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Online Marketing Guide

Smart Marketing for Local & Regional Businesses

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10/7/2013

A complimentary guide to online marketing for businesses that serve a specific location or region and who aren't appearing frequently for internet "keyword" searches within Google, Bing, or Yahoo! results. If you found this guide useful, please leave me a review via <http://bit.ly/steve-review>

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Overview

I'm a huge believer in helping others. It's how I earned my Congressional Recognition Award in 2006 and why I was awarded with an Army Achievement Medal in 1996. This year, I have a mission to help as many local and regional businesses as possible. You've received this guide because you were on my list or because you were in my local area and I happened to have a copy on hand.

This guide is a complimentary checklist of actions you can take to improve your web traffic, whether you have a website or not. It includes where to submit your business information and how that information may increase your visibility within search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo! and their respective maps search as well.

Start with Your Website

I have more than one location:

- ☐ There's a main "Locations" or "Service Areas" page that lists my locations
- ☐ I have a page for each location such as [mysite.com/locations/anaheim.html](#)
- ☐ Each location page contains the Name, Address, and Phone Number for the location (the exact same information I share with other websites)
- ☐ Each location page shall be connected to Google+ by using authorship or publishership tags
- ☐ Each location page has a strong call-to-action (Contact Us button for example)
- ☐ Each location page lists the specific services I offer at that location
- ☐ Each location page offers a map to my location
- ☐ Each location page uses **Schema.org/LocalBusiness** structured data
 - <http://www.51blocks.com/online-marketing-tools/google-local-toolbox/>
- ☐ Each location page offers a simple way for users to see or leave a review:
 - Google Plus Local
 - Yahoo! Local
 - Bing Local
 - Yelp
- ☐ A simple video (Animoto.com?) shared on YouTube about the location
 - Video title: Your Service, Your Area - Your Company Name
 - Video description: hand-typed info, name, address, phone and link to location-specific page

I have one location:

- ☐ My name, address, phone number are listed on every page (perhaps in the sidebar or near the copyright at the bottom of the website?)
 - I'm using Schema.org/LocalBusiness code as indicated above
- ☐ Same page attributes as multi-location exist in the sidebar or within a section of every page on the website

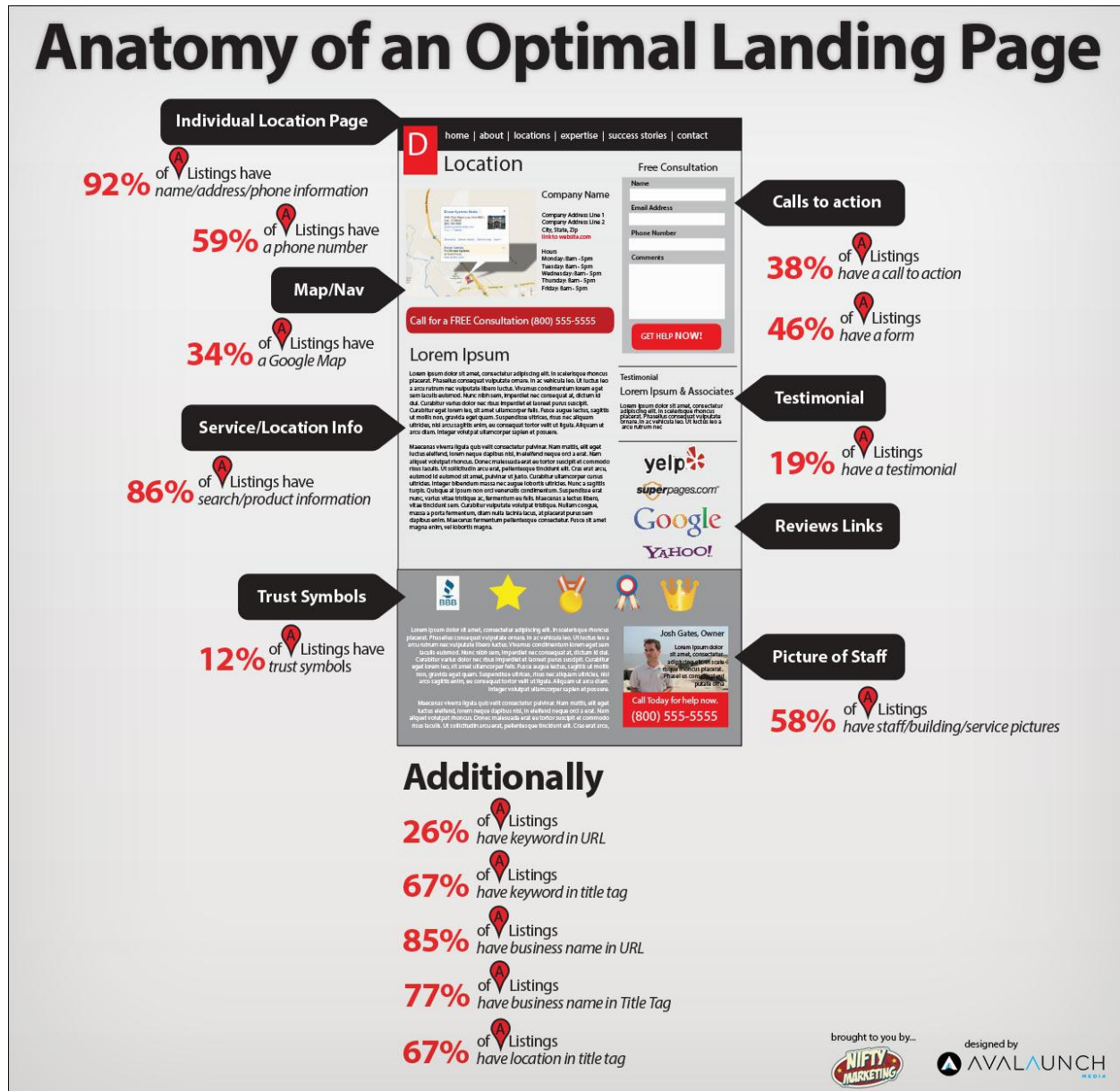
If you found this guide useful, please leave me a review: <http://bit.ly/steve-review>

Example of a Location Page

If you are using location pages for multiple locations, this image might be a good visual starting point of how to construct the pages that target a specific area. If done correctly, these are the pages that will appear to Google users who search for your service without typing in the area they are in as part of their keyword search.

In other words, this page might appear for plumber, florist, or locksmith searches without a city name used as part of the keyword phrase.

Anatomy of an Optimal Landing Page



Individual Location Page

- 92% of Listings have name/address/phone information
- 59% of Listings have a phone number
- Map/Nav
- 34% of Listings have a Google Map
- Service/Location Info
- 86% of Listings have search/product information
- Trust Symbols
- 12% of Listings have trust symbols

Location Page Structure:

- Navigation: home | about | locations | expertise | success stories | contact
- Location: [Map]
- Company Name
- Free Consultation Form: Name, Email Address, Phone Number, Comments
- Hours: Monday-Sun 9am-5pm, Tuesday-Sun 9am-5pm, Wednesday-Sun 9am-5pm, Thursday-Sun 9am-5pm, Friday-Sun 9am-5pm
- Call for a FREE Consultation (800) 555-5555
- GET HELP NOW!
- Testimonial: Lorem Ipsum & Associates
- Reviews Links: yelp, superpages.com, Google, YAHOO!
- Picture of Staff: Josh Gates, Owner
- Call Today for help now. (800) 555-5555

Additional Statistics:

- 26% of Listings have keyword in URL
- 67% of Listings have keyword in title tag
- 85% of Listings have business name in URL
- 77% of Listings have business name in Title Tag
- 67% of Listings have location in title tag

Additional Elements:

- 58% of Listings have staff/building/service pictures
- 19% of Listings have a testimonial
- 46% of Listings have a form
- 38% of Listings have a call to action



brought to you by...  designed by 

Image Courtesy of Nifty Marketing

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Claim Your Business Listings

The "big rip-off" of local Google marketing involves agencies that charge you a monthly fee to submit your business to hundreds of directories, map software, and social networking websites, when this task is something that need only be done once and can be done manually in less than an hour.

Business Databases

Most of those destinations mentioned above get their data from one of two major sources: InfoUSA or Acxiom. Local marketing companies simply add your business information to their monthly submission list once and within a few weeks your info is all over the Internet.

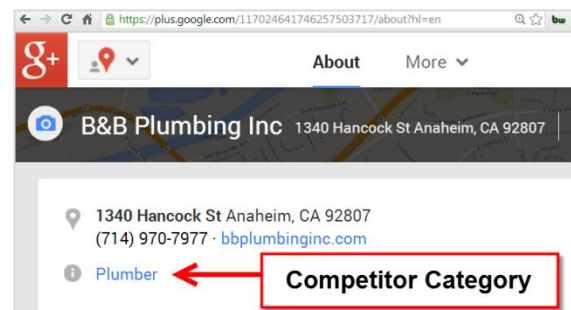
Here are the links to a few databases you can submit to yourself. Because search engine robots are very mathematical, **be sure your information is exactly the same wherever you submit it** (including abbreviations, punctuation, and parenthesis), preferably how you registered it with the county you're in.

1. InfoUSA: <http://www.expressupdateusa.com/> (\$50 as of 10/7/13)
2. Acxiom: <http://www.mybusinesslistingmanager.com> (\$50 as of 10/7/13)
3. Nokia: <http://here.com/primeplaces/> (Free as of 10/7/13)
4. Others: <http://www.anderson.ucla.edu/rosenfeld-library/databases/business-databases-by-name>

Search Engines

Submitting your information to search engines like Google is easy, but it takes a few minutes of research to figure out the best category to use.

My favorite technique is to figure out what the majority of my competitors are using within the new Google+ Local <https://plus.google.com/u/0/local> by punching in a few of my closest competitors' names.



Use the category that appears the most frequently FIRST. Use the other categories found in the other 4 "Other Categories" fields.

Remember to submit your name, address, and phone exactly how it's registered and claimed with the databases above. **For multiple locations, be sure to use the specific location page not the homepage in the Website Address field.** Avoid using keywords or locations in business name and description fields, as it's frowned on by the search engines.

- ☐ For Google, claim your business here: <http://www.google.com/local/add/businessCenter>
- ☐ For Yahoo!: <http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/local-listings/basic-listing/>
- ☐ For Bing: <https://www.bingplaces.com/DashBoard>

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Business Listings

As I mentioned above, InfoUSA and Acxiom should take care of a bulk of your business listing requirements that agencies claim to do for you manually. However, regional and industry directories do not typically pull from a third party database, so you'll have to do a little legwork to beat the competition.

Find out Where Competitors are Listed

Start by researching competitors; many of which are already in local business directories in your area. I use one of the following two services to spy on competitors:

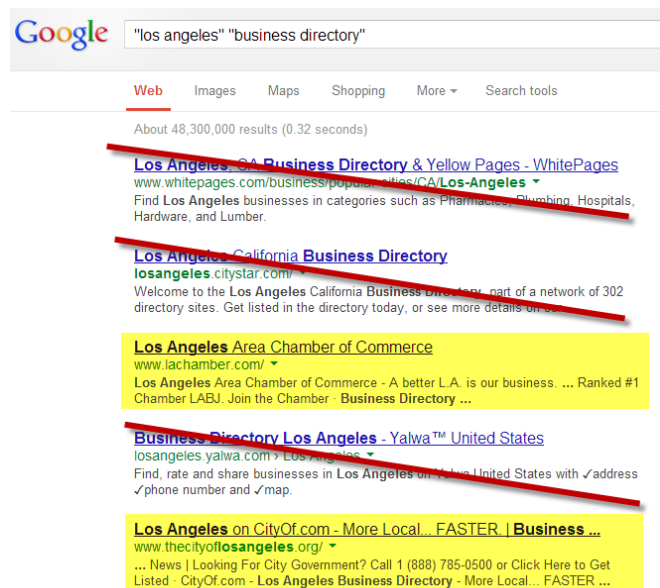
1. GeoRanker.com
 - ✓ Finds the competition for you based on the keyword used on both implicit and explicit keyword types
 - ✓ Use Citations report to get the citations sources of up to 100 Local Competitors at once by running high effective reverse engineering algorithms
2. lcf.whitespark.ca
 - ✓ Create a New Project and add no less than 10 competitors to the project
 - ✓ Be sure to add your business to the project as well
 - ✓ Run a Compare report to get the full list of every citation you have vs. competitors

Find Local / Regional Directories

Below are a few examples of how to find the local and regional directories in your area.

You should not have to pay to be listed in these directories, skip any site that tries to use extortion techniques to get you to pay.

1. Search for your city and business directory in quotes (see image →)
2. Search for your county and business directory in quotes
3. Search for your state and business directory in quotes



Look for websites that are specifically about your area. CityStar and WhitePages shown above have listings all over the globe and are likely already buying data from InfoUSA and Acxiom.

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Find Industry Directories

Many business types, such as lawyers, doctors, and restaurants have directories dedicated to them. These directories stay in business by charging for inclusion. My suggestion is to only pay for those that require a one-time fee or low annual fee, but never a monthly fee.

Search for "your industry" and "directory" (both in quotes) to find opportunities. If you only see general directories with a category for your industry, don't fret, it's likely that your industry simply doesn't have an industry portal with a web directory.

Below are a few examples of industry directories, so you'll know what to look for:

1. Lawyers.com
2. 1800Dentist.com
3. MapPlumber.com
4. HomeAdvisor.com
5. FTDFlorists.com

Think Outside the Box

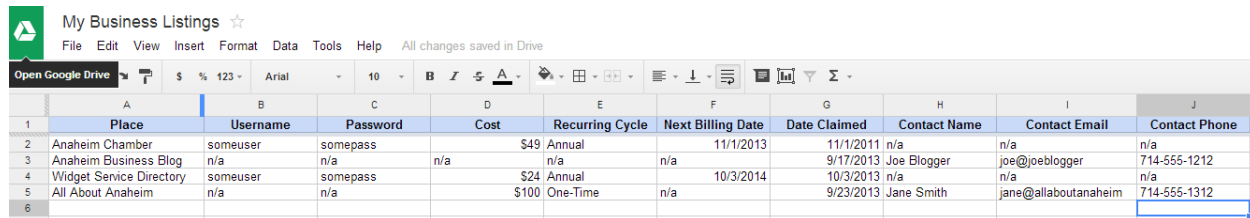
Your city has a website and people in your city have blogs. Both offer an excellent opportunity to get your business listed and possibly even earn some referral business. Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and be prepared to donate some time or product as you build your relationship with the webmaster.

- ☐ Search for "your city" "official website"
- ☐ Search for "your city" "blog"

Keep Track of Your Listings

I like to use a Google spreadsheet (docs.google.com) to keep track of the business listing, usernames, passwords, costs, and contact information.

This way, when or if I'm too busy to work on my marketing, I can click SHARE and delegate the work to someone else without creating confusing versions and going back and forth in email. You can as many people as you'd like working on the same live spreadsheet at the same time using Google Spreadsheets - I can't live without them.



| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |
|---|--------------------------|----------|----------|-------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Place | Username | Password | Cost | Recurring Cycle | Next Billing Date | Date Claimed | Contact Name | Contact Email | Contact Phone |
| 2 | Anaheim Chamber | someuser | somepass | \$49 | Annual | 11/1/2013 | 11/1/2011 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 3 | Anaheim Business Blog | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 9/17/2013 | Joe Blogger | joe@joeblogger | 714-555-1212 |
| 4 | Widget Service Directory | someuser | somepass | \$24 | Annual | 10/3/2014 | 10/3/2013 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 5 | All About Anaheim | n/a | n/a | \$100 | One-Time | n/a | 9/23/2013 | Jane Smith | jane@allaboutanaheim | 714-555-1312 |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | |

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Earn Reviews

Websites such as Yelp.com will annihilate your business if you play the ignorant card. They want you to lose so badly that they've made it against their guidelines to ask your customers to review you. Let's face it, people only really leave reviews when they have a poor experience.

I say "screw that" - ask for reviews if you feel you've earned them.

Here's the trick: ask when it's likely the customer will leave a positive review. For example:

- ☐ Send surveys
 - If customer clicks "had a great experience" redirect them to "Leave us a Review" page
 - If customer clicks "had a poor experience" redirect them to "Customer Service" page
- ☐ Remind your best customers
 - *Our business only exists because of customers like you*
 - *We can't put into words how important your rating and review of us is these days*
 - *Here's a card with a few places you can share your experience online*
 - *Send a Review Request – How To PDF – to your customers – easy to generate it with the following tool - <http://www.georanker.com/blog/free-local-seo-tools/google-review-request-pdf-generator/>*
- ☐ Get sneaky, but be careful
 - You can't pay for reviews or apparently bribe your customers, but you can send out a newsletter and allude to the fact that a customer who left a review was recognized
 - *Our CEO was so thrilled at the great feedback left by John Smith on Yelp that he gave the servicing rep the afternoon off and sent John Smith a special gift of gratitude. Check out the review yourself here and let us know about your own experience.*

Top Review Websites

Below is a list of business review websites you should claim your business in and start monitoring reviews you're locations are receiving:

General

- ☐ BBB.org
- ☐ Yelp.com
- ☐ AngiesList.com
- ☐ Checkbook.org
- ☐ InsiderPages.com
- ☐ Glassdoor.com
- ☐ RipoffReport.com
- ☐ PissedConsumer.com

eCommerce Reviews

- ☐ eKomi-us.com
- ☐ Google Wallet Reviews
- ☐ TrustPilot.com
- ☐ ResellerRatings.com
- ☐ Bizrate.com
- ☐ PriceGrabber.com
- ☐ ViewPoints.com
- ☐ Epinions.com
- ☐ ReviewCentre.com

Specialty Reviews

- ☐ Zagat.com
- ☐ Urbanspoon.com
- ☐ TripAdvisor.com
- ☐ HomeAdvisor.com

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Encourage "Checking In"

Unless your business is mobile, like say a food truck or an on-location windshield repair service, you should be encouraging your visitors, customers, and employees to "check-in" when they are onsite. Destinations, including Yelp.com (mentioned above), are collecting a LOT of data from people who are using this feature to share with and to meet new friends.

What they will do with this data is yet to be determined, but any type of structured data that can be used within search engines to create stars, pictures, or extra description text can help or hurt you in the long-run.

Near Field Communication (NFC) technology allows these applications to confirm that a person genuinely is at the location they claim to be at.

Give Hints to Visitors

- ✓ Use a window placard by the entrance of your location to start with
- ✓ Put a countertop display that's easy to see from the back of the line
- ✓ When it's slow, assign someone as a greeter to encourage people to check-in
 - Use your imagination on this one

Top Places People Check-in From

1. Facebook
2. Foursquare
3. Yelp
4. Google Plus

Incentives to Checking In

Unlike reviews, these destinations actually prefer that you offer your potential customers an incentive. Foursquare, for example, allows you give coupons and award frequent visitors. Google+ now has Google Offers, and Yelp, well they aren't suing anyone for awarding a check-in (yet).

About Me

I'm Steve Wiideman, a veteran military and veteran online marketer with over 15 years of experience with electronic commerce. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in E-Business Management and currently consult with several Fortune 500 brands in retail, consumer electronics, and multi-location services.

You might have seen me in this commercial: <http://youtu.be/XOcdXGs3VSc>

I hope this guide makes a serious dent in your online marketing!



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