

DigitalMarketing**NOW**

A Breakthrough Guide for Small Business

*Making
the Most with*

Mobile Marketing

yelp 
vs Google
Reviews
– Which Is Best?



7 LOCAL
Marketing Myths
**That Could Be
Holding You Back**

**CONTENT
Marketing 101**

**– Attracting Eager
Customers to Your Blog**



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Welcome To Digital Marketing NOW

Thanks for checking out Digital Marketing NOW, your online marketing resource guide for small business. Each month we will be covering topics that resonate with local businesses just like yours.

Our goal is simple. We want to enable you to do big things online, and it all starts by breaking down the complexities of marketing your business online.

It doesn't matter if you're are just starting out, or an established business owner in your local community, you can always benefit from increasing your brand's visibility online.

To your Success,

Digital Marketing NOW
www.digitalsapien.com

Digital Sapien Interactive is a leading small business internet marketing service provider. We help small businesses connect with more customers online.

If you want to build your business, you need to market, it's that simple. But you can lose thousands of dollars if you don't know what you are doing. So we urge you to take action with some of the strategies we recommend.

For a more "hands off" approach, we offer affordable solutions and can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of Digital Marketing NOW and feel free to reach out to us anytime.

Making the Most with Mobile Marketing



Fast food restaurants seem to have cracked the code and figured out how utilize mobile marketing to their advantage.

Pizza franchises like Pizza Hut and Dominos allow customers to order through their cell phones. Taco Bell now has an app with

similar features. While these companies likely spent millions of dollars to roll out these changes, they did so with the express purpose of keeping themselves first in their customer's mind.

How did they do this? And how can you take advantage of it? Read on to find out.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MOBILE APPS

Over 40% of millennials use their cell phone as their primary source of connection with the world. They text, network, look up information, play games, surf the web, pay bills – and order food. Knowing this, the companies mentioned above created mobile apps for their companies.

Mobile apps allowed them to stay directly in front of their customer at all times. A mobile notification can alert them of specials or deals. The person sees it, clicks on the notification and takes advantage of it.

In another scenario, a person is on their way home. They're hungry. Instead of searching for or calling their local pizza place, they simply pull up Pizza Hut's app, place an order and pay for it. They can even choose the time their pizza is delivered. How's that for convenience?

Apps are the lifeblood of a smartphone. Creating an app that allows your customer to interact with you without having to call in and place an order is the most convenient way to get them to think of you whenever they're craving food. It increases your business and your customer loyalty, and it puts you miles ahead of your competition.

But isn't setting up your own mobile app expensive? Not necessarily.

HOW TO SET UP YOUR OWN MOBILE APP

Custom mobile apps are great – if you can afford them. Since most local businesses don't have that type of budget, owners may feel having a mobile app is out of reach.

It isn't. There are businesses that can help you to establish your own mobile app for a surprisingly low fee.

Splick.it, **ChowNow** and **Seamless** are three of these companies. They will set up branded mobile apps for you. Splick.it works with major brands like Fuddruckers and Pita Pit. They handle ordering, loyalty programs and payment processing. ChowNow allows Facebook ordering, and Seamless allows people to search for local websites that deliver right from the front page of their website.

Each company allows people to order from your website or from your mobile app. This allows your customers to choose which way they want to interact with you. It also allows you to reach more customers.

Splick.it says that their apps increase a customer's order size by 30-70% versus a walk-in customer. Imagine someone spending 30% more every time they order from your app. The investment is well worth it.



A woman with dark hair styled in a braid, wearing a black turtleneck and a large ring, is looking at her smartphone with a surprised expression. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

splick.it



seamless



HOW TO KEEP CUSTOMERS COMING BACK TO YOU

Loyalty programs are an important part of any restaurant's business plan. They keep people coming back to you. Think of Starbucks' loyalty program. People order a lot of coffee just to become a Gold member. For them, the perks are easily attainable, and worth it.

It's convenient to have a platform that has a loyalty program built into it, like Splick.it, but there are other options available. **Swipely**, **Perka** and **Belly** allow you to not only track your customers' loyalty points, but see which of your items are the most popular.

You can even customize their rewards. Swipely allows you to see which of your customers spent

Swipely 

 **Perka**™

 **belly**

the most money with you during any given period of time. You may want to make their reward different, say giving them a coupon for 25% off. Rewarding your customers makes them want to come back, but personalized rewards show that you value them.

You can also offer deals. You don't just have to offer them through your app. You can use websites like [LocalConnect](#) to publish your deal on websites like Coupons.com and similar mobile apps. This allows you to place your deal in front of thousands of potential local customers. It's a smart way to get both new and returning customers to come in.

HOW TO OFFER EASIER PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payment options are also built into the custom apps, but there are three other options you should consider using in addition to what is available on the app.

Paypal allows you to simply enter an email address, mobile number or a pin and pay for your purchase. Many national chains like Home Depot and Dollar General accept them.

Google Wallet lets you pay with your phone instead of a credit card. It is similar to *Apple Pay*, but Google Wallet works with every mobile carrier. Apple Pay only works with Apple Watch and iPhone 6.

Both options work with “tap to pay” technology. The customer only has to tap something (in Apple’s case, the tapping is optional) and they’ve paid for their order. It definitely saves time, and shows customers you are far ahead of your

competition. You’ll get plenty of people who’ll keep coming back to you because you accept their preferred method of payment.

The world of business is changing rapidly. Every day we are relying more and more on technology. There is no reason that small businesses have to be left behind.

What was once beyond your reach as a restaurant owner is now available to you. Use the mobile methods mentioned here to increase your customer base and grow your business.

The ability to order and pay for things online is all about convenience. If you invest in it and take advantage of it, you will start reaping the rewards sooner than you think.

Try to implement at least one change in the next few months. Even if all you do is offer online ordering, let your current customers know about it. Encourage them to try it out. I promise you it will put you far, far ahead of your competition.



yelp®

vs Google

Reviews

- Which Is Best?



Out of all of the places online that you can review a business, only two places spring to mind for many consumers: Yelp and Google.

Both of them are powerhouses

with a long history in the business. Both of them are influential. But which one is the better choice?

The winner is the one you'll need to focus your efforts on. Be warned: you may not like the answer. Keep reading to find out.





The Pros and Cons of Yelp

Yelp was established in 2004. Currently over 10 years old, it doubles as a social network. People can connect with other yelpers, share their reviews, see where their friends have eaten at and offer recommendations.

Yelp has a lot of power online. Aside from its community, it's still the #1 place users go to search for reviews. It's easy to look for a local business in Yelp. Its search algorithm allows you to pull up places that haven't necessarily claimed their Yelp page, but are still in the area. You don't need to sign in to use the search function, see the business's information or read its reviews. You do need to sign in to leave reviews though.

For business owners, claiming your page is free. You can interact with reviewers as soon as you claim your page. Business owners will also be interested in the SEO juice that Yelp gives your business in the search engines. It's also a high traffic website, boasting hundreds of millions of views per month.



But for all the positives, Yelp seems to have a seedy underside. It is often accused of pressuring businesses to buy ads or to pay for better reviews to be displayed. There have been several lawsuits surrounding these accusations.

Yelp's review algorithm seems rather wonky. Some reviews don't post at all, while others will show up immediately. Sometimes a review will only stay visible for a short period of time. Some new reviewers insist their reviews don't show up at all.

There's also the terms of service that states Yelp can terminate your listing at any time for any reason. This basically leaves you at their mercy.

Google Reviews Pros and Cons

As current king of the search engines, adding reviews to Google seems like a given. After all, Google gets over half of the world's search engine traffic. Allowing users to express themselves about experiences with their local businesses seemed like a natural next step.

Google's pros are obvious: search engine rankings can be higher if your business is related to a qualified search. While reviews don't really have any bearing on your rankings, being listed in Google's local business network, Google My Business, does.

You also get access to all of your favorite features of Google, like Google+, Google Maps, YouTube, Hangouts and Gmail. This means you can manage all of your information and content from one place.

But there are some cons too. Your Google+ content will show up for all of your circle, but not necessarily all of the public. It's also not as easy to search for a business or local listing on Google as it is for Yelp.

Still, despite these setbacks, Google's power can't be denied.

Which One is the Winner?

Right now, it's Google Reviews, though Yelp comes in at a very close second.

Yelp's constant reports of lawsuits and its inexplicable algorithm is a very sore point for a lot of people. While it's still the #1 place for local business reviews, it has been accused of bullying both businesses and reviewers alike. Constant bad press isn't good for a company, despite what the professionals say.

As more and more people feel the sting of Yelp's negativity, they begin to turn away in search of other alternatives. Since Google already has many features that people use, like YouTube and Gmail, it only makes sense that people will begin flocking to Google to look for reviews for businesses.

In fact, most of the time those reviews show up in search engine results, with Yelp being displayed further down the page. Don't discount Yelp's influence, but if Google's stars are the first thing you see, you're more likely to click on those, and then go to Yelp.



Which One Should You Focus On?

For now, the answer is both.

While Google is slowly winning over the public with its seemingly unbiased treatment of reviews, it's not fast enough. Some people still consider Yelp the king of review websites, and for good reason. Yelp only focuses on reviews, while Google Reviews is just a small part of the Google empire.

Monitoring both is good for your business. It allows you to see what people think of your services and your personnel. It also allows you to respond to any complaints in a professional manner. Handling a negative review the right way can impress upon potential customers how important their experience is with you. And it can also encourage other people to review you.

Monitoring two websites sounds like a headache doesn't it? But it's part of being a business owner. Since both Yelp and Google Reviews are technically social networks (Google only

counting because it's attached to Google+), you should think of it as part of your social network profiles. View Google Reviews and Yelp as you would Facebook – an important part of your online presence.

Change Is Coming

Although the clear winner in this debate is Google, Yelp does have some pros that cannot be ignored. It still holds a rather large audience, and it still weighs in heavily on search engine results. Meanwhile, Google has streamlined their reviews so that you can monitor and access them along with its other main services. Google's reviews also hold weight in search engine results, but you must be listed in order to show up.

The inconvenience is negligible compared to what is actually happening: change. Just as customers are looking for other places to leave reviews, business owners are looking for other places to respond to reviews. Google doesn't apply the pressure that Yelp does, but Yelp is still a powerhouse, and it will be difficult to take its place.





LOCAL

Marketing Myths

That Could Be Holding You Back

T

here is a unique challenge to online local marketing. Your competition pool is often smaller and much more unique. Therefore the goal of getting to the first page of search results seems easier to obtain. It may even seem cheaper, since all you have to do is beat out a few hundred businesses.

Perhaps you, as a business owner, have decided to do your own online local marketing. You've searched online for information on how to get the results you want. You've created a plan, and now you're ready to take action.

But wait. Before you take that first step, there's something that I need to tell you: chances are the information you've gathered is woefully out of date.



In fact, chances are most local business owners are using online marketing tactics that may be ten years old.

“How is that possible?” you ask. After all, you checked the date of your information. Some of it was published as recently as a few days ago.

Search engines change their algorithms daily. These changes are often minor, but they add up to bigger changes, like Google’s recent change favoring mobile-friendly websites (more on that later). So tactics that may have worked ten years ago do not work now. In fact, search engines penalize some of those tactics. If you get hit with penalties, it’s improbable that you will show up in the search engines at all.

Here is a list of seven local marketing myths you may be buying into that are keeping your business from achieving online success.

Myth #1: Quick SEO Can Help You Get on Page 1

There are no shortcuts when it comes to ranking in SEO. A long term, consistent approach is needed in order to be successful. Sometimes, even the best plan to get on the first page doesn’t come to fruition.

There are hundreds of factors that decide where your website is going to rank in a search engine. One of those factors is how long your website has been around. If it’s less than a year old, your chances of getting on page one are about 2-3% at best.

Search engines put their trust in older websites with an established history. Those websites that are ranking on page one for your keyword have been around for years. Even if they haven’t, they’ve probably got other ranking factors working for them that you aren’t seeing. It is highly unlikely that any “quick SEO” technique is going to work in your favor. It’s better if you simply invest in a solid, long term plan and exercise some patience.

Myth #2: Microsites Will Help You Boost Your Rankings

The logic is fairly simple. Ranking a microsite is easier than ranking a huge site, right? And the microsites will contain general information that will point people back to your business. So you can pull in traffic from these sites without investing a lot of money in SEO for your company website.

Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but it doesn’t work like that anymore. The days when you could use dozens of keyword-based microsites to get search engine rankings are gone.

Search engine algorithms have been updated to exclude any network of websites that point to the same domain. So if you’re looking to use 50 plumber-based keyword microsites to point back to your business websites, think again. You’re more likely to get penalized than be rewarded.



KEYWORDS



Myth #3: Your Keyword Needs to Be in Your Domain

This springs from the second myth involving microsites. Having someone search for “laptop repair” and seeing “laptoprepair.com” at the #1 position will garner clicks.

Except for one thing: if you actually search for “laptop repair” in a search engine, the first results to come up are going to be businesses with brand names as their domains, like “geeksquad.com.”

Brand names are more important than keywords in search engine results. The moral: focus on establishing your brand instead of trying to rank for a keyword. If your brand is associated with that keyword, you’ll be rewarded with higher rankings.

Myth #4: You Need Multiple Phone Numbers for Tracking Purposes

This is another myth that springs from myth #2. When setting up microsites, each site would have its own separate phone number. That way the business owner could see which sites were performing the best, and which ones needed to be cut.

A search engine uses your phone number to identify your business as unique. Multiple phone numbers confuses the search engine, and can hinder your online marketing efforts. Stick to one number. It’s easier to maintain.

Myth #5: You Don’t Need Social Media

It is true that some businesses won’t get a lot of attention on social media. But you still need to use it to your advantage. You can use it to connect with other local businesses that compliment your services. You can report on local events, or curate information that is of interest in your niche. Doing these things can position you as an expert in your field.





Myth #6: Optimizing Your Site for Mobile is a Waste of Time

Maybe this was true a few years ago, but now it's a necessary part of having a website.

In fact, in early 2015 Google launched an algorithm change that rewards mobile-friendly websites with higher rankings. They're placing more emphasis on mobile traffic, since more than 50% of internet traffic comes from mobile sources. That number will continue to grow.

Optimize your website for mobile. You'll boost your rankings and get more traffic.

Myth #7: Reviews Affect Your Rankings

Your reviews have nothing to do with your rankings.

Your reviews are just that: reviews. They do affect how customers view your business, but they don't affect how search engines rank your website.

If you're worried about bad reviews and a bad reputation, you shouldn't be. Be proactive. Respond to negative reviews in a very professional manner. Most of the time you'll find you can resolve the issue. This impresses upon potential customers that you care about their experience with you and you want to satisfy them.

In truth, the right response to a bad review is better than a dozen glowing reviews.

Local marketing can be pretty confusing. It's easy to come down with information overload. If you're still using any of these myths in your local marketing plans, make immediate adjustments. You don't want to purposefully hold your business back from reaching its full potential.





Content Marketing 101

— *Attracting Eager customers to your Blog*

By now you are probably aware of what a blog is, and that fresh content plays an important role in your rankings and visibility online. But in this article we'll tell you WHY your busi-

ness's blog is such a powerful marketing tool and how you can create great content your visitors will love.



Consider your blog a direct communication tool to bridge your business with the public and we're going to cover five characteristics of a blog and why it is essential for your business:

1. Adding New Content is EASY

For many people editing their website is quite difficult. Websites are seen as being very technical and the average business owner is generally afraid to go on to the site to make any changes in case they mess it up.

Blogs have changed all of that. They provide a content publishing system that is so easy to use that the average web user and small business owner can become a blogger and add new content with ease. The technical barriers were removed allowing millions of small business owners to create blogs relating to their business.

2. Blog Posts are Listed Chronologically

This is the most consistent element of almost every blog out there. Articles are listed with a title followed by the body content, starting at the top of the page with the most recently published article followed by the next most recent and so on.

This format was chosen back in the early days of blogging when it was mainly journalists who used blogs. The term blog is derived from 'weblog', which essentially means an online diary or journal. Diaries have entries made by date and that is how blogs work too.

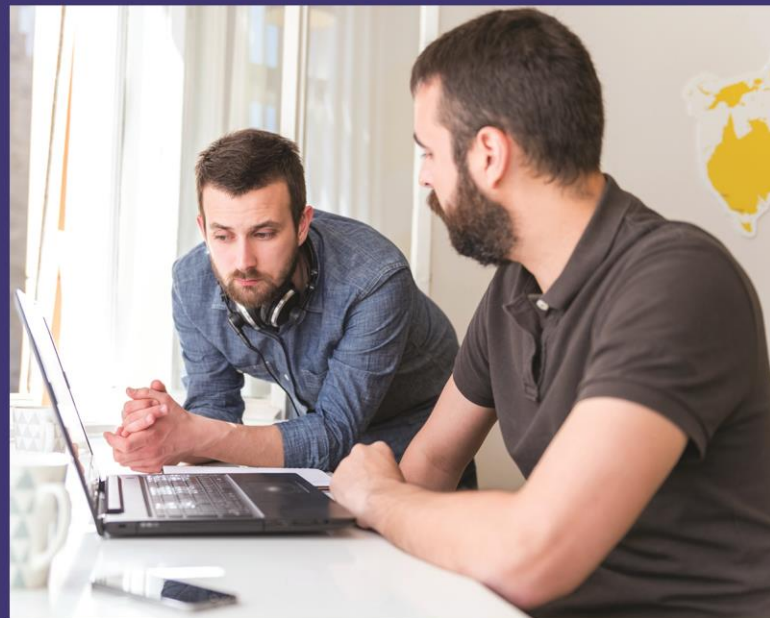
Although the format is traditionally the same, the role of the blog is not really used as an online diary these days. Most business owners use it as a way to keep their clients and customers informed of what is happening within their business and niche. They are very powerful marketing tools.

3. People Can Share Their Comments on Blogs

This is one of the most valuable features of a blog. Below every blog post is a comments box that allows any person from the public to leave a comment on the article.

This enhancement turned websites from one-way broadcasting devices, to two-way communication tools. Readers can directly communicate with you, the author of the content, carry on the conversation started by the article and essentially turn a blog into a community.

This last point is more powerful than you think and this is the reason why:



4. Content is Consistently Updated

Another major problem that plagues many traditional websites is that they remain static and stale. Most websites never change and you can come back to the same pages with the same content. A lot of business owners either don't realize that they need to update their website often, or they don't have the technical skills or resources to get it changed.

Blogging changed that, so even a person with minimal technical skills can easily log into their blog and add fresh new content.

This has helped them to have terrific results in the search engines, especially on sites like Google. Google rewards sites that publish valuable content on a consistent basis. Blogs, by their very nature, do this, assuming motivated bloggers are running them and are consistently adding new content. As a result, business owners see their sites rise high up in the search engines bringing new traffic and most importantly, new customers.

5. Blogging is a Conversation, and People Respond Better vs. Normal Websites.

If you combine all of the elements above, the personal style of writing, the ease of adding content leading to frequent updates, and the ability to interact with your readers, you have the winning formula for a very natural communication tool.

Blogs, by their very nature, are considered trusted sources of information and the blogger is generally perceived as a respected expert, whether they are or not, purely on the back of their successful blogs.

GREAT CONTENT



Again, this subtle element is significant and distinguishes blogs from normal websites. If people trust the words written on a blog, if they like and identify with the person writing the blog, then you have all of the elements necessary to create a popular community focused around your business.

That is why any small business can become extremely successful with a blog. They can quickly build a loyal audience, keep people coming back and ultimately monetize that traffic.

HOW TO ATTRACT ATTENTION TO YOUR BLOG?

The first way to attract attention (traffic) to your blog is to write good content. This is the foundation that your blog needs to be built upon.

The other key ingredient is marketing. You need to be able to set up a professional marketing campaign so that people can find your content.

First let us deal with the content side of things and then we will discuss the marketing aspect.

Content

How to Write a Killer Blog Post

Once your blog is set up, it is time to get going on your first killer blog post. It needs to be an article that your readers will really respond to. If you post a fantastic and compelling blog article, it usually means more traffic, more comments, more pins on Pinterest, more tweets, and more Facebook shares, all of which will help grow your blog. But what makes a killer blog post?

A killer blog post:

Is easy to read. Blog posts should be clear and concise. Statistics show that blog readers tend to skim articles, especially if they appear long. So use short paragraphs, headers, and bullet points.

Make sure that you write in a conversational manner, but proper grammar and spelling is essential. Readers won't forgive sloppy writing and grammatical mistakes.

Makes a clear point. A killer blog post always has a clear and concise message that can be boiled down to one short sentence. If you, the author, aren't able to summarize your point, how will the reader be expected to follow your logic? Always write with the point in mind. If you have multiple points it would be better to split the article into two posts.

Empowers the reader. A killer blog post isn't about YOU or what you've done or created or cooked. Yes, you may be sharing something you've done, but the best blog posts do it only in a way that makes the reader feel that THEY could do it too, offering clear tips and helpful instruction. They want to come away from your blog informed and feeling that they have learnt something new.

Provokes an emotional response. The posts that people remember (and share) are the ones that make them feel a certain way, whether that be happy or angry or encouraged or inspired. This means they usually take a stand one way or another. Neutral might seem safe, but it is boring and forgettable. Your aim is to make people think and react. You want to provoke some kind of response from them.

Teaches a simple lesson. Whether your post is a DIY tutorial showing how to make something, a recipe, or some other helpful tip, the best blog posts stick to one clear and easy-to-follow lesson. This is not to say you can't do complicated projects or recipes, but in general, the projects with the best response will be the simplest of the bunch. These tend to get shared more on social media too.

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