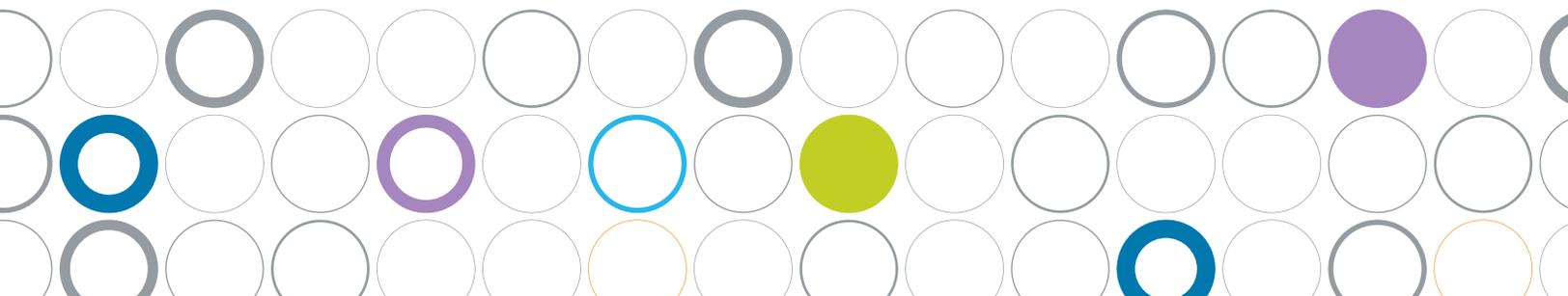


How the Top Retailers and Service Providers Achieve Top Local Search Results

The five step process any multi-location business can follow to manage and optimize their local business listings and be found on local search engines, the Mobile Web, Internet Yellow Pages and GPS/Information Services.



"Why isn't your business currently found on the first page of local search results?"

Answer: "We're working on it."

According to Google, 20 percent of all searches are related to location.

"When done correctly the five step process delivers first page positions faster than local SEO alone."

Marketers need to optimize, distribute and track content across all platforms: online directories, local search engines, social platforms, and mobile devices (WAP, Android, and iPhone apps).

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To achieve top local search results, businesses need to manage their "NAP Listings" (name, address, phone number) data across multiple search engines, IYPs (Internet Yellow Pages) and information/411 services.

When multi-location retailers and service providers were asked "why isn't your business found on the first page of local searches?", the most common answer was "we're currently working on it." When asked "what exactly are you working on?" the answers were surprisingly different. In this paper we will define the five essential steps to be "working on." This step by step guide will walk you through the essentials of managing a complete, fully optimized "NAP" local business listing for multiple business locations throughout the Internet, Mobile Web and GPS platforms.

The fastest growing areas of search on the Internet today are Local Search and Mobile Search.

The buzz these days about local and mobile search is a secret gold mine for any business that figures it out. This topic has created so much confusion and so many opinions that it has made it nearly impossible to hear through the noise. All of your business locations need to be found for local search to capitalize on the current local and mobile search trends.

Multi-location service or retail businesses struggle the most!

After finding so many multi-location businesses struggling to be found in local search we decided to turn down the noise, roll up our sleeves, and define what the top performing, multi-location major retailers and service providers are doing to achieve first page local search results. We will define a process that when done correctly and systematically, proves to deliver first page positions on local search engines and works faster than just a localized SEO process. When these five steps are completed we see businesses appear in both the organic area (FREE) and map area (FREE) of the search engines in less than 30 days.

What is a "NAP" listing on the Internet?

Prior to defining how to optimize and manage your NAP local business listings for first page local search results, let's first define what a "NAP" is. Each and every business that has a name, address, and telephone number has a digital presence or "local business listing" within the search engines and information services (also known as data aggregators).

How data aggregators play a key role in your local search results.

The goal of these data aggregators is to acquire as much relevant and enhanced content about your local business listing as possible. The aggregator's purpose is to either display the local business listing in its own search results or resell the enhanced local business listing to other services that will display your listing in their search results.

Basic local business data acquired by search engines and information services include:

- Business listing name
- Business telephone number
- Business street address, city, state and zip code
- Business type/category

Enhanced local business data is more relevant and valuable to aggregators and search engines.

In addition to the most basic local business information, aggregators wish to acquire as much “enhanced data” or local business details as possible. The more enhanced your local business data is, the more value it has for display to the searching consumers. Enhanced data can include, but is not limited to:

- Additional business category types
- Business descriptions
- Operating hours
- Web page links
- Images and logos of the business
- Images and descriptions of products the business offers

Now, with a better understanding of the elements of an enhanced local business listing, we will define the five steps to completely enhance and optimize your listings on a per location basis.

Step 1: Location Landing Pages

Create individual location landing web pages for each business location.

Creating location pages for each store gives that store its own website or “home page”, which enables it to maintain its own local business identity on the web. This location home page will be your anchor or net for that individual store. It will collect, report and measure everything that happens for that particular store on both the Web and the Mobile Web.

- A. Create specific individual web pages for each location with localized page content, including a localized description, a local address and a local telephone number.
- B. Add local enhanced content and conversion tools to the page including driving directions, business operating hours, local services provided, local deals or discounts and more.
- C. Apply only best practice SEO techniques to each and every location’s individual web page with a specific focus on local keywords (e.g., “Sporting Goods San Diego”).
- D. Add an analytics code to the individual location pages to measure ROI and report a specific store’s web, mobile web and telephone statistics.

What to look for in software to create location pages for each store:

1. Does the software have automated page building that allows you to add, delete or modify business web pages and *automatically build new pages with no additional cost?*

The more enhanced your local business data is, the more relevance it has for local searching consumers.

If you want each of your stores to be found for local search, it’s best to have a unique, easily crawlable URL and web page for each individual store.

Having a web page for each store allows you to focus local SEO on localized search terms for the store in that area.

2. Does the software integrate local SEO proven best practice elements to each individual location page with a *specific focus on the highest volume and valued local search terms*?
3. Does the software provide a content management system or integrate with an existing CMS to enter and manage enhanced localized content, such as images, coupons and promotions to each individual location page?

“Mobile web searches are expected to surpass desktop searches by the end of 2012”, Google CEO.

If you want each of your stores to be found for mobile searches, it’s best to have a unique, easily crawlable mobile URL and mobile web page for each individual store.

Mobile web adoption is expanding eight times faster than the desktop Web did two decades ago. By 2013, mobile devices are expected to be used more often than PCs to access the web, according to Morgan Stanley.

Step 2: Mobile Location Landing Pages

Create individual mobile location web pages formatted for mobile web searches.

Mobile web searches are expected to surpass desktop searches by the end of 2012, as more people access the Web from their mobile devices. The majority of mobile searches are highly local by nature. When users search from a mobile phone for a business or service, they are almost always looking for a business or location in their immediate area.

- A. Create specific individual web pages formatted for the Mobile Web for each location with localized page content, including a localized description, local address, and local telephone number.
- B. Add enhanced mobile content, such as driving directions, business operating hours, social network check-ins and sharing, local services provided and more. Consider designing a page for each type of mobile phone (e.g., iPhone, Android, WAP).
- C. Apply approved best practice SEO techniques to each and every location’s individual mobile web page with a specific focus on high volume local keywords (e.g., “Sporting Goods San Diego”).

What to look for in software to create mobile location pages for each store:

1. Does the software have automated mobile page building that allows you to add, delete or modify locations, and *automatically build new pages*?
2. Does the software integrate local proven best practice SEO elements to each individual mobile location page with a *specific focus on the highest volume and valued local search terms*?
3. Does the software provide a content management system or integrate with an existing CMS to add enhanced localized content, such as images, coupons and promotions to each individual location mobile pages?

Step 3: Per Location Analytics

Implement location specific reporting/analytics to measure web, mobile web, telephone traffic, and first page search results on a per location basis.

Per location reporting is the best way to know where your efforts are working for each location. Reporting is fundamental for determining ROI and measuring results from local SEO and SEM campaigns.

- A. Add telephone reporting for each location to report call volume, call duration, and time of day calling stats.
- B. Add a web analytics/reporting code to each location page to measure traffic volume from search engines and referral websites.
- C. Constantly monitor your positions and placement on the first page of search engines to identify areas where you lack first page presence.

What to look for in analytics and reporting software:

- 1. Does your reporting software integrate telephone, web, and mobile web all together to provide complete analytics for each location?
- 2. Does your reporting software offer real time and flexible on-demand reporting?
- 3. Does your web analytics solution provide reporting for each individual location?
- 4. Can you separate web traffic from mobile web traffic on a per location basis?
- 5. Can you monitor all business locations' first page positions on the major search engines by search term and location?

Step 4: Claim each of your free local business listings

Claim, optimize and manage your local business listings on the local search engines and major IYPs.

Every major search engine and IYP offers free claiming and management of your local business listing data, including: Google, Yahoo!, Bing, Superpages.com and Yellowpages.com. It is always in your best interest to manage your local business listing information yourself – including category types, business hours and local content – in order to provide maximum relevance to the consumer.

- A. Claim each local business listing and add all relevant categories that describe your business offering that will be found when users search for your business's product or services.
- B. Add operating hours, payments accepted, and all other business-specific information.
- C. Add logos, local store images, coupons, and additional local business content to enhance your listing and deliver more relevant content to your user.
- D. Edit location specific web links to deliver the user in one click directly to your individual store's local landing pages.

What to look for in software to manage your local business listing data:

- 1. Any vendor you choose should consult and guide you through the best practice process of enhancing your bulk listings for more search relevance and not just submit your basic data.
- 2. The software should provide the most targeted categories with the highest amounts of searches. As well as enhanced data such as hours, images, video and social networking links.

Make sure your categories are defined for the highest volume keywords for the products and services you offer.

Link your free business listings to your location specific web page to deliver local searchers directly to the information they are seeking when searching for local businesses (i.e. operating hours and telephone numbers).

3. Confirm that your vendor handles *direct submissions* to Google, Yahoo!, and Bing (the three major search engines), as well as the IYPs.
4. Make sure that your location data is bulk uploaded and *submitted in real time when you add, delete, or edit a location*.

Step 5: Update all information services with any changes

Search engines use information services to validate your local business data and categories. Make sure they match.

Information services are the major provider of enhanced business data to the GPS services.

You can easily distribute your enhanced local business information and localized web pages to the information services that support directory services and GPS data.

The information services – including LocalEze, InfoUSA and Axciom – aggregate your business location data along with enhanced content and categories, for the purpose of selling the data to directory services, local search engines and IYPs.

By providing enhanced local business data and location-specific web page links to the information services, you define and control the content the aggregators are distributing about your business. Providing the same consistent data to all of the information services and local search engines will provide relevant back links to help validate your local business listings across the local search engines and IYPs.

- A. Manage each local business listing and add all relevant categories that describe your businesses, products or services.
- B. Add operating hours, payments accepted and other local enhanced business-specific information.
- C. Provide logos, local store images, coupons and additional local business content to enhance your listing and deliver more relevant content to the user.
- D. Add web links to deliver user clicks straight to individual store's local web pages.

What to look for in a software tool to manage your local business listings' bulk uploads to the information services:

1. To avoid preparing and submitting your bulk feeds to multiple vendors, find a vendor with existing relationships with each of the information services.
2. Confirm that your vendor handles direct submissions on your behalf to "ALL" the major Information services, including LocalEze, InfoUSA, and Axciom.
3. Make sure that your location data is bulk uploaded and *submitted in real time when you add, delete, or edit a location*.

Multi location businesses that have followed this five step process have maximized their exposure in local and mobile search.

The local search engines and IYPs are starving for enhanced local business content with the No. 1 goal of delivering their searchers the most user friendly and relevant content they can. If your business makes the effort to speak their language and deliver the enhanced relevant content they desire, you will surely reach the top of their local search results.

Whether you have 100 or 100,000 business locations, the five step process remains the same for each and every location.

There is an array of vendors that provide individual services to support the elements of the above five step plan, including:

- Web design/development firms to create localized landing pages for each store
- Mobile web design firms to build mobile location pages
- Store location software to manage location pages on the Web
- SEO companies to locally optimize location pages
- Telephone tracking companies for local telephone numbers and statistics
- Agencies to manage local business data submissions to the information services
- Analytic companies to measure web and mobile web traffic
- Mobile web store location services to build mobile store locators

Managing multiple vendors to complete the five step process can be very time consuming, with fragmented focus and a very costly proposition.

Look for a vendor that can automate the five step process, including building individual store location pages, managing and distributing multiple local business listings to search engines and information services, and reporting web, mobile web and telephone traffic results on a per store basis.

Conclusion

As mentioned, there is a great deal of confusion and differing opinions on what it takes to be successful with local and mobile search. Businesses that get it right are utilizing the five steps outlined above to make sure all of their locations are found, and taking it one step further by adding software to automate, analyze and support this ongoing process. With mobile location search on the rise and about to surpass desk top searches, now is the time to embrace these tactics and bring your businesses to the top of the search engine results pages.

About Rio SEO™

Rio SEO, a new brand spun-out by Covario, Inc., is a dedicated business unit focused on providing best-of-breed technology solutions for earned and owned digital media programs, specifically for SEO (search engine optimization) and social media marketing. Based in San Diego, it is among the largest independent providers of SaaS-based SEO automation solutions with patented technology. Rio SEO offers application modules for organic search and social media with tools for content marketing, auditing, reporting, competitive analysis, mobile site optimization, SEO execution, and local SEO automation. Rio SEO software clients include brand marketers, retailers, and digital agencies. More information about Rio SEO is available at RioSEO.com.



9255 towne center drive, suite 750, san diego, ca 92121 • 858.397.1500 • rioseo.com

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