TIPS TO GET MORE CUSTOMERS FROM SEARCH RANKINGS

melbourne web experts

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connecting your business to local customers

You've opened your business and you created a website. Now what? This guide will provide you with 10 vital tips that will transform your business from just getting by to a powerhouse of customer leads and sales!

Even if you strictly do all your business offline, the reality today is that almost everybody will only find you through an online search. Long past are the days of a Yellow Pages listing and a small community advertisement. The fact is, 97% of people looking for a business to solve their problem (be it a plumbing issue, planning a party or simple hunger), searched online to find it.

If you have a physical location, 85% of people would have looked up Google Maps to see where you are.

You MUST have a presence online to survive, and more than that, you MUST be listed in the search engines so customers can find you.

This guide includes 7 tips to illustrate how to climb and rank in the search engines, and how to stay there.

Tip #1: Keyword Research

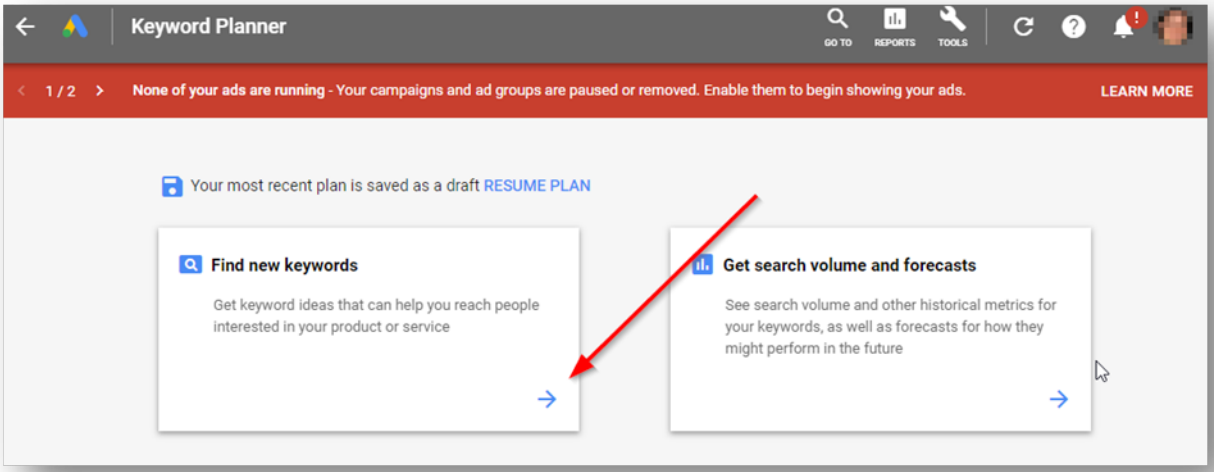
Before you begin to rank in the search engines … you need to know what your potential customers are typing in. You won't gain much traffic if you rank for terms completely unrelated to your services!

To do this, first brainstorm what terms a potential customer might type (or speak) in order to find your business. If you are a plumber in Oakleigh, they might type one of these keywords in:

- Plumber in Oakleigh
- Drain cleaning
- Licensed Oakleigh plumber

- Residential plumbing services
- Plumbing repairs
- Melbourne plumber
- Emergency plumber
- Sewer cleaning

List all these terms down in a spreadsheet. Next, you can use a tool that actually researches keywords. The best of these is Google itself, in their Keyword Planner. It is part of their Adwords program, but you can sign up for a free account and pretend you will start an Adwords PPC campaign … but actually don't.



Type in a keyword term, and Google will give you a multitude of ideas:

Google returned 310 keywords for you related to “plumber in Oakleigh” … this should give you plenty of ideas for keywords! As a bonus, Google will also return a range of numbers for monthly traffic. This is the amount of times people searched for that keyword phrase in a month.

Locations: Australia Language: English Search networks: Google

Keyword ideas plumber in oakleigh DOWN

Found 310 keyword ideas

Show broadly related ideas; Exclude adult ideas Add filter

Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Ad impressi sh
Your search term			
plumber in oakleigh	1K – 10K	Medium	
Idea			
plumber oakleigh vic	100 – 1K	Medium	
emergency plumber oakleigh	100 – 1K	Medium	
plumbing snake	10K – 100K	High	
sewer cleaning oakleigh	100 – 1K	High	
drain cleaner	10K – 100K	High	
liquid plumr	1K – 10K	High	
sewer cleaning	1K – 10K	High	
licensed plumbers in oakleigh	100 – 1K	Medium	

As you can see, people typed in “emergency plumber Oakleigh” far more than “plumber in Oakleigh” … something you will want to keep in mind.

Tip #2: Look at Your On-Page SEO

What to do with all these keywords? Now that you have an idea of what your customers are searching for, it's time to put some of them into your website … but in a natural way. Don't begin filling your home page with words such as "*Find a plumber in Oakleigh Vic if you have an emergency plumber in Oakleigh licensed plumbers in Oakleigh will clean your drains …*" That will get you banned from Google really fast.

Instead, write sentences and paragraphs for your website that naturally includes these keywords. So, thinking of a selection of keywords found in Google, you can write something like this:

"*We are licensed plumbers in Oakleigh servicing the all of Melbourne's South-East. Do you have an emergency? We are available on-call 24/7. Our services include sewer and drain cleaning, water heater installation and plumbing repair.*"

This is natural sounding, but includes many of the keywords people search for, such as licensed plumbers, Oakleigh, emergency, sewer cleaning, drain cleaning, etc.

Sprinkle your keywords all over your page, but in a natural, informative way. Whatever terms you want to rank for, add them to the following elements:

- Your Title
- Your Meta Description
- Your H1 header tags
- Within paragraphs
- In your navigation

Other on-page factors to keep in mind include:

The speed of your website – Use a quality web host and proper website software, such as Wordpress. If you are using Wordpress, do not overload it with plugins. Each plugin slows your site down just a

little bit. Wordpress also has special plugins to increase your website speed.

Quality content – You can increase your exposure through high-quality instructional blog posts related to your business (ie "how to unclog a sink" if you are a plumber).

Social proof – Though not officially a ranking factor, social proof is a very powerful method to increase sales and indirectly affect SEO rankings.

Customer testimonials, endorsements and reviews will have visitors staying on your website longer, convincing them that you are the right business for the job they need performed.

These testimonials and reviews also add to the keyword-rich content on your website, further improving the odds you will rank in Google.

NAP (For local businesses) – ***N***ame, ***A***ddress, ***P***hone. Make sure your business name, business address and phone number appear on every page of your site – usually in the header and/or footer. This is very important, as we will see in Tip #4.

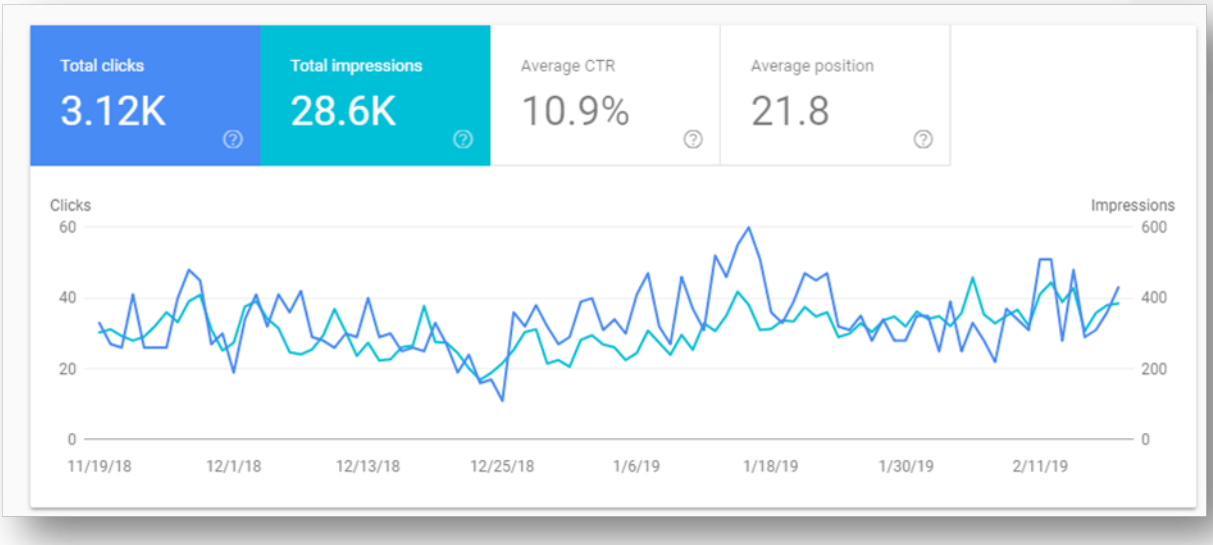
Tip #3: Perform an SEO Audit

Once you have your content and other on-page SEO factors complete, it is time to perform an SEO audit. What is this? It's checking that your website could rank well in Google search.

First, it's time to register in Google. While Google will likely find your website anyway, we might as well encourage them as much as possible to find and index your website and all your pages. To do this, register at Google Search Console:

https://search.google.com/search-console

Once you add and verify your website, you will begin to see data about your website:



The Google search console will scan your website for any errors, usability issues, security, etc that could all impede your rankings.

You can also check Google itself to see if all your pages are indexed. Go to Google and type in site:yourdomainname.com.au. Google will return all the pages in its database. If some pages are not included, it's either because they are too new or there are some problems.

Finally, check the site speed of your website. Google loves website to be fast, and anything above 80% is decent. Check your website here:

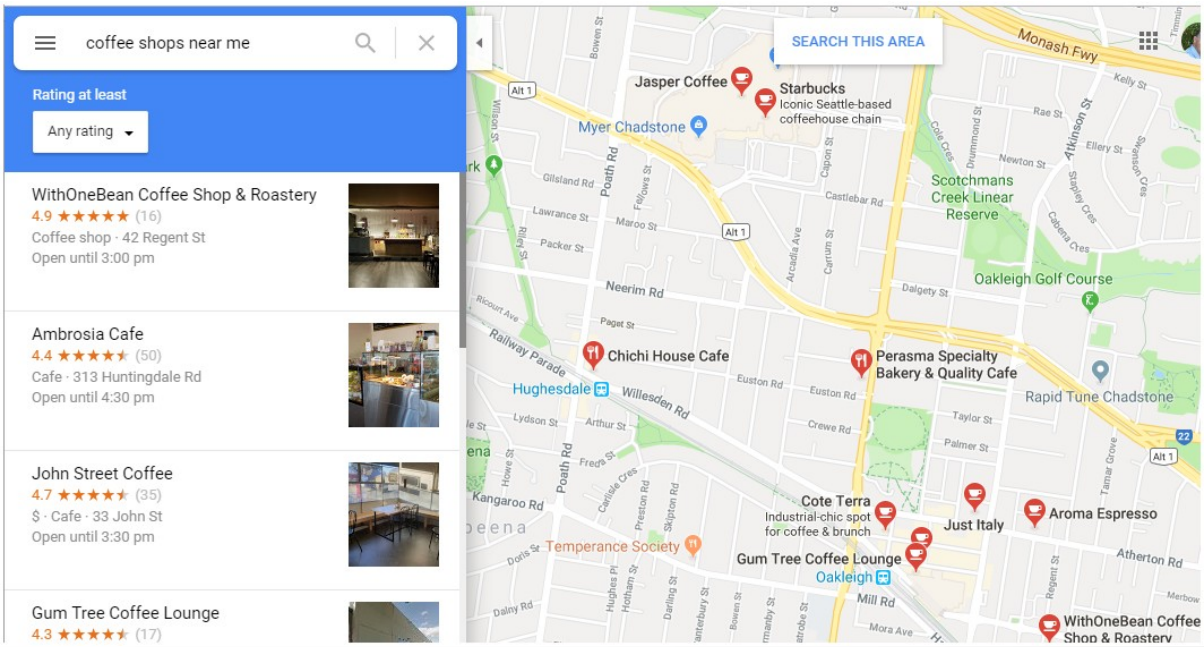
https://gtmetrix.com/

Tip #4: Local Search

So far, we have been talking about search engine rankings, but what is known as "organic search" … these are the regular search results you are familiar with.

However, if somebody's intent is to search for something locally, Google will first present them with local search results before the regular results.

That means, even if your website is #1, in a local search a group of (usually 3) local business listings and Google Maps will instead appear first:



Does this mean you need to create another listing? Actually, yes. Along with your website, you need a local listing in Google Maps.

The next question, naturally, is how to get in this “three pack” of local results? Google states right on their local search page how they determine local ranking. They are:

Relevance - How well does your business match what the user is searching for?

Distance - How far away is your business from where the user searched?

Prominence - How well-known is your business?

Prominence is an important one. This ties into your website and how well your business ranks in organic search. Prominence also ties into the next two tips, which help in making your website more popular and with a great reputation.

Back to Google Maps. If you have been open for a while, chances are somebody has already listed you. If not, you can create a listing and begin ranking in local search, as well as rank in regular search with your website. This actually gives you TWO opportunities to increase traffic to your business.

To create your local listing, go to Google My Business:

https://www.google.com/business/

Once you set up a listing and verify it (usually through a PIN number or physical mail to make sure your mailing address is real), you can add details such as:

- Your business name (exact same as the "NAP" details on your website)
- Hours of operation
- Photos of your business
- Virtual video tour of your premises
- Your address (same as NAP)
- Your location on Google Maps
- Your services
- Your phone number (same as NAP)
- Your website address

Tip #5: Citation Building

Merely having a listing on Google Maps just announces that your business exists. Now you have to rank it in local search.

To do that, you need to have citations pointing to your business. What are citations?

Citations act as “mentions” and “votes” from other authority websites and reviewers, which helps you begin ranking in the local search listings.

Examples of citation sources include:

- Yelp
- Facebook
- Yellowpages
- BBB
- Foursquare

There are literally thousands of places to gain citations, most of them specific to a type of business and niche.

For instance, if you are a car dealership, you would also include your business listing in places like Edmunds.com and Autotrader.com.

If you are a pizza restaurant, you would also list your business in Zomato.com and Localeats.com.

Just like with Google Maps, you may have to claim your business on these websites. And there could be dozens of them. Some may be accurate about your business, while others may have wrong or misleading info. You won’t know who left a review about you or who created your listing in the first place until you do a search for your business.

Tip #6: Review Management

Similar to citations, these same websites usually also have reviews about your business. When you claim your business, you also have an opportunity to respond to reviews.

All your reviews is known as your online reputation. Of course, you want to have an excellent reputation! This will affect the rankings of your local listing.

Positive reviews are gold, of course, but make sure you respond to them. You don't have to be too detailed, simply say thank you, but be specific. If the reviewer's name is Jim, say "Thank you, Jim, for those kind words!"

While positive reviews are of course fantastic, every business will get negative reviews. However, you can even turn these into something positive. How you respond to a negative review is the exact same as how you respond to a positive review. In both cases, potential future customers, clients and leads will read how you react.

The first step is acknowledging that a problem occurred. Apologize and sympathize.

Next, apologize but with a bit of a marketing angle. Something like "*we are normally known for our exceptional attention to detail, and we regret that this didn't happen in this case*."

Finally, end it by offering to talk offline, and give them your personal name and your phone number to try and resolve the issue.

However, don't mention your business name. You don't want the potential of this actual negative review showing up in the search results when somebody types in your business!

No matter what, though, always respond to negative reviews. Future customers looking you up will see that you took the time, care and energy to answer it.

You will want to keep encouraging great reviews. To do so, simply ask your current customers! Here are some other ways:

- Ask for a review in a follow-up email (after you know they are satisfied!)
- Create business cards with review instructions on the back
- Place a review button on your website … and list the reviews once you have some
- Ask on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc
- Give instructional flyers to satisfied customers as well

How and when will you ask for customer reviews? If you are a limo company, asking right after the ride is best, because it is fresh in their minds.

If you a home improvement company, it's best to ask a week or so after everything is complete. That way, your customer will have had time to enjoy their new addition or renovation, and you can phone or email them for a follow-up.

During that time, you can find out if they love everything or if there are some problems. If there are problems, you want to get those fixed before asking for an online review!

Tip #7: Linkbuilding Outreach

While citations help "power" your local listing, your website itself is "powered" mainly by links from other websites. This is also known as "off-page SEO."

Say you own a restaurant in New York. A large, highly authoritative magazine such as *Grubstreet* publishes an article and mentions your business.

Not only will you definitely see a huge boost in traffic to your shop, but your website will also get a huge boost in the organic search engine rankings.

Why? Because the article will likely have a link that goes back to your website. For example, you can see a link to a website called “Take31” from a high-quality, authoritative site:

GRUB STREET

The chicken perilla-seed pot with grilled pearl onions, bacon, roasted whole garlic, and chicken broth. Photo: Melissa Hom

For one of this decade’s most successful restaurant groups, Hand Hospitality doesn’t have a ton of name recognition. But over the last eight years, they’ve opened a series of smash-hit restaurants. Hand’s first spot, Take31, opened in 2011 and set the stage for other contemporary Korean restaurants like Oiji, Soogil, and JeJu. Her Name Is Han seems to have been perpetually packed since it opened in 2015, though the restaurant group has made its biggest mark through its involvement in the highly-regarded Atoboy and its sister restaurant, Atomix (both of which *New York* named Best New Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018, respectively). Next week, Hand will expand once again with o:n°, a restaurant where most everything will be cooked table-side

Google will then find and catalog this link, analyze it, and note that the link was referenced from a highly respected publication. This link acts as a “vote of confidence” to your site.

You can bet that this restaurant gained lots of rankings a few days after this article was published online!

Along with featured interviews in prestigious magazines, how else can you get backlinks to your website? There are several ways:

Press releases: An informative, newsworthy press release will be picked up by several media outlets. Your local newspaper (the online edition), regional outlets, television news, radio and national news websites may pick up your press release and publish it, complete with links back to your site.

Youtube Videos: Videos you publish on your Youtube channel can have links back to your website.

Blog comments and forum posts: Look for blogs and forums relevant to your industry and join in the conversation. If you leave thoughtful, legitimate comments and advice, you can leave a link to your business that the site owners will approve of.

Guest posts: A powerful way strategy for posting comments on blogs and forums is that you get to know the website owner.

After contributing to great conversations for a few weeks or months, you will become known as a bit of an authority figure in your business. Approach the owner personally and ask if you can contribute guest articles to their site. You will leave a link to your site in the “About the author” credits.

Social Properties: Your Facebook business page, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and other social networks can all include links back to your website.

There we are, 7 tips to get more customers from search engine rankings! As you go through each tip, both the organic rankings of your website and the local ranking of your business listing will become stronger and stronger.

To stay on top, keep up with these tips! Build and maintain your citations, review, respond and encourage reviews, keep publishing content and keep building new links.

Now watch for a steady increase of customers, and more and more of them saying “Nice place. I found you online!”

What next...?

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