

# Local SEO and HTTPS— The Indisputable Marketing Strategies for Better Ranking

*Because businesses that rank  
better, grow faster*





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## Introduction



Being in possession of a small business does not necessarily mean being a small dreamer and a lighter strategist. As Tony Hsieh so aptly put it:

*“Whatever you are thinking, think bigger”*

Size hardly matters when it comes to the progression of a business. The only ventures that are successful and will always remain successful in the times to come are those who think like the customers and provide services that the customers will always come looking for.





For instance, the first thing that we do when looking for a product to buy or a service to call is to open our laptop or our smartphones, and type in the product we need, followed by the place we live in. It's like a reflex for the customers of the 21st century. Now, the million dollar question is, when customers take to the search engine to make their purchasing decisions, will they find your venture there? And if they do, how far along in the list will your name appear?

If this question has you scratching your head and running to the search engine to discover firsthand your business's standings, then you are not paying enough attention to one of the most significant marketing strategy called local Search engine optimization. It's about time you changed that. And while you are in the process of making your online presence better, make sure that once customers begin to approach your business through net searches, they do not fear for their safety or the breach of their privacy by using another great tool called HTTP encryption.

Your business might be small but it can be far more authentic and progressive than the biggest ones with the application of local SEO and HTTP as a dominant part of your marketing strategy.

In this book, we will be discussing just how important local SEO and HTTP is for every business and how it can help them make it past the turnstile of success with proper strategies and futuristic approaches.

## Getting Started With Local SEO



No longer can a business grow or even exist without adopting Local SEO as a domineering part of their marketing strategy. Sure, in the past, a local venture might have enjoyed growth without a local excursion in their inbound marketing campaign. But today, local SEO is called for if success is part of the future plans.

To understand why local SEO is important, simply look at the way we buy things offline. Imagine your sudden need to buy a pair of high-heeled shoes. So you go to the market and surprisingly, the first shop you find is that of shoes. Incidentally, you see just the pair you were looking for right on the front window and that will be end of your shoe hunting experience because you got everything you were looking for placed for you in the right place.



Keeping in view the above scenario, just make a slight change in your imagination and think of this market as your favorite search engine which could be Google, Bing, Yahoo, Baidu and

the likes. Since we now have technology at our fingertips (literally), we will begin our shopping by just typing in our needs on the search engine and look for the availability of the product in our local neighborhood. Here too, you'll be able to find the nearest shops with their products on the first page of the search engine and without much ado, you'll make up your mind and order the shoes you were looking for or drive your car right to the shop front and make your purchases.

It all sounds very convenient and incidental but let us assure you that there is nothing coincidental about this. Their webmasters and marketers have spent hours and days and even months to place the webpage on the desired spot. There are many different strategies to achieve this, but here are some of the most effective ones:

## **1. Verify Accurate Information:**

Every local business must be listed correctly along with its address and contact information. More importantly, all the websites that offer reviews and information about your business niche must also be citing accurate information.

Nothing infuriates customers more than being fed with the wrong details.

## **2. Prepare Content:**

Content, be it in the form of articles or blogs, plays a strategic role in leading the traffic towards the business's website. If you are a newbie, then forget about links and back links and just write creative blogs with the name of your local area. Just make sure that product names and common keywords are incorporated in the blogs. Keywords will make your blogs appear on the front page of the search engine results and the quality of your content will turn your visitors into your customers.

## **3. Reviews Matter:**

No matter how much you praise the integrity of your products and services, potential customers will always take other customers' words over yours. What you need to do is simple. Make sure others who have had a good experience with your products always give a review about it. And in case of bad ones, provide the best compensation you can offer. Remember, people usually forget products but they don't forget the attitude with which they were dealt with.

## **4. List each of your physical locations:**

Better use tech when you have it. Using location services and GPS software makes sure that people can find your brick and mortar store easily for instance. This will ensure top rankings for people who are searching for places in same locality.

The aforementioned four (4) marketing strategies are the groundwork for establishing a solid presence on search engines.

And unless you already have a very high ranking on Google, managing local SEO requires constant work and needs updating of the pages every month to keep them on the top ranks.

### The Reasons behind the Noteworthy Impact of Local SEO on a Business's Success



Gone are the days when local businesses used to rely on ballpark figures to predict their success after a particular marketing strategy. Leaflets, flyers, and other print advertising

techniques were like a foray in the dark; like slipping leaflets for kids' toys under the door of an elderly couple's house that were well past their retirement.

Despite it being all desk work, local SEO is the opposite of that



metaphorical arrow that is released with a blindfold on. In local SEO, the customers who have already made up their mind to buy a product approach the market, and all a business needs to do is make sure it's there at the first call. Local SEO shows a noteworthy impact on the business's growth. Here are some of the biggest reasons that Local SEO is so important:

### **1. Because we are all using technology now:**

We are the iGeneration ; living in the era of smart phones where we have the world on our fingertips. Searching for a local business is just a matter of downloading an app or using the

internet to look for a business as we go by our everyday lives. Local SEO makes sure that no potential customer is lost whether they are using their PC or their smart phone.

## **2. Because Others Have Yet To Learn About It:**

Surprisingly, most regional businesses are naïve about Local SEO and have not established their online presence, which leaves the field clear for you to lay your claim. Those local businesses who have established Local SEO sooner than the rest are already enjoying growth.

## **3. Because Local SEO Exists Where People Do:**

It was a good idea to advertise a business in the local paper when people used to read newspapers avidly. But today, readership of the local papers has decreased by eighty percent, leaving no one to learn of the news from the newspaper. The reason that people are heading to internet browsing for news is why local SEO is a smart technique for marketing your business.

## **4. Because Local SEO Only Targets The Target Market:**

The upshot of local SEO is far greater than any traditional marketing strategies of the past. Thousands of flyers only used to bring a handful of customers to the store. Even mass mailing wasn't that effective. But local SEO, if approached by 10 people, brings in most of them because, local SEO only targets interested customers using related using keywords and postings on related sites. Normal marketing just reaches everyone. If you were running a plumbing company and posted ads everywhere, the best you can do is hope that when people do have a need for plumbing they will remember your business. On the other hand, local SEO will allow you to reach people who need a plumbing service at that moment. People who search for



plumbing services (because something just broke in their plumbing) will reach your website through Google, Bing, or other search services.

### **5. Because Local SEO has a Global Reach:**

The internet reaches people worldwide which is much more than what we can say of print advertising. This far and wide approach opens various new opportunities for shopping. A person can buy something for their loved ones and have it delivered at their home from seas apart, without even moving an inch. Wider approach means more customers, and this kind of opportunity is what turns a local business into an international phenomenon.

### **6. Because Local SEO Can Be Your Business's Extension:**

Most local businesses go on years without much growth or without expanding from one small shop on the street side.



Establishing another brick and mortar store needs a huge investment, and it isn't something which most small store owners can afford. Local SEO, on the other hand, allows small businesses to expand to another location, a virtual one, without requiring a significant investment. This platform reaches out to an even larger population than another brick and mortar store



could ever have, allowing the local business to expand and reach more customers without moving an inch from their home base.

Local SEO is one of the newer approaches to SEO, and Google is encouraging more and more businesses to set out on the path of this new form of marketing. That is why many local SEO opportunities are being offered for free. For instance, local businesses can register their location on Google maps and places for free. These local businesses can also have their business listed in various online directories free of cost, and so far, only 10% of local businesses have harnessed this opportunity. As more local businesses become aware of this, Google may not be so generous.



## The Trailblazing Trends of Local SEO for 2017 and Beyond

Internet marketing saw some mind-blowing developments in the year 2016. Online marketing was at its boom and every month brought new features and new techniques for the marketers to give it their best and get a high conversion rate. While Search Engine Optimization has rapidly gained success and has almost taken over marketing for every niche of business, local businesses were a little late to catch up on the trend and use local search to gain exposure. First introduced by Google in the year 2007, local SEO has come a long way since then. Matter of fact, 2017 only shows promise of some of the best trends to come from local SEO. Here they are:

### **1. Spamming Keywords Are Out:**

We have all firsthand experienced the over-use of keywords for the sake of high inbound traffic. It goes something like “plumbing services in Alabama” “services of plumbing in Alabama” and “Alabama plumbing services” used at least 20 times in 500 words of content. Overusing the same sounding keywords might get these local businesses the ranking they want. However, the kinds of content these keywords produce are scarcely ever authoritative or persuasive. Lexical semantics is the new trend when it comes to content creation; where one keyword is used to form the title and to build the content around it. Instead of stuffing a keyword forcefully, you use the keyword as a seed to grow the content, resulting in organic content that connects with both search engines and the hearts of the readers.



### **2. Social Content is the new King:**

The content available on the website of a local business is not the only thing that helps with search engine ranking. Now, the Search Engine Results Page (SERP) also shows results from the keywords mentioned on social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter and even on Instagram. 2016 recognized this emerging trend and 2017 is definitely appreciating it. With social media posts and even reviews emerging in the search engine results, it has gained significant prominence and already a large number of marketers are taking full advantage of this trend.

### **3. Mobile Phone Optimization will be Elemental:**

In the past, local businesses might have made great progress without optimizing their website for phones. But 2017 is not just bringing this trend as a choice, but as a necessity for those who wish their local SEO endeavors to succeed. The clients and customers are not just staying in one place, they are always on the go and where they are, their mobile phone (or another communication device) is with them. It's high time that local businesses planned their SEO strategies around being mobile-friendly. That is the quickest and most effective method for them to become accessible for new customers.

### **4. Voice Search:**

A large number of people were introduced to the enchanting feature of voice speech for texting and searching last year. But in 2017, this voice search phenomenon is truly expected to become a regular medium for searching. No longer will people type what they are in search of when driving or multi-tasking but will just speak out their desired product and destination and Google will list down results. Now, the only way for a local

business to appear on the SERP is to be very responsive to the



search commands passed on through Siri or Cortana which are the search tools of apple and Microsoft respectively.

Huge enterprises like Uber and Domino's Pizza have already made it possible for their clients to order by speaking. Now, local SEO is allowing small businesses to step into this new feature as well.

### **5. HTTPS Are On The Rise:**

There is more to come about HTTPS later in the book but for now, it will be enough to know that the use of HTTPS will govern online marketing in the year 2017. Safety has always remained a major issue where online purchasing and marketing are concerned, but Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure (HTTPS) has made it safe to transfer data from clients to businesses. The customers will no more worry about their personal information

being exploited and local businesses won't fear for their reputation.

With so much competition and options available, the clients won't take a second to switch from one service to another if they feel their safety is not taken care of. As an added benefit, websites with HTTPS enjoys a better ranking than their contenders.

### 6. Social media will be an even bigger hit:

It is unimaginable to think that social media can get any more of a boost than it has already got in the last couple of years. But as Mark Zuckerberg's or Kevin Systrom's luck would have it, a lot

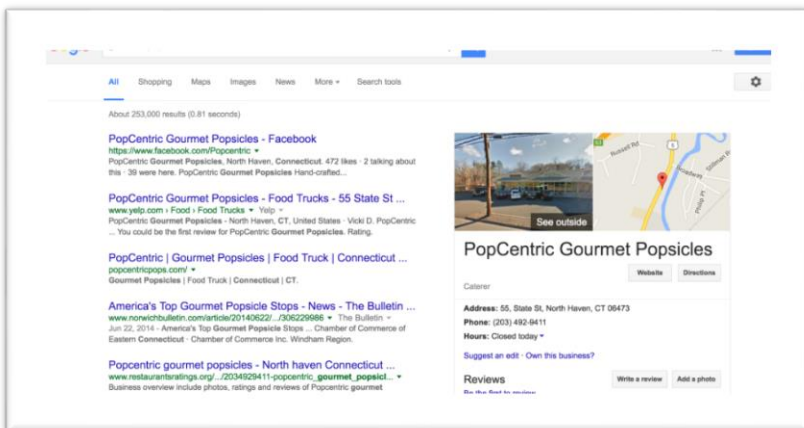
more is to come. A platform where people only used to gather for socializing purposes is now also the place people go to before they buy anything.



Using social media for local businesses is not only cheap, it is also very effective when it comes to increasing your rank in search engine results. Thousands of reviews, posts, activities, and discussions everyday are helping local entrepreneurs direct quality referral traffic toward their business.

## 7. Location Listing:

Survey states that 86% people use Google Maps to look up addresses and locations, and most of them are using mobile phones to do it. Now, most of the time, Google Maps is used to assist the customers to find out the best coffee shop in such and such area or which location serves the best breakfast on weekends and so on. Being a mobile phone user, anyone can imagine how much this feature helps local businesses gain new customers.



Matter of fact, many times, people deviate from their plan because they couldn't find the coffee shop they were looking for because of an improper location listed on the web and head for another which is more clearly mentioned and easier to reach.

Gone are the days when Local Search Engine Optimization and better rankings were limited to keywords, back linking, and content development. The trailblazing trends of Local SEO for 2017 will enable the local businesses to use communities, groups, threads, and even discussions to up their ranking. One thing is for sure, the progressive and advanced trends of local



## Chapter 3

SEO of 2017 will keep the marketers on their toes as they'll try to watch every platform to keep their rankings high.



### Success Stories that can be brought Forth by Active Local SEO Campaigns



Say whatever you might have to say about Google. But one thing cannot be denied is that, the dominating search engine definitely keeps a soft spot for the local businesses that are new to the whole business phenomena. That being said, if Google's bias can be held down and judged critically, then the search engine will pass the test of always guaranteeing best results and also giving a chance to the newer, agile, and promising local businesses. That goes on to say that the search engine doesn't only favor the big enterprises but allows the smaller and more local ones to have their chance at success as well.



This is because Google realized something early on. Sure, enterprises could give Google a lot of money to Google and have their businesses ranked higher, but this will make search engine results worse for users. That is why Google has managed to dominate the search engine for more than a decade – people trust its results. Thus, if a local business is more relevant to a keyword than a billion-dollar corporation, the local business is given priority. Google treats their search result with authenticity like it is a sacred thing, and their users love them for it.

In case a local business is doubtful of their success with the search engine, then allow us to explain what kind of businesses are best suited for local SEO and how:

### **1. Beauty Treatment Services:**

No one likes to travel to faraway places to get their hair and makeup done. Beauty treatments are a weekly thing and most locals are in search of a local salon to avail their services. Now, we can guarantee that a local salon can do really well if they maintain a proper social media page and a website with tons of reviews and testimonials, hundreds of photos, and regular blogs that put a stamp on their expertise. Nothing can stop this business from good rankings and rapid growth.

### **2. Multi-location companies**

Local SEO is not only for small businesses in small places but it is equally beneficial for huge businesses in small places. Everyone knows about the McDonald's franchise in California and San Juan but few would know about the tiny McDonald's outlet in Delhi or Riga. The locals there, or even tourists there, can type in the search bar to look for the nearest McDonald's outlet and have the snack of their choice.



Those brands that have thousands of outlets all over the world can use local SEO to specifically target the local market of each outlet and enjoy success on a local level.

### **3. Emergency Services:**

Ambulances, medics or animal rescue services are mostly small and only available to service one particular local area. These services can benefit largely and even save lives with a well-established local SEO. Matter of fact, their optimization should be so developed and far ahead that their entire information and details could be determined within a few seconds. Voice feature would be most appreciated in these kinds of services.

### **4. Dentists:**

Medical services can benefit greatly with Local SEO. A dental pain or regular dental treatments are not something that people look for in faraway places. They only search for the “best dental services in my city” and the first few results will help them make up their mind. One thing that will expedite their decision in choosing a particular service is the location (the nearer the better) and the reputation.

Google Maps will take care of listing the location and the reviews and testimonials will help them decide how great one dental service is from another. Dental services can go a bit further and even add call options with the search result. If the marketers have done a good job of maintaining the local SEO, then they’ll not only be successful in grabbing new customers but can even make old locals change their mind and try out your now local business.

## 5. Plumbing Services:

A plumbing service is almost always called from the nearest providers, and the decision is made based on which one appeared first on the search engine. As soon as the SERP appears after the search of “Plumbers near me” is typed in, the one that appears on the top with a *call* option is the one that gets the job.

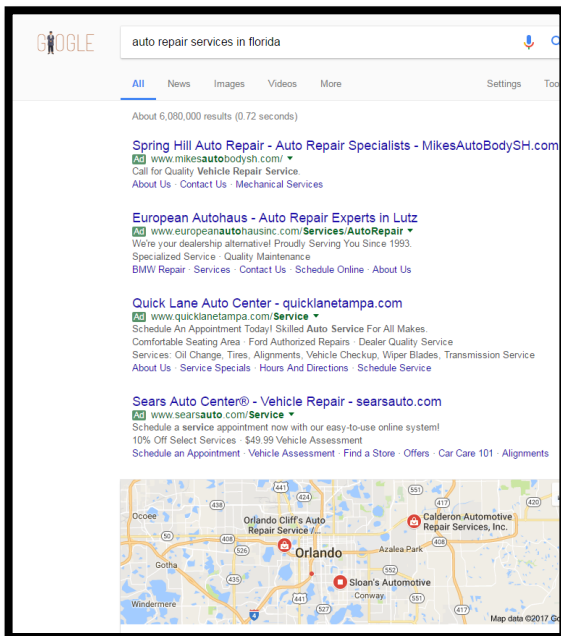
Now it is entirely up to the plumbing service providers how they choose to use local SEO to direct their target traffic to them with a higher conversion rate.

## 6. Food Services:

Food is one thing for which people can drive to distant locations to enjoy a good meal, unless there’s one present in their neighborhood, then they’d definitely prefer it. Cafes, breakfast joints, restaurants, and bars are the joys of local population and preferred by most to see familiar faces around them. In this case, local SEO would have to do a far greater job than just

providing the basic location and contact information. Deals, happy hours, and upcoming gigs must be advertised and updated regularly to keep locals interested.

Also, pizza services need to innovate





and outsmart their competitors if they want to stay in the business for a long time because, pizza is the most ordered food staple in America and if they don't keep their local SEO updated with latest features, then they'll easily be replaced by some other pizza place.

### **7. Repair Shops:**

Repair shops are yet another service in which local dealers reign. No local resident would ever dare go into unknown territory or neighboring town to get their car fixed. Any time the house, PC, laptop, or any electronic item begins to act up, they'll type in the search engine, go through the reviews and call the service immediately. Most people are loyal and long-time customers of repair services. Therefore, the new ones will have to work really smartly, displaying some innovation and creativity to attain and retain customers to grow their business.

Remember that repair shops are only called in times of despair, and the ones that will jump out immediately with the help of better SEO campaigns will be the ones that will be preferred.

## Getting Started with HTTPS

The digital marketing experts are always working on effective ways to use SEO and new Google features for the betterment of the business and for its growth and high ranks. For that reason, it came as a surprise when Google Webmaster announced HTTPS as a ranking signal on August 2014.



But then, after digging a little deeper into the workings of HTTPS, it wasn't a surprise at all because Google has always been an advocate of safe and secure systems. It was just expected that HTTPS

proved to be better for ranking in addition to offering a secure connection to Google.

Let's first understand what HTTPS is:

### **Understanding HTTPS:**

If you are connecting this HTTPS from the one that we see before; URLs as *HTTP://* then you are right to do so. HTTPS stand for Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure and is the secure version of HTTP which we usually find in websites. The advantage of using this HTTP other than for better ranking is to



make a secure encrypted transfer possible from the customer's end to the businesses'.

While many data sensitive sites have already been using this system for secure transfers, it has now become an essential tool to be used for all websites if they want to maintain their reputation, keep the trust of their customers, and prevent confidential data from leaking in addition to gaining a better ranking on the search engine.

### **How HTTPS affects Google's Ranking Signal**

Google has been investing in creating and providing safe and secure services to its worldwide users for a long time now, and suffice to say that it has somewhat been successful in encouraging the use HTTPS.

In the earlier months of 2014, Google began to run websites through tests to see if the sites were using encrypted and protected links. Upon seeing the encouraging results, the search engine decided to use HTTPS in its ranking algorithm. Few search engines ever reveal such information. But whether it was to help out the businesses or to motivate more and more websites to use encrypted connection with HTTPS, Google revealed this information.

What started out as a small call out from Google and was considered a lightweight signal compared to other ranking signals, is now one of the leading trends of SEO for local and big enterprises alike and considered a necessary step by SEO experts.

## From HTTP to HTTPS: How SEO Can Benefit From the Switch



HTTP did a good job when it came to communication, but it did a horrible job when it came to privacy. Over an HTTP connection, it is possible for someone to tell what pages you visit on a website. With HTTPS, the connection between you and the website is encrypted. Therefore, someone can be able to tell that you opened Google.com, but no one will be able to





tell what pages you visited or what you searched – since it is all encrypted.

When you connect to an HTTPS website, an encrypted connection is formed between you and the website.

While HTTPS was announced as the ranking signal back in 2014 and Google clearly declared it's partiality to the secure version, there are still a large number of local and international business websites that have still not adopted it. There are not many reasons for a business to avoid security. There are however a number of reasons for the businesses to avail it.

We are listing down the SEO and trade benefits that come with switching from an HTTP to HTTPS, so people who are confused over the switch can see the wisdom in switching over to HTTPS:

### **1. Better Protection**

As much as we like the internet, we don't trust it. It takes a good amount of time for most people to decide whether to trust a website with their credit card information or not. HTTPS is the protocol that makes the decision for the customers easier because people know that any information from their end that will be transferred to the businesses will be encrypted and safe from any sort of intervention. This security factor makes it even more important for e-commerce websites to make the switch as quickly as possible so that traffic on their website improves.

### **2. No Room for Security Lapses**

We all have seen firsthand or heard of the hack of a website, followed by the business posting notices on all social media account to warn their visitors and customers that their account information may have been compromised. Granted, many



businesses are fairly safe, and it only happens for a few minutes before the business is able to get the control back. However, these few minutes can result in loss of confidential information.

These kind of mishaps can ruin the reputation of a business. HTTPS is an encrypted protocol that has zero patience for tampering and never allows the data manipulators thanks to the encrypted security.

### **3. Boost in Ranking**

As already established, businesses that rank higher definitely perform better, and since Google has already revealed HTTPS as a ranking signal, there remains no doubt of HTTPS bringing better rankings — as long as you've got your content strategy right.

### **4. High Conversion Rate**

Being interested in a product or service offered by the business is not enough. Most people, after making up their mind, step back only because they have doubts about the security and authenticity of the website. Considering the amount of fraudulent activities taking place all across the world through the internet, their concerns are quite rational.



A webpage that switches from HTTP to HTTPS is removing these suspicions from the customer's mind and allowing them to entrust the business with their sensitive information. This is how HTTPS websites end up with a higher conversion rate than HTTP.

HTTPS is the green light that ensures the customers that this transaction is safe and encrypted and the website is securing their information with proper security measures. Businesses that have switched to HTTPS are enjoying more credit card and online payments which in turn is helping them grow their business.



## A Step by Step guide to making the Switch from HTTP to HTTPS

It is not even a matter of choice anymore. If a website wants to remain on top of SEO and run a business in the most safe and efficient manner, then switching from HTTP to HTTPS is obligatory.

However, the process of migration is a bit technical and you must seek a professional to carry it out. The following steps can be taken to make the switch.

### **1. Begin with a Trial**

You wouldn't want to mess up the switch on your first take so it's always smarter to begin on a test server first. This will give you enough practice and help you learn the correct procedure before you implement it on your real server. Given that there's no mess that can't be cleaned up, but starting with a test server will save time.

### **2. Turn Off Content Delivery Network (CDN)**

First things first, disable the CDN plug-in if it is on. It will need to be disabled only temporarily, but it must be done to make the switch from HTTP to HTTPS.

### **3. SSL Certificate**

Next you need to get an SSL certificate and install it on the server. This certificate is a text file which encrypts data on the server upon installation and help to secure all the sensitive communication between a site and its customers.

#### 4. Revise and Update References

It's an easy procedure that can be conducted using CTRL+H and finding all internal link references in the database and replacing them with encrypted HTTPS ones.

#### 5. Updating and Revising Miscellaneous Other Things

- All external links including social media and backlinks must be updated.
- Bring up-to-date all the paid media, marketing, and email automation campaigns so that the encrypted HTTPS is being used.
- Website URL of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+ and YouTube must be updated.
- Update the disavow file.
- Update URL parameter settings

#### 6. Canonical Tags

Canonical tags are important in order to avoid duplication on the website. It helps to redirect to the single most dominant and preferred page. Usually, it is content management system that takes care of this but it must be checked again to ensure no duplication.

#### 7. Hreflang Tag

Hreflang tag tells Google what language is being used on your website. This is very important; if someone using Spanish Google searches for something, Google will give preference to websites using Spanish language. Make sure your language tag is correct.

## 8. Plug-ins and Modules

Modules and plug-ins need to be updated as well so that all insecure content is removed.

## 9. Content Management Systems

Migration from HTTP to HTTPS asks for a complete change in settings in the CMS systems. It can be done using a guidebook. Once this is done, CMS itself takes care of updating many of the afore mentioned features, but it is still important to recheck it to ensure everything is in order.

## 10. Run the Web Crawler

Web crawler, also referred to as web spider or web robot, is a programmed system that conducts a thorough check on the web and makes sure that all the data is up-to-date and secure. Once you are done with the changes in the CMS, make sure you run the Web Crawler to check if everything is secure and up to date.

## 11. Redirects

Redirects are important to make sure that you don't lose customers and visitors in the midst of switching. So, replace and update all the redirects or else the webpage will most likely lose visitors and even experience a drop in rankings. And while you are in the process of fixing redirects, take a moment to check all the URLs that haven't been updated in years that might be broken. Use the help of URL crawlers to run a thorough check.

## 12. Sitemaps

The search engines need to know about the secure and encrypted URL, so that needs updating as well. It will allow the webmasters to list the new URL.



### **13. Enable HTTP Strict Transport Security (HSTS)**

HSTS is a security measure that allows web browsers to communicate with the websites using only the encrypted URL of HTTPS. Therefore, when switching, it is required to clear all the caches and let the browser connect with only one safe URL and avoid confusions.

Enabling HSTS will also allow the website to load faster.

### **14. Enabling the Online Certificate Status Protocol (OCSP)**

This internet protocol checks if it is the security certificate of a server that has been revoked rather than that of a browser. Enabling it will save time that otherwise would be wasted when the browser begins to cross reference and download details from the security certificate authority.

### **15. Update HTTPS on all Platforms**

Once the HTTP has been switched to HTTPS, it is important to add it on the webmaster tools of search engine versions.

Since there are so many minor details to take care of, HTTPS scarcely ever makes the transition smoothly. Most of the time, web masters begin to see a drop in ranking rather than an increase due to failures in updating most analytical features like keyword tracking or introducing the HTTPS on other important platforms.

Therefore, it is important to say that don't expect the changes in ranking at once or very quickly. First, you'll need to ensure that the transition has gone smoothly and every minor and



## Chapter 7

major task has been taken care of and only after that will you be able to see the results clearly.



# Things That Can Go Wrong When Switching To HTTPS

You'll know at once that you have missed one of the important



steps once you begin to face some confusing issues after your transition from HTTP to HTTPS. This mostly happens when even after the new URL, the old one is still actively running. Google has declared and actively practiced the task of favoring the secure URLs over the non-secure one. Thus, while Google takes care of indexing the recent version, it still leaves various



problems to take care of that arises when two websites with the same URLs are in function.

The issues that we are going to list mostly occur when one or more than one of the steps is missed during conversion. Here are some of the most common things that can go wrong when switching from HTTP to HTTPS:

### **1. Replication of Content**

Duplication of text is the consequence of failing to imply step 6 from the last chapter. When two web pages with the same contents are up and running, then a duplication of content occurs on the web. To avoid confusion and misguidance involving analysis of ranking, it would be wise to leverage canonical tags and avoid the problems from the very beginning.

### **2. Weak Links**

The dilution of links goes rapidly down when two URLs of same site are in function. The links shared by two pages at once weakens its strength by a large margin and even canonical tags cannot help with the matter unless we update external links as much and as frequently as possible.

### **3. High Search Engine Crawl Budget**

Web crawler is a software program that is used to check if all the data on the web is up to date. However, when two websites are running at the same time, then the web crawler will be forced to check the data on URLs, HTTP and HTTPS. This will not only take more time but will also double the budget. Large websites will face even more inconvenience because of this.

*What can be done to address these problems?*



In order to take care of the aforementioned problems, it is best to redirect the unsecure version of HTTP URL 301 to the secure and encrypted version of HTTPS all over the linking and navigational structure of the website. Also make sure to do the following:

- ✓ Internal links need to be checked again. Remove all the broken ones and make sure that every single internal link is pointing towards the new HTTPS rather than to the old one.
- ✓ XML sitemaps must be updated with the new HTTPS URL.
- ✓ HTTPS version of the website must at once be updated in the Google and Bing webmaster tools including the www and non-www version of the HTTPS URL.
- ✓ Whether Google picks it up or not, you must add the HTTPS version under the preferred domain setting.

## Lessons to Learn From the Highest Converting Websites

There is always something to learn from the best and when it comes to figuring out which website is the most successful one;



local or otherwise. It can be deduced with the help of its conversion rate. It goes without saying that the website with the highest conversion rate has uncovered the mystery of web marketing.

The best part about these websites is that new start-ups or the struggling ones can learn a lot from these websites by observing some of their best features. While HTTPS is a known factor for better ranking, it is only one part of it. There are several other factors that contribute to better ranking and better SEO. Local



SEO too can take some pointers from these sites. Let's have a look at what these websites are doing right:

### **1. Absence of Irritating Sign-up Forms**

A sign up form thrust upon the screens of the visitors is not going to tempt them into signing up faster. Ironically, it is the opposite that works better or at least it did for the internet software company Vendio.

When Vendio had a sign up form on their landing page, their conversion rate was just okay. Upon some observation, they figured out that maybe it was some of the fields on the sign-up form that was rankling the visitors. Therefore, they decided to put on a different page. It was a dangerous risk as many visitors avoid clicking on any more links unless they are really interested. Fortunately, for Vendio it worked and they experienced an increase in their conversion rate – it became more than double of what it was before.

### **2. Value Propositions Are Explicit and Clear**

The best and the most unique offer of the business must be mentioned first and foremost without any delay. These one-lined statements should be attractive enough to give a reason to the visitors as to why they should explore further and take interest in the services and products the webpage has to offer.

One such example is that of Lyft. In just a few clear and concise words, Lyft was not only able to convey what it has to offer but also successfully targeted two kinds of customers at once. Another great example is that of MailChimp. Open the page and within seconds the customers would know what the business is all about. Value propositions are the one chance for websites to not only stand out but even outshine the toughest of their

competitors with just few powerful and creative words. Also, note that there are no jargons or technical terms in abundance - just use simple everyday language for everyday people.

### 3. Easier to Navigate

People rarely have time to navigate the twists and turns in a website. In fact, many visitors will disregard a service on the sole basis of complicated website even if the services offered are priceless. It has been observed by the experts that websites that are easier to navigate have a much higher conversion rate. It is important to design the website with clear navigational plans so that visitors can easily find their way to the landing page and to the page where they can easily sign-up for your services.

### 4. Shorter Forms

No one has enough time or patience to fill long forms asking for unnecessary details. Keep it short and related and ask for

information that visitors can provide within seconds without having to go look for it or open a search engine to find the correct details. Most people change up their mind on the sole basis of the length of the form. If the

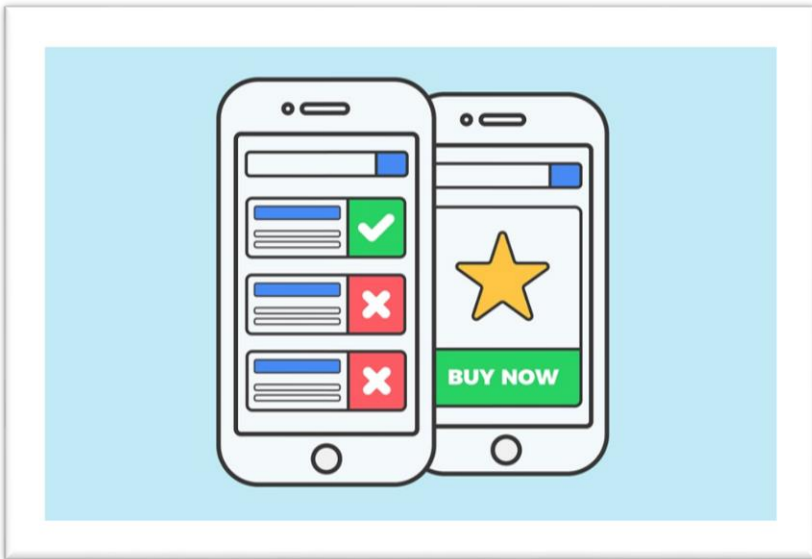
The image displays two web forms side-by-side. The left form is titled 'Member Login' and contains two input fields: 'Email' and 'Password'. Below these is a 'Sign in' button. At the bottom, there are two links: 'Remember me' (with a checked checkbox) and 'Forgot password?'. The right form is titled 'Register' and contains five input fields: 'Full Name', 'Username', 'Email', 'Password', and 'Confirm Password'. Below these is a 'Submit' button. Both forms have a blue background with white text and input fields.

visitor has even clicked the sign-up form, it is because they are prepared to sign-up for your services; the worst thing a website

can do is make them run away after looking at the complicated form.

### 5. Mobile Sites:

It's no secret that companies that focus on their mobile site are enjoying soaring traffic and why not, it makes complete sense after all. People today spend most of their time in using their mobile devices. So naturally, when they wish to surf, shop or research they'll be tapping away in their cell phones. A company without a mobile site will face major setbacks because of it.



Look at any successful company and you'll find that their mobile sites are very well designed.

And it is not just an observation of a third party but Google too is advising webmasters to shift their focus to mobile sites and help create websites that work smoothly and easily on mobile phones.

## 6. Variation in Buttons:

The theory of color psychology works perfectly fine with marketing and branding. A great number of websites experienced the difference first hand and not a minor difference, but a statistically significant one as they saw a rise in the percentage of their Click-through rate.

A simple act of changing the call to action button from green to red can do wonders.

## 7. Visual Appeal:

A visually appealing website will be used more by customers. For an example of a well-designed website, simply look at Hubspot. This website has been able to combine all the winning factors of a successful page in addition to appearing beautiful to the visitors. The end result is (not surprisingly) a high conversion rate. The Hubspot webpage is simple, small, and straight to the point. Minimum words are used to get the message across, the CTA is so aptly placed that it actually gets difficult not to click the button. Their descriptions are briefly worded, their blogs daily updated, and each one ends with a separate call to action, hence increasing their conversion rate even more.

## 8. Engaging Taglines:

Words have the power to change lives, which is why it is pretty understandable how a few engaging words can tempt people to click a button. The key is in simplicity and depth. Let's look at some of them:

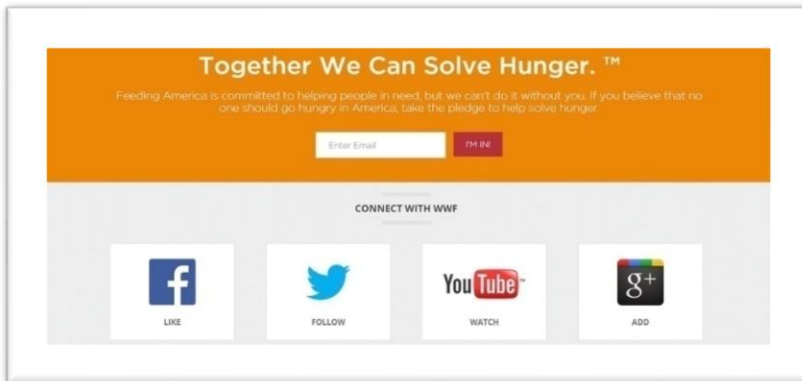
- ✓ Fighting Ignorance since 1973 (It's taking longer than we thought)
- ✓ Stories are better in Color



- ✓ Delivering quality oohs and aaahs since 2000
- ✓ Financial talk for the rest of us

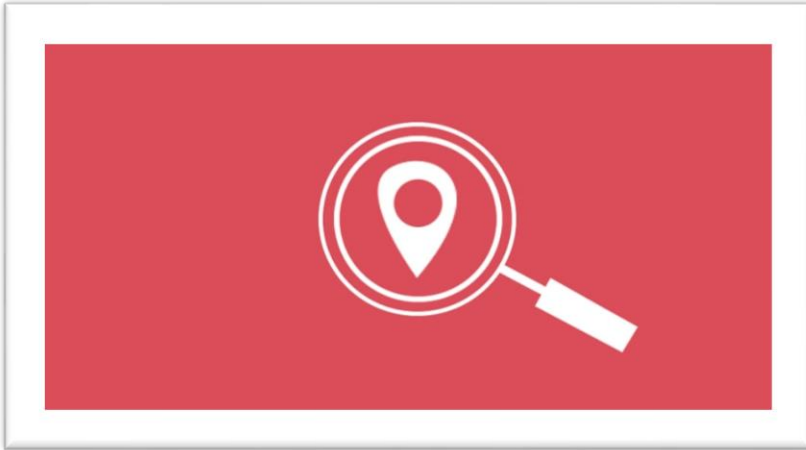
All of these taglines are soon followed by a call-to-action and rarely fail to tempt the visitors to click away.

A business could be small and just in its days of infancy. Yet, there is nothing that can stop it from adopting a local SEO strategy and taking ideas from some of the most successful digital marketing strategies.





### Closing Thoughts on Local SEO



We cannot stress the importance and value of a local search presence for the success of a local business enough. We have already discussed in detail the benefits and real-life examples to drive the point home. A strong local presence can be established in two ways; by yourself (if you have enough knowledge, skills and expertise in the niche), or you can hire experts.

By now we all know what good local SEO can bring to a business; the rankings will be better, the traffic will be high, domain authority will be good, which once again will help with better rankings and so on. We are well aware of the whys and technicalities behind local SEO but have you ever wondered how it affects a simple buyer looking to acquire something with the help of the World Wide Web?



Allow us to explain how:

- **The Webpage Gets The Vote Of Confidence:**

Think about this carefully. Would you believe someone who lists down his own strengths and strong points to you? Or there's more of a chance of you believing another group of people who refer that person to you? This probably doesn't need to be said but the latter strategy would work better.

Similarly, no one would be willing to trust a small local business unless it has been referred by other sources. Local SEO achieves it by utilizing authoritative directories link to the local business. It's like a trusted entity is vouching for a local business and it attracts the customers like flies to honey.

- **The Local SEO Ends Up In A Complete Marketing Makeover:**

Apparently, there are various shortcuts that can instantly raise the rankings of a local businesses' website, but they hardly produce lasting results. Once a local business begins to work on their SEO strategies on raising the website's authority, and on increasing their rankings, the rankings are instantly improved and last for a long time. These methods end up in organic search and have more conversion rates.

Therefore, while reviving or building a local presence might seem like too much drudgery, it will help you build up a completely new marketing strategy and presence. And before you realize it, you'll have a completely updated, trending and high-ranking website.

- **It Gets Rid Of The Mess:**

Your webpage is important and could never be treated like a bulletin board in your room, which is usually a mess with an assortment of creative pieces and things whose more suitable place would be inside the dustbin.

Though, local SEO takes time, but by the end of the whole procedure, the local businesses' website emerges as a cleaned up, focused, and more developed piece of marketing. From then on it is just a bit of tweaking here and there and the business will be enjoying a well-developed, up-to-date and flawless local SEO presence in the search engine.



## Closing Thoughts on HTTPS

One thing is for sure - HTTPS is here to stay which means that in the near future, the HTTP protocol will vanish from the face of



the Internet. And it is not an opinion or a foresight but a fact because of the stance taken up by the leading browsers. These browsers are soon going to standardize HTTPS and will no longer support the unprotected HTTP protocol. But why wait for the browsers to ban them before making the switch? It's not like a web page itself won't be benefitting from HTTPS.

Fortunately, the switching process itself is simple enough and can be implemented with some expertise and careful planning.

HTTPS offers more than just secure surfing; it also takes care of the Achilles heel of every business: the confidential information their clients trust them with. With disasters that happened with Home Depot, TJX, and AOL (among many others), we got to see the living example of what happens when highly confidential information gets leaked. Let their sufferings be our lesson and switch to HTTPS at once.



## End Note

The days when international and local businesses used to pay the print media for high exposure are behind us. While the rules of marketing are still the same, the marketing platform has entirely changed. We live in the age of iGeneration, where kids enjoy the availability of internet technology from a very early age. Today, nearly half of the world's population has access to internet whereas 81% population of the developed countries has the internet on their fingertips.

This transition from print media to digital media was slow but over the course of 23 years it completely took over. Today, no business can survive in the market without having a very strong digital presence. And this rule applies to both local and international businesses.

The only setback to this platform is safety concern. People still hesitate over sharing their personal information on the internet for fear of exploitation and misuse, and there are several incidents that have given them a reason to. The increasing use of HTTPS will take care of this problem too, and the way internet giant Google is encouraging it, before long, it will be a standard.

In this age, a business just needs to focus on increasing their ranking on the search engine, generate organic search result for the customers, and voila! that right there is their recipe to success.

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