

5 Steps to Improve Your Google Ranking and Get More Business

If there's one thing you need to know about digital marketing, it's that ***we don't market to people anymore...we market to Google. When Google notices, likes, and trusts a brand, more people are likely to see it.***

Unless you have been living under a rock for the past 20 years, you should be pretty familiar already with the search engine Google. However, as a business owner, it's important to fully understand the power Google holds in terms of online search and marketing. Every day, more than 3.5 billion searches are conducted on Google. Yes, 3.5 billion!

...and if dominating it's competition in the search engine market wasn't enough, Google also provides several other useful services to consumers. You know, like Gmail, their popular emailing service, Google News, Google Shopping, and Google Photos (just to name a few!).

Of course, Google's algorithm is a well-kept secret, and even if we could figure it out, they alter it so many times a year we could never keep up! So, what's a savvy entrepreneur to do?

Well, there's one thing we know for sure: ***Google is in the customer service business, and they're only going to recommend websites to their consumers that they trust.*** Although there are SO many factors that contribute to your search engine authority, the following steps will seriously help to improve your online ranking.

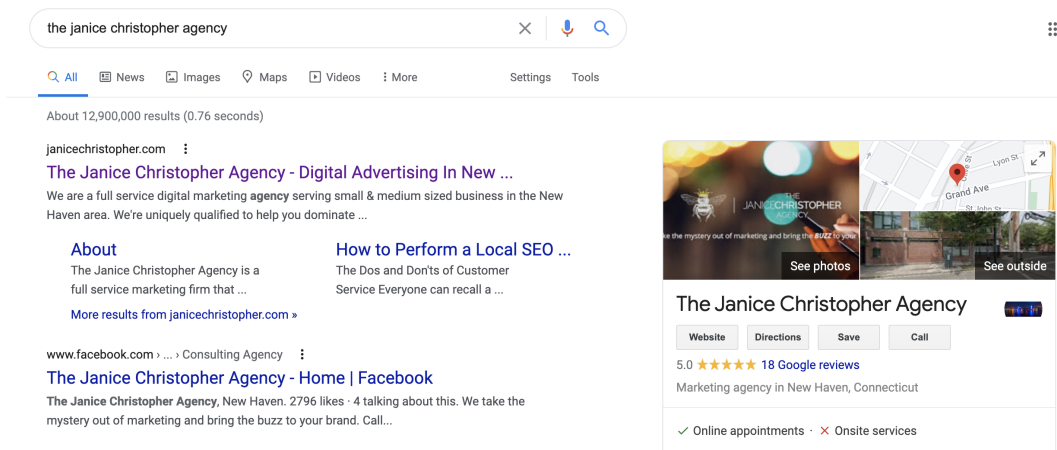


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By completing each step listed below, you'll be well on your way to creating a buzz on Google that will help you attract new clients!

1. Be sure you've claimed your Google My Business Listing

We can't even begin to tell you how many business owners never claim their Google My Business Listing (yikes!). For those who don't know, that's the rectangular "pop up" that appears on the right side of your browser when you search for your business on Google.



The purpose of this listing is to provide helpful information to consumers who are trying to learn more about what you do. But here's the thing: it's only helpful information if it's accurate information.

When you don't manage your own Google My Business Listing, the accuracy of your business category, hours of operation, location, and services can suffer greatly. ***When your listing information is incomplete or incorrect, you are definitely losing business!***

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Don't be that business owner!

Having incorrect information on your listing will not only hurt your chances of attracting new business, but will also frustrate customers who rely on Google's information to find out your hours, services, and location. By keeping your listing updated and accurate, you'll be well on your way to snag more organic searches that can turn into dollars in your pocket.

Action Steps: Take a peek at the Google My Business Listing for your business. Is your name, address and phone number correct? What about your business category and business hours?

Below your business hours, you may see a message saying "is this your business?" followed by either "claim it now" (which means you haven't claimed it yet!) or "manage now" (which means you have). In either case, follow the prompts to login to either claim or update your listing.

Result: *Claiming and managing your listing puts you in favor with Google, especially when you log into your listing once a month to keep it updated. With each login, you can add a new photo, post a business update, or even add a Google Q&A.*



2. Post social media updates, events, and offers to your Google My Business listing

Another necessary step in becoming Google's sweetheart is to continue to show that you are an engaged, interactive business owner. Google needs to know that you're invested in providing your customers with the highest quality of service so that they feel confident in recommending you in organic search results. ***The goal is to be trustworthy, and an effective way to demonstrate that you've got what it takes is by posting your social media updates, events, and special offers to your Google My Business Listing.***

Action Steps: Log into your Google My Business listing, navigate to the posts section, and start sharing your awesome content. Google will only show your posts on the front of your listing for 7 days, so posting weekly allows you to take full advantage of the space Google allows for your posts. Keeping your content fresh will help your business stand out to Google, and in turn, get potential clients to notice and feel confident about your brand.

Result: *Visitors to your listing will see that you're actively managing your online image, and will feel confident in your customer service skills. Google will adore you because you're actively engaging with THEIR customer... the searcher. A total win-win!*



3. Begin managing and monitoring your online reputation

Google is already monitoring your reputation...so why aren't you? In case you don't already know, ***your online reputation plays a HUGE role in organic search ranking, especially in the map area of local search results.***

Receiving and responding to new Google reviews helps you maintain your online reputation and outperform your competition. This is yet another critical step in demonstrating to Google that your business is dependable and worthy of its recommendation.

Action Steps: It's time to pay attention to generating new reviews. Having a system in place to send review requests to your customers is an excellent way to make review generation an automatic part of your day to day operations. This can be done by email or, even better, using a software solution that automates the process for you.

You'll want to respond to each review with a meaningful message in a timely manner. Google is literally timing you to see how long it takes for you to respond. They're measuring your behavior as a reliable business owner, and you can't afford to fall short.

Result: *Managed reviews demonstrate to prospective customers that the people who have already interacted with your brand LOVE your services. When you generate consistent, positive reviews, consumers are more likely to want to engage with your business. That's powerful stuff!*



4. Employ search engine optimization techniques

There are three ways that your business can appear on the first page of Google.

First, you can pay for **Google AdWords**. When using Google Adwords, a written advertisement accompanied by a link to your website or your phone number appears at the top of a search engine results page.

Another way to end up on the first page of Google's search results has to do with a searcher's location. If the search is made local to your business location, you may show up in what is called the "local pack" or "map pack". Generally, **in the map pack** Google will serve its top 3 recommendations in close proximity to the consumer. There are certain tricks to boost your chances of popping up in the map pack, but that's for another day.

The third way you can show up on the first page of Google is through **organic ranking**. When you rank on Google organically, you start to see results in the growth of your revenue.

No one goes to the second page of Google to find the best of anything.

Search engine optimization is a strange and wonderful thing, and honestly, it can be complicated. To maintain good SEO practices you either need to do some optimization on the back end of your website, or, you can pay a marketing agency to do that for you in a super-fancy way. If you ultimately decide to hire someone, be sure they understand what keywords you want to be found on Google for.



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It's important that the person you hire is particular about how they are going to prove that their work is paying off in organic search results. Our agency has encountered many business owners who have previously been taken advantage of in this regard.

Don't let anyone baffle you with industry jargon.

Action Steps: Talk with your web developer or marketing agency about adding SEO to your marketing strategy.

Result: *Having a pretty website is one thing. You most definitely want to give your site's visitors a great user experience. When you do, they stay longer and look at more pages. Guess what? Google is measuring that too, and factoring that data into how they rank you. But that's only half of the equation. The other half is the technical back-end work that will bring favor from Google and other search engines. They don't read what humans see, they read what's in the code. They read H1 and H2 tags, and a whole bunch of other confounding variables. Get help in optimizing your website to speak Google's language!*



5. Be sure your website is mobile friendly, has an SSL and has been updated recently

Does your website look good when you view it on a mobile device? If it doesn't, let's just say that you're definitely losing business as a result. ***A website that's not mobile friendly looks and acts as if your granny built it fifteen years ago...not a good look or reflection of your brand!***

While we're talking about websites, does yours have an SSL certificate? SSL stands for Secure Socket Layer, which basically lets Google know that you've taken steps to protect your visitors from malware and viruses when they visit your site. If your website is SSL deficient, guess what? Google will warn each visitor that your website is "unsecure". Yikes. That's a big business-block! Do yourself a favor, spend the extra \$100 a year and add an SSL to your website.

Action Steps: If your site isn't mobile friendly, make it your top priority to get that corrected. Next, ensure that your website has an SSL certificate. If it doesn't, it's time to call your domain registrar and buy one.

Result: *Prospective customers will have an easy, enhanced experience when engaging with your website. Your new best friend, Google, will know that it's sending their searcher to a modern, updated website that delivers a good and safe user experience.*



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The Bottom Line

Taking a little bit of time to pay attention to your marketing and your standing in Google's Search Engine Results Pages will serve your business well. Whether you decide to take a crack at our 5-step process on your own, or you hire a professional to do it for you is up to you. Some business owners have the time, tools and expertise to manage the finer points of their online presence, but most do not.

You don't cut your own hair, do you? Exactly! That's why you probably need a marketing expert to get the job done right. We're huge advocates of doing what we are good at and hiring experts to help us with all of the other things. Don't be shy, call us! We offer a free consultation. 203-903-1070 or email us at hello@janicechristopher.com

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