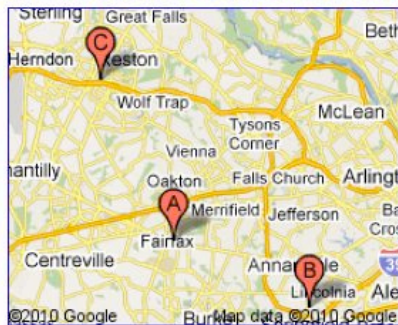


Google Local? What *Every* Lawyer Needs To Know to Dominate



It's The New Yellow Pages!

Local business results for **accident attorney near Fairfax, VA**



- A** [Fairfax Virginia Personal Injury and Car Accident Attorney Ben Glass](#) -
www.benglasslaw.com
22, 3915 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax - (703) 591-9829
[Directions, hours, and more »](#)
- B** [Becker, Kellogg and Berry](#) - www.beckerkelloggberry.com
220, 5501 Backlick Road, Springfield - (888) 312-5087
[Directions, hours, and more »](#)
- C** [Hall, Sickels, Frei & Mims, PC](#) - www.hallandsickels.com
150, 12120 Sunset Hills Road, Reston - (703) 925-0500
[Directions and more »](#)
- [More results near Fairfax, VA »](#)

[Fairfax, Virginia - Best Personal Injury Car Accident Attorney ...](#) ☆

Free Consumer Books on Virginia Personal Injury and car **accident** claims are available to Virginia residents before you talk to the insurance adjuster, ...

www.vamedmal.com/ - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

by Tom Foster and George Murphy

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

Understanding Google Local – The Basics

What is Google Local and why do you care? First of all, recognize the importance that Google, the #1 search engine and fastest growing technology company ever, has placed on Google Local. Below is an example of a typical search for "DUI Attorney Richmond VA"

The screenshot shows a Google search for "dui attorney richmond va". The search bar at the top contains the text "dui attorney richmond va" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, the results are categorized into "Sponsored Links", "Local business results for dui attorney near Richmond, VA", and "Organic search results".

Sponsored Links:

- www.DUI.com/Virginia Want your Virginia DUI Dismissed? Free visit. Save your license.
- www.VirginiaDUI.com Virginia DUI / DWI Help We teach DUI law to other lawyers. We employ 5 former Va. prosecutors.
- www.LoupassiLaw.com Aggressive Lawyer Richmond Criminal-DUI-DWI Attorney Experienced Former State Prosecutor

Local business results for dui attorney near Richmond, VA

A map of Richmond, VA, is shown on the left, with red pushpins labeled A through G. To the right of the map is a list of local businesses:

- A** [Richmond DUI & Reckless Speeding Lawyer-Bob Battle](http://www.bobbattlelaw.com) www.bobbattlelaw.com - (804) 673-5600 - 6 reviews
- B** [John W Luxton Criminal Lawyer Richmond](http://www.luxtonlaw.com) www.luxtonlaw.com - (804) 643-0147 - More
- C** [Chucker and Reibach](http://www.vattrafficattorneys.com) www.vattrafficattorneys.com - (804) 335-0836 - More
- D** [Standish Alexander, Esq.](http://www.standishalexanderlaw.com) www.standishalexanderlaw.com - (804) 355-0016 - More
- E** [Brenner Evans & Millman PC: Attorneys](http://www.beylaw.com) www.beylaw.com - (804) 644-1300 - More
- F** [Riley & Wells](http://www.rileywells.com) www.rileywells.com - (804) 673-7111 - 1 review
- G** [Richmond Criminal Law](http://www.richmondcriminallaw.com) www.richmondcriminallaw.com - (804) 643-7311 - More

[More results near Richmond, VA »](#)

Organic search results:

- Virginia DUI, Reckless Driving, and Traffic Attorney | Robert E ...**
Richmond, Virginia DUI Lawyer Bob Battle is the author of the extremely or DUI, people charged in Virginia can rely on **Richmond, Virginia attorney Bob ...**
[Criminal Defense](#) - [Traffic](#) - [Personal Injury](#) - [Drunk Driving/DUI](#)
www.bobbattlelaw.com/ - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#) - [Print](#) - [X](#)
- Richmond VA Traffic DUI Lawyers and Attorneys | Reckless Driving ...**
Riley & Wells, Attorneys-At-Law. Experienced Criminal, DUI & Traffic Defense Lawyers.
Richmond, Virginia. Free Consultations.
www.rileywells.com/ - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#) - [Print](#) - [X](#)

Sponsored Links (Right Side):

- Local DWI Attorneys**
Get help fighting your DWI.
Free Call - Free Consultation.
www.duiattorneys.com
Virginia
- VA DUI - DWI Lawyer**
Fight Your Drunk Driving Charges
Call For A Consultation Today
www.BooneBeale.com
Virginia
- DWI.com**
Arrested for DWI? Call now.

Richmond Criminal Defense
Aggressive Criminal Defense Lawyer
Free Consultation, Available 24/7
CriminalDefenseLawyerRichmond.co
Virginia

DUI Defense Lawyer
Choose Aggressive & Experienced Representation. Free Consultation!
EstherWindmueller.com
Richmond-Petersburg, VA

Attorneys in Richmond
Expert Attorneys at Lawyers.com
Search By Location & Practice
www.lawyers.com

Notice that "Local business results for dui attorney near Richmond, VA" are listed directly beneath "Sponsored Links" (Google Adwords) and before organic search results. Clicking on the red pushpin (annotated by letter in the map) will open Google Maps. Maps will provide directions and provide a GPS guide to the listed address.

Google Local is considered by many to be the "new" Yellow Pages. As such, it is a very powerful marketing vehicle that all attorneys who are focusing on geo-location based practice areas (like my example) must take advantage of. Just for clarity sake, Google Local listings rely on the Google Maps GPS technology.

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

It seems to be a mystery, no matter what service or product you're offering, as to how to increase your rankings on Google Local searches. The *devil is in the details* and this is true for Google Local listing and placement as well.

Whether you're a local attorney, doctor, dentist, barbershop or retail store, higher rankings on the local Google search is just as important as your organic search engine rankings because of the increased online exposure that it offers as the first displayed results.

The New Trend: Local Searches On Smartphones

People aren't just searching from their home or business computers anymore. The trend is starting to shift from calling 411 to using a wireless device to find local businesses. Think about how many times you see people looking up information on their phones?

The number of searches for local businesses and service providers on mobile phones is continuing to grow year after year. Google, being the number one search engine in the world, is what a large majority of smartphone users prefer when looking for businesses in their area from their mobile devices. Therefore, it is crucial for you to stay informed on how to maintain a presence on Google Local and be viewable on these search results.

We are going to make the assumption that you already understand the point of Google Local, as you have gotten this report. But the real missing piece is truly understanding how Google decides what businesses to rank higher than others on local searches.

Is it by Location?

hardware store near Virginia 20101

Categories: [Building Materials & Supls.](#), [Retail stores - Hardware](#)



Why Should You Care About Google Local?

Is it by the Number of inbound links?

Clinton Barber Shop: More about this place

1 - 10 of about 11

[Clinton Beauty - WashingtonDC.com](#)

... Beauty Hair Salons/**Barber** Shops. Clinton **Barber** Shop. 8971 Wood
www.washingtondc.com/beauty/business-directory/.../clinton

[Spas and Beauty Salons In Clinton, Maryland | Travels.com](#)

... Clinton Spas and Beauty Salons. Clinton **Barber** Shop. 8971 Wood
from the center of Clinton ...
www.travels.com/spa-beauty-clinton-md-us/

[Clinton Salon | Salon in Clinton, MD | Fave Video Yellow Page](#)

... Clinton Salon. 1-20 of 55 total results. Clinton **Barber** Shop. 8971 Wood
www.getfave.com/locations/md/clinton/salon

Or is it by the amount of Reviews?

Reviews

[Write a review](#)

Experienced Kentucky Personal Injury Law Firm

★★★★★ By [John](#) - Jul 6, 2009

As a victim of a personal injury **accident** myself I can tell you that it is important to seek out attorneys who are experienced, trustworthy, and have a track record of success. The Schafer Law office gives you nothing less. The experienced Kentucky personal injury lawyer team is successful, honest, and gets fair compensation for their clients.
maps.google.com

Was this review helpful? [Yes](#) - [No](#) - [Flag as inappropriate](#)

Experienced, Trustworthy, And A Great...

★★★★★ By [John](#) - Jul 6, 2009

As a victim of a personal injury **accident** myself I can tell you that it is important to seek out attorneys who are experienced, trustworthy, and have a track record of success. The Schafer Law office gives you nothing less. The experienced Kentucky personal injury lawyer team is successful, honest, and gets fair compensation for their clients.
maps.google.com

Was this review helpful? [Yes](#) - [No](#) - [Flag as inappropriate](#)

Top Kentucky Personal Injury Lawyer

★★★★★ By [Mark](#) - Jul 1, 2009

As a certified specialist in injury and wrongful death law in Arizona, I understand the difficulty injury victims have in finding a personal injury lawyer anywhere in the United States. Due to my position in the law, I get the chance to meet great injury lawyers from all around the country. It is from my personal contacts with Mr. Schafer that I have come to respect him personally and professionally. I certainly understand that there are so many attorneys on television, in yellow pages, and on the internet that it can be difficult to choose the lawyer you can actually trust. For those that cannot decide, I strongly encourage you to start your search by meeting personally with Mike Schafer. One visit with him and you will recognize his commitment to his clients and the law are "above and beyond" your expectations. Mark P. Breyer, Esq.
maps.google.com

Was this review helpful? [Yes](#) - [No](#) - [Flag as inappropriate](#)

Louisville Accident Attorney Mike Schafer...

★★★★★ By [Florida FLSA](#) - May 6, 2009

Don't make a mistake in your Kentucky **auto** injury case! My friend Kentucky **auto** lawyer Mike Schafer has written a free book to help you with your **auto** injury case. Mike answers all your questions and helps you on the road to recovery. As a lawyer who has handled disability claims for over 29 years, I know it is crucial that you have a lawyer like Mike Schafer who understands the games Kentucky **auto** insurance companies will play with your **auto** crash case. I refer all my clients who have friends or family injured in Kentucky **auto**, motorcycle or truck crash cases to Mike. Attorney Nancy Cavey

Well, the answer is....

All of the above (and a whole lot more)!!!

There are a number of factors that Google Local looks at when deciding how local businesses are ranked, and it is *significantly different* than the Google organic algorithm (organic refers to “normal,” non-paid search engine rankings) that relies heavily on page optimization (page titles, content, etc.) and number of external links.

In this report, we’ll not only show you everything that Google Local looks at when deciding what businesses should rank where, but we’ll also show you the importance of each factor, as well as what you can do to increase your local search engine rankings and generate more leads.

Before we get into the ranking factors, let’s take a moment to go over what you need to do first: claim your Local Business Listing (LBL).

Step ONE: Claiming your Local Business Listing

Claiming your Local Business Listing is very important. It basically allows **YOU, THE BUSINESS OWNER** to decide what kind of information is displayed about **your business**. However, according to this report, Google Local is also ranking the business owners who have claimed and **updated** their Local Business Listings higher than those who haven’t.

Claiming your Local Business Listing can be as easy as following these instructions:



If you haven’t claimed your profile yet, go to <https://www.google.com/local/add>, fill out the required fields about your business, and submit it to the Google Local Business Center.

They will then ask you to verify the information by either a) calling you at the phone number you entered, or b) sending you a postcard in the mail and you going back into the Google Local Business Center to enter a PIN code that is on the postcard.

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

Be sure to provide as much information as you can when giving information about your business to Google Local. **Videos, pictures, hours of operation, payment methods, coupons for service, etc.** can all help your Local Business Listing rank better than your competition on Google Local searches, so you can never provide too much information.

Once you feel you have optimized your Local Business Listing by providing as much information as humanly possible, you can go on to the ranking factors and we'll take a look at what Google Local reviews when determining local rankings and what you can do to improve your results.

Step TWO: Understand Ranking Factors

A survey was conducted in May 2009 by a Google Local consultant, David Mihm, where he took 20 experts in the local search engine ranking community and asked them to rate the importance of each factor as it pertains to Google Local rankings.

As of this writing, the study can be seen here,
<http://www.davidmihm.com/local-search-ranking-factors.shtml>.

We're going to be reviewing some of these results, and show you ways that you can improve on each factor and rank better for your local search results.

Here are the top 15 ranking factors according to the survey:

1. [Local Business Listing Address in City of Search](#)
2. [Citations from Major Data Providers](#)
3. [Association of Proper LBL Categories](#)
4. [General Importance of Claiming LBL](#)
5. [Product/Service Keywords in LBL Title](#)
6. [General Importance of Off-Page Criteria](#)
7. [Volume of Customer Reviews](#)
8. [General Importance of Customer Reviews](#)
9. [General Importance of On-Page Criteria](#)
10. [Full Address on Contact Page](#)
11. [Proximity to Centroid](#)
12. [Quality of Inbound Links](#)
13. [HyperLocal/Web Crawl Citations](#)
14. [Product/Service Keywords in LBL Description](#)
15. [Location Keywords in Inbound Anchor Text](#)

Google Ranking Factor #1:
Local Business Listing Address in City of Search

The first, and most important ranking factor according to the survey of the 20 local search experts is *making sure your physical address is actually located in the city in which you would like to rank on Google Local.*

We run into this problem with a lot of clients, for both organic search engine optimization, as well as for local search.

With organic search engine optimization, there are ways to “manipulate” the search engines and results (build links including anchor text of other cities, adding content based on other cities, etc.), so that you rank for multiple cities.

But for the Google Local searches, how can you rank for cities in which you’re not located?

Simple answer: **you can’t**.... UNLESS you have an address in that city. You’ll find out later in the report, **where** in that city is also important.

This area is where you can put your creative and entrepreneurial thinking to good use. You don’t have to have an actual office, secretary, desk, and staff at that location - you just need an **ADDRESS AND PHONE**.

Look around for mail forwarding or virtual office services in your area where you can pay a monthly fee for either the rights to the address or the ability to use the office (if you plan on clients visiting you at that location) from time to time.

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

Google Ranking Factor #2: Citations from Major Data Providers



This is the most important Google Local ranking factor that doesn't have to do with your business' physical location.

Remember when we said earlier that "manipulating" Google Local is almost impossible? Well, it is because they verify EVERYTHING in order to reduce the number of potential spam and insincere business listings. Google also pulls from a large number of data providers (or websites) to verify your physical address, phone number, service offering, point of contact and so on, to make sure everything matches up where it should.

What data providers/websites does Google Local pull from when verifying information (so that you can go get listed on these sites)?

Well, as much as we would love to just list a few sites that you need to get listed on, it's not that easy.

There are primary and secondary sources that Google Local pulls from in order to verify your business' information.

Data Providers to Google Local

The following websites provide data about your business DIRECTLY to Google Local. They, for the most part, power Google Local's search engine verification process.

Primary Data Providers:

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

Localeze - A resource trusted by Google that verifies and submits your business data to Google Local, as well as to the following websites (which are, in some cases, secondary data providers to Google Local):

- Yahoo Local
- Bing Local
- Superpages.com
- Yellowpages.com
- Best of the Web Local
- OpenList
- DexKnows
- GetFave.com
- Addresses.com
- Loladex.com
- Citysquares
- GenieKnows.com
- YellowBot
- Kudzu
- Edmunds.com
- Matchbin, Inc
- Boulevards
- Praized
- Amazon

You can list your site with Localeze by going to <https://webapp.localeze.com/bizreg/> and filling out the required information.


InfoUSA- Another resource trusted by Google that submits your data to Google Local. They also submit to:

- Bing Local
- Yahoo Local
- Ask
- GetFave.com
- AOL Local
- Superpages.com
- Telenav
- Tellme
- DAPlus.us
- Switchboard.com
- Centerd

You can add or update your business listing with InfoUSA by going to http://leads.infousa.com/landing/Updatelisting.aspx?bas_vendor=190000&bas_session=


Why Should You Care About Google Local?

200 characters max, 200 characters left.


Category: 


Which categories (up to 5) best describe your business?
Ex: Dentist, Wedding Photographer, Thai Restaurant
[Add another category](#)

Be sure to capitalize on additional categories if you have multiple practice areas (we always recommend using as many pre-defined categories as possible, such as “attorney” and “personal injury attorney”).


Category: 

Which categories (up to 5) best describe your business?
Ex: Dentist, Wedding Photographer, Thai Restaurant


Category: 

Category: 

Note: You have chosen a custom category

Category: 

Note: You have chosen a custom category

Category: 

Note: You have chosen a custom category

Google Ranking Factor #4: *General Importance of Claiming LBL*

We’re not quite sure why this factor isn’t number one, seeing as your business doesn’t have much chance of ranking well on Google Local if your Local Business Listing hasn’t been claimed yet. So, if you haven’t claimed your Local Business Listing yet, go back to page 5 for instructions on how to do so.

Google Ranking Factor #5: *Product/Service Keyword in Local Business Listing Title*

Including the keyword that you’d like to rank for in the title of your Local Business Listing page is very important for your LBL to rank well on Google Local.

But you, like 90% of attorneys (especially personal injury attorneys), probably have multiple practice areas. So, how do you fit all of those practice area-based keywords into the title of your listing? We mean,

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

is someone really going to click on your LBL when it shows up in his or her search results as:

"New York Auto Accident Medical Malpractice Workers Compensation Attorney Jim Smith?"

Probably not.

If you have one primary practice area then it makes it easier because you can be a little bit broader. For example, a client of ours, Bob Battle in Richmond, Virginia, only handles DUI/DWI and major traffic violations. Therefore, his Local Business Listing title is:

[Richmond DUI & Reckless Speeding Lawyer-Bob Battle](#)

www.bobbattlelaw.com

Another client of ours, Ben Glass, handles primarily medical malpractice cases in Virginia. His listing is:

 [Virginia Medical Malpractice Attorney Ben Glass -](#)
www.benglasslaw.com
3915 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax - (703) 591-9829
[Directions, hours, and more »](#)

Mike Schafer, of Louisville, Kentucky, handles primarily auto accident cases:

[The Kentucky Accident Attorney, Michael A. Schafer](#) ☆ - [more info »](#)

440 South 7th Street, Louisville, KY - (502) 584-9511

★★★★★ [5 reviews](#) - [Write a review](#) - [1 coupon](#)

"As a victim of a personal injury **accident** myself I can tell you that it is ..."

However, if you don't have a niche practice area and accept a variety of types of cases, you'll need to be broader in your LBL. You might say "well, then I'll just create a Local Business Listing for each of my practice areas," but that's not the answer. When Google Local sees that you have multiple listings all pointing to the same website, it's likely that none of them will rank.

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

The best thing to do is to be as specific as possible and hope that the potential client searching for you knows to search for a “personal injury attorney in Washington, DC” or a “criminal defense attorney in Dallas, Texas.” Don’t forget, you can still work those other practice areas and keywords into your Local Business Listing as categories, description, and even reviews.

Google Ranking Factor #6: *General Importance of Off-Page Criteria*

The ranking factor of General Importance of Off-Page Criteria basically refers to the inbound links that you have coming into your website. As you already know, if you’ve read anything about organic search engine optimization, the quality and quantity of inbound links that you have coming into your website is critical to your website’s search engine rankings. Well, it’s no different for Google Local rankings.

More importantly is that the links coming into your website are from other websites that list your address and phone number, such as directory sites and local review sites. Any time you come across a local review site or directory, be sure to get your site listed.

How can you find some of these sites?

Localeze and InfoUSA automatically submit your site to many of the larger local sites, but there are also some legal sites that you should try to get listed on, like Avvo.com, Martindale-Hubbel.com, Findlaw.com, AttorneyPages.com, etc.

Also, don’t forget to have your address and contact info listed on your blog site or any other websites you might have. Registering with your local Chamber of Commerce usually results in a listing, as well.

One thing you can do to see what sites your competition is listed on is to spy on them and cherry pick their links.

How do you do this?

Simply do a search for what you know populates a Google Local result and that you would like to rank for.

For each of your competitors that populate in the local search results, you can click on “more” or, if they have reviews, click on the “_reviews” link. That will take you to their Local Business Listing page.

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

Scroll down to the bottom of the page where it says "More About This Place."

More about this place

Here is where a number of sites that Google Local is using to pull data from for your competition are listed. Go through them for each competitor and see what links/listings you are able to obtain. This is also good to see what types of other blogs or websites they are using that you may not know about.

Google Ranking Factor #7: *Volume of Customer Reviews Associated With Your Local Business Listing*

and

Google Ranking Factor #8: *General Importance of Customer Reviews*

The number of positive reviews that a local business obtains on Google Local is becoming more and more important to Google Local rankings, and rightfully so.

Remember Mike Schafer from Louisville who we used as an example earlier? Well, he has 5 positive reviews!



It's one of the primary reasons why he (as a solo attorney) ranks number two on Google Local for the search term "Louisville auto accident attorney".

People looking to hire you as an attorney are also very likely to read the reviews that past clients and other attorneys leave on your Local Business Listing, so having a lot of positive reviews about your practice or firm can help with conversion AND rankings.

We don't think it's unreasonable to say that the fact that Mike's Local Business Listing includes five positive reviews makes his listing more likely to result in a contact or case than those without reviews.

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

Here's one five-star review from a satisfied client:

*"As a victim of a personal injury **accident** myself I can tell you that it is important to seek out attorneys who are experienced, trustworthy, and have a track record of success. The Schafer Law office gives you nothing less. The experienced **Kentucky** personal injury lawyer team is successful, honest, and gets fair compensation for their clients."*

and one from another attorney endorsing Mike:

*"Don't make a mistake in your **Kentucky auto** injury case! My friend **Kentucky auto** lawyer Mike Schafer has written a free book to help you with your **auto** injury case. Mike answers all your questions and helps you on the road to recovery. As a lawyer who has handled disability claims for over 29 years, I know it is crucial that you have a lawyer like Mike Schafer who understands the games **Kentucky auto** insurance companies will play with your **auto** crash case. I refer all my clients who have friends or family injured in **Kentucky auto**, motorcycle or truck crash cases to Mike."*

Attorney Nancy Cavey"

Also, see the words in bold? That means that Google Local is also pulling from this content, so be sure to include your keywords in the testimonials if possible.

Do not be afraid to ask for reviews/testimonials from clients you have done a good job for. They will be happy to provide it.

Always be sure to remind past clients and anyone else whom you work with that it would be greatly appreciated if they were to take the time and post a review on your Google Local page, whether it be through your e-mail list or newsletter, your Facebook or Twitter page, or any other type of communication you have with past clients.

Google Ranking Factor #9: General Importance of On-Page Criteria

This ranking factor deals with the "optimization" of your actual business listing. Are your keywords mentioned in your title and categories? Is your description optimized with keywords? Do your reviews include keywords that you would like to rank for?

We think that this particular ranking factor is a little bit unnecessary, as it pretty much ties in everything that we've discussed so far and everything else that we're about to go over. So, to summarize this

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

ranking factor: just be sure to optimize your LBL with as much information as possible.

Google Ranking Factor #10: *Full Address on Contact Page*

This ranking factor, in our opinion, is often overlooked when it comes to Google Local.

Make sure your website's "contact us" page includes the full physical address of your firm or practice. And, if you want to take it one step further, include your address on the website's sidebar, so that it's on every page of your website.

When Google Local sees that your physical address is actually included on your website, it gives them plenty of justification to tie your website to your Local Business Listing, along with all of those other data providers that you are now listed on after reading ranking factor number 2.

Remember, Google Local goes out and verifies EVERYTHING and when they start seeing that the address on your Local Business Listing matches up to the address on your website and all of the other data providers, they will start trusting your Local Business Listing more and more.

Google Ranking Factor #11: *Proximity to Centroid*

The eleventh most important (and, in our opinion, most ridiculous) ranking factor according to the report is the **Proximity to Centroid of City Being Searched**.

In other words, the closer to the center of the city that a business is located in, the better chance that they have of being ranked higher.

When you're about to pick out your office location and are working with your local commercial real estate agent, are you really taking into consideration how close the office is to the "centroid of the city?"

We would hope not - you likely have more important things to worry about.

If an attorney who is not as recognized and has only been practicing law for one year is outranking an attorney who has been nationally-

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

renowned and has been practicing law for thirty years, just because he is in the center of the city, does that seem right?

Luckily, Google Local has revisited this issue and now puts more importance on reviews. A survey was done in 2008 and the Proximity to Centroid ranking factor was number five at the time. Believe it or not, we did see Google Local results a year or so ago that were obviously biased towards businesses that were closer to the center of that city than those that weren't, so it's nice to see this change.

Google Ranking Factor #12: *Quality of Inbound Links*



Here is another factor that may be directly related to organic search engine optimization and yet it still plays a key role in Google Local rankings. Many of the survey participants downplay this and other factors that relate directly to your website, because they have seen Google Local listings previously include those that have no website at all in the top results. Therefore, if listings without websites appear in the top Google Local results, why would it matter if your website has inbound links or not?

This topic is debatable, but we would still say that a) your Local Business Listing including a website (with an address and phone number, along with content based on your geographic location and practice area[s]) is important, and b) the quality of the inbound links coming to that website is just as important.

In fact, we'll throw another variable of this particular ranking factor out there: the link neighborhood of your inbound links is also very important.

Think of it this way: Google Local verifies absolutely everything before showing your LBL in the top results in order to combat spammy entries from showing up and to make sure that the business address, phone number, and additional information is correct and reliable in order to

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

guarantee the legitimacy of these listings to their visitors and anyone else searching on Google Local.

Seeing as it is always extremely easy to get a large quantity of “junk” links from other non-related websites in order to build more authority to your website, don’t you think that Google Local will measure the quality and amount of relevance of the inbound links that your website has to make sure they are indeed quality links vs. some offshore SEO company linking your site from just about anywhere in order to try to pull one over on the search engines?

We think that the quality of inbound links that your website has is important to both organic SEO rankings, as well as Google Local rankings. The motto “quality over quantity” always applies to link building. If you do decide to go out and launch an aggressive link building campaign, make sure you do so with the basics of link building in mind: only try for high authority links and only obtain links from websites that are relevant to your practice or your location.

Google Ranking Factor #13: *Hyperlocal/Web Crawl Citations*

This can be somewhat related to the quality of inbound links ranking factor mentioned at number twelve, but this particular one pertains to the local-based citations having more authority over the nationwide citations.

In other words, if you have a website that lists and reviews attorneys from all over the country, and another website that lists and reviews businesses specifically in your state and/or city, the niche and location-based website listing your website will have more authority than the nationwide website.

Your local chamber of commerce website, city and state-specific directories, websites, and blogs, and any other websites that allow you to list your address, phone number, and website address are very valuable and you should always keep your eyes open for these types of opportunities.

The goal is to have Google Local crawl these particular websites, see your city or state mentioned numerous times in various content, so it will see your website listed on a bunch of different sites, and ultimately give you more authority.

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

Now, can it actually be verified that Google Local prefers these local-based websites vs. nationwide resources? No, and this topic is another heavily debated one. However, most of the local and niche websites that list your business are free or inexpensive, and they can also be good for traffic/phone calls even if they don't help you rise in the Google Local rankings, which is why we would recommend taking the time to get listed on them.

Google Ranking Factor #14: ***Product/Service Keywords in Local Business Description***

We mentioned earlier that "optimizing" your Local Business Listing is important. Keywords being mentioned in your LBL's title, categories, and products can help your listing rank well for certain searches, and you should also try to work your keywords into your description, as well.

One thing you want to try to avoid is writing the description for the search engines and completely ignoring those who actually click on your LBL to find out more information. In other words, don't write your description as:

We are a Maryland personal injury attorney, Maryland auto accident law firm, Baltimore medical malpractice lawyers, and Annapolis injury trial law firm specializing in workers' compensation, etc...

This description doesn't read well and just lists your keywords one after another. Make sure you word the description as if a potential client is reading it and thinking about calling or hiring you, and seeing as the keywords being included in the description are not as important as having them in your title or categories, don't spend too much time overdoing your description with keywords if it sounds ridiculous.

Google Ranking Factor #15: ***Location Keywords in Inbound Links to Website***

This factor is a combination of number 12 and number 13. Again, most of this may be wishful thinking, but those who have studied Google Local would like to hope that websites with quality inbound links and anchor text that includes geo-specific keywords would outrank those that don't.

So, if you have an inbound link to your website from another blog, and the link from that website says:

Why Should You Care About Google Local?

My Friend Gary's Law Firm Site

The Google Local "link juice" for this link wouldn't be as much as if it were:

Arlington Injury Attorney Gary Smith

The reason is that the city is included in the anchor text of that link.

Anchor text links are important for both organic SEO and Google Local rankings, so be sure to find out the anchor text of inbound links coming to your website and "optimizing" the inbound links that you have the ability to change by working keywords into the anchor text of those links.

Other factors that we think are important:

Including City + State in Most/All Website Title Tags - If Google Local is indeed taking into account certain on-page optimization factors of your actual website, then there is no doubt that having your city and state in the title of the website is important, seeing as it's the most influential on-page factor that there is when it comes to organic and local optimization.

City, State in Contact Page Title Tags - If you can't work your city and state into all of your Web pages' titles, then at least make sure they are in the contact page titles, as these probably already include your address and phone number.

Association of LBL Videos- The more info that you provide in your Local Business Listing, the better chance that it will rank. Plus, videos are very good for conversion, so even if these videos don't help you rank better, they leave you with a better chance of someone contacting you or visiting your website for more information.

Association of LBL Photos- Again, the more info you provide, the better off you are.

There are a number of ways that you can increase your Google Local rankings, by either optimizing your Local Business Listing, getting listed on a number of other resources, or even making a few simple website changes. Remember, these ranking factors are almost certainly going to continue to change over the years. Make sure you keep an eye on Google Local ranking trends. Just because these

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ranking factors are important to your Google Local rankings today doesn't mean that they won't change in six months. Therefore, keep checking our website, blog, Facebook page, and other resources listed below, so that you can be sure to stay up-to-date on changes and improvements as they're being made.



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