

experience.com

WINNING LOCALLY ON GOOGLE

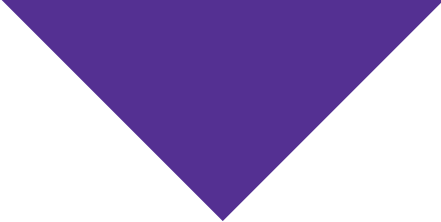


Your Guide to Increasing Visibility
and Business Opportunities

GOOGLE
WANTS TO
BE YOUR
FRIEND

Google Wants to be Your Friend

Does your company have local business location(s)? Do you offer exceptional products, service and support? If so, Google wants to be your friend because they want their audience to have the best experience, from search through delivery. As you can probably guess a friendship with Google has many benefits.



Think about Google like a referral partner. Usually, referrals know you, your business and trust that you will do a good job for their friend, family member or colleague.

Google's algorithm is similar, driving both local and organic search results. And just like those that recommend you, Google needs to confirm you are an actual business with a real location, and that any customers referred to you will have an exceptional customer experience.

New American Funding in Bettendorf, Iowa is a great example. Melissa and her family are moving to Bettendorf. They've decided to purchase their first home with this move. Before they even start packing, they are searching for homes on Realtor.com and Zillow. The following Sunday, they visit their destination to look at several homes. They are focused on this area because they want their two young children to attend highly-rated Pleasant View Elementary School. Needing a mortgage pre-approval letter, they set out to find the best loan officer. They've heard too many horror stories about how complicated the mortgage experience can be.

Melissa jumps online to research options. Of course, she goes to Google (92.57% of worldwide search share belongs to Google, according to StatCounter). She starts with a basic search: "Mortgage in Bettendorf, Iowa."

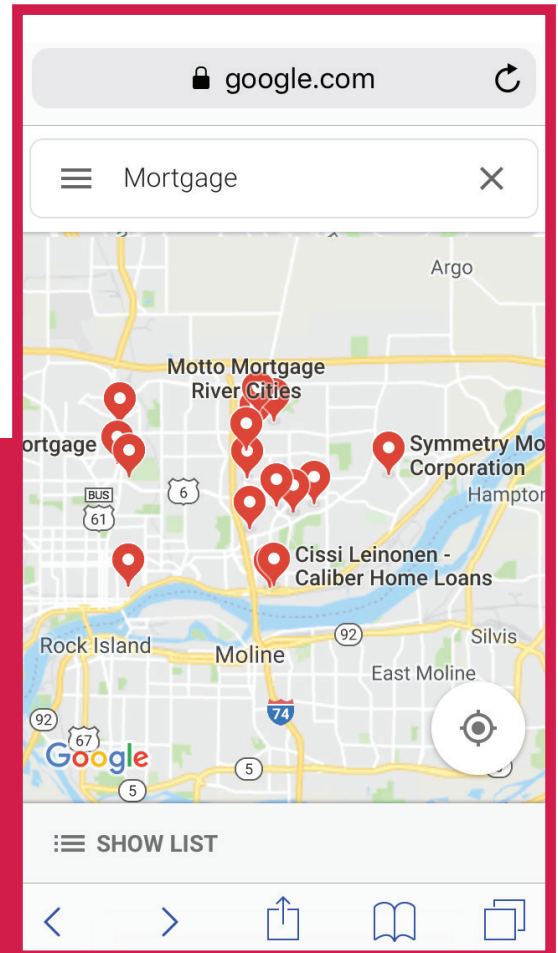
Search Engines Market Share Worldwide

Google 92.57%

Bing 2.45%

YAHOO! 1.64%

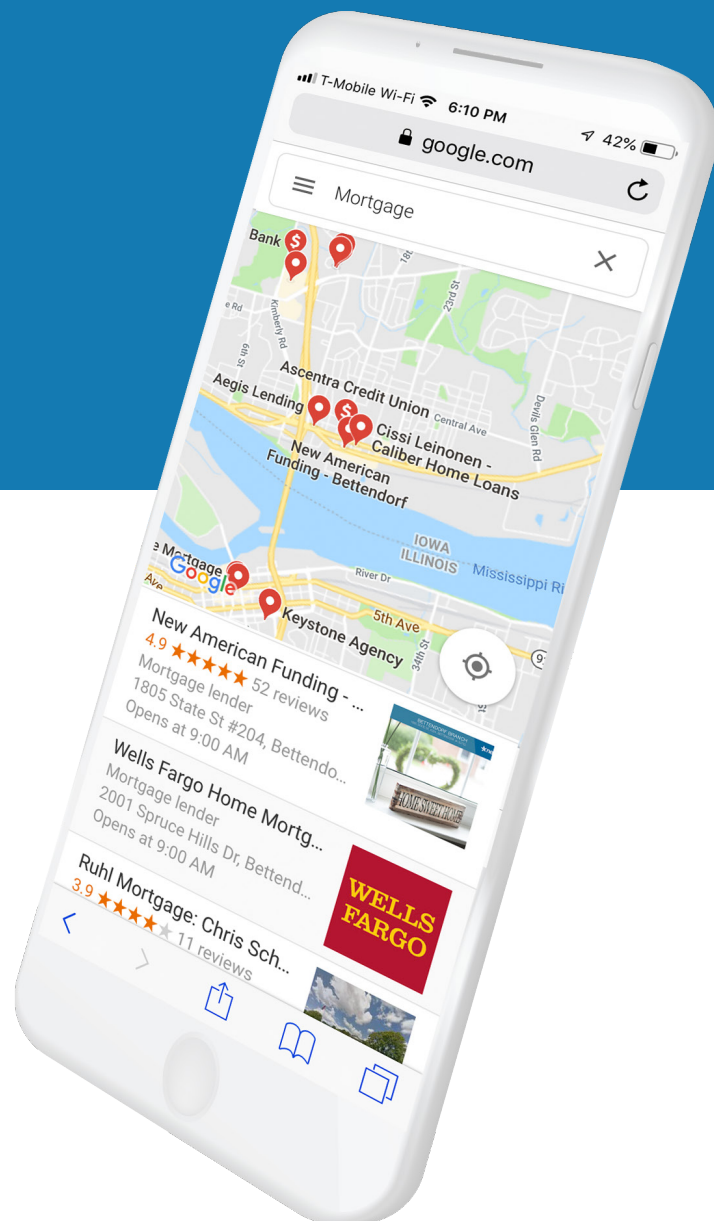
JANUARY 2019 - JANUARY 2020



Costco and Wells Fargo invest heavily in Google Ads to own the Pay-Per-Click (PPC) spots that appear at the top of the first Search Engine Results Page (SERP). The single keyword “mortgage” is costing them about \$50 per click. Ouch!

This image to the right is the Google Local Pack—where the gold is. Here you find New American Funding, Wells Fargo and Ruhl Mortgage. Even when doing this search multiple ways, New American comes up in the local pack in nearly every search. The question is, why? What are they doing for Google to be so friendly?

When someone goes online and searches for something, the Google algorithm has great intentions—to find and provide the most prominent, local and relevant options.



PROMINENCE

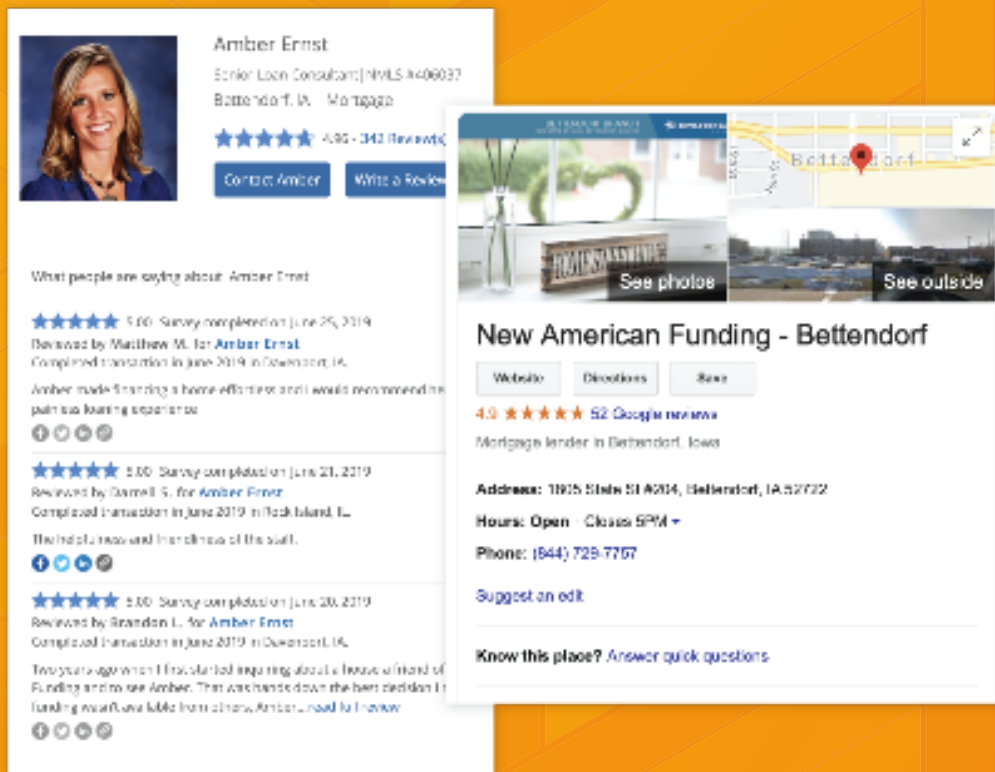
How well-known a business is. This could mean a local landmark, or based on information that Google has about a business like links, articles and directories.

DISTANCE

How far each potential search result is from the location (or Google's knowledge about the location) for the person searching.

How accurately a local listing matches what someone is searching for.

RELEVANCE



Upon further investigation, you will notice that Amber Ernst and the New American Funding team in Bettendorf, Iowa is absolutely the best option. If you secure a loan with them, you are almost guaranteed to have a great experience. The company has thousands of reviews to prove it. Amber has hundreds of her own reviews. If you ask local real estate agents, they are likely to recommend this group or at least know of their reputation. How did Google get this one so right? It's all about the math.



The Google Algorithm

In 2018, SaaS company Moz.com published an article discussing 50 different local search ranking factors. The majority of them can be categorized into five major buckets (see Page 8).

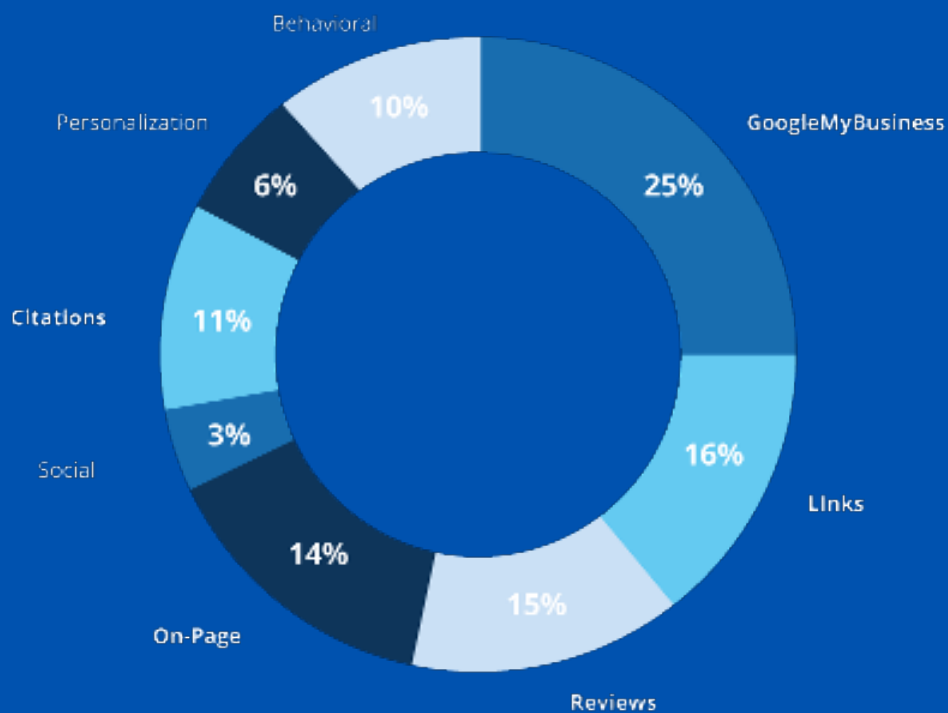
When a search is made, Google first asks and answers the question, “Does the search query have local intent?” In our earlier example, Google clearly believes the search including “mortgage” has local intent. So, they show their Local Pack in the most premium placement possible, directly under the paid ads

According to Moz.com, roughly 81% of the algorithm centers around the following 5 key factors:

Google Local Search

GoogleMyBusiness	25%
Link Signals	16%
Review Signals	15%
On-Page Signals	14%
Citation Signals	11%

Local Pack/Finder Breakdown 2018



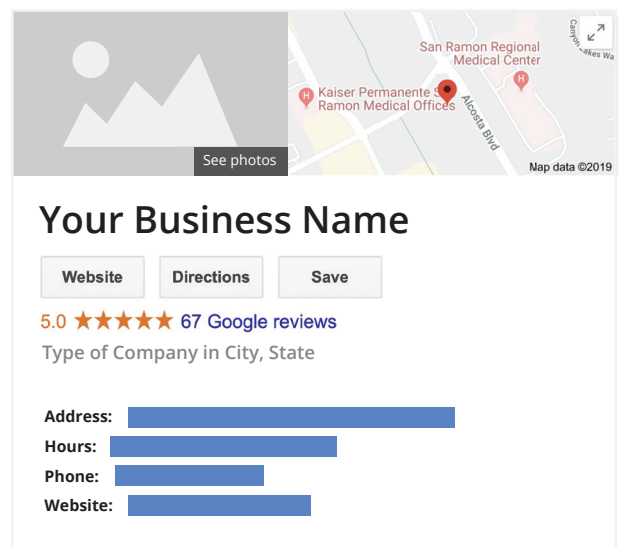
GOOGLE MY

Optimizing Google My Business

Optimizing your company's locations is crucial for Google to be your friend. With Google My Business (GMB) accounting for 25% of the local search ranking algorithm, every location of a business needs to have a claimed listing with accurate information. If the location can't be found, or if the words "Claim this business" appears, ownership needs to be assertive—quickly! To Google, an unclaimed business barely exists. Linking to Google My Business and updating the listing data is like saying, "Hey Google, I'm over here." If a company has 10 or more locations and doesn't have a service like Experience.com to manage this, you may be able to use a bulk upload spreadsheet.

"Give customers a chance to get to know what you do, and where to find you."

While on GMB, make sure to enter complete, accurate information to give customers a chance to get to know what you do, and where to find you. This makes it easy for Google to match you with the right searches. Focus on a name, physical address, phone number, business category, hours of operation, photos and attributes. Here is a link to Google's guide on editing your business information.



See photos

San Ramon Regional Medical Center
Kaiser Permanente Ramon Medical Offices
Alameda Blvd
Map data ©2019

Your Business Name

Website Directions Save

5.0 ★★★★★ 67 Google reviews

Type of Company in City, State

Address:

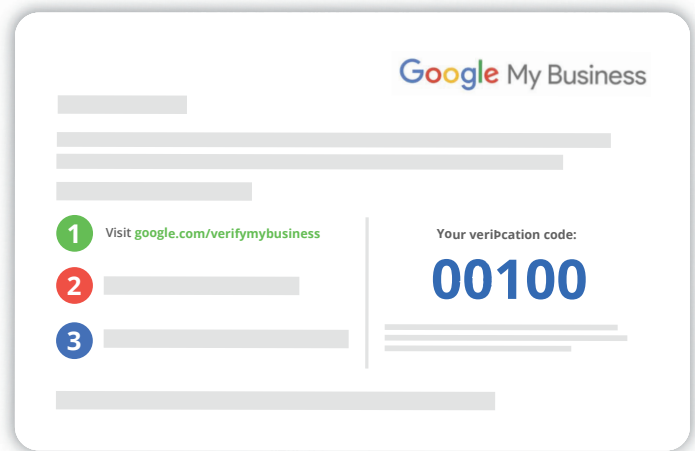
Hours:

Phone:

Website:

Y BUSINESS

Next, verify your location. Verifying your business location(s) is mission critical to winning on Google search. Through an almost unbelievable analog process, Google will send a postcard to your location with a five-digit number for verification. **Here are 8 tips we've picked up over the years for managing your GMB location listings:**



1. Manage the Google postcard dance with care The verification postcard that Google sends out looks a little like an ad. Make sure your location managers, marketers and/or administrators know that the Google postcard is being delivered to them via USPS mail and to be on the lookout for its arrival. You'd be surprised how many end up in the trash.

2. Name your location listings to make it easy for Google It helps to put the primary search phrase in your business name. Make sure to keep consistent with what appears on your website and other sites like Yelp and Bing. (e.g. If you're a mortgage company, it is a good idea to add the word "mortgage" to your title)

8 TIPS

3. The address for each location should be the same, everywhere If you are at 12677 Alcosta Blvd., Suite 250, then you should be using the exact same address on all of your listings across search engines and directories. If you use "Boulevard" on Yelp, "Blvd." on Google and "Road" on your location's website, you are creating mismatches. Google's algorithm likes exact matches. This problem occurs frequently with addresses that contain suite numbers, such as Suite 250, Ste 250 or #250.

4. Use a local phone number. Local phone exchanges usually reinforce that it is a local business. If you have 20 locations that all use the same 1-800 number, then you clearly have a national call center handling calls for the business. This is a "not so local" practice.

5. Use the actual website for each specific branch location

When Google crawls the linked site, it should have the local name, address, hours, phone # and other attributes. Try not to link all of your locations to the same web address.

6. Keep your hours accurate

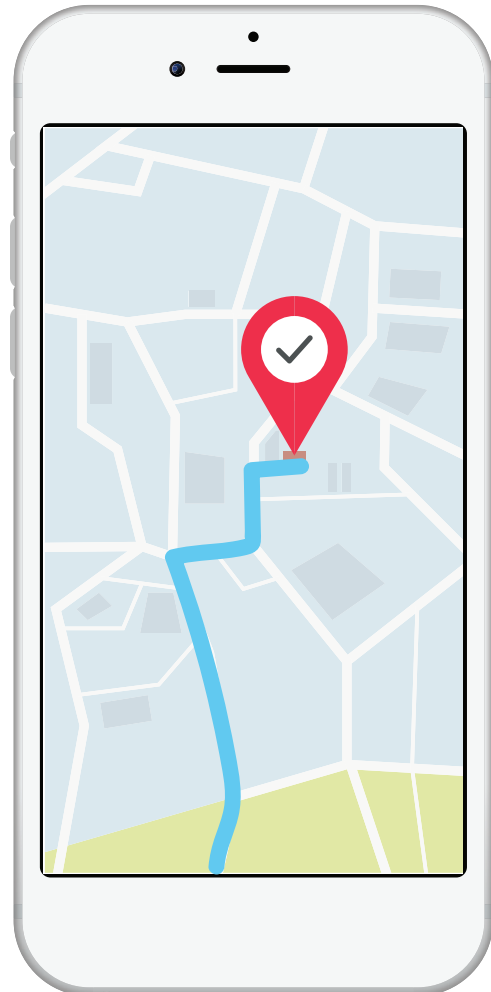
Entering and updating your hours, especially during the holidays, gives both customers and Google confidence.

7. Add and update photos and videos regularly

Showing your goods and services can help tell the story of your business.

8. Get your customers to write reviews

Managing and responding to reviews is extremely powerful.



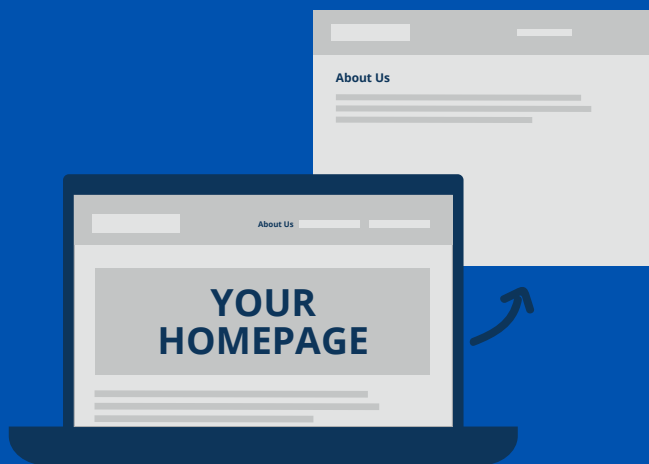
"Verifying your business location(s) is mission critical to winning on Google search."

LINK SIGNALS

Backlinks are a clickable object (text, link or image) that goes from one site to another. Google's algorithm loves it when relevant sites link to you as an answer for what the searcher is looking for. In recent years, Google has moved away from their original "PageRank" algorithm, but still sees links to your website as a valuable signal.

There are two types of links, Internal and Inbound.

Internal is a link that goes from one page of your website to another without leaving your domain. For instance, if someone is on your home page and clicks on a link to find a location that directs to another page on your website.



Inbound links are links that are on other sites that redirect their traffic to your website. When one website mentions a different website and links to it, that's a signal to search engines that other external sites are endorsing the content. Focusing on inbound links can really help you win online, as there is plenty of opportunity here. Getting natural links from high-quality websites will really boost your page rank. For instance, let's look at our friends at New American Funding. They are a mortgage company, employing more than 1,000 loan officers with 200 locations.

Let's make a list of a few inbound partners New American Funding should focus on, and count the results. You can do this for any business vertical.



Zillow offers individual Loan Officer Profile Pages and Branch Pages. Each of these can link to from Zillow to the New American Funding Website. That's roughly 1,200 links.



LendingTree is now offering Loan Officer and Company Pages. That's another 1,200 links.



Google My Business offers professional listings and branch listings. Add 1,200 possible links.



Yelp, BBB, Bing, Apple Maps, City Search, City Data, YP, Yahoo—let's say you only use their location pages. Add 1,600 links.



Our CX 2.0 strategy offers Professional Pages, Location Pages and Company Pages. That'll add another 1,400 links back to New American Funding sites.

That's more than 6,000 links driving traffic to New American Funding. Then, add review sharing on social media and the links grow exponentially. For New American Funding, they received more than 65,000 reviews in the first 30 months. Those reviews have been shared on social media pages more than 400,000 times. Each of those 400,000 shares have a link back to a New American Funding Page. It is important to underline that even if Google didn't reward inbound links, it would still be a great strategy for growing business. Getting links to and driving traffic from a trusted website to you is simply great business practice. Sharing the true voice of your customer all over social media in front of friends, family and colleagues drives more traffic, referrals, and business to you.

"Sharing the true voice of your customer all over social media in front of friends, family and colleagues, drives more traffic, referrals, and business to you. It's a smart and cheap way to grow business."

Industry-Specific Backlinks Build Authority

You can often find the most authoritative (in the eyes of the search engine) directories specific to your type of business simply by searching for them. Here are some that dominate their online categories.



MORTGAGE



HEALTHCARE



REAL ESTATE



AUTOMOTIVE



REVIEWS

Google loves reviews and so do potential customers. Positive reviews will definitely persuade people to choose your business, and they will also have a big impact on search rankings.

Getting your customers writing reviews for your company on Google (and other third-party review sites) is valuable for several reasons:

1. Google is reading the reviews and looking for keyword matches.
2. An ever-growing volume of local customer reviews tells Google you continue to exist in that location and continue to do a great job for your customers.
3. Responding to your reviews tells Google and the rest of the world you care about the Voice of the Customer.
4. Once you're doing great on Google reviews, turning your attention to other relevant industry third-party reviews sites are likely to help you create additional business opportunities.

ABC Company

4.9 ★★★★★ 1,650 reviews ?



[Redacted review text]



Next, let's look at another example of a company winning on Google: San Diego insurance company Fusco and Orsini Insurance. When you are looking for insurance in San Diego—which is a big, competitive market—this single-location agency often comes to the top of the search results. At the time I am writing this, they have 262 Google reviews (by the time you read this, they will have more) across a perfect 5-star average.

Knowing that Google loves positive sentiment and is reading the reviews looking for keyword matches, it is easy to see why they are winning. **Here are a few of the exact matches found in their reviews:**



Review Signals for Fusco and Orsini Insurance in San Diego



Jesse McGuinness

1 review · 9 photos

★★★★★ 7 months ago

I called different companies for Worker Compensation Insurance quotes for my janitorial business. I received three quotes. I contacted Daniel Morton at Fusco & Orsini. When I spoke Daniel, he was very helpful, knowledge and professional. I sent him a copy of the lowest quote that I had received. He said he could find a better rate. The next day he secured a net rate that was half the price of the lowest offer I had received. I was extremely pleased and would highly recommend his company.



A flawless 5-star average across 229 reviews is very hard to achieve. There is also positive customer sentiment throughout the reviews, which have over 12,000 written words (reviews and replies). WOW! There are hundreds of notable keyword matches for words like Insurance, Car, Auto and Home. Customers are even calling the agents out by name! The combination of these components is clearly driving excellent performance. It is easy to see why they are winning on Google. They have figured out Google's system by having a claimed GMB listing with complete data and a lot of happy customer reviews.

Bravo!

- Keyword **"Insurance"** used **200+ times in reviews**
- Keywords **"Car or Auto"** used **42 times**
- Keyword **"Home"** used **21 times**
- **The Agents' Names** used **100+ times**

ON-PAGE CONTENT

Google also looks at a company's on-site content as a ranking factor. If a company lists themselves as an accounting firm but their website says nothing about accounting, that is a red flag. The idea is simple enough—make sure you have high-quality content on your site that tells potential customers the products and services you offer.

Additionally, the security and functionality of your site can affect your rankings. For instance, is your site mobile-friendly (responsive)? Does it work on all devices and browsers (compatible)? All of these combine to create your level of authority to Google.

DATA ON YOUR SITE MATCHES YOUR LISTINGS DATA

The diagram illustrates the importance of consistency between a company's website and its Google My Business (GMB) listing. It shows two side-by-side mockups. On the left is a website mockup titled 'Your Website' which includes a placeholder image, 'High-quality content' represented by horizontal bars, a 'Reviews' section with star ratings and text, and a footer for 'ABC Company' with address, hours, phone, and website. On the right is a GMB listing mockup for 'ABC Company' showing a map, contact information, and a 'Reviews' section. A blue arrow points from the 'Reviews' section of the website to the 'Reviews' section of the GMB listing, highlighting the need for data consistency.

Your Website

High-quality content

Reviews

★★★★★

★★★★★

ABC Company

123 Main Street, Suite 215, San Ramon, CA 94582

Mon-Fri: 9:00 - 5:00 am EST | 555.555.5555 | www.abccompany.com

ABC Company

Website Directions Save

5.0 ★★★★★ 67 Google reviews

Type of Company in San Ramon, CA

Address: 123 Main Street, Suite 215, San Ramon, CA 94582

Hours: Mon-Fri: 9:00 - 5:00 am EST

Phone: 555.555.5555

Website: www.abccompany.com

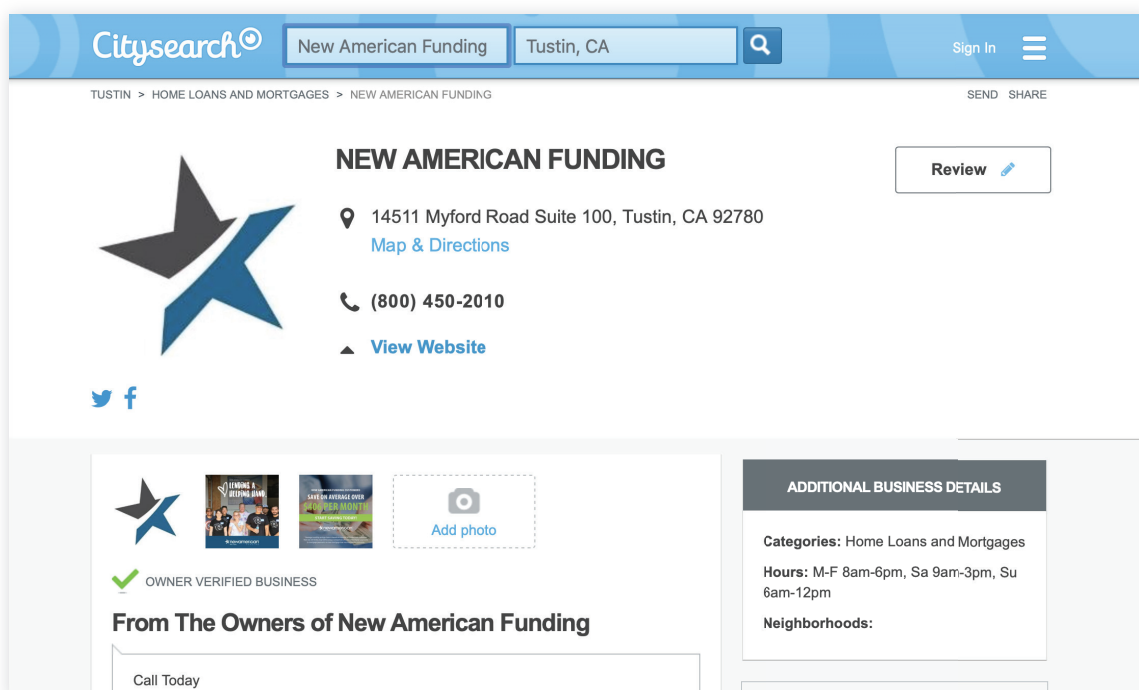
Reviews ? Write a review Add a photo

LOCAL CITATIONS

A local citation is an online mention of a business' Name, Address and Phone Number (NAP). This information is critical for influencing search engines to display local search intent, while also helping internet users discover local businesses. There are two kinds of citations: structured and unstructured. Google's algorithm looks at both when ranking search results. Citations are really important to your business. Focus on the citations that can actually bring you customers. For instance, restaurants should make sure their NAP data is perfect on Yelp.

A structured citation is a mention of your business on websites and business directories like Yelp, Bing, Yahoo, City Search and Yellow Pages.

structured citation

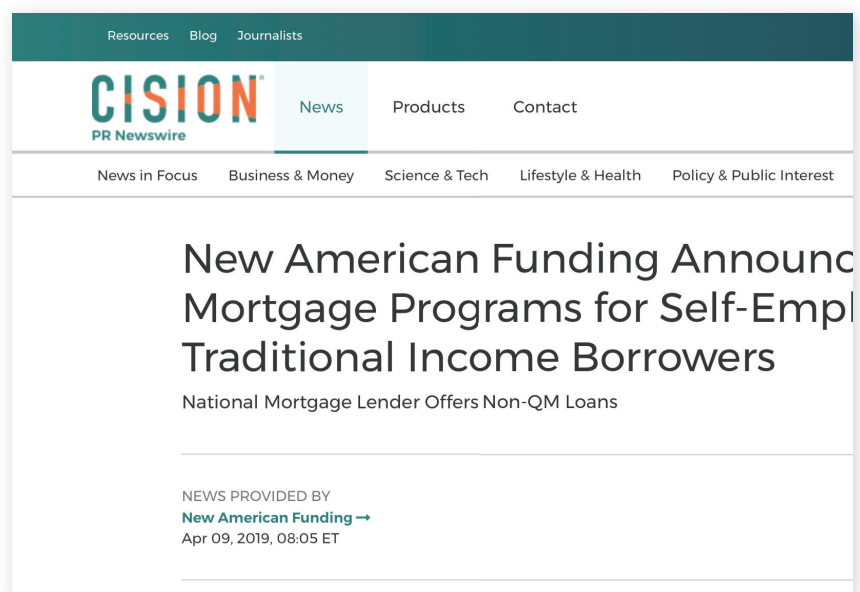


Source: Citysearch

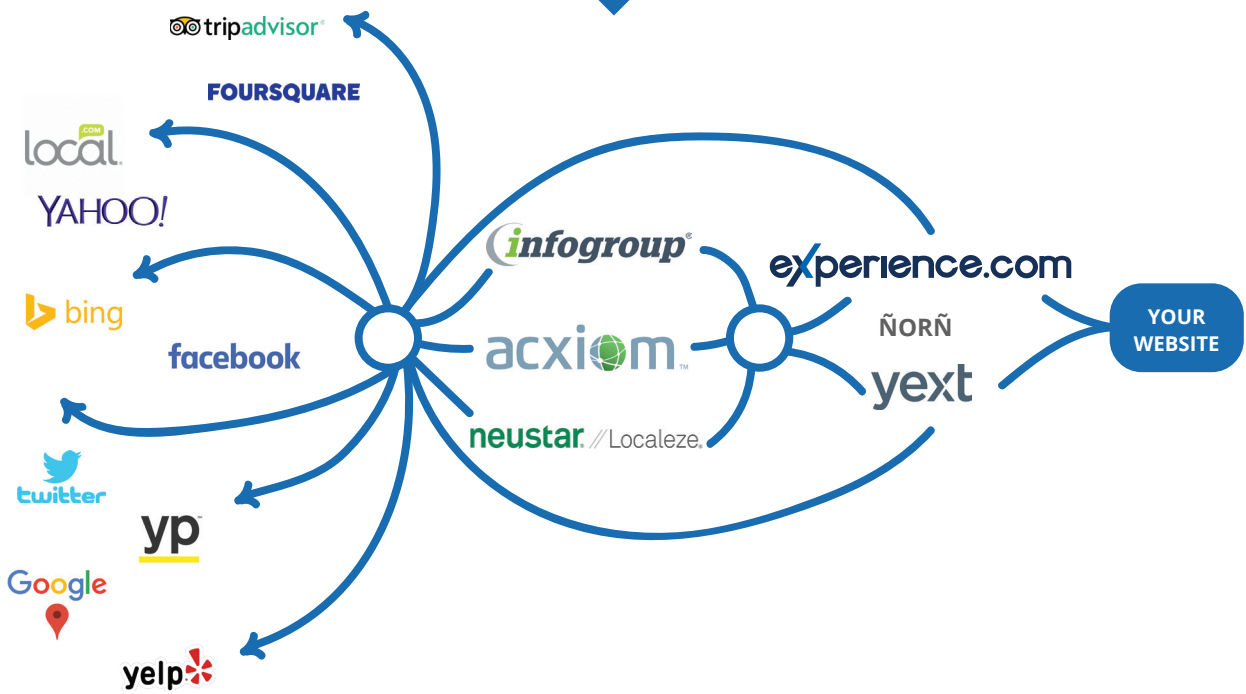
An unstructured citation is a mention of your business on blogs, news sites and other businesses' websites.

It is important to make sure your business is listed on high authority and industry-specific sites to earn credibility and trust from Google. For example, mortgage lenders and real estate agents should have all of their locations listed on the major directories, as well as industry-specific listings like Zillow, LendingTree and Experience.com.

unstructured citation



Source: Cision



The local search ecosystem is complicated, especially for big, multi-location brands. There are hundreds of directories. Maintaining proper location data means companies must deploy bulk methods of sharing and syncing data. When defining your citation criteria, focus first on consistency. Next, update sites with authority. Finally, add vertically and geographically-relevant citations.

TOP 15 CITATION SITES

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. GoogleMyBusiness | 9. Facebook |
| 2. Bing | 10. Yelp |
| 3. Apple Maps | 11. Yahoo |
| 4. Express Update | 12. Superpages |
| 5. Acxiom | 13. Foursquare |
| 6. Factual | 14. City Search |
| 7. Localeze | 15. YP |
| 8. Dun & Bradstreet | |

Winning on Google can be complicated, but by following the practices provided, your business locations can successfully broadcast the following statements to Google and potential customers:

“Hey Google, we’re over here!”

“We are open for business.”

“We have local customers who are happy to vouch for us.”

“We sell what your searcher is looking for.”

“We have a location that is close to the searcher.”

Companies we work with that focus on perfecting their GMB listings consistently show up in Google’s Local Pack and frequently hear from customers, “I found you on Google!”

Remember that your brand is everywhere, and potential customers are finding you on search engines, maps and online directories. A good listings management and reviews strategy will be well worth your time and effort, helping you win more local business online.

IMPROVE YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION WITH A FREE CX AUDIT

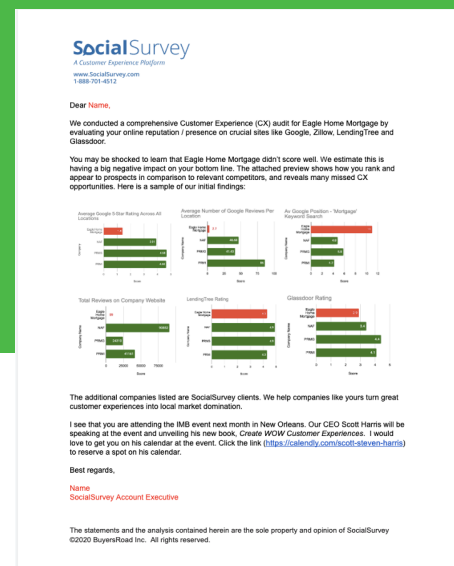
What's your Google rank? How does that compare to competitors? How many reviews and ratings do you have versus others in your market? Find out with Experience.com's comprehensive Customer Experience (CX) audit.

Every CX Audit shows how others view your business online, and what you can be doing to improve your position and authority score. By taking control of your online reputation you'll be able to capitalize on more opportunities and turn great customer experiences into local market domination. Get started today by requesting your free CX Audit* at <https://try.Experience.com/customer-audit/>

For more information, please visit Experience.com or contact us directly at +1 (888) 701 4512. You can also follow Experience.com on all social media platforms.



* Must meet qualification criteria to get comprehensive CX audit.



About Experience.com

We believe that experience is everything. Amazing experiences create customers for life, and poor ones destroy brands and businesses. That's why Experience.com has built the world's most impactful Experience Management Platform (XMP) with features to drive operational and behavioral change, in real-time, during the moments that matter. XMP delivers impactful business outcomes including increased customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, online reputation and visibility, as well as improved employee engagement, and compliance - making every experience matter more. Founded in 2015 as SocialSurvey, Experience.com is headquartered in San Ramon, Calif. and backed by SavantGrowth (fka Kennet Partners), Silicon Valley Data Capital, Tri-Valley Ventures, and Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati. For more information, visit www.experience.com or call +1 (888) 701 4512.

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