

Local Search Tactics

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These notes accompany Susan Hallam's **Local Search Tactics** presentation at Search Engine Strategies London 2006

As a nation of *small shopkeepers*, many small businesses have yet to realise the benefits of Local Search in the UK:

- There are more than 4.3 million small businesses in the UK, with 1000 new businesses being set up every day
- Small businesses can be very slow to adopt these new technologies, with only 32% of businesses in Derbyshire or 44% in Northamptonshire having a website
- Specific sectors, such as hotels and restaurants, can have a website adoption rate of as low as 18%
- Majority of small businesses seek to trade with customers within a 5 or 10 minute drive; the lure of the Internet opening up international trade is of little or no interest
- Local search can address either customers who are located locally, or who are travelling to the area
- SME's work within financial constraints, and local search marketing costs have to be traded against other marketing initiatives

Investigate the benefits and possibilities of Local Search using:

- Keyword discovery tools such as Yahoo Search Marketing/Overture Keyword Assistant to learn which local phrases hit the sweet spot
- Google Trends to learn more about searching trends by location, as well as trends over time
- Consider Nielsen/Netrating's findings that in January 2006, 5.8 million people clicked on a link from a top 10 search engine that then led to a Local Directory or Local Guide. This means 26% of all people visiting the search engines are directed to Local search information. This is more than those directed to news services like BBC, and more than those directed to travel services like Expedia.

The major Local Search players:

- Yell.com
 - Market leader with 64% market share
 - 174,000 advertisers
 - 2 million business listings
 - powering the Google Local search results

- Google Local
 - Combines Google database results cross checked with Yell.com results
 - Opportunity to buy location specific PPC ads
 - Or opportunity to rank in the top 3 Google local results
 - Or opportunity to rank well in the organic results.
 - *Top tip: location information shouldn't be restricted to your Contact Us page; include location information as a footer on every page, or include location information alongside your keyphrases in your content.*
 - Visit the Google Local Business Centre to update your own local business listing
 - Google SMS: get Google Local data straight to your mobile phone. Send a text to 64664 containing your request in the format and Google will texts **whatyouwant.whereyouwantit**
Boots.Nottingham
Pharmacy.Islington
- Other major search engines with local search
 - Yahoo! Business Finder (powered by Thomson Local)
 - MSN Local Search
 - No ASK local searching yet
- Touch Local
 - Second most visited local directory after Yell
 - 1.2 million visitors monthly (Oct 2005)
 - 114 local business directory websites
 - Monthly listing for £15
 - Pay Per Call service
 - Client ratings of business services
- Thomson Local
 - 173 local directory areas
 - Thomson powers Yahoo Business Finder
- Other local directory services: where to spend your resources?
 - 192.com
 - Scoot
 - AskAlix
- Review UK Local Search Engines resources
 - Identifies local search engines, directories
 - www.wrx.zen.co.uk/searchuk.htm