

Title:

Local Advertising In Business Directories

Word Count:

892

Summary:

Highlights the opportunities that Local Businesses can take advantage of by advertising online via business profiles and local business directories.

Keywords:

For decades, local mom and pop businesses could rely on word of mouth and traditional print services to garner customers. If the local businesses had a good or service that they wanted to promote, the

Article Body:

For decades, local mom and pop businesses could rely on word of mouth and traditional print services to garner customers. If the local businesses had a good or service that they wanted to promote, they could just call up the local newspaper and ask for an advertisement. However, as media has evolved towards more sophisticated routes such as the Internet, it has become increasingly more difficult (and oftentimes prohibitively expensive) for local businesses to stand-out against the crowd by advertising in both newer and older types of media.

Yet, local businesses continually find themselves facing a problem. As potential customers become more Internet savvy, local companies could be doing themselves a great disservice by not having some sort of exposure on the Internet.

According to Kelsey Research, 70% of US households now use the internet when searching for local products and services. In fact, it is projected that over 20 billion searches for local information will be made in 2007. 75% of Internet users have looked for services and products within an area close to their home or business. Moreover, recent Internet studies have found that some of the most searched queries in search engines such as Google or Yahoo are words such as local business, free, discount, cheap, and other terms bearing the connotation that the searcher is looking for something to purchase.

Although many may be trying to look for cheap electronics that can be

shipped to their homes, it is also extremely apparent that consumers are searching for businesses in their local area that they can patronize. Most consumption on a day to day basis is not on items such as electronics that can be purchased online. People need automotive services, tutors, daycare, lawn care, restaurants, grocery stores, salons, plumbers, and much, much more within a few miles of their house. These daily rituals that we all engage in are all predicated on knowing where to find business. And as mentioned above, with an abundance of people turning to the Internet to find out where well priced, convenient goods and services are located, even a small Internet presence can skyrocket a business.

Unfortunately, the typical local business doesn't have a lot of money to spend on Internet exposure. Even if they do have the finances to build a website, the process can be cumbersome and somewhat daunting for the generations of small business that aren't well-read in the ways of cyberspace. If the typical website can run anywhere from hundreds to thousands of dollars, is it still worth creating? Even if you get the website up and running, how will people find you? How high will you be ranked on search engines? If you are like me, all the worry involved takes away time from all the daily customer service issues that come with the territory of owning a business. Why should you spend an inordinate amount of money when there is no guarantee of getting more customers for your trouble? Many are pushed away because the return on investment just doesn't seem worth it.

If this is what you think, perhaps you can consider many other low cost options for your small business to get attention and some exposure on the web. Something as simple as a Facebook or Myspace account can be used to garner advertisement for your business. The Internet is all about content and link popularity, and having even a little bit can help. However, there are services that are beginning to expand the range of possibilities for local businesses and cater explicitly to them. Websites such as www.Cityslick.net and www.Merchantcircle.com allow companies to create local listings whereby customers can put basic contact information, slogans, product descriptions and photos, customizable coupons, appointment generators, documents, social bookmarking, and much more. The terrific part about websites like these is that they are not static; companies do not simply post a listing and hope for customers to show up. Consumers can browse, request deals, request appointments, chat with other consumers and businesses in the forums, and leave reviews.

If you decide to list on a business directory website, make sure that they are doing their best to get you the most exposure possible. According to

www.webworkshop.net, Link text (the text that is clicked on when clicking on a link) is singly the most important factor when Google determines the rankings for any given search-term. To help a small local business website grow in this fashion, it is critical that business owners submit to local directories that can provide custom back links.

www.Cityslick.net in particular is proactive in its approach to ensure that these sorts of interactions occur. By using the latest search engine optimization (SEO) techniques, they are drawing customers to the website not only by promoting it as a way to find cheap, local deals, but they are also making it so that listings, just by themselves, have the same sort of visibility as traditional websites.

Local and small business owners have a multitude of things to worry about including how to best promote their venture. By using the internet to post to sophisticated business directories, companies can get all the benefits of having a website without having to pay a lot of money for their own website. Take a look. Your customers and business will thank you for it.