Drive More Local Leads with SEO

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AMERICA'S SBDC RHODE ISLAND

We exist to train, educate, and support entrepreneurs of both new (pre-venture) and established small businesses. Positioned within the nationwide network of SBDCs, we offer resources, key connections at the state and national level, workshops, and online and in-person support that equips us to help Ocean State entrepreneurs reach the next level of growth.

What is Local SEO?

Definition

SEO stands for search engine optimization.

This is a <u>PROCESS</u> where you improve content so that it ranks higher on platforms like Google.

Local SEO is all about optimizing content so that your business appears higher in the local search engine results pages (SERPs) than your competitors in the local area.

Why is Local SEO Important?

Local SEO is extremely important because it helps customers find businesses in their search area.

When people search, they are looking for products near them. This is particularly prominent in service industries.

Examples: plumbers, construction, dining and lifestyle offerings like laundry and car wash services.

Local SEO makes it easier for consumers to find what they need.

Do You Need Local SEO?

1. You have a have a local service area or storefront and you're looking for a way to optimize your local presence.

2. You want to increase foot traffic to your store. Walk-ins welcome!

3. You want to show up on the top of the search engine results pages (SERPs).

4. Your business is local and you don't need people outside your service area to find you. A national presence is not a priority.

5. People local to your business are searching for you right now and you want to be found!

Creating a Local SEO Strategy

Stats

76 % of all local searches that happen on a phone result in a store visit within a day

68% of online experiences start with a search engine

Less than 1% of searchers ever make it to the second page of the search results

Google owns 87% of the traffic share

46% of all searches have a local intent

Source: BluCactus

A New Way to Look at SEO

Think of integrating local SEO is as a form of customer service. When you begin with the end user in mind, think of how nearby online searchers can find, like, connect with, and **choose your local business**.

These online efforts to promote business locations so you become a household names in the communities you serve.

In order to start this relationship, you as the business owner MUST take the first step so when the customer is ready- you will be ready.

Focus on Consistency

Name. Address. Phone Number. (NAP)

Having correct NAP for all your listings across the internet is crucial for local SEO. Google scans all these listings when searching for information about your business. The data is stored and used when determining ranking. Incorrect information in NAP citations can lead to confusion for customers and a poor user experience.

Google values consistency in your listings!!

My Fancy Plumbing Company   vs.   My Fancy Plumbing Co.

123 Main Street   vs.   123 Main St.

www.MFPC.com   vs.   MFPC.com

401-123-1212   vs.   401.123.1212

Google My Business

Claim Your Business

Google My Business (GMB) is the most important part of a local SEO strategy. GMB allows the creation of free business listings.

A business needs to provide important business contact information like the store or office address, exact location on a map, category of business, phone number, website address etc. while creating the listing.

Once the listing goes live it needs to be verified. Post verification the business can optimize Google My Business by:

Uploading pictures of your store or office and your products or services.
Mentioning your business operation hours.
Mention additional categories which are relevant to your business.
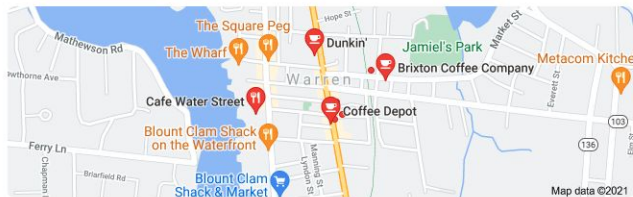Share business updates and fresh content on a regular basis.

Left search result:

coffee in warren

All · Maps · Images · Shopping · News · More — Tools

About 189,000,000 results (0.71 seconds)

Rating ▾ | Price ▾ | Hours ▾

Coffee Depot
4.7 ★★★★★ (228) · $ · Coffee shop
501 Main St
Dine-in · Takeout · No delivery

Cafe Water Street
4.6 ★★★★★ (175) · $ · Restaurant
279 Water St
Dine-in · Takeout · No delivery

Brixton Coffee Company
No reviews · Coffee shop
75 Market St
Dine-in · Curbside pickup · Delivery

Right search result:

coffee in warwick ri

All · Maps · Images · Shopping · News · More — Tools

About 18,400,000 results (0.67 seconds)

Rating ▾ | Price ▾ | Hours ▾

Brewed Awakenings Coffee House Warwick
4.3 ★★★★★ (783) · $$ · Cafe
1316 Bald Hill Rd · In Warwick Center
Dine-in · Curbside pickup · Delivery

West Shore Coffee Bar
4.6 ★★★★★ (215) · $ · Coffee shop
2291 W Shore Rd
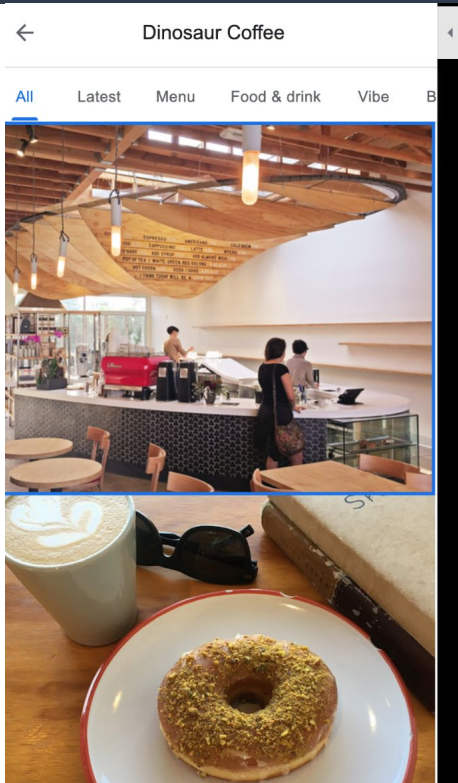Dine-in · Takeout · Delivery

Cafe Tempo Coffee House
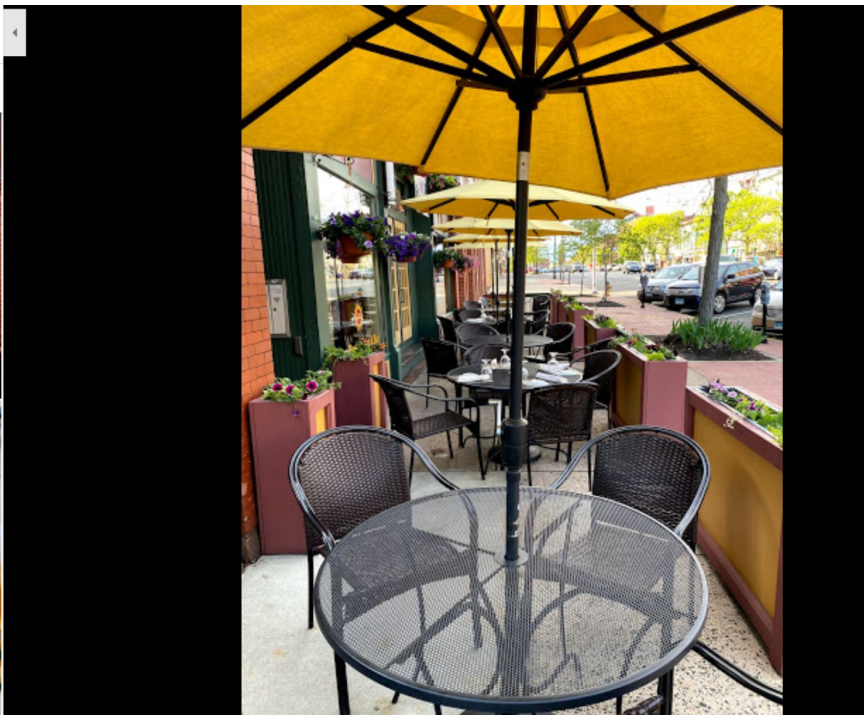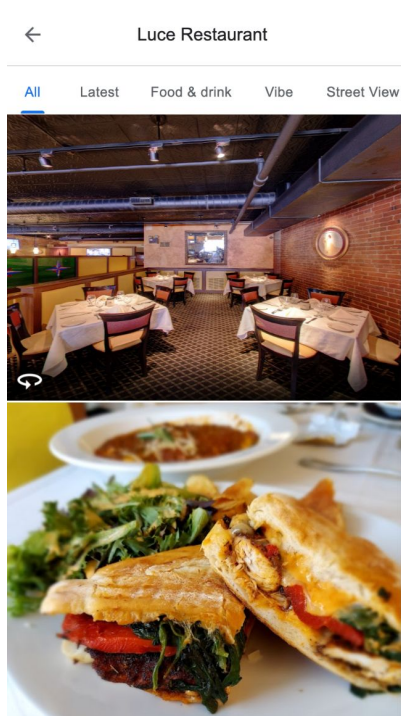4.6 ★★★★★ (585) · $ · Cafe
32 Toll Gate Rd
Dine-in · Takeout · Delivery

Add Pictures

Different Angles

Local Directories

Where to Start?

1. Yelp

2. TripAdvisor (not for all business)

3. Yext (paid)

4. Social media

5. Bing My Business

6. Angie's List (now known as Angi)

7. Better Business Beaurea

Business Directories

A Winning Keyword Strategy

Keyword Research

Local keywords are location-specific phrases that generate results related to a geographic location. For example, "coffee shop in Morro Bay, CA" is a local keyword.

You want to incorporate local keywords on your site so you can appear in searches when people want to find a business like yours.

Think of How Users Would Look for You

Italian food in Smithfield vs Fine Italian Dining in Smithfield

Car Wash in East Providence vs Car Detail Service in East Providence

Clothing Store in Newport vs Where to Buy Swimsuits in Newport

Church in Providence vs Catholic Church in Providence

Tools for Keyword Research

1. [Ahrefs Keyword Generator](#)

2. [SEMrush Keyword Magic Tool](#)

3. [Ubersuggest](#)

4. [Moz Keyword Explorer](#)

5. [Google Trend](#)

6. [SpyFu](#)

Manage Your Reviews

Respond to Positive and Negative Reviews

Did you know that 92% of users trust recommendations over a brand? Reviews serve as recommendations (and sometimes oppositions) for your brand. It's fundamental that you manage your reviews by responding and taking in feedback from your customers.

You can get reviews for your business on Google My Business, Facebook, and other local directories.

To help you manage your reviews, take time to respond to them.

If you get positive reviews on your profile, take time to acknowledge their feedback and thank them for taking the time to write a review. It shows your audience that you're listening and grateful for their patronage.

Handling Negative Reviews

The customer isn't ALWAYS right, but if you are noticing a consistent trend in negative reviews, it might be time to take a deeper look into the issue.

Apologize and Reconcile

It cost five times more to acquire a new customer than retain a customer and WORD OF MOUTH travels far and wide.

Optimize for Mobile

Does it Matter?

Mobile-friendliness is a critical component for helping you rank in search results and deliver a positive user experience for your audience.

When people look for a local business, they often use their mobile devices to search for a local company. If you don't have a mobile-friendly website, those users will likely bounce from your site and visit a competitor's instead.

Not to mention, Google takes your site's mobile version into account when ranking your site. If your site isn't mobile-friendly, you won't rank well in search results.

How to Do This

The best way to create a mobile-friendly site is to integrate responsive design. Responsive design enables your site to adapt to the screen of all devices, from laptops to smartphones. As a result, your audience will have the best experience on their device and stay on your site longer.

Most website builders have this feature so it doesn't often require much work to be sure you are optimized for mobile.

Curious to see if your site is mobile-friendly?

Free tool:

Google

Results

Zoom Zoom!

Speed Matters

Page speed is a direct ranking factor.

A slow page speed means that search engines can crawl fewer pages using their allocated crawl budget, and this could negatively affect your indexation.
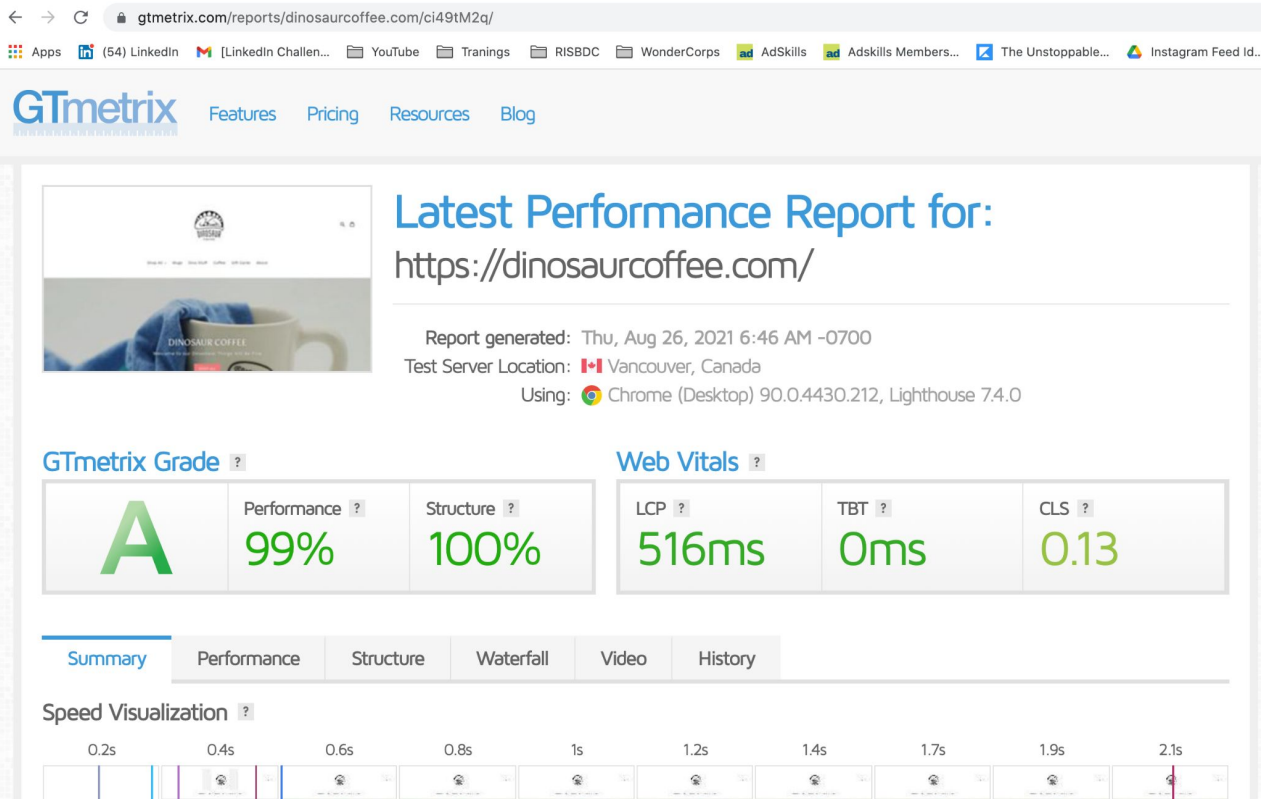
Page speed is also important to user experience. Pages with a longer load time tend to have higher bounce rates and lower average time on page.

Longer load times have also been shown to negatively affect conversions.

What is a good time? Under 2 seconds
Where do you land? Check here: GTmetrix

Test Your Site

Create Content

Be Sure It's Local

Focus on publishing content that is high-quality and original. While using keywords is important, it's advisable only to use them in a natural way. Do not stuff your copy with keywords.

Do you have the best pizza in RI? Be sure you write in a way that is natural and includes all the keywords you want to be found for.

Stuck on Content?

Every page is a new indexed page for your site, on which to target a geographic search phrase, and a new opportunity to get found in the search engine results pages (SERPs).

If you're having trouble coming up with geo-targeted content, consider highlighting customer success stories and case studies.

Your 'About' section is another great place to optimize for local search.

On Page SEO

ALWAYS do the Basics

On-page SEO is a marketing technique where you optimize landing pages and other web pages so that

they rank better on search engines. Good practices for on-page SEO include:

Include the full keyword in the URL

Feature the keyword in the title tag

Keep keywords short and concise

Use the keyword in the meta description

Definitions

1. **Title Tag**: The title/topic of each page

2. **Meta Description Tags**: A short description that summarizes the content

3. **URL**: The web address of a specific page

4. **Header Tags**: Headings that add structure to a page, for example, H1, H2, and H3

5. **Image Alt Tags/Alt Text**: Short and clear description of an image

Use Your Website Builder

Some website builders even offer more advanced features, such as the possibility to add canonical tags,

integrate custom scripts to their pages (e.g. to install Google Analytics) or even set pages to "not index".

Some even comes with a live Google results snippet that lets you see how your page will look in Google.

However, the basic features should be the first place to start developing an efficient SEO strategy.

Most website builders have these capabilities.

Measure!!

You can't have an effective growth strategy for any marketing medium unless you measure!

Google Analytics is a free web analytics service that tracks and reports website traffic, by source and medium, to give you a complete view on how users find and use your website.

Want to know if your local SEO strategy is working? You need to benchmark and measure!

Conclusion

Local SEO refers to the practice of increasing the visibility of physical locations in search results. Local SEO generates high-quality traffic and drives conversions for local businesses. It can also help you compete with big brands and stay relevant.

Focus on the basics, and do each item very well. Don't rush!

Stay relevant and remember no marketing strategy is a s set it and forget it strategy.

Resources:

Google My Business

Test Mobile Friendliness

Site Speed

How to Update Your NAP

Complete Guide to SEO

Google Analytics

Questions?

Type your question to the chat box

Contact Us:

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