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Does changing your business phone number affect SEO?

30-second summary:

- Although a business phone number isn’t as tough on your SEO as a complete rebrand, changing it can have an impact on your SEO.
- Preserving NAP consistency should be your primary goal when changing your phone number.
- Your marketing strategy can help make the transition easier for your customers, too, as you can notify them of the change ahead of time.
- The key goal in addition to retaining your ranking should be to not lose the trust of your customers by changing your information – hence the need to approach

the process carefully.

Much like all other aspects of digital marketing and brand positioning, SEO is a constantly changing game. With so many moving pieces and evolving trends, it’s no wonder that brands aren’t quite certain which decisions will negatively impact their SEO, and which ones are safe enough to make.

One day, it seems that one kind of behavior is perfectly fine, while the next Google will penalize it because they’ve implemented algorithm changes. Add customer expectations into the mix, and it gets even more difficult to figure out just what’s worth the effort, and what should be left alone.

When it comes to your business details, including your name, address, and phone number (neatly packed into the notion of NAP information), change can be good. After all, entire companies have successfully rebranded without a hitch. However, changing a single piece of information such as your phone number can change the entire customer journey if not done right.

Here, we’ll tackle a few essential steps in the process to keep in mind, so that your phone number shift doesn’t impact your ranking or your brand perception negatively.

NAP it in the bud

Local search is a vital component of your overall SEO strategy, all the more so when you’re running a strictly local business with a physical presence, such as a pastry shop, a car repair facility, or a beauty salon. Your foot traffic heavily depends on your customers’ ability to find correct information online when they search for your services.

If they stumble upon an outdated number, they’ll call the next business in their search results with solid reviews and forget that you exist. Simply put, consistency matters. Google

doesn’t want to disappoint its users, so it penalizes businesses with inconsistent NAP (Name, Address, Phone number) information across the internet. As soon as your directories, your website and other online listings don’t show your actual phone number, your ranking will suffer.

The remedy is fairly simple. If you have decided to change your phone number or your entire communications system, for that matter, you should take the time to revise all your local business listings and directories where your company pops up.

NAP consistency is a vital ranking factor that can either plummet your business in the eyes of search engines, or it can help you reach those topmost desirable spots in the SERPs. So, while changing your business phone number might not be a cause for worry on its own, how you distribute it will greatly matter in local rankings.

Take care of your call tracking

Some businesses steer clear of call tracking simply because they aren’t sure how to go about it, afraid to damage their SEO in the process. Even more importantly with regards to call tracking, every business needs to adhere to those key legal requirements, such as the EU’s GDPR, or General Data Protection Regulation, to make sure their customers’ sensitive information is safe. But when the time comes to move from outdated landlines and change your numbers or merge them, you can also reap the benefits of this potentially SEO-beneficial process.

Wanting to unify and improve their communication systems, companies are switching to digital phone solutions such as voice over internet protocol (or VoIP for short). There are many perks of such a transition for call tracking, smarter customer support, and better customer engagement, all of which can support your SEO efforts in the long run. As you learn about VoIP and its many applications, you’ll be able to make

the most of your phone-based interactions with your customers to serve your brand reputation, but also your ranking.

In addition to having more business phone numbers at your disposal if you need them, you should know that VoIP platforms come with other useful features such as call analytics, recording, emailing, and texting. Collecting all of that data and implementing SEO-safe call tracking with the help of Dynamic Number Insertion both work in favor of your SEO.

Building and preserving customer trust

When done right, changing your business phone number can be a seamless process that doesn’t do any damage to your ranking. However, it’s important to remember the reason for the ranking in the first place: search engines want to give users the best, most trustworthy results first and above all other available options online. In doing so, they reward businesses that accurately portray themselves online, and contact information is a vital component of that representation.

The basic premise goes as follows: if a customer calls you and gets a notification that the number no longer exists, they lose trust in your brand. Google and other search engines recognize that lack of trust and thus push other businesses above yours, with accurate and verified contact details available. In a sense, it’s customer trust that drives search engine ranking.

Research has confirmed this, as 80% of surveyed respondents in BrightLocal research have stated that they would lose trust in a business with incorrect and inconsistent contact details. If you’ve decided to change your phone number, making sure it’s consistently represented across all of your digital outlets is the key piece of your SEO puzzle: to preserve customer trust and thus to preserve your ranking.

Notifying the customer in time

Thankfully, you can make sure that your customers have the correct information in a few simple ways. If you've taken care of all of your business directory listings, your social media pages, messaging app presence, and your website, you can use your marketing strategy to get the word out.

Your subscribers and return customers will want to know that your business has changed a vital piece of information. Just like you don't want them to spend an hour going to an old address of your café only to discover a weird-looking shop for plumbing supplies, you want to have your new number added to their contacts list.

You can use your weekly/monthly newsletter to notify them of the switch, post a social media update letting customers know the new number they can reach you on, and post a little announcement on your website, too, especially if you gain plenty of call traffic from all of these outlets.

Changing a business phone number can be a simple process in itself, but its impact on your business will not be unless you prepare properly. Taking care of all the business registers where your company is listed paired with implementing search engine-approved tracking tactics as well as customer engagement will be more than enough to help you through the process.

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