



Chicago SEO Pro

Search Engine Strategies & Marketing

Google Local SEO Checklist – Top 10 Rank Factors

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In 2009, local search thought leaders reviewed 41 rank factors and concluded which elements have the greatest impact on a web site's ability to rank well in local search listing results, i.e. Google Maps. As of June 7, 2010 the rank factors increased to 58.

This checklist covers the Top 10 factors to getting your web site(s) ranked locally that recurred between 2009 and 2010.

1. Claim/Create Local Business Listing

Check the major local listing providers for your current listing(s) to claim or create one:

<http://www.google.com/local/add>

<http://listings.local.yahoo.com/csubmit/index.php>

<https://ssl.bing.com/listings/ListingCenter.aspx>

2. Ensure Your Business Address Matches Your Target Location

If your business is located in Chicago, IL, the address in your local listing should be an actual Chicago location. A real physical address such as:

Dan's Shoe Store
123 E. Randolph St.
Chicago, IL 60601

3. Pick Relevant Categories For Your Business/Service

If your business or service pertains to a category already listed select that category before blindly creating a new category. Chances are people have already made that association and will be more equipped to find you within a related category.

4. Put Your Product/Service Name In The Listing Title & Description

Often times businesses focus on their business name in directories and listings, however in the case of local search, users are looking for a product or service. Incorporate your business name into the Title, but don't forget to give searchers a quick easy way to associate the two.

5. Web Citations From Local Directories & Internet Yellow Pages (IYPs)

Internet Yellow Pages focus on local areas as do local directories. Having listings in these just reaffirms your location and relevance to that location. So the more citations you have, the better, but also, the more high quality the listing provider the better the credibility.

6. Add Images to Local Maps Profile & IYP Listings

Adding images provides a higher level of completeness to profiles and reinforces the level of accuracy relating to the business.

7. Local Phone # Area Code Associated With Local Listing(s)

Common sense tells us that if there is a local area code then the business is local. This is also a compliance factor with Google's Maps Listing Guidelines.

Example: Which of these would you consider a local business?

Dan's Shoe Store
123 E. Randolph St.
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 555-5555

Dan's Shoe Store
(800) 555-Shoe

8. Location Keyword (i.e. City, State) in Listing Description

Having the location within the listing description is another indicator of location however supplying more than just 1 instance could be perceived as "spammy" and work against you.

9. Age Of Local Listing Page/Profile

The age of a listing contributes to the trustworthiness of the business.

10. Add Product(s)/Service(s) in Custom Fields

Essentially the more complete you can make your profiles, the better. This just affirms additional information in relation to the primary information but also provides a sense of reassurance to Google and the user. A company that takes the time to really ensure accurate, detailed information performs well in search engine local listings.

