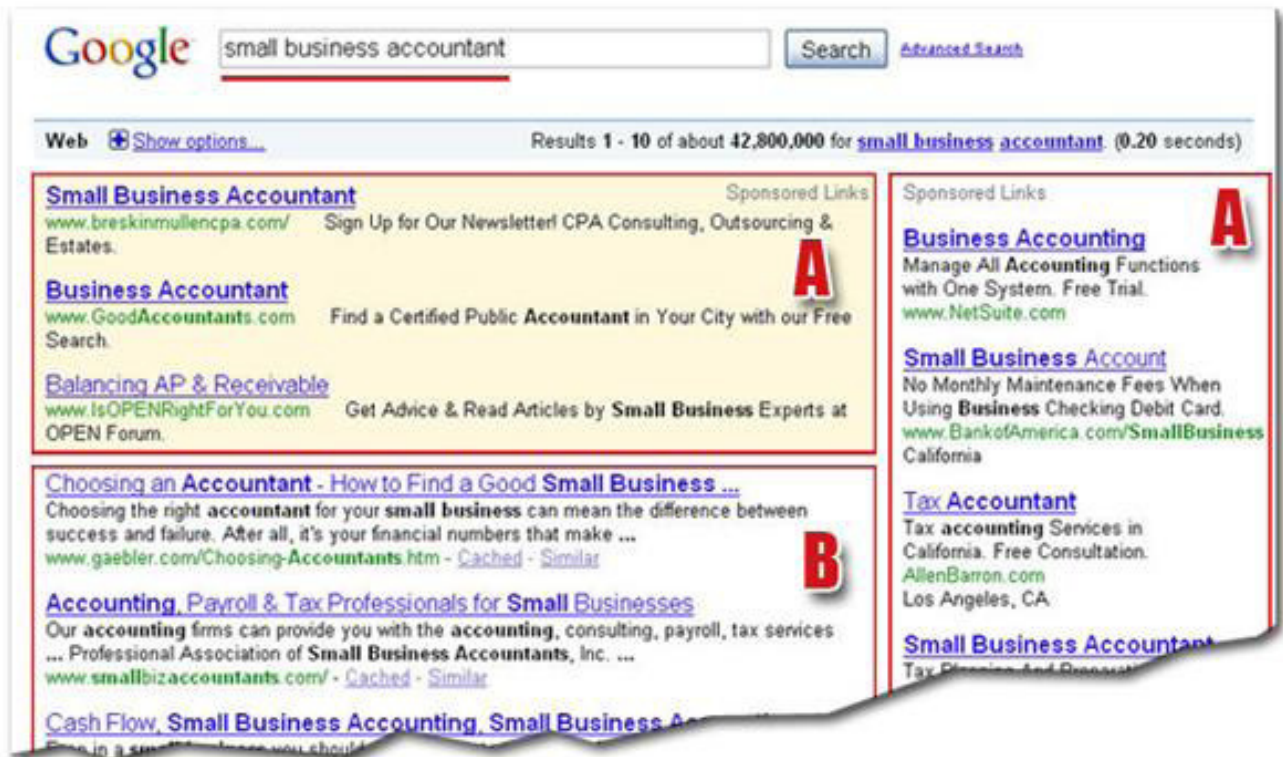
And to demonstrate, while this is 2 years old, here is a graphic statistics of digital searches versus traditional (like Yellow Pages):



It's for this reason that I wrote "**Search Engine Optimization for Local Businesses.**" To give you, the business owner, a clear understanding of what Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is and why it's something you should care about.

To your success,
Barak Granot

What Is Search Engine Optimization?



Search Engine Optimization (aka SEO or Search Engine Marketing) is the process of getting one's website ranked high in the search engines (with a primary emphasis on Google).

As nearly all search engines sell "Sponsored Ad Space," it is important to note that SEO is designed to help improve your "organic rankings" (aka the placement you get for free).

In the example, above, I've done a search using Google.com for the term, "small business accountant." The areas denoted by the letter, "A," are "Sponsored Links" and are therefore not affected by Search Engine Optimization. They are what are referred to as "Pay-per-click" ads (aka PPC). The businesses you see listed are paying Google a pre-defined amount for every "click" (i.e. visitor) they receive.

The area denoted by the letter, "B," is the start of the "organic search engine listings" and this area IS controlled by search engine optimization techniques.

Search Engine Optimization for Local Businesses

While there is nothing wrong with buying Pay-per-click ads, and it is something I recommend you consider, it is very important that your website/web pages rank well in the organic search engine listings as this can bring you lots of qualified website traffic completely free of charge.

There are two main aspects to search engine optimization. The first is referred to as **"on-page SEO tactics"** and the second, **"off-page SEO tactics."** In the next section, we'll discuss the basics of "on-page" search engine optimization.

On-page SEO Tactics

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/
<html lang="en-US">
<head>
<title>Walmart.com: Save money. Live better.</title>
<meta name="Description" content="Shop Walmart Online for Low Prices on Top Br
">
<meta name="Keywords" content="Walmart, Walmart.com, Books, Fitness, Equipment
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
<!-- RSS link tags -->
<!-- canonical url -->
<link rel="canonical" href="http://www.walmart.com/" />
<link href="http://i2.walmartimages.com/css/global.css" rel="stylesheet" type=
<!--[if lt IE 7]>
<link href="http://i2.walmartimages.com/css/global_ie6.css" rel="stylesheet" t
<![endif]-->
<!--[if IE 7]>
<link href="http://i2.walmartimages.com/css/global_ie7.css" rel="stylesheet" t
<![endif]-->
<meta name="verify-v1" content="eG8Lf3u0H7c1EaP5caxTDaJP2XGU+l2EOhq+FzzKud4="
<meta name="y_key" content="3fb23d43bbb2352f" />
<meta name="msvalidate.01" content="B0AA8C6FAC5A619517
<script type="text/javascript" language="
```

On-page SEO is primarily technical in nature and needs to be applied to every page of your website. Websites are not optimized as a whole but rather one page at a time (but with a global perspective of what is trying to be achieved).

I'm not going to go into great detail as to what is specifically done to each page but I am going to give you a good overall understanding.

Basically, your on-page SEO should accomplish three main objectives:

- Your website's code (illustrated by the code from Walmart.com above) should be well-coded. By this, I mean that it should be easily read and understood by search engines.
- Each page of your website should be built around **"intelligent keyword phrases"** that are likely to draw targeted visitors to your page/site.
- Your site's design should be attractive and your content found useful to visitors so as to encourage them to stay as long as possible on your site.

Search Engine Optimization for Local Businesses

One on-page SEO tactic that isn't even widely discussed is what is called "Visitor Experience Optimization." (aka VEO)

Google (and other search engines) have the ability to track how long the average visitor stays on your website and gives added benefit to sites that have a longer than average "visitor duration."

It stands to reason, right?

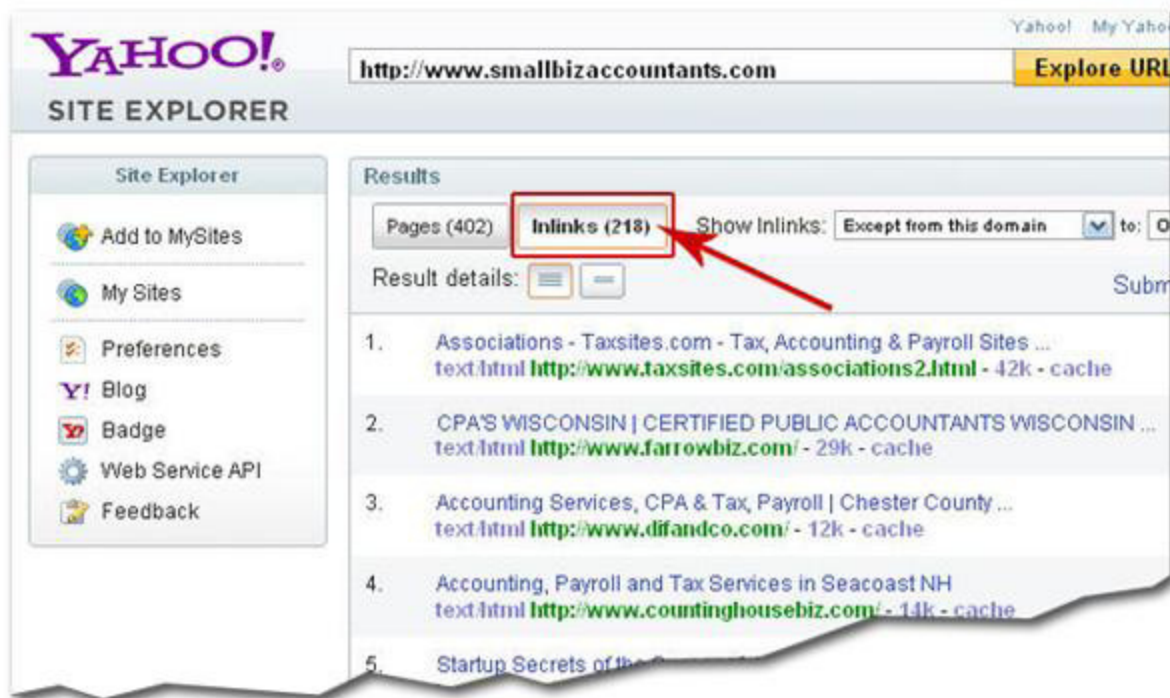
If the majority of your website visitors hit the "BACK" button after being on your site for only three seconds, it could be assumed that they either didn't like what they saw or they didn't find something they felt was relevant to what they were searching for.

However, if your visitors stay on your site for 1-3 minutes (or more), the search engines will give you a boost in the search engine rankings as your visitors have "spoken." They obviously have liked something about your site long enough to hang around and therefore, your site is believed to contain "valuable" content.

This is one of the reasons that it's wise to consider adding an "involvement device" to your website. This could include getting your visitor to sign-up for your company newsletter (to receive a coupon or other free gift), adding video to your website or simply allowing them to comment on the content you've posted.

All three options help your visitors connect with you in a more personal way than just having the ability to read your website's content and can help you bring you more business in addition to helping your site rank better in the search engines.

Off-page SEO Tactics



There are a number of **"off-page SEO tactics"** but the most important one is how many links your site has "pointing at it" from other websites/pages across the internet.

If you'd like to get a general idea of how many links the search engines have found for your site, do this...

1. Go to Yahoo.com and enter the following into the search box:
link:www.yourdomain.com (replacing "yourdomain.com" with your actual domain name).
2. Click the button to conduct your search.
3. This will take you to the "Yahoo Site Explorer" as shown above. Once on this page, select "Except from this domain" from the "Show Inlinks" drop-down menu so Yahoo will only show you the links it found from the other sites that are linking to you.

Search Engine Optimization for Local Businesses

The more links your site has, the better.

This is because each link can be thought of as a "vote" for your site. The search engines figure that if others like your site well enough to link to it, then it probably contains valuable information.

This is why we use Article Marketing, Web 2.0 Strategies and a variety of other techniques to continually build links for our clients.

Search Engine Optimization for Local Businesses

Google Places

The search engines have started a trend of accommodating more and more to the local searches. Few years ago Google initiated the famous “Google Maps” that popped up few local websites along with the organic searches.

Later on the Google Maps was named “Google Local” but was basically the same:

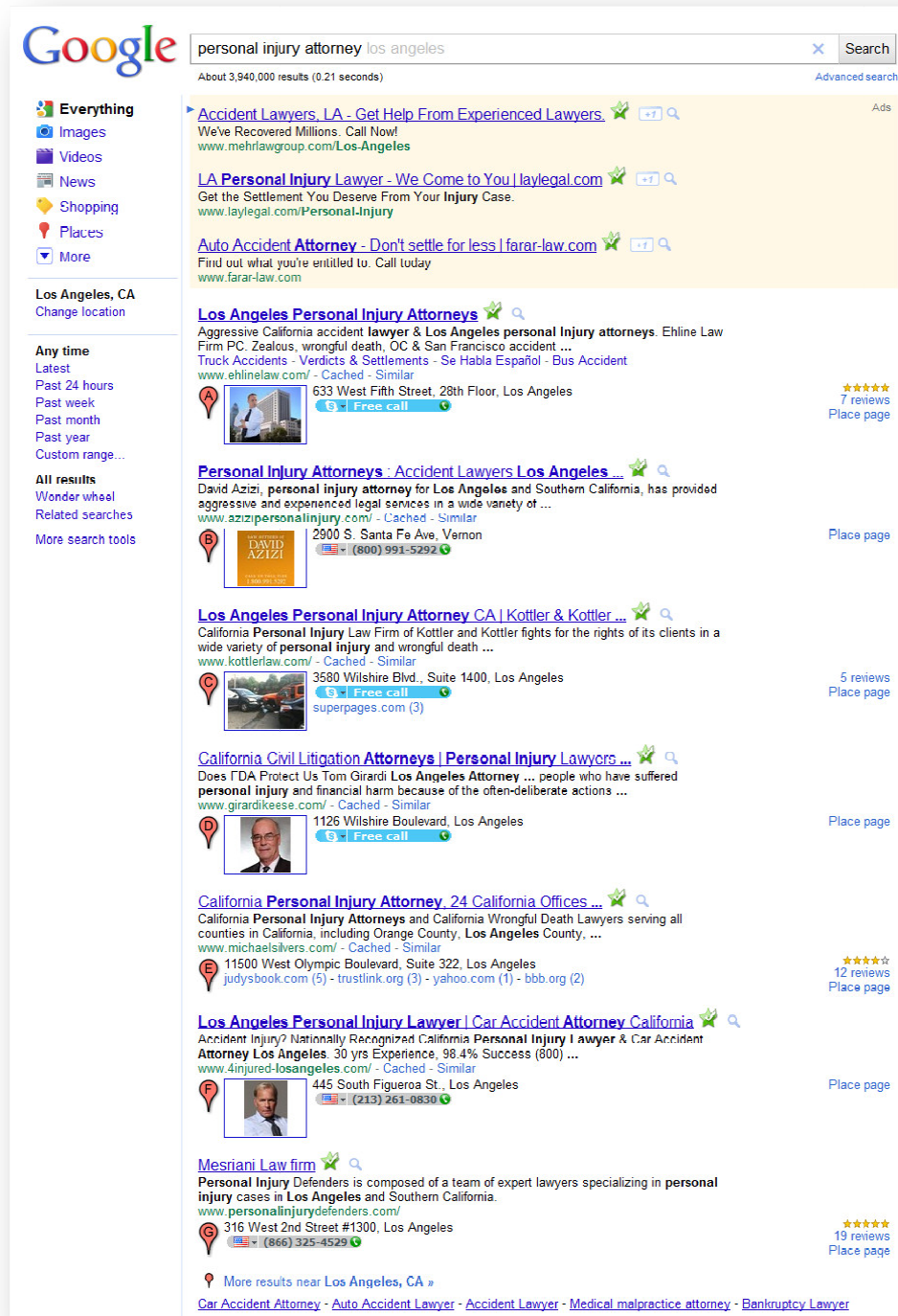


This was the beginning of an evolution as now small businesses could show up on the first result page that was dominated by the big national companies beforehand. And at those early stages it was very easy to rank in the Google Local box (and in addition to that you could be also featured in the organic listings).

Since then (from the last half of 2010) there were few changes in the local algorithm that made it harder to “manipulate” the listing results. The smaller change was cosmetic– its name was changed to Google Places – and in addition to that other changes include toughening up the criteria to rank and the most visible and dramatic change was the merging of the local and organic results.

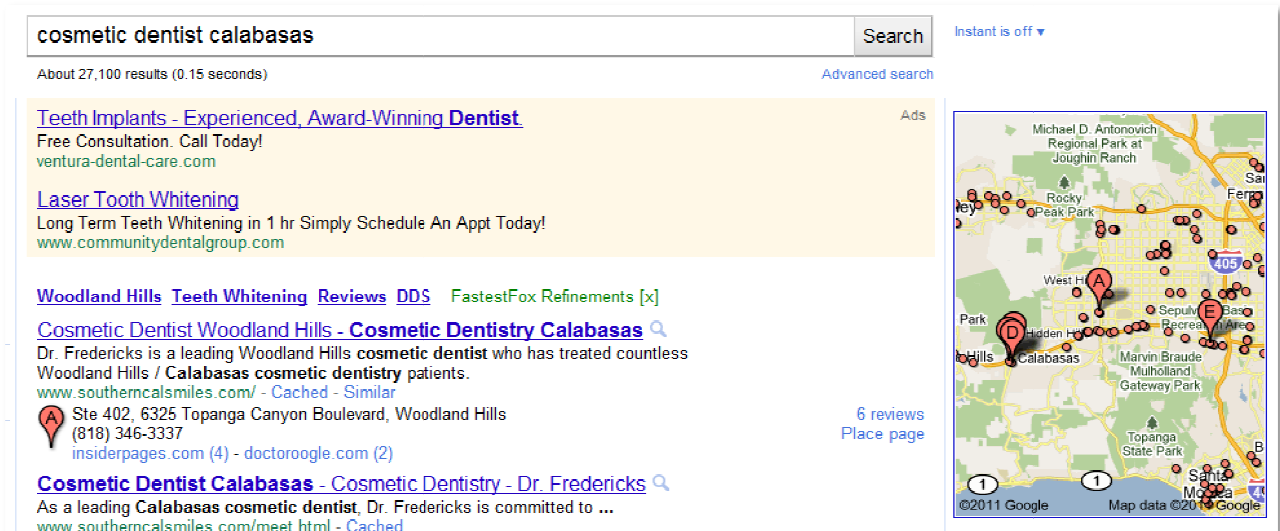
Search Engine Optimization for Local Businesses

It was no longer enough to have a good optimized Google Places page; you had to have that and a good optimized website. The results look like this:



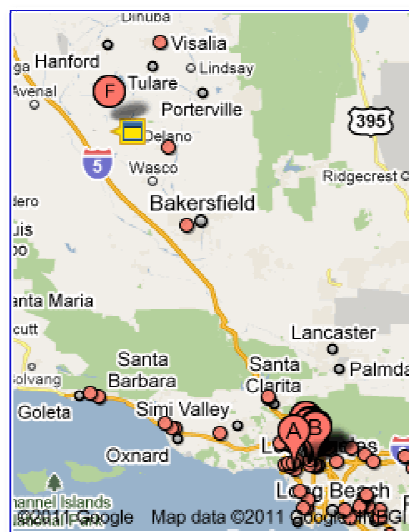
Search Engine Optimization for Local Businesses

Currently, it is harder to rank on Google Places and to keep on top of the game (unless you know what you are doing ☺), but the results are worth it. If you have a good optimized Google Places presence, you can be seen for miles and miles away. Like here:



Company A from Woodland Hills is first and we even get a dentist from Encino ranking even though he is far away (well, there are a lot of dentists closer than him that he outranked).

And even more obvious in this case (company F sowing up in searching Los Angeles even though it is far from the city):



Traffic Generation Strategies

Even the most attractive of websites is useless without visitors and that's why we utilize many different traffic generation strategies on behalf of our clients. We do our best to help you dominate the search engine results in an effort to bring you targeted traffic that is meaningful to your business.

Just a few of these strategies include...

- Search Engine Optimization (both on-page and off)
- Article Marketing
- Press Releases
- Blogging/RSS Feed Syndication
- Social Bookmarking
- Utilizing "Web 2.0" properties (like Twitter.com, Facebook.com, etc.)
- Video Marketing (like YouTube.com, Viddler.com, etc.)
- Online Classifieds (like Craigslist.org, Kijiji.com, etc.)
- And a whole lot more!

Whether you are looking to make direct sales from your website, build leads or encourage your visitors to stop by your store or office, we can develop a traffic generation strategy to meet your objectives.

Social Media

There is more and more weight on the social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Google and other search engines are starting to appreciate the interaction with the general public and take that into consideration when ranking a website.

If a website has a lot of “fans” or “followers”, it is popular and therefore provides what people expect. When your fans are writing you and you write them, you are summoning the search engines to “spider” the page – meaning to come and map the new content (which is connected to your website).

When you have a good amount of followers and fans, you have another advantage – you can market to them!

This is like an instant email list for which you can send promotions and news and remind them of your existence (you can never know when they will need you – or need to recommend you to someone else).

This will be the stress of the next years so don't stay behind!

Where Do We Go From Here?

If you're ready to build a solid online presence and attract new business, we'd love to discuss your individual needs.

To get started, give us a call at: (818) 666-8686 or visit: <http://www.UniqueWebConsulting.com/contact> and complete our online form to request an appointment.

We'll set an appointment at a time that's convenient for you (typically 30 minutes in length) to go over our proven "Online Marketing Blueprint." This blueprint is very in-depth and has been proven to help our client's get a positive return on their investment in as little as 21 days.

About The Author

Barak Granot is the founder of Unique Web Consulting which specializes in helping local businesses build a meaningful online presence.

He is a Cum Lauda graduate of Computer Science (BSc) and has over a decade of experience as a business consultant, coaching managers and owners and helping small and medium-large businesses.

He can be reached for a free video evaluation of your site or a personal consulting session at the following:

E-Mail: info@UniqueWebConsulting.com

Phone: 818-666-8686

Or for faster response visit <http://www.UniqueWebConsulting.com/contact> and complete our online form to request an appointment.