

Local SEOs most focused on link building and content development, report finds

In addition to organic tactics, nearly 80% of local marketers are buying ads on Google. That's 10% more than last year, according to a newly released survey of 1,300 local marketing agencies, small businesses (SMBs) and multi-location enterprises from Moz.

Budgets cut but mostly upbeat. The survey asked a wide range of questions; among other topics, about the impact of COVID-19 on marketing budgets. The majority (70%+) said they were dealing with cuts, though "74% believe that business-as-usual will return within a year of safety orders being lifted." Paid media, social and localized web content were more often cut than SEO, though local link building was in the middle of the list.

Asked what SERP features they were most focused on, these marketers responded: 1) featured snippets, 2) local packs, 3) Google Business Profile and 4) "we don't have a SERP feature strategy." Consistent with the zero-click narrative, 77% of respondents said they agreed with the statement that Google (Business Profiles) are "the new homepage" for local businesses.

Local link building strategy with highest ROI

Source: Moz State of Local SEO Industry

Link building most sought after. The top local SEO tactics where marketers wanted to invest more were the following:

1. Local link building – 18%
2. Local content development – 15%
3. On-site optimization – 13%
4. Technical analysis of ranking/traffic/conversions – 9%
5. Website design – 8%
6. Review management – 7%
7. Social media – 6%
8. Email marketing – 5%
9. Technical needs – 4%
10. Schema – 4%

Moz observed that highly competitive industries such as automotive, real estate and legal were “clamoring the loudest for devoted link building resources.” **For enterprises**, by comparison, the top items on the local SEO tactical wish list were:

1. Review management – 13.9%
2. Local content development – 13.2%
3. On-site optimization – 13.2%
4. Local link building – 11.1%
5. Technical analysis for ranking/traffic/conversions – 10.4%
6. Website design – 9%
7. Schema – 5.6%
8. Other Google Business Profile features management – 5.6%
9. Technical needs – 4.2%
10. Social media – 3.5%

In terms of link building, content development, direct requests and sponsorships were the top three strategies with the highest ROI, according to the survey (see graphic above).

Uncertain about ranking impact. Three-fourths of respondents said that they believe “use of Google My Business profile features (e.g., Posts, Q&A) impacts rankings in the local pack.” That answer is partly correct. While some elements of GMB do impact local rankings, the local SEO consensus is that

Posts and Q&A do not impact local rankings. Reviews and photos, by comparison, do have an impact.

Asked about where local SEO resides within the organization, most often (48% of the time) it was located in the marketing department. Alternatively, it fell under the control of the business owner (15%), account managers (9.1), webmaster (6.6%), IT department (3.4%) and other groups. Most local marketers (68%) reported they were using two to five local SEO tools, while 12% were using six or more; 20% used either none or one.

Why we care. For the majority of U.S. businesses that have a physical presence or service area, local SEO is an essential part of digital marketing. Yet it remains a complex and evolving sub-discipline of SEO complicated by a good deal of confusion and inaccurate information.

*Join me, GatherUp's **Mike Blumenthal**, SterlingSky's **Joy Hawkins** and LocalSEO Guide's **Andrew Shotland** as we do some myth-busting, ranting and offer local SEO best practices on a **special edition of Live with Search Engine Land** as part of the SMX Next, June 24 at 4:15 – 5:00 EDT.*

About The Author

Greg Sterling is a Contributing Editor to Search Engine Land, a member of the programming team for SMX events and the VP, Market Insights at Uberall.

<http://feeds.searchengineland.com/~r/searchengineland/~3/GDk28>

Y8iah8/local-seos-most-focused-on-link-building-and-content-development-report-finds-335976