



Changescape Web

50 Local Search Questions Answered

We've compiled 50 common questions we get from customers about local search engine optimization (Local SEO). We provide the answers to those questions

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Introduction

Congratulations for downloading our eBook on 50 Local Search Questions Answered.

To assist you in your determining what really matters in achieving higher local search engine results, I've compiled a listing of Local SEO questions and answers in this eBook.

Ken Tucker



Most businesses struggle to be found online. There are so many tactics that are out there - so how do you choose which ones are right for your business?

Understanding Local SEO

In order to develop a solid understanding of what the critical elements are for local search, businesses should:

- Develop a clear message and create a marketing strategy?
- Learn about some of the tactics that will be needed to help with local SEO?
- Select a set of tactics that work in conjunction with one another to amplify your efforts.?

I love helping people learn. Providing you with the information you need is core to our philosophy at Changescape Web, and I hope this eBook helps you deal with the potential overwhelm by making local SEO easier to understand.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Tucker'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'K' and 'T'.

Ken Tucker

About The Author

Ken Tucker, Owner and Chief Marketing Strategist

Changescape Web

Ken Tucker is the founder of Changescape Web (www.changescapeweb.com).

Most businesses struggle to be found online. Changescape Web builds websites that generate customers so businesses can grow and thrive. Specialties include search engine optimization, website design, reputation management, social media marketing, lead generation, and marketing automation.



Ken is a StoryBrand Certified Guide, a Master Duct Tape Marketing Certified Consultant, an Inbound Marketing Certified Professional (since 2010), and an SEO for Growth Consultant (stlouis.seoforgrowth.com).

Ken is the author of [Social Media Marketing for Restaurants](#) and co-author of [Reputation Management \(Marketing Guides for Small Businesses\)](#).

Ken created and taught one of the first college credit Social Media Marketing classes in the US at St. Charles Community College. He has taught a course on Content Management Systems. He serves as Co-Chair of the St. Charles County Chambers of Commerce Technology Committee.

A photograph of a person's hands typing on a silver laptop keyboard on a wooden desk. The scene is partially obscured by a semi-transparent green overlay. In the foreground, a smartphone and a tablet are visible on the desk. The text "50 Local Search Questions Answered" is centered in white over the green area.

50 Local Search Questions Answered

50 Local Search Questions Answered



Whenever I speak to a group on Local SEO, I usually get several local search questions.

The quest for local SEO can sometimes seem elusive. What with Google and other search engines constantly changing their algorithms for page ranking, it's not an easy task to, quite literally, stay on top of things. Basically, a successful local SEO encompasses a number of factors, including:

- Inbound Marketing Strategy
- Effective Keywords and Keyword Phrases
- On-page SEO
- Social Media Strategy
- Interesting and Useful Content
- Presence on Google My Business and other Pertinent Directories
- Customer Reviews and Testimonials, and a Strategy for Soliciting and Monitoring Them

- Link Building and Citations
- A Mobile-Friendly Website
- Blogging

Local SEO FAQs

In the 12 years that I've been in this business, I've heard numerous questions from clients on what really matters to be successful in local SEO. I have also learned a lot myself, sometimes through trial and error. To assist you in your determining what really matters in achieving higher local search engine results, I've compiled a listing of questions and answers below.

What Does SEO Mean / Stand For?

SEO = Search Engine Optimization. Effective SEO is the strategy, process and tactics for working to improve your company's rank in search engine results for the keywords you most want to show up for.

What is Search Engine Marketing?

While it may sound like this is SEO, it is a paid marketing strategy that ends when you stop running your ads. It should be considered lead generation instead of SEO.

What Does Local SEO Mean?

Local SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is a procedure for optimizing your website to help it display more prominently in the local search results pages on Google and the other major search engines.

What is Organic SEO?

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is an inbound marketing strategy process that drives "free" or "organic" traffic and/or search results on search engines like Google, Yahoo and Bing.

How Does SEO Improve My Business?

An effective SEO strategy increases ranking for keyword phrases important to your business, increasing the likelihood that your business will be found online and also improving conversion rates that turn visitors into leads.

What is On-Page SEO?

On-Page SEO are the things you do on your overall website site structure as well as the things that you do on each and every page to provide Google information to help your site and it's pages rank.

What are Key Elements of On-Page SEO?

On-page SEO for each page should include: the Page URL, Page Title, Meta Description, Alt Tags for images, keywords used in the page copy, anchor text to internal and external pages, and H1 and H2 Header tags.

What is “Black Hat” SEO?

Black Hat SEO is a set of aggressive strategies that don't obey search engine guidelines, and usually ignore user experience. These are risky strategies that might result in penalties from the search engines.

Does Social Media Help with SEO?

Search engines view people's positive social signals (likes, shares, votes, views, pins, etc.) on sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube as trusted and convincing endorsements about your company.

Do Images Help with SEO?

Images can certainly help with SEO. First, they can enhance with the user experience on the web page. You can also add “alt tags” that help with on-page SEO (which tells Google what the image is).

If My Site Ranks Well Now, Should I Still Invest in SEO?

SEO is not static. Google and Bing change their algorithms frequently and your competitors are constantly working to improve their rankings. And things break on your site. As a result, SEO should be an ongoing effort.

What is a Big Missed Opportunity with SEO?

Not creating content and pages on your website to focus on the problems you solve for your customers. These create great long-tail keyword opportunities, and many users describe their problems in their searches.

Is User Experience a Factor for SEO?

Yes, sites that are easily navigated and keep people on the site longer have a better chance of higher ranking. If people instantly click back to Google after entering your site (bounce), this results in lower rankings.

Can Anyone Guarantee 1st Page Rankings?

No. You should run from anyone who promises this. SEO is complex with too many variables outside of your control including Google algorithm changes and what competitors might do and how much they might spend. SEO is an ongoing investment.

What Criteria Should You Use to Select Keywords?

Search volume, relevancy, and competition level. You want to pick your keyword battles. It's very difficult to rank for a highly competitive keyword phrase, so it is better to rank for keywords you can win.

What is a Focus Keyword Phrase?

A focus keyword phrase is the primary phrase that you want to try to rank the web page for. The focus keyword phrase should be used in on-page SEO.

What is a Long-Tail Keyword Phrase?

A long-tail keyword phrase is a 3-4 word phrase (or longer) that is a highly specific phrase. Long-tail phrases are typically easier to rank for, and also tend to convert better. Example: Accountant St. Louis MO

What is Google My Business (GMB)?

Google My Business (GMB) is a web page that Google provides for local businesses. It allows you to put your company info on Google +, Google Maps, Google Search and other Google features.

What is NAP and Why is it Important?

Name Address and Phone (NAP) is critical for local businesses. It's important for your NAP to be accurate and consistent not only throughout your website, but also anywhere it appears throughout the entire Internet.

How Can My Business Show Up on Google Maps?

Having strong Google reviews, and fully completing your Google My Business

listing – adding photos and videos and selecting correct categories – improve your business' chances of showing up on Google Maps.

Why Are Reviews Important to SEO?

Customer reviews are one of the top ranking factors for local SEO. They strongly affect how companies are ranked in Google's local search results. Customer reviews reflect trust, relevancy, and timeliness to both the searcher and the search engine.

How Can I Stimulate Positive Reviews?

Building a review funnel is the best way to stimulate positive reviews. You can select the review sites that matter the most to your business and create a process to make reviewing your business easy.

Should I Respond to Negative Reviews?

It is important to consider responding to all reviews. Every positive review should have a response. Negative reviews can be addressed as appropriate, which can always be to take the follow-up offline.

How Can I Monitor Reviews?

The best way to monitor reviews is to implement a review monitoring service. You get immediate notification whenever someone leaves a review so you can respond in a timely manner. Social media monitoring using a tool like Hootsuite is also important.

What is Review Velocity?

Review velocity is the frequency of reviews written on a particular review site. It is an important factor in determining the impact of reviews on local SEO on sites like Google and Yelp.

Are Testimonials and Reviews the Same Thing?

To the reader, these may appear similar, but in the eyes of Google they are different. Reviews have a particular data format that Google uses to assess your online reputation. Both help with trust.

How Often Does Google Update Its Algorithm?

While no one is sure but Google, major algorithm changes occur every 2- 3 months with a series of minor adjustments occurring on an ongoing basis. Last year Google made a total of over 500 algorithm changes.

What Review Sites Should Be Considered?

From an SEO perspective, Google My Business and Yelp rank well for most industries. Google My Business reviews directly impact how your business ranks on Google Maps. Industry specific sites are also important.

What Are Citations?

A citation is a reference online to your NAP – your company name, address, and phone number, as well as your website URL.

How Do Citations Help Rankings?

Citations are used by the search engines to evaluate online legitimacy and popularity of your business – the more accurate quality citations your business has the better.

What is Google Search Console?

Google Search Console is a free service from Google that provides insights about your website such as search traffic, index status, crawl errors such as 404 errors and more.

What are 404 errors?

A 404 error is also known as a “Not Found” error. These errors occur when the webpage is not found, which occurs because of a broken link to that page, or because the page has been removed. These should be fixed.

What is Google Analytics?

Google Analytics is a free service that provides comprehensive statistics on website traffic to include visitors, time on site, pages visited, conversion rate, and more.

What is HTTPS?

Hyper Text Transport Protocol Secure is the secure version of HTTP. It is a protocol used to encrypt the data being sent between your web browser and

the web server it is connected to.

Why is HTTPS Important?

When connecting to a website with HTTP, your browser assumes it is connected to the proper web server. HTTPS encrypts the connection and verifies the website using a security certificate. Google also prefers HTTPS over HTTP.

Why is Local Web Page Content Important?

Local web page content gives you an opportunity to use local search phrases (which include geographic terms) in pages and posts on your website. Having content for these local search phrases increase findability.

What is Link Building?

Link Building, also referred to as Inbound Links and Off-Page SEO, is when another website links to your website for content and relevancy.

Does Linking to Other Sites Help My Website?

Linking to other websites is not nearly as beneficial as other websites linking to your site. It is a good practice to link to quality external sites that add value to the content on your page or post as it boosts your authority as an expert on than topic.

What Is Structured Data?

Structured Data is a format for data about your web page that makes it easier for Google to crawl and index that page for search results.

What is Domain Authority?

Domain Authority is the measure of a domain name's power and is based on popularity, age, and size.

What are Title Tags?

Title tags are the meta data that tell Google what the title of the page is and should include a strong keyword phrase. This is extremely important for SEO. Title tags are visible when you hover over a browser or tab.

Does Google Penalize Websites That Are Not Mobile Friendly?

Websites that are not mobile friendly tend to not rank as well on Google, especially when the search is from a mobile device. With more than 50% of searches from mobile, it may not be penalizing but it is hurtful.

How Important is Page Load Speed?

Page load speed has become an important factor for SEO because it impacts user experience, especially on a mobile device. Since more than 50% of all searches are done on mobile, slow page load speeds hurt SEO.

How Many Words Should a Web Page Have to Rank Well?

It is recommended that every page you want to rank have at least 500 words. Blog posts should have between 500-3000 words depending on competition for the keyword phrase and your link building strategy.

How Does Blogging Help My Website?

Blogs are already well designed for search engines. Companies that blog have 97% more inbound links and 434% more indexed pages.

Can My Blog Be on a Different Website?

You can choose to host your blog anywhere. But when it comes to SEO, it is important to have your blog properly integrated into your website. If your blog has a different domain in its URL, you don't get SEO credit for your website.

Do Page URLs Matter for Search Rankings?

Yes, page URLs are an important factor for SEO and should include the focus keyword phrase for the page to be most effective.

What are Ranking Signals?

Ranking signals, or ranking factors, are characteristics of a website used by search engines that determine its position in search results. All ranking signals combined form the algorithm of a search engine.

What is Anchor Text?

Anchor text is the word or phrase that you hyperlink to go to another page on your website, or to a relevant page on another website. Ideally anchor text is done using an important keyword phrase for the website.

What are Cornerstone and Skyscraper Pages?

Cornerstone and Skyscraper pages, commonly referred to as resource pages, contain a lot of content. These pages typically exceed 2500 words and are developed for critical keyword phrases and to build links.

Get Started!

Hopefully these Local Search Questions and Answers will help you on your journey to rank for local search phrases! Let us know if you have any other questions about local search engine optimization.

Want to see how your website ranks for local search? Request a free [Competitive Search Rank Report](#) to find out.



Ready for a Website that Generates Customers?

This eBook helps to explain some of the terms and key components of local SEO. There are a lot of things to consider and it's important to have the right set of tactics. We can help!

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