



TIPS FOR LOCAL SEO

The Internet gives every business the opportunity to reach customers across the globe. But for many estate agencies, the most desirable target audience isn't global, *it's local*.



A successful digital strategy for estate and letting agencies should focus on reaching local customers and on appearing for localised search queries. This will enable people who are either in your local area already or searching for services in your area to find you quickly and easily.

This is why local Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is an essential component of any estate agent's digital marketing strategy. Here are eight tips for local SEO for estate agencies:

1. REGISTER WITH GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

Google provides a one-stop-shop for local businesses, called Google My Business. It is a tool to help you increase the visibility of your business within Google search results, Google Maps and Google Plus. It enables you to manage all of your business' Google services in one place.

Sign your business up to Google My Business by visiting the website www.google.co.uk/business.

Once in, you will need to input all of your business information – essential is your full business address. Google will also give you the opportunity to verify your business address, which you need to do.

2. ADD YOUR BUSINESS ADDRESS TO YOUR WEBSITE

It's important that Google understands where your business is located, if you are to improve your visibility in the local search results. You therefore need to include your full business address plus postcode on your website.

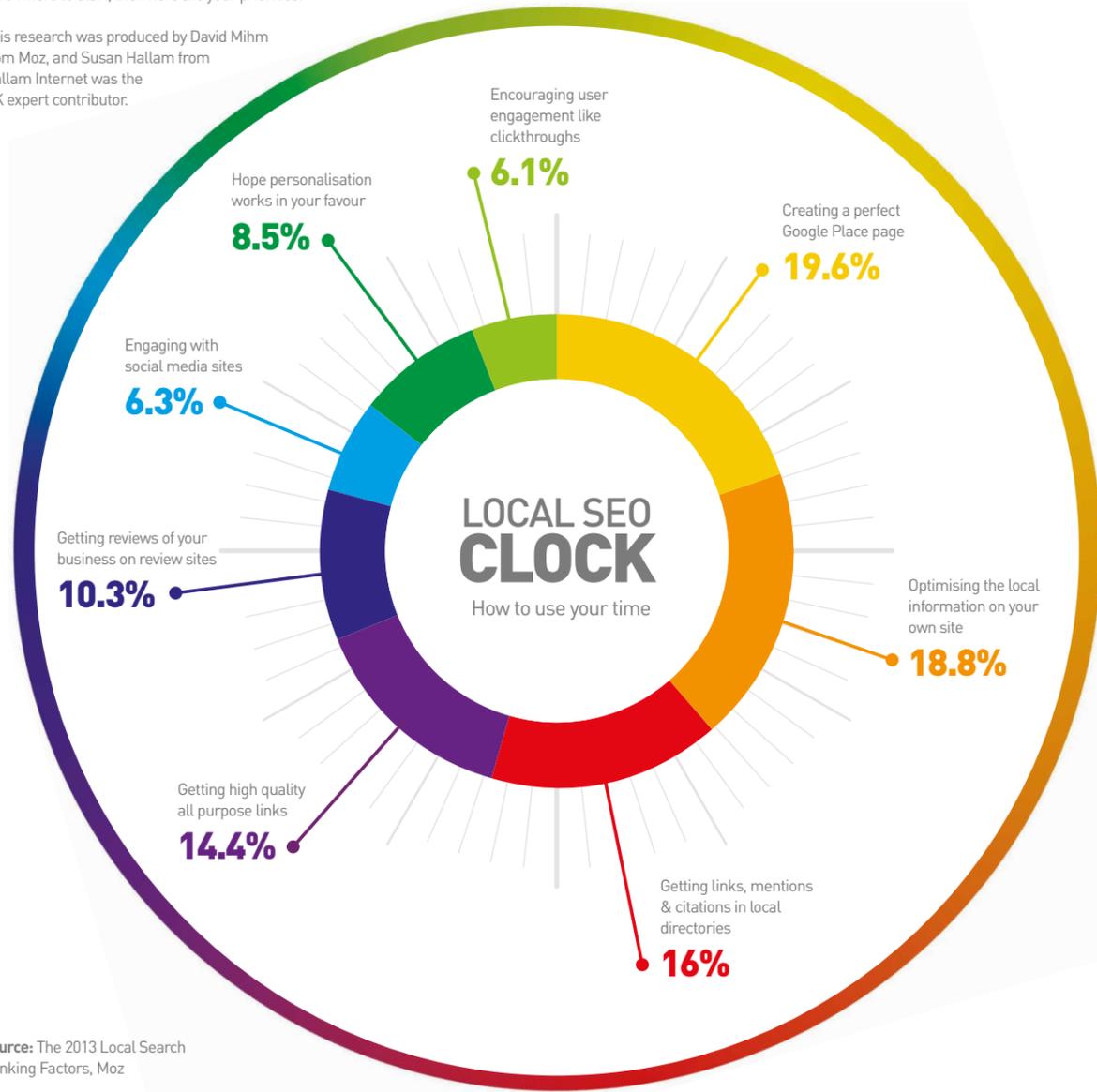
If appropriate, consider including your address in the footer of your website so it appears on every page. This will reinforce the relevancy of every page on your site for local search.

3. HAVE A SEPARATE PAGE ON YOUR WEBSITE FOR EVERY BRANCH YOU HAVE

If you are a multi-branch agent, you will want to have good local visibility for all of your branch office locations.

If you want your business to appear in the local search results, but are strapped for time and not sure where to start, then here are your priorities.

This research was produced by David Mihm from Moz, and Susan Hallam from Hallam Internet was the UK expert contributor.



Source: The 2013 Local Search Ranking Factors, Moz

Include a separate page on your website for every branch you have. Each page should include information specific to the location, including the branch address and postcode. This will enable Google to see where your business is active and thus helps you to improve your search visibility for local searches across all your target areas.

4. USE LOCATION RELEVANT KEYWORDS WITHIN YOUR WEBSITE'S CONTENT

In SEO, we call this optimisation; the process of 'optimising' your

website's pages so they are as relevant as possible to the search terms for which you'd like to appear in the search results pages.

If you want to be found by local searches or people searching for estate/letting agencies in your area, you'll need to use local place names across your website.

5. LIST YOUR BUSINESS IN PROPERTY SECTOR DIRECTORIES

The property sector has a wide range of niche specific directories in which you can list your business

and its address(es). Some examples include:

- Rightmove
- Zoopla
- UK Property Guide

You should look out for places that your competitors have listed their businesses too.

By listing your business in high quality property sector directories, you will reinforce your location to Google and thus help to improve your business' visibility in the local search results.

YOUR MOST IMPORTANT TASKS

1. CHOOSE THE CORRECT GOOGLE PLACES BUSINESS DIRECTORY
2. BE CONSISTENT WITH YOUR COMPANY NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER
3. GET LISTED IN HIGH QUALITY LOCAL BUSINESS DIRECTORIES
4. PUT YOUR ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER ON YOUR WEB PAGES
5. GET HIGH QUALITY LINKS TO YOUR WEBSITE

DO NOT WASTE YOUR TIME

1. GET A LISTING OF A FALSE BUSINESS ADDRESS
2. STUFF KEYWORDS INTO YOUR BUSINESS NAME
3. HAVE INCONSISTENT VERSIONS OF YOUR COMPANY NAME, YOUR ADDRESS, OR YOUR PHONE NUMBERS
4. USE THE WRONG GOOGLE BUSINESS CATEGORY ON YOUR GOOGLE PLACES
5. HAVE MORE THAN ONE GOOGLE PLACES PAGE

6. GET LINKS FROM LOCAL WEBSITES BACK TO YOUR WEBSITE

Links are an important part of SEO. When another website links to yours (in the form of a hyperlink), Google considers this as a 'vote' for the quality and relevance of your website and this boosts your visibility in the search results pages.

By getting links to your site from local websites, you can improve your local visibility.

These might include links from local government websites or local associations or groups of which you are a part. Perhaps your agency sponsors a local sports team or has raised money for a local charity – if so, have them include a link to your website from their own.

7. GET LINKS FROM PROPERTY SECTOR AUTHORITIES

Links are valuable, but some are more valuable than others.

To improve the perceived quality of your business website and therefore its visibility in the search results, you should seek to get links back to your site from property sector authorities.

For example, is your estate agency accredited by The Property Ombudsman, ARLA, RICS or NAEA? If so, you should be listed on their websites. Equally, if you or your colleagues are accredited by any other sector specific bodies, aim to ensure that links are created to your company website from those sites too.

8. GET POSITIVE REVIEWS OF YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE

Reviews are a hugely valuable tool in improving your business' online presence.

If you want your company to appear prominently for localised searches, then you will certainly need to consider how your customers are able to leave reviews for your business online.

The importance of accumulating genuine and honest reviews of your services via authoritative online business and social hubs is ever increasing and although you may have all the other elements of your local search strategy covered, the power of review data should not be underestimated.

TOP TIPS

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If appropriate, consider including your address in the footer of your website so it appears on every page.

Use local place names across your website.

If you'd like more advice on local SEO for your estate agency, visit www.hallaminternet.com and type 'local SEO' in the search bar.

Susan Hallam is a strategic internet marketer, trainer, consultant, senior University Lecturer and a speaker on The Property Academy Groups' roster. Plain speaking and engaging, she writes a column for .net magazine and can also be found at www.hallaminternet.com