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# Corner The Local Search Engine Market

Four Steps to Ensure your Business will Capitalize from Local Google Search  
Exposure

2010

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# Introduction

## Why You NEED This Guide

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We live in an age where everyday more and more people are connecting online. The internet is more of a household necessity than passing fad. With the proliferation of smart phones, laptops and wireless internet, people can access the internet anywhere. If someone needs information they are more likely to turn to a search on Google than they are a magazine, encyclopedia or even the handy yellow pages. The last point is what makes this guide valuable. When people search Google for a local service or product, are you showing up to them? If you aren't then you are missing out on a number of potential leads and sales.



*"Hmmm, where should I eat tonight?"*

The power of Google has never been more alluring. We live in a society where a common response to a question is "I dunno, I'll just Google it." This guide will share five steps that you can take to make sure you show up in Google searches when potential customers are looking for your products or services. We will focus on local search terms, so that you can rank quickly, and receive very targeted traffic that is based in your own community.

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# Step One: Research

## What Are Your Customers Searching For?

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Since we are working on local search terms your research should be pretty simple. All you need to figure out is “What do my customers search Google for”? This search term will become your keyword.

Essentially it comes to a simple pattern, just combine your location with your product or service. If you have a restaurant in Toronto then a pretty good start would be “Toronto Restaurant”. If you live in a popular town name you might want to include your province as well (i.e “Toronto Ontario Restaurant”). Once you have combined your locale with your product/service you can use the Googles keyword tool (<http://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>) to get an idea of how many people search for your term.

If you live in a smaller town you might not get many or any results in the keyword tool but that is OK. Google’s tool doesn’t track terms that get less than 250 searches per month. It doesn’t matter if not a ton of people are searching for your term though because everyone who does search for it is super targeted and on the verge of buying. If you don’t see a number in the monthly search column, then ask around your circle of friends and see what they would search for if they were looking for your product/service.

Once you have your “keyword” (your location + your product/service in most cases) then you are ready to optimize your website for local based searches. Now the fun begins.

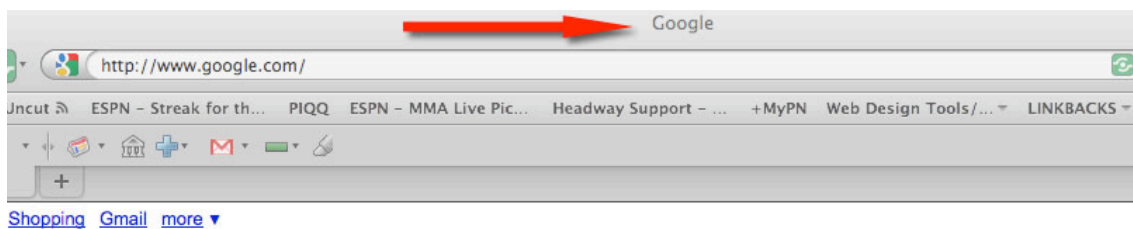
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# Step Two: Title Tag

## The First Thing Google Sees

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Google is constantly scouring the internet for content. They have their automatic programs that go out and find and list websites based on a complex formula that only they know the real secrets of. One thing we do know is that Google doesn't see your site like you do. It sees a text version without all of the bells and whistles. The very first thing it sees is your Title Tag, which makes sense since it is at the very top of your website:



*The title tag is found at the top of your web browser*

As you can see from the above picture, the title tag is not technically on your web page but it is found at the top of your web browser. It is pretty essential that this title tag has your keyword in it. It is the first thing Google sees and it is what Google will list your website as in their search engine.

## How Do I Change It

If you are lucky enough to have your website powered by WordPress then you simply change your "Blog Title" to your keyword term. You can change this in the back office of WordPress in Settings → General.

If you are using a traditional HTML website then you will have to manipulate some code. If you have a web designer they can probably do this for you in a couple of minutes. Either way you will have to edit the title tag in your header. Somewhere in between the <head> and </head> tags will be <title></title> tags, just put your keyword between those tags and you are all set.

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# Step Three: Gotta Get Dynamic

## Fresh Content is KING.

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A “dynamic” website consists of some sort of regularly updated content. This is usually done by adding a blog to your website, or moving your site to a dynamic platform like WordPress.

Google values dynamic website more highly than static (rarely changing) websites. A website with fresh content is naturally more relevant and up to date, so Google awards higher rankings for them. This is why even the biggest names in the business world are adding company blogs to their websites.

The easiest way to add a dynamic element to your website is to build it in WordPress in the first place. If you already have a website you can look into how much it would cost to recreate it in WordPress. Conversely you can also just add a blog to your current website.



*Google loves dynamic blogs, and so do potential customers!*

What you want to do is to update it as often as possible. A solution like WordPress makes this as easy as using a word processing program. You can use your blog to announce industry news, sales, events and any other information potential customers might find useful. If you want to get even more interactive, you can write how-do articles related to your business. This will benefit you in two ways, you will get more Google love from the fresh content, and you will also brand yourself as an expert in your field.

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# Step Four: Backlinks

## Backlinks: The Holy Grail of Google

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### What Are Backlinks?

Backlinks are the number one most important factor when you want your website to get to the top of Google searches. In the simplest terms, backlinks are links on the internet that point back to your site. The most effective backlinks have your chosen keyword as the **anchor text**. Anchor text is the actual text that people click to visit your site. When Google finds a link to your site that includes the keyword you want to rank for then it will boost that sites relevancy.

Example: To visit my website, [click here](#)

“click here” is the **anchor text in this example**

### How Do I Create Backlinks?

Many of the places you get links from will have a field for your web address as well as a field that is something like “Link Text” or “Link Title”. Whatever you put into those latter fields will become your “anchor text”. So if you are trying to rank for “Toronto restaurant” that is what you would use.

Sometimes though you will have to create it yourself. The two most common ways to create anchor text links when backlinking is through HTML and BBcode. BBcode is almost exclusive to links on message boards so that is about the only place you will need it. You will use the HTML code much more often.

Here is how you create anchor text backlinks:

#### HTML

`<a href="http://www.yoursite.com">ANCHOR TEXT aka KEYWORD</a>`

## **BBcode**

[url="http://www.yoursite.com"]ANCHOR TEXT aka KEYWORD[/a]

*Notes:* The spacing above counts. Also the use of .com is an example, use whatever ending your site actually uses. Lastly, make sure that you close the link with the </a> or [/a] (depending on code), if you do not, the link will not work.

## **Where Do I Get Backlinks?**

### **1. Your Own Sites**

This is a nice easy step. If you are trying to get one of your sites to rank for a keyword and need backlinks, the best place to start is with any other sites you might own. Add a link to the site you want to rank for. Include the link on any blogs you might own or any other business sites you have.

You don't have any sites? Go to free blog sites like Wordpress.com, Blogger.com and LiveJournal and create blogs. Create a blog on these sites and post an article that relates to your business. Include an anchor text rich link to your website. Anywhere that offers you the chance to build a free website or blog is a potential link.

### **2. Reciprocal Linking**

Reciprocal linking has become kind of a taboo word in link building these days. Simply trading links with people is not nearly as effective as it once was. Google caught on to this practice and having a page full of links that gave you a link - will not help your rankings.

That said, you can trade links with sites that will actually drive traffic to your site. In this case even if the reciprocal link won't help for your search engine placement it is still worth trading if the site you are trading with is going to send significant traffic to your site. To avoid any of the issues with reciprocal linking, if you have another website or blog you can participate in 3-Way linking. This is essentially getting people to link to the website you are trying to get to the top of Google, while you give them a link back on ANOTHER site...NOT the one trying to rank in Google. Of course this is only for people with another site handy that they don't care if it has a lot



of outbound links on.

### **3. Web Directories**

The internet is full of hundreds (probably thousands) of online web directories where you can post your link. The first directory to worry about is <http://www.dmoz.org> This is by far the most powerful of the free web directories. The first step to any backlinking campaign should include a submission to DMOZ. Just follow their posted instructions (to the letter, they are picky). DMOZ is moderated by volunteers so it may take a long time for your link to get approved. Do not submit every week, submit and check back in 3-4 months and if your link isn't there you can resubmit.

The other directory that is super powerful is the Yahoo Directory - this is separate from the yahoo search results. This is probably the only directory I would even suggest you pay for. The price is expensive, but the link is very valuable to your SEO efforts. If you have the money, go for it. If you can't justify the cost, you can ignore it for now. That is the ONLY directory I would suggest you pay for. There are a lot of directories out there and I think you are best off focusing on the hundreds of free ones. A lot of these directories will ask for a reciprocal link - as stated above that is not a great trade off. You can ignore the ones that require a reciprocal link OR you can set up a free Blogger blog and just throw the link up there. Most of them will accept this, but some will require a link from the domain you are submitting - ignore these sites and move on. To get you started here are a couple links to online lists of web directories that you can submit to.

<http://www.addurl.nu>

<http://www.directorycritic.com/free-directory-list.html>

**\*\*\*Note: These directories sometimes die, move to a paid situation or stop accepting new submissions - it is the nature of web directories\*\*\***

You can find a lot more by searching terms like "free web directory" The thousands of directories on the above two lists should keep you busy though.

#### **4. Blog Commenting**

There are a plethora of blogs today and most of them offer you the chance to post comments. You can gain backlinks by leaving relevant comments that actually mean something. Much like forum posting this isn't something to do recklessly. You need to actually read the blog posts you are commenting on and then drop a thoughtful response.

Creating the links on these blogs is pretty simple, when you are filling out the comment section "Your Name" will end up being the anchor text to your link. Some blogs will not allow people to put keywords as their name, but a lot do if the comment is well thought out. Some blogs will also let you put an HTML link in the body of your comment, but usually only if that site is relevant to the discussion at hand. To find fresh blog posts, search twitter for "new blog post" and you will have enough to stay busy for awhile.

#### **5. Social Media**

Social Media is a broad term but it is a good all inclusive term for the purposes of this guide. Basically there is a whole world out there based on social interaction over the web that is primed for backlinks. It has probably become the most popular backlinking method.

First there are Social Bookmarking sites like Digg and Delicious that offer profiles which allow you to add a link, or have an about me section that allows you to place an HTML link. You can google "social bookmarking sites" to find hundreds of sites that may allow you to place an anchor text rich link in your profile.

There are also a ton of blogging or micro blog type sites out there. Sites like Squidoo, Blogger, Wordpress.com etc... offer people the chance to create a blog type web page. These blogs and pages can easily have links added to them that point to your site. If you use these sites, try to create some original content for each of them - even if it is a quick 250 word article.

Online profiles are one of the hottest places to get backlinks. Almost any site that has some sort of "community" offers a profile section that you can use to add a link. This is not limited to a certain type of sites, basically any site you can create a profile on. I would suggest focusing on the high PR sites - for example a lot of newspapers, offer profiles, TED.com etc...

**\* \* \*Note: To get you started here is a link that includes a ton of profiles that someone**

used to build his backlinks:

<http://ebookisdead.com/links.php>.

Some of these links may not be accepting new profiles due to the spamming, but by studying how and where this guy got his links will make the above paragraph make a lot more sense \* \* \* \*

## 6. Article Writing

Article writing can also give you decent backlinks. Just write an article on your topic and there is no shortage of sites to submit that article to. Most sites allow a link (or two) in the body of the article, but even if they don't, they ALL offer a profile that you can get a link on AND an author resource box that will be posted along with your article. This resource box can be a perfect opportunity to sell yourself or website...plus of course the ever valuable backlink. Some of the most popular article sites are:

<http://www.ezinearticles.com>

<http://www.searchwarp.com>

<http://www.goarticles.com>

<http://www.articlebase.com>

You can also save all of your articles as PDFs (with anchor text rich backlinks in it) and upload to document sharing sites like Scribd and Docstoc.

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# Conclusion

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If you want to dominate your local search engine rankings , then these four steps will ensure you do that.

The keys to your Google dominations are:

- Researching and picking a great local keyword (i.e. Toronto Restaurant). The key here to remember is to combine your location with your product and/or service.
- Make sure your keyword is in your title tag. This is the first thing Google sees, it has to include your keyword.
- Dynamic websites rule Google. Remember that migrating your website to a WordPress platform, or adding a blog to an existing website is the easiest way to make your site dynamic. Google will reward you for fresh content.
- Get Backlinks! You need to get backlinks to your website. You can find them in many places, and remember you want your keyword to be the anchor text as much as possible!

Using these four steps you will be able to tap into very targeted traffic that are usually people looking to buy now! Who wouldn't want that? Good luck, and we hope to see you at the top of Google soon!