

## Top tips for selling local SEO

We all know that competition for the top spot on Google is intense and for some industries, it may not be realistic to expect that a small business client will ever reach the highest echelons of the SERPs. A local mom and pop store is unlikely to ever accrue enough SEO juice to topple a behemoth like Amazon or Walmart for example.

As an SEO agency, this can make selling your services to small business owners almost impossible. An opportunity does exist however within the field of local SEO. While it isn't as sheer a cliff face to climb as the main search results, ranking for local search is getting harder. There are two core reasons for this;

1. Google has reduced the size of the local pack over time, switching from seven results to just three. Fewer spots mean more intense competition.
2. More and more data is emerging showing that local search is often driven by strong purchase intent. According to [Wordstream](#), 72% of consumers conducting a local search will visit a physical store within 5 miles of their location.

It's no longer easy for businesses to successfully execute their own local search campaigns but it's also impossible to ignore. As [Search Engine Land columnist Jayson DeMers](#) says, "Now that the internet has become the primary source consumers turn to for local business information, not showing up in local search is tantamount to professional suicide."

As an agency, this gives you a great deal of leverage when it comes to selling your local SEO services. Read on for our top tips to refine your local SEO sales strategy and grow your client list.

### 1. Trash the one-size-fits-all approach

While it's fair to say that the mechanics of a successful local SEO campaign are similar no matter the client ([growing an incredible review profile](#), creating local content, link building, building citations) your sales prospect doesn't want to feel like they're one of a conveyor belt of clients.

Bright Local's Myles Anderson [advises](#) saying less and listening more. "Once you've managed to get a potential customer on the phone, you might feel under pressure to talk quickly and give them as much information as you can. You want them to know what you do and how you can "help" them, after all!

"But in fact, all you're doing is overloading that person with information before you know much about them. This is a real frustration for business owners — and an instant turn-off.

"Business owners know a ton more about their business and market than you probably do. So you need to encourage them to tell you about their business, their customers, their competitors and the challenges they face. Then, you can

use this information to showcase your knowledge and tailor your services to meet their individual needs.”

Shutting up and letting your prospect speak helps you to get to know your potential client quickly. From observing rather than leading the conversation, you should be able to gauge their level of expertise, their pain points and their objectives. Armed with this knowledge, you can create a tailored pitch that really strikes a chord.

## **2. Don't make guarantees**

If your prospect has been burned by SEO agencies in the past – or they are considering making a significant investment in your local optimization solutions – they're likely to ask for guarantees. At the very least, they will want to know what they can expect in return for their spend.

The trick here is to focus on achievable, realistic results. SEO results can't be guaranteed - [Google tells businesses to be wary of SEOs guaranteeing positions](#) so if this is a practice you're guilty of, it might be time to adjust your entire sales strategy.

Instead, focus on things that you can deliver – such as how much contact time your client can expect, how many reports they'll receive and how many man hours you'll spend working on their campaign. Provide projects and forecasts if appropriate but ensure you caveat those predictions with an explanation of why those rankings aren't guaranteed.

## **3. Use statistics in your pitches**

There is an abundance of statistics which highlights the importance of local SEO. Source a crop of compelling figures to include in your presentations to underline the value of what you're selling. Data from authoritative third parties adds credibility, authority and trustworthiness to your pitch. Try these to get started:

- HubSpot has [16 stats](#) which show the importance of local SEO
- Google [data](#) on the importance of micro-moments and near me searches
- The [BrightLocal 2017 Local Consumer Review Survey](#) includes compelling statistics on the importance of reviews for local success

## **4. Showcase your knowledge on your site**

As an SEO agency, you won't need any convincing when it comes to the importance of content but, are you using your blog to offer advice specifically related to local SEO? If not, create a content plan which focuses on local SEO topics. [HubSpot's pillar and cluster approach](#) to content creation will be useful

here. It makes it easier to create both overview and detailed posts around local SEO subjects.

Showcasing your expertise via your blog will likely help you to build your lead pipeline but, you can also pass specific post links to prospects as they relate to questions and topics discussed during the pitch and presentation stages. If for example your lead asks about reviews and this is a topic covered on your blog, you have a great excuse to follow up your meeting with a helpful email linking the prospect to your blog post.

## **5. Explain the secondary benefits**

Many of the activities you'll need to conduct to boost local SEO will have secondary benefits for your client. Take the time to walk through each of these benefits so they appreciate the value for money and usefulness of your service.

Reputation management helps to improve service quality for example. Link-building via involvement in the community can aid with brand building and visibility. If you carry out digital PR to help build local back links, you may spend some time generating local media coverage which can increase footfall in store.

## **6. Manage expectations**

There is nothing worse than working hard to sign a new client only to have to explain a few weeks in that what the client is expecting from you is vastly different to what you've actually sold them. Be upfront about that fact that local SEO is a marathon, not a sprint before contracts are signed. You can do it quickly, which will return short-lived results, or you can invest in it on an ongoing basis, and see better and more stable results in the long run.

It can be frustrating from a client's perspective to see regular debits coming out of the account but very little progress in terms of rankings first off. Along with making secondary benefits clear, being transparent about timeframes from the outset sets the stage for a happier client relationship before a contract is signed.

## **7. Provide report examples**

This is especially important if your client has been burned by SEO agencies in the past. Providing report examples not only helps to paint a clearer picture of your service, it also demonstrates accountability which can swing the pitch in your favor.

This is a chance to show added value too by highlighting analysis and recommendations along with reports – it's easy to download a link report or keyword ranking chart from Google Search Console so indicate the additional expertise that your reports bring to the table.

## **8. Cherry pick relevant client testimonials**

Google advises businesses seeking an SEO agency [to ask questions](#) such as:

- Can you show me examples of your previous work and share some success stories?
- What's your experience in my industry?
- What's your experience in my country/city?

You can turn this to your advantage by having client testimonials relevant to your prospect ready to share. Businesses want to see what you've achieved for firms like them when trying to gauge what value you might bring to their organization. Sharing testimonials from clients in the same industry and the same local area shows that you're comfortable with the job at hand and capable of making a difference. It also demonstrates that you understand their business sector and location and suggests you can hit the ground running if they commission your services.

## **9. Share your local knowledge**

Demonstrate knowledge of the business' location in person. You'll likely be focusing on their local area throughout much of the optimization process so it's good to show that you have an understanding of the foibles of that particular area. This might include referencing local competitors or picking up on an incorrect address listing.

## **10. Pinpoint competitor strengths and weaknesses**

Conduct competitor research ahead of your presentation so that you can show how your prospect's competitors are performing. Explain what they're doing right to be in their position, then share what you'll do differently (or the same but better) to beat them. Small business owners will know their competitors well, and the emotional satisfaction of beating them is a powerful incentive.

## **We'd love to hear your thoughts**

If you're an SEO professional, how do you ensure you ace your local SEO pitches? What's your best sales technique or tip for closing a local SEO contract? We'd love to hear your thoughts and recommendations in the comments below.