

How to Promote Your Business Using Online Directories



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CHAPTER ONE

The Top Online Directories: Google, Facebook, and Yelp

Ten years ago many of us might have used a phonebook to search for businesses and services in our area. Nowadays, it's necessary to know how to make your business visible on the internet. In this ebook, we'll talk about how to use online directories to give potential customers access to your business.

Do you know how consumers are finding and choosing your business?

The Top Online Directories

There are a lot of local listings to sign up with for free online. As a rule, the more directories you can establish a presence on the better. For now, let's talk about the top three modern directories that offer the most robust foundation for promoting your business online.

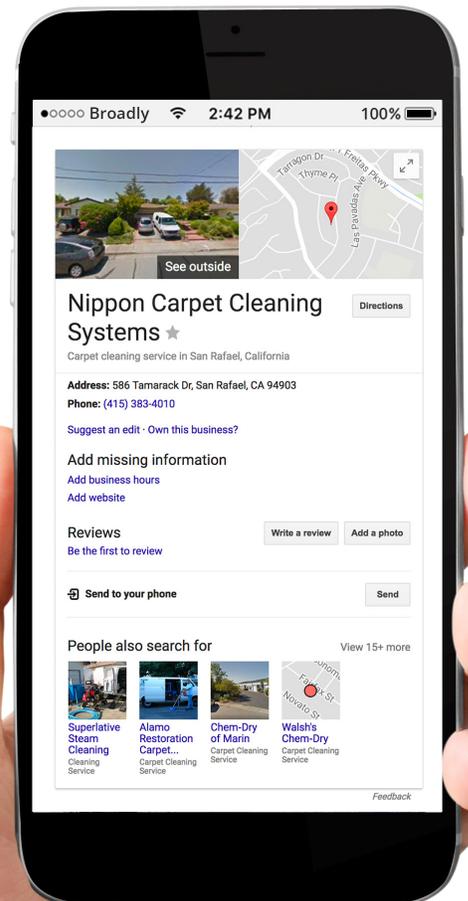
Being on the top online directories will begin to rank your business on the most popular search engines. Plus, you'll have all your business information in one spot as well as a social platform to engage with your customers, receive customer feedback, and boost your search ranking.

Be there when
people search for
you on Google.

Google My Business

Getting found on Google is a local business owner's dream. The first step to getting your business found on Google is setting up a [Google My Business](#) profile. You can think of Google My Business as a one-stop shop for all of your business information. This includes a reviews platform and a social media platform to better connect with your customers. When people search on Google for the services you provide, they'll have easy access to your business' general information, contact information, location, and customer reviews.

Most importantly, Google My Business has the added benefit of being directly tied to Google's Search Engine. This means all of your information can be seen immediately on the first page of Google's search results.



By creating a Google My Business page, your business is more likely to connect directly with customers. On your business page you can share content, news, promotions, photos, and videos to engage with your customers. The more engagement you receive on your Google page, the more Google will recognize activity from your business and the more your ranking will improve.

Long story short, investing your time to establish your presence on Google is one of the most valuable things you can do for your business -- and it's absolutely free!

Find and Claim your Yelp Business Page

Business Name Mel's Diner	Near Berkeley, CA	Get Started
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Respond to reviews as the business owner



Measure visitor activity on your page



Call to get started
(844) 889-6823

Yelp for Business Owners

Yelp has a tremendous influence over consumer behavior when it comes to verifying businesses online. Because Yelp is a trusted local business resource for consumers it's important to make your presence on Yelp look its best.

There is a common misconception that one must pay Yelp to have a strong Yelp presence. The good news is there are many things you can do to build a great presence on Yelp, for free!

Once you [claim your Yelp page](#), you will have full control of your business profile. You will be able to respond to customer reviews either through private messaging or as a public comment, customize your page with photos and information. You'll also be able to formalize your citations and update your company details such as your hours of operation, location, a company bio, and your contact information.



Facebook Pages

Connect with people and tell them about your business with a Facebook Page.

Create a Page

Facebook Business Page

Facebook is an up-and-coming player in online search for local businesses. Since last year, more than half of the U.S. population now visits Facebook at least once a month. As Facebook gains popularity, having an established profile on their platform will put you ahead of the curve.

You can set up your Facebook Business profile within a matter of minutes. Update your profile with your business name and a representative image of your business such as a logo or a team photo. Add general information such as your hours of operation and website address. An “About” blurb describing your business and values will help to personalize your page and distinguish you from your competitors. You can also add a call-to-action button on the header image of your profile so you can prompt visitors to call you directly or to visit your website.

Once you’ve updated your profile, you can communicate with your customers through text, publish new content, and promote your page to your target audience.

Conclusion

Establishing your business on top online directories is the first step to making your services accessible to modern consumers. Having a presence on Google, Yelp, and Facebook, allows you to effectively promote your business through reviews, your website, and social media.



CHAPTER TWO

Using Your Online Directories as Your Social Media Platform

There's a lot of skepticism circulating around the subject of social media for local business owners. Investing in your social media may seem like a waste of your time, but in reality keeping up a healthy presence on sites like Google and Facebook can help to engage your customers and promote your business.

A study from the Pew Research Center found that 65% of adults in the US use some form of social media. This means that when you promote yourself on your Google, Facebook, and other directory profiles, there's a good chance you're reaching out to consumers who are using the same channels.

Do you know how to use your social media to promote your business?

Many business owners won't bother with social media because they aren't sure of how to use it. However, social media is a powerful platform for engaging customers, sharing information and bettering your business. You can use your social media as a platform for:

- Facilitating discussion about your industry or service
- Learning more about your customers.
- Providing a central place for customers engage with your business.
- Learning from your competition to see how they engage with their audience.

With social media, you stand to gain both insight and, in the case of your Google+ profile, SEO benefits for your business.

Post on Your Google and Facebook profiles

Earlier we talked about the benefits of setting up your business listings on sites like Google and Facebook. Now you can put these pages to work! Posting pictures of people enjoying your business or providing valuable information such as tutorials, giveaways, and discounts can help drive people to your page and ultimately to your business. The more valuable the content on your page is to your followers and the more attractive your business looks, the more traffic you'll gain.

Engage your Audience

Not only is there a good chance that your current customer base will be able to engage with your business, they are also the most likely to ask for your services again. A study by Bain & Company found that customers who engage with companies over social media spend 20-40% more money with those companies than other customers.

Chances are that your customers will use social media to communicate with one another and share their experiences in the form of reviews or posts. As your business grows, so will the number of opportunities to communicate with customers. You can even experiment with other social profiles like Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and other social platforms.

Say “Thank You”

When a new customer mentions your business on Google, Facebook, or any other type of social media, be sure to respond! Say “thank you” for choosing your business and let them know you care.

Reach Out For Feedback

Ask for more detailed feedback. Not only will this help you more effectively understand your customers, but it goes a long way in building loyalty in your local market.

Learn From Your Competition

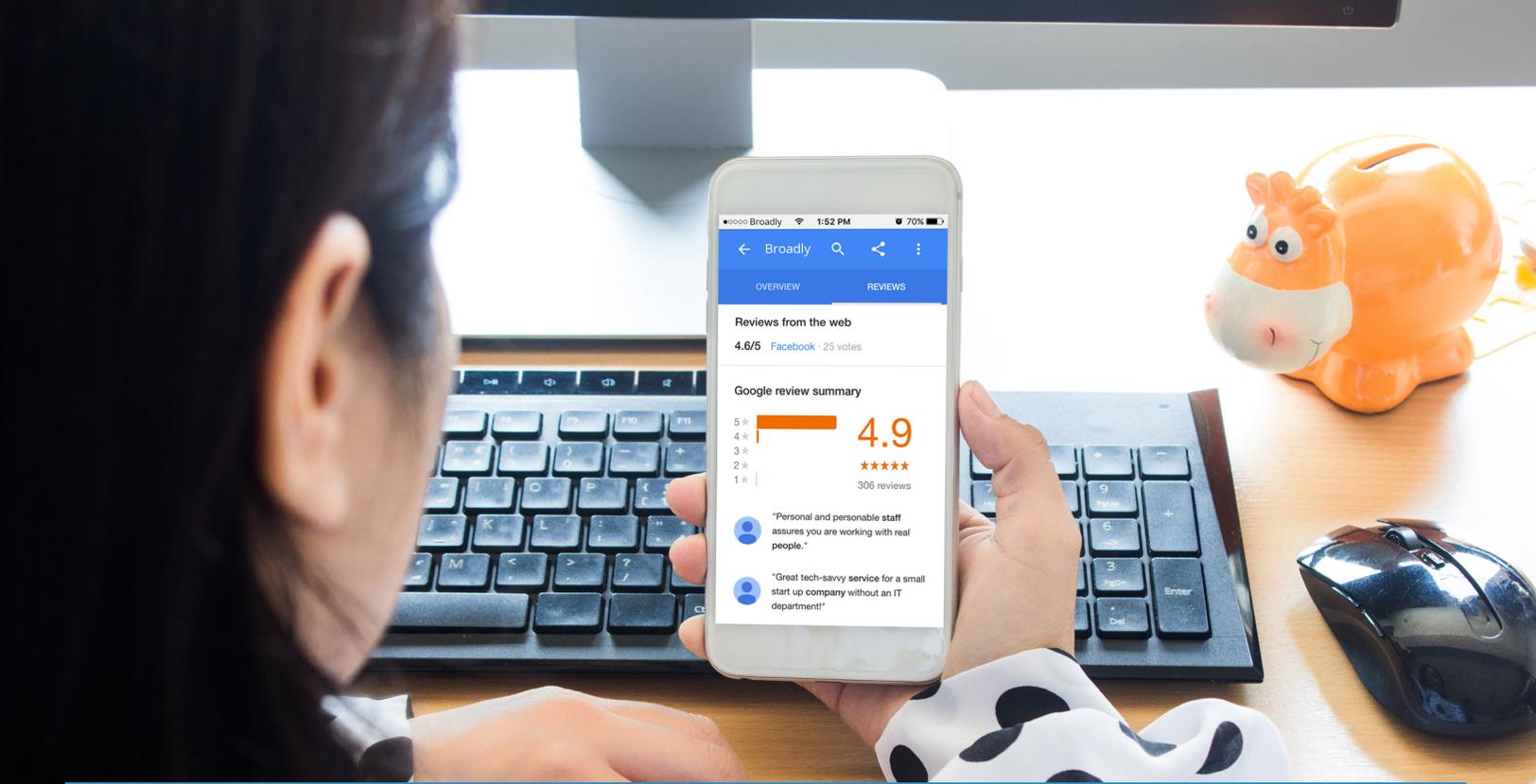
If you have strong competition, checking out their social media is a great place to learn from them. Learning from your competitors is the first step to surpassing your competitors. Social media makes it easier than ever to learn from your competition, especially when it comes to seeing how they engage with their customers. Do some research on some of your strongest competitors to evaluate:

1. What type of customer service are they providing via social media.
2. How your local competitors address customer requests, complaints, and positive reviews.
3. How they engage customers through content, campaigns, raffles, and competitions.

Watching how your competitors work is also a great way to learn what *not* to do on your social media. Some business owners will actively spam their followers by posting unsolicited ads or updating the same content over-and-over again. From the business owner’s perspective, letting your customers know that you’re open and ready for business makes perfect sense. Taking in the customer’s perspective takes a more considerate approach.

Conclusion

Social media has become an essential tool for promoting your business. Fortunately, social media now ties in with your business listings on Google and Facebook.



CHAPTER THREE

How To Take Advantage of Your Online Reviews

Most online directories come with a review platform for customers to evaluate the quality of your services. Take advantage of the value of your reviews to improve and promote your business for free. We've come up with some of the most common ways to promote your business using reviews.

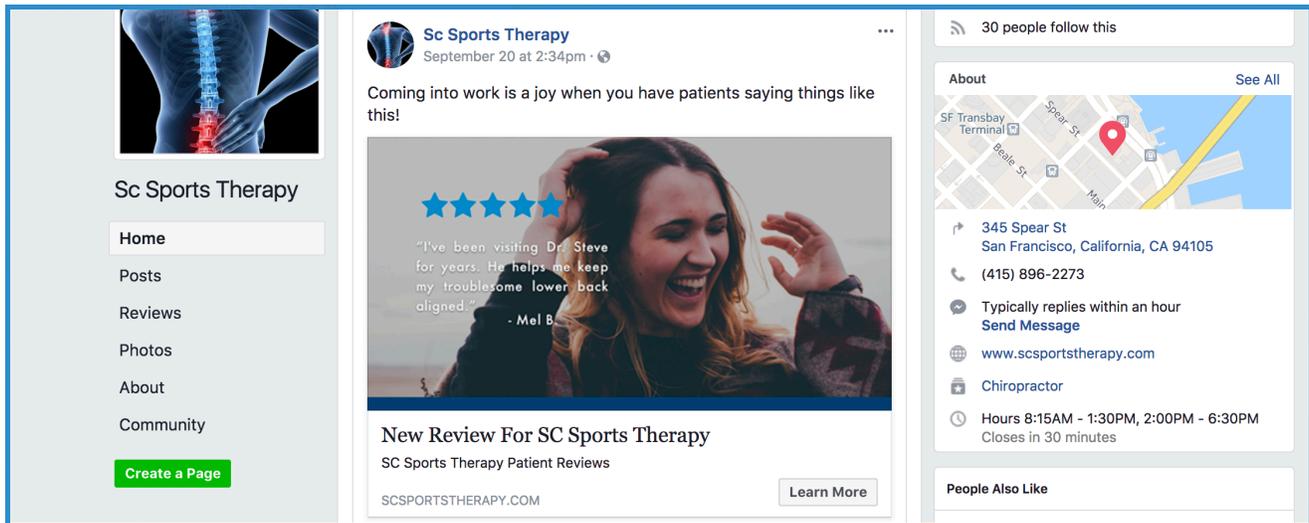
Post Existing Reviews on Your Website and Social Pages

Reviews not only showcase quality of your work -- they are also essentially free content that you can use to promote your business.

Do you know how to use reviews on your online profiles to promote your business?

promote your business. In fact, many business owners now post their best reviews on their website and other social profiles. So much so, that Google, Yelp, and Facebook each offer free embeds that you can put on your website to showcase your customer reviews.

Business information all in one place.



Review shared on business facebook profile.

Posting Reviews Improves Search Results

Posting customer reviews can also improve SEO on your Google My Business and Facebook profiles. Google especially values businesses that actively and consistently post relevant content online including reviews. Once Google recognizes activity on your social pages and website they will rank your business higher in search results. Using your reviews as material for content is a great solution.

Responding to Feedback Improves Your SEO

Generally speaking, replying to reviews shows that you value constructive dialogue with your customers. Being receptive and responsive helps to build loyalty and trust, especially if the customer felt they had a bad experience. Google recognizes this, and chose to stand in favor of responsive business owners. In November 2016, Google confirmed that responding to customer reviews improves local SEO. Google values businesses that respond to customer feedback because responsive

business owners tend to have the customer's best interest in mind.

Our Conclusion? Get More Reviews!

Easier said than done, right? It's no secret that none of the above is possible without consistently getting great customer reviews for your business. With more reviews on your online listings, not only will you speak to the majority of online shoppers who use reviews to make a purchasing decision, you'll be able engage with your customers and boost your SEO in the process.

Broadly.com offers solutions that will help you boost your reviews and keep the content rolling on your social media, so that you can take care of responding to your customers and putting out your best work.



CHAPTER FOUR

Making Use of Other Online Listings for Your Business

Google, Facebook, and Yelp are the first directories you should get your business listed on, but stopping there is a recipe for missed opportunity. Although Google, Facebook, and Yelp are absolute essentials for your business, they aren't the only online directories that will make a difference in your local marketing plan.

Having a presence anywhere your customers might potentially find you is critical to attracting new customers and growing your business. This can be achieved by signing up with a variety of free and paid directories and data-aggregators to automate citation creation for your business.

Do you know how to get the most out of other online directories?

Be Perfect on the Essentials: Google, Yelp, and Facebook

It's important to be sure that your name and address are perfectly compliant with Google's guidelines before moving on to other online directories to post your citations. Making sure you're pitch-perfect on Google means you won't have to fix those items in case of a citation violation on another site.

Where to Sign Up

Don't overlook directories like [Bing Places](#), [Yahoo Local](#), and Apple Maps. The process for all listings is similar, but there are variations for every site. Each site has a separate set of rules that you must follow.

Remember: every online directory that you register with is an opportunity for your business to be found online and to receive additional business citations from other sites. If you're considering purchasing a listing, saddle up and do some research first to make sure you're hitting the right audience.

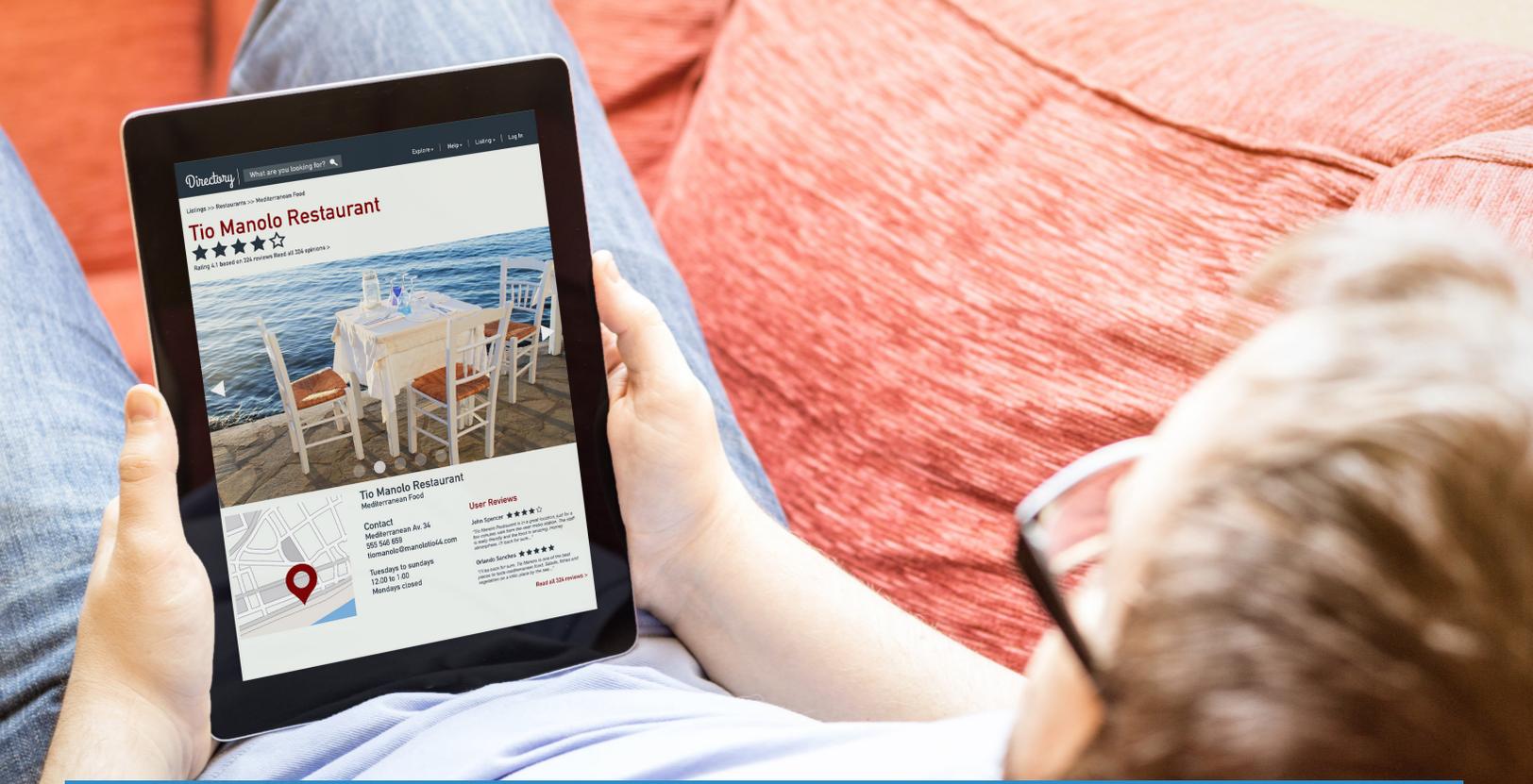


Moz has an excellent guide for finding the best listings for your type of business. [Check it out here.](#)

Use Low-cost Data-aggregators

Low-cost data-aggregators such as Infogroup, Acxiom, and Localeze collect verified business information for search engines like Google to compare and validate existing listings. Data-aggregators can enable you to improve your local presence, build strong backlinks, and help you rank higher in local search results at a low cost.

Google takes into account the number of times your business is mentioned, including on all of your online listings and associates your relevance and prominence in your area of service. The more links that associate your website with your name, location, and contact information, the better your brand can be found online.



CHAPTER FIVE

Local Citation Best Practices for Small Business

Getting your citations on multiple online listings is the definition of tedious. However it is incredibly important that your citations are thorough, consistent, and reach as many relevant online listings as possible. When your citations are properly formatted and strategically placed on a variety of online directories, you're setting yourself up for your business with the strongest web presence it can possibly have.

What takes just a few good hours can take even longer without proper technique. We've come up with a few tips to help you power through getting your citations right on your local listings so that your business can be in tip-top shape to be found online.

Do you know best practices when it comes to creating local citations for your business?

Do it Yourself

There are numerous services you can pay to claim, manage, and optimize your citations on your behalf, but chances are you're the best possible person to catch any errors. Doing your citations is always best to do by yourself or side-by-side with a professional partner -- that way you can catch any misinformation specific to your business, and your hire can catch anything that doesn't fall into citation best practices. Mistakes in your citations could cost you in the long run, so don't leave it up to a stranger to get it right.

Make Sure Your Citations are Consistent

Make sure your citations are consistent and fix your current citations if you have any. Make sure that your business is correctly spelled and that your location and area of service is the same on every citation. Keep in mind that the number of citations you have will grow naturally over time – without your direct involvement – because some sites feed business info to others. Bulk will come more easily and naturally if you first spend some time fixing your current citations.

You can check the consistency of your listings with [Moz Local](#), a citation management tool that locates your business listings and identifies areas for improvement.

Remove Duplicate Listings

Moz Local is also a great resource for removing duplicate listings. You can check the consistency of your listings with Moz Local, a tool that locates your business listings and identifies inconsistencies.

Keep Track of Your Login Information

This *should* go without saying, but everyone's been in a situation where they wished they had kept all of their login information organized in one place. As a business owner, it is extremely important to be on the ball with your login information, especially when it comes to your online business listings. If you're in a situation where you can't retrieve your information, you're in danger of being stuck with inaccurate business listings that you can't edit but is associated with your business for good. Not only do inaccurate listings potentially confuse onlookers, they also can hurt your search rankings.

Final Thoughts: Double-check, again!

Once you get all your online directories set up, give yourself a pat on the back! Putting in the work to get your citations consistent and out there on the web will pay off in dividends.

If you want to be extra careful, check in on [Moz Local](#) to make sure there aren't any inconsistencies in your listings. Google's business listings are ultimately an assemblage of data points -- only one of which is you as the business owner. Google puts business listings together based on everything pointing to your business, so it's up to you to ensure that they find the correct information across the board.

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