B2B Local Search Marketing: A Guide to Hidden Opportunity



Is a local business you're marketing missing out on a host of B2B opportunities? Do B2B brands even qualify for local SEO?

If I say "B2B" and you think "tech," then you're having the same problem I was finding reliable information about local search marketing for business-to-business models. While it's true that SaaS companies like Moz, MailChimp, and Hootsuite are businesses which vend to other businesses, their transactions are primarily digital. These may be the types of companies that make best-of B2B lists, but today let's explore another realm in which a physical business you promote is eligible to be marketed *both locally and as a B2B*.

Let's determine your eligibility, find your B2B opportunities, identify tips specific to your business model, analyze an outreach email, explore your content with a checklist, and find an advantage for you in today's article.

Seeing how Google sees you

First to determine whether Google would view your brand as a *local* business, answer these two questions:

1. Does the business I'm marketing have a physical location that's accessible to the public? This can't be a PO Box

or virtual office. It must be a real-world address.
2. Does the business I'm marketing interact face-to-face with its customers?

If you answered "yes" to both questions, continue, because you've just met Google's local business guidelines.

Seeing your B2B opportunity

Next, determine if there's a component of your business that already serves or could be created to serve other businesses.

Not totally sure? Let's look at Google's categories.

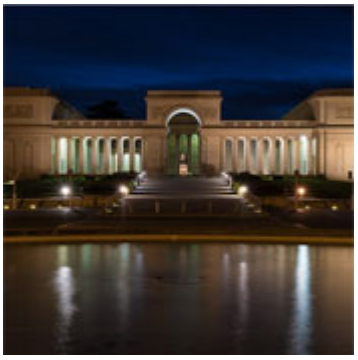
Out of the 2,395 Google My Business Categories listed here, there are at least 1,270 categories applicable to B2B companies. These include companies that are by nature B2B (wholesalers, suppliers) and companies that are B2C but could have a B2B offering (restaurants, event sites). In other words, more than half of Google's categories signal to B2B-friendly companies that local marketing is an opportunity.

Let's look at some major groups of categories and see how they could be fine-tuned to serve executive needs instead of only consumer needs:



Food establishments (restaurants, cafes, food trucks, caterers, etc.) can create relationships with nearby employers by offering business lunch specials, delivery, corporate catering, banquet rooms, and related B2B services. This can work especially well for restaurants located in large business

districts, but almost any food-related business could create a corporate offering that incentivizes loyalty.



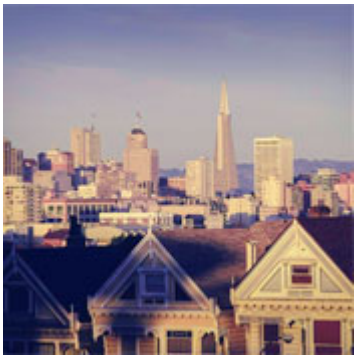
Major attractions (museums, amusements, cultural centers, sports centers, etc.) can create corporate packages for local employers seeking fun group activities. Brands looking to reduce implicit bias may be especially interested in interacting with cultural groups and events.



Professional services (realty, financial, printing, consulting, tech, etc.) can be geared towards corporate needs as well as individuals. A realtor can sell commercial properties. A printer can create business signage. A computer repair shop can service offices.



Personal services (counseling, wellness, fitness, skill training, etc.) can become corporate services when employers bring in outside experts to improve company morale, education, or well-being.



Home services (carpet cleaning, landscaping, plumbing, contracting, security, etc.) can become commercial services when offered to other businesses. Office buildings need design, remodeling, and construction and many have lounges, kitchens, restrooms, and grounds that need janitorial and upkeep services. Many retailers need these services, too.



Entertainers (comedians, musicians, DJs, performance troupes, etc.) can move beyond private events to corporate ones with special package offerings. Many brands have days where children, family members, and even pets are welcomed to the workplace, and special activities are planned.



Retailers (clothing, gifts, equipment, furniture, etc.) can find numerous ways to supply businesses with gear, swag, electronics, furnishings, gift baskets, uniforms, and other necessities. For example, a kitchen store could vend breakfast china to a B&B, or an electronics store could offer special pricing for a purchase of new computers for an office.



Transportation and travel services (auto sales and maintenance, auto rentals, travel agencies, tour guides, charging stations, etc.) can create special packages for businesses. A car dealer could sell a fleet of vehicles to a food delivery service, or a garage could offer special pricing for maintaining food trucks. A travel agency could manage business trips.

As you can see, the possibilities are substantial, and this is all apart from businesses that are classic B2B models, like manufacturers, suppliers, and wholesalers who also have physical premises and meet face-to-face with their clients. See if you've been missing out on a lucrative opportunity by examining the following spreadsheet of every Google My Business Category I could find that is either straight-up B2B or could create a B2B offering:

See local B2B categories

The business I’m marketing qualifies. What’s next?

See which of these two groups you belong to: either a B2B company that hasn’t been doing local SEO, or a local business that hasn’t created a B2B offering yet. Then follow the set of foundational tips specific to your scenario.

If you’re marketing a B2B company that hasn’t been doing local SEO:

1. Know that the goal of local SEO is to make you as visible as possible online to any neighbor searching for what you offer so that you can win as many transactions as possible.
2. Read the Guidelines for Representing your business on Google to be 100% sure your business qualifies and to familiarize yourself with Google’s rules. Google is the dominant player in local search.
3. Make sure your complete, accurate name, address, and phone number is included in the footer of your website and on the Contact Us page. If you have multiple locations, create a unique page on your website for each location, complete with its full contact information and useful text for website visitors. Make each of these pages as unique and persuasive as possible.
4. Be sure the content on your website thoroughly describes your goods and services, and makes compelling offers about the value of choosing you.
5. Make sure your website is friendly to mobile users. If you’re not sure, test it using Google’s free mobile-friendly test.
6. Create a Google My Business profile for your business if you don’t already have one so that you can work towards

ranking well in Google's local results. If you do have a profile, be sure it is claimed, accurate, guideline-compliant and fully filled out. This cheat sheet guide explains all of the common components that can show up in your Google Business Profile when people search for your company by name.

7. Do a free check of the health of your other major local business listings on Moz Check Listing. Correct errors and duplicate listings manually, or to save time and enable ongoing monitoring, purchase Moz Local so that it can do the work for you. Accurate local business listings support good local rankings and prevent customers from being misdirected and inconvenience.
8. Ask for, monitor, and respond to all of your Google reviews to improve customer satisfaction and build a strong, lucrative reputation. Read the guidelines of any other platform (like Yelp or TripAdvisor) to know what is allowed in terms of review management.
9. Build real-world relationships within the community you serve and explore them for opportunities to earn relevant links to your website. Strong, sensible links can help you increase both your organic and local search engine rankings. Join local business organizations and become a community advocate.
10. Be as accessible as possible via social media, sharing with your community online in the places they typically socialize. Emphasize communication rather than selling in this environment.

If you're marketing a local business that hasn't created a B2B offering yet:

1. Research your neighborhood and your community to determine what kinds of businesses are present around you. If you're not sure, reach out to your local Chamber of Commerce or a local business association like AMIBA to see if they have data they can share with you. Doing

searches like “Human Resources Event Seattle” or “People Ops Event Seattle” can bring up results like this one naming some key companies and staffers.

2. Document your research. Create a spreadsheet with a column for why you feel a specific business might be a good fit for your service, and another column for their contact information.See if you can turn up direct contact info for the HR or People Ops team. Phone the business, if necessary, to acquire this information.
3. Now, based on what you’ve learned, brainstorm an offering that might be appealing to this audience. Remember, you’re trying to entice other business owners and their staff with something that’s special for them and meets their needs..
4. Next, write out your offering in as few words at possible, including all salient points (who you are, what you offer, why it solves a problem the business is likely to have, available proof of problem-solving, price range, a nice request to discuss further, and your complete contact info). Keep it short to respect how busy recipients are.
5. Depending on your resources, plan outreach in manageable batches and keep track of outcomes.
6. Be sure all of your online local SEO is representing you well, with the understanding that anyone seriously considering your offer is likely to check you out on the web. Be sure you’ve created a page on the site for your B2B offer. Be sure your website is navigable, optimized and persuasive, with clear contact information, and that your local business listings are accurate and thorough – hopefully with an abundance of good reviews to which you’ve gratefully responded.
7. Now, begin outreach. In many cases this will be via email, using the text you’ve created, but if you’ve determined that an in-person visit is a better approach, invest a little in having your offer printed nicely so that you can give it to the staff at the place of

business. Make the best impression you possibly can as a salesperson for your product.

8. Give a reasonable amount of time for the business to review and decide on your offer. If you don't hear back, follow up once. Ideally, you're hoping for a reply with a request for more info. If you hear nothing in response to your follow-up, move on, as silence from the business is a signal of disinterest. Make note of the dates you outreached and try again after some time goes by, as things may have changed at the business by then. Do, however, avoid aggressive outreach as your business will appear to be spamming potential clients instead of helping them.

As indicated, these are *foundational* steps for both groups — the beginnings of your strategy rather than the ultimate lengths you may need to go to for your efforts to fully pay off. The amount of work you need to do depends largely on the level of your local competition.

B2B tips from Moz's own Team Happy

Moz's People Ops team is called Team Happy, and these wonderful folks handle everything from event and travel planning, to gift giving, to making sure people's parking needs are met. Team Happy is responsible for creating an exceptional, fun, generous environment that functions smoothly for all Mozzers and visitors.

I asked Team Happy Manager of Operations, Ashlie Daulton, to share some tips for crafting successful B2B outreach when approaching a business like Moz. Ashlie explains:

- We get lots of inquiry emails. Do some research into our company, help us see what we can benefit from, and how we can fit it in. We don't accept every offer, but we try to stay open to exploring whether it's a good fit for the office.

- The more information we can get up front, the better! We are super busy in our day-to-day and we can get a lot of spam sometimes, so it can be hard to take vague email outreach seriously and not chalk it up to more spam. Be real, be direct in your outreach. Keeping it more person-to-person and less "sales pitchy" is usually key.
- If we can get most of the information we need first, research the website/offers, and communicate our questions through emails until we feel a call is a good next step, that usually makes a good impression.

Finally, Ashlie let me know that her team comes to decisions thoughtfully, as will the People Ops folks at any reputable company. If your B2B outreach doesn't meet with acceptance from a particular company, it would be a waste of your time and theirs to keep contacting them.

However, as mentioned above, a refusal one year doesn't mean there couldn't be opportunity at a later date if the company's needs or your offer change to be a better fit. You may need to go through some refinements over the years, based on the feedback you receive and analyze, until you've got an offer that's truly irresistible.

A sample B2B outreach email

> *"La práctica hace al maestro."*
> *– Proverb*

Practice makes perfect. Let's do an exercise together in which we imagine ourselves running an awesome Oaxacan restaurant in Seattle that wants to grow the B2B side of our business. Let's hypothesize that we've decided Moz would be a perfect client, and we've spent some time on the web learning about them. We've looked at their website, their blog, and have read some third-party news about the company.

We found an email address for Team Happy and we've crafted our outreach email. What follows is that email + Ashlie's honest, summarized feedback to me (detailed below) about how our fictitious outreach would strike her team:

Good morning, Team Happy!

When was the last time Moz's hardworking staff was treated to tacos made from grandmother's own authentic recipe? I'm your neighbor Jose Morales, co-owner with my abuela of Tacos Morales, just down the street from you. Our Oaxacan-style Mexican food is:

– Locally sourced and prepared with love in our zero-waste kitchen
– 100% organic (better for Mozzers' brains and happiness!) with traditional, vegan, and gluten-free options
– $6–$9 per plate

We know you have to feed tons of techies sometimes, and we can effortlessly cater meals of up to 500 Mozzers. The folks at another neighboring company, Zillow, say this about our beautiful food:

"The best handmade tortillas we've ever had. Just the right portions to feel full, but not bogged down for the afternoon's workload. Perfect for corporate lunches and magically scrumptious!"

May I bring over a complimentary taco basket for a few of your teammates to try? Check out our menu here and please let me know if there would be a good day for you to sample the very best of Taco Morales. Thank you for your kind consideration and I hope I get the chance to personally make Team Happy even happier!

Your neighbors,
Jose y Lupita Morales
Tacos Morales

www.tacosmorales.com
222 2nd Street, Seattle – (206) 111-1111

Why this email works:

- We’re an inclusive office, so the various dietary options catch our eye. Knowing price helps us decide if it’s a good fit for our budget.
- The reference to tech feels personalized – they know our team and who we work with.
- It’s great to know they can handle some larger events!
- It instills trust to see a quote from a nearby, familiar company.
- Samples are a nice way to get to know the product/service and how it feels to work with the B2B company.
- The menu link, website link, and contact info ensure that we can do our own exploring to help us make a decision.

As the above outreach illustrates, Team Happy was most impressed by the elements of our sample email that provided key information about variety, price and capacity, useful links and contact data, trust signals in the form of a review from a well-known client, and a one-on-one personalized message.

Your business is unique, and the precise tone of your email will match both your company culture and the sensibilities of your potential clients. Regardless of industry, studying the above communication will give you some cues for creating your own from the viewpoint of speaking personally to another business with *their needs* in mind. Why not practice writing an email of your own today, then run it past an unbiased acquaintance to ask if it would persuade them to reply?

A checklist to guide your website content

Your site content speaks for you when a potential client wants to research you further before communicating one-on-one. Why invest both budget and heart in what you publish? Because 94% of B2B buyers reportedly conduct online investigation before purchasing a business solution. Unfortunately, the same study indicates that only 37% of these buyers are satisfied with the level of information provided by suppliers' websites. Do you see a disconnect here?

Let's look at the key landing pages of your website today and see how many of these boxes you can check off:

My content tells potential clients…

☑ What my business name, addresses, phone numbers, fax number, email addresses, driving directions, mapped locations, social and review profiles are

☑ What my products and services are and why they meet clients' needs

☑ The complete details of my special offers for B2B clients, including my capacity for fulfillment

☑ What my pricing is like, so that I'm getting leads from qualified clients without wasting anyone's time

☑ What my USP is – what makes my selling proposition unique and a better choice than my local competitors

☑ What my role is as a beneficial member of the local business community and the human community, including my professional relationships, philanthropy, sustainable practices, accreditations, awards, and other points of pride

☑ What others say about my company, including reviews and

testimonials

☑ What my clients' rights and guarantees are

☑ What value I place on my clients, via the quality, usefulness, and usability of my website and its content

If you found your content lacking any of these checklist elements, budget to build them. If writing is not your strong suit and your company isn't large enough to have an in-house content team, hire help. A really good copywriter will partner up to tell the story of your business while also accurately portraying its unique voice. Expect to be deeply interviewed so that a rich narrative can emerge.

In sum, you want your website to be doing the talking for you 24 hours a day so that every question a potential B2B client has can be confidently answered, prompting the next step of personal outreach.

How to find your B2B advantage

Earlier, we spoke of the research you'll do to analyze the business community you could be serving with your B2B offerings, and we covered how to be sure you've got the local digital marketing basics in place to showcase what you do on the web. Depending on your market, you could find that investment in either direction could represent an opportunity many of your competitors have overlooked.

For an even greater advantage, though, let's look directly *at* your competitors. You can research them by:

1. Visiting their websites to understand their services, products, pricing, hours, capacity, USP, etc.
2. Visiting their physical premises, making inquiries by phone, or (if possible) making a purchase of their products/services to see how you like them and if there's anything that could be done better

3. Reading their negative reviews to see what their customers complain about
4. Looking them up on social media, again to see what customers say and how the brand handles complaints
5. Reading both positive and negative media coverage of the brand

Do you see any gaps? If you can *dare to be different* and fill them, you will have identified an important advantage. Perhaps you'll be the only:

- Commercial cleaning company in town that specializes in servicing the pet-friendly hospitality market
- Restaurant offering a particular type of cuisine at scale
- Major attraction with appealing discounts for large groups
- Commercial printer open late at night for rush jobs
- Yoga instructor specializing in reducing work-related stress/injuries

And if your city is large and highly competitive and there aren't glaring gaps in available services, try to find a gap in service *quality*. Maybe there are several computer repair shops, but yours is the only one that works weekends. Maybe there are a multitude of travel agents, but your eco-tourism packages for corporations have won major awards. Maybe yours is just one of 400+ Chinese restaurants in San Francisco, but the only one to throw in a free bag of MeeMee's sesame and almond cookies (a fortune cookie differentiator!) with every office delivery, giving a little uplift to hardworking staff.

Find your differentiator, put it in writing, put it to the fore of your sales process. And engineer it into consumer-centric language, so that hard candy buttons with chocolate inside them become the USP that "melts in your mouth, not in your hands," solving a discovered pain point or need.

B2B marketing boils down to service

> *“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.”*
> *– Charles Dickens*

We’re all in business to serve. We’re all helpers. At Moz, we make SEO easier for digital and local companies. At your brand, _____?

However you fill in that blank, you’re in the business of service. Whether you’re marketing a B2B that’s awakening to the need to invest in local SEO or a B2C on the verge of debuting your new business-to-business offering, your project boils down to the simple question,

“How can I help?”

Looking thoughtfully into your brand’s untapped capacities to serve your community, coupled with an authentic desire to help, is the best groundwork you can lay at the starting point for satisfaction at the finish line.

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