10 Essential Items for Any Local Business Website

Make Sure Your Website
Is Optimized for Local Search
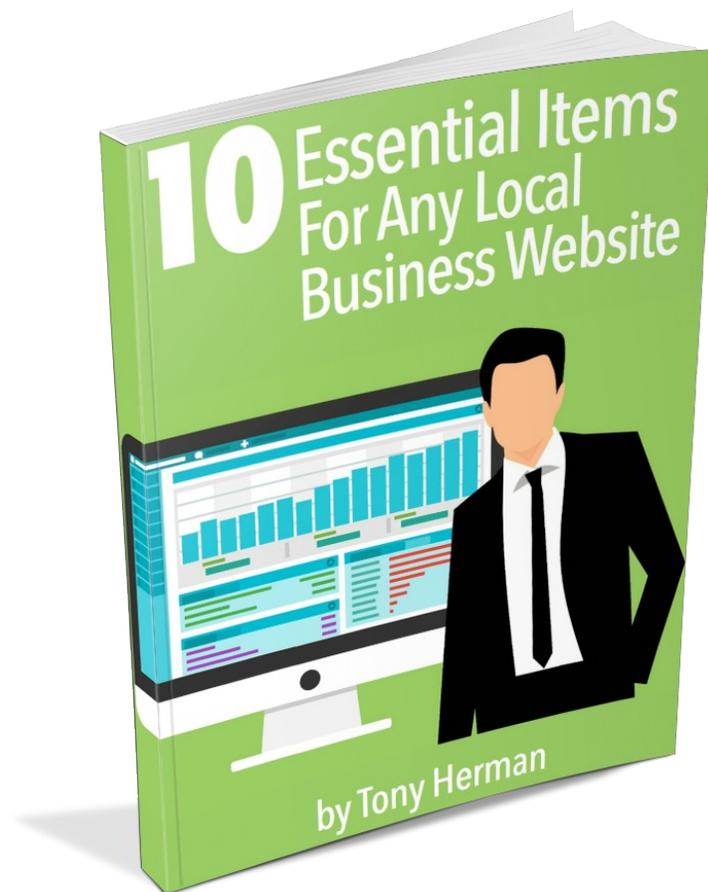
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My time and research has gone into writing this book.

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I believe you get out of something what you put into it but it doesn't help to get a little help and guidance along the way so that you're putting your hard effort and work into the right things.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: The Initial Check

What you will learn in this chapter:

- How to see if your website shows up for local searches

The first thing you want to do is find out where you're ranking already. You can do this pretty easy with Google. Do some searches like these:

[your industry] + [your city name]

Example: dog grooming Madison wi

[your industry] + "in" + [your city name]

Example: dog grooming in Madison wi

If there are a few names for the industry you are in, then try those searches.

Example: dog groomers Madison wi

If it's a good local search, you should get what we call a 3-pack page, which is the normal 10 results that Google shows plus 7 more at the top, which are local results.

Sometimes, there are just 3 but there are usually 7. There are maps and reviews posted here. Review this page carefully and study your competition – see what they're up to and how their websites and listings look.

It looks like this:

This means it's a search that you can show up in for local searches. This is a good thing because it's not terribly difficult to rank here.

What we'll go over next is how to get your website ready so that it can rank here and do a good job once it gets someone to click. This will help you if your website shows up in a page like this or not.

Chapter 2: Prepare Your Website

What you will learn in this chapter:

- How to get your website in shape for ranking well.

I've seen a lot of websites of small businesses and they come in all shapes and sizes. Some of them are fine but others seem to need help – design-wise or other. What I'll do here is cover some items that your website (and specifically your home page) should have so that you can stand a fighting chance.

1. Have 1200 words of original text on your home page.

Search engines can really only read text and if there's not enough on your home page, they're going to have a tougher time trying to classify it.

2. Check your entire website for misspelled words and grammar mistakes.

Not only does this not present your company well, it goes into your ranking score. Your home page needs your primary keyword on it in a heading 1 or heading 2 tag. If the keyword you want to rank for is "dog grooming Madison wi" then that exact text needs to be on the page. Don't put it there just by itself though – put some other text around it.

For example: "The Best **Dog Grooming in Madison WI** is Here!"

I made the keyword bold. It's fine to have small words like "in" within the keyword phrase. You need to make sure anything you put on your website is human-readable. In other words, write for people, not search engines.

If you're not sure what I'm talking about with heading 1 or heading 2 tags, then take a look here:

http://www.w3schools.com/tags/tag_hn.asp

3. Title tags for all pages need to be under 60 characters.

Your home page's title tag needs to have your city and state listed in it.

4. Meta descriptions for all pages need to be under 300 characters.

Every page should be unique. Don't use the same text twice. Start each one with a verb to encourage people to click on your website when it comes up on search – make it compelling. Tell them what they'll miss if they don't go check out your page.

5. All pages should have your address on them.

You can do this at the bottom / footer of all pages. Make sure you are consistently using the same address everywhere. Have one, official address for your company and stick to it. Use the address Google uses when you search for your company.

If you have a Google+ Business page, then make sure the address on your website matches what you have there. This is very important.

Any address you have out on the Web is called a citation. They all need to match. This is also referred to as "NAP" for Name, Address, Phone Number.

6. Get Microdata (Schema) Added to Your Website

You might need your Webmaster's help for this and there are some WordPress plugins available to help you if you're using WordPress. This hidden data you can have on your website helps search engines classify your website better.

This website can help you generate it:

> http://www.microdatagenerator.com/local-business-generators/

7. Make Sure Your Website is Mobile Friendly

This is a big one now. Make sure it's mobile friendly here:

> https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/

8. On Your "About Us" Page, Link Out to Other Local Websites

Linking out to high value websites makes your website a resource. Don't be afraid to link to other websites. There are plenty you can send your traffic to that won't be your competitors. Have these links open in a new window/tab.

For example, if I were making a link on the dog grooming website, I'd mention the city we're in (Madison, WI) and then link it to the city's website.

9. Beef Up Content on Other Pages

Make all content on your website awesome.

10. Have a Landing Page for Each Location

If you have multiple locations, each one needs its own page. Each one is like a mini-home page, so make sure you have images, an embedded Google Map and at least 500 words of text. Use microdata here, too.

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These 10 items are essential for any website that's doing business locally. The websites that this matters the most for are websites that are doing a service. If you sell a product or do something else, these tips should also help your website rank a little better.

Another thing to think about (not really covered here since it's a large topic) is conversion. This means converting your website traffic into leads and sales. You basically do this with call to action statements to get people engaged and so you can build your mailing list (email).

Now that you've done some things to get your own website working better for you, read on for some tips on how to get traffic to your website.

Chapter 3: Get the Word Out!

What you will learn in this chapter:

- How to get links to your website

Now that your website is in better shape, it's time to get good links to your own website. Here's a list of websites to go to and create accounts on:

1. Google
2. Bing
3. Yahoo!
4. Yelp
5. Merchant Circle
6. LinkedIn
7. YellowPages.com
9. Whitepages
10. Supermedia
11. Yellowbook
12. CitySearch
13. Mapquest
14. Biznik
15. Local.com
16. Foursquare
17. ThinkLocal
18. CitySlick
19. USYellowPages
20. SuperPages
21. Outside.in
22. Dex
23. BizJournals.com
24. TeleAtlas
25. JustClickLocal
26. Discover our Town
27. Metrobot
28. EZ Local
29. twibs
30. LocalEze
31. Kudzu
32. CityVoter
33. Manta
34. Zipweb

35. [MatchPoint](#)
36. [UsCity.net](#)
37. [Local Site Submit](#)
38. [InfoUSA](#)
39. [Axciom](#)
40. [Infignos](#)
41. [Yellow Assistance](#)
42. [Get Fave](#)
42. [My Huckleberry](#)
43. [GenieKnows](#)
44. [MojoPages](#)
45. [Brownbook](#)
46. [Magic Yellow](#)
47. [CitySquares](#)
48. [TeleAtlas](#)
49. [Navteq GPS](#)
50. [Judy's Book](#)

Source: http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/10322/The-Ultimate-List-50-Local-Business-Directories.aspx

Links from websites like this are good. What they do is link your business name to your website and that's what you want. In my book, *Get Traffic: Basic SEO for Small Business*, I talk about an SEO Firewall and this is part of doing that.

Be Local Social

When you post things on social media, make sure you mention your city and state somewhat often. No, not on every post, but maybe do it on 25% of them or so.

Get Reviews

If you have a Google+ page (you should), then ask your customers to give you a review. You can't pay them to give you a good review (you might be able to creatively compensate them for their time) but just ask them and most people will. Give them a card or something to take with them to remind them or have them do it on their phone right there.

This goes for reviews on websites like Yelp, too.

Create a Press Release

Press releases still do wonders. You won't regret doing one. Yes, they're work but the links you get on press release websites are good ones. If your release is about something unique and interesting, then you might even get some reporters calling you for interviews or you might end up on TV in a news report – you never know.

The best place to go is over to PRWeb.com to get started. When you do one, do it right. They have some guides there to help you.

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If you follow the ideas listed in this chapter, you'll get good, safe links to your website, which should help it rank better locally.

Chapter 4: Keep it Up

What you will learn in this chapter:

- How to keep your ranking efforts going

Your website is now in better shape, and you have more links pointing to it, so now what?

I always say this – the best SEO (search engine optimization) you can do is keep adding content.

Plan it Out

Set a schedule and goal. Maybe it's one post a week on your blog – that's fine, just do something. When you create articles, don't forget to mention the city and state you're in – maybe 25% of the time or so.

Social Media

With social media, remember to keep it social and forward or like other people's content. Don't always talk about your business and don't always promote. Pretend you're at a party, mingling. Talk about other things and promote other companies you know of as well (your customers, your vendors, etc.)

Get Help

If you're lost, then get some help. Find a local web developer or get an intern for the summer. College kids are always looking for internships so that they can say they helped you and they're really good with social media and updating websites.

It's not hard. Get someone to help you just 5 hours a week. It's better if they come to your office or place of business because you can then talk to them face to face about what you want to say or promote. Since you can schedule blog posts and Facebook posts, they should be able to get a whole week of social media done for you in those 4-5 hours.

Conclusion

There you go. You got 10 things to check on your website, 50 places to get listings and a bunch of other tips to help your website rank better locally.

Make sure you read my other book on how to further get your website into shape, research keywords and optimize it:

https://www.tonyherman.com/seo-for-small-business-websites/

Thanks for reading!

Bonus Material / Resources

625 Free Stock Images

Get a pack of 625 free stock images to use on your website (worth $39.95).

- Web pages look better when they have images on them
- People like looking at images
- Your website will look more appealing and more professions with great images

You have the rights to use these images on your website for free without worry.

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