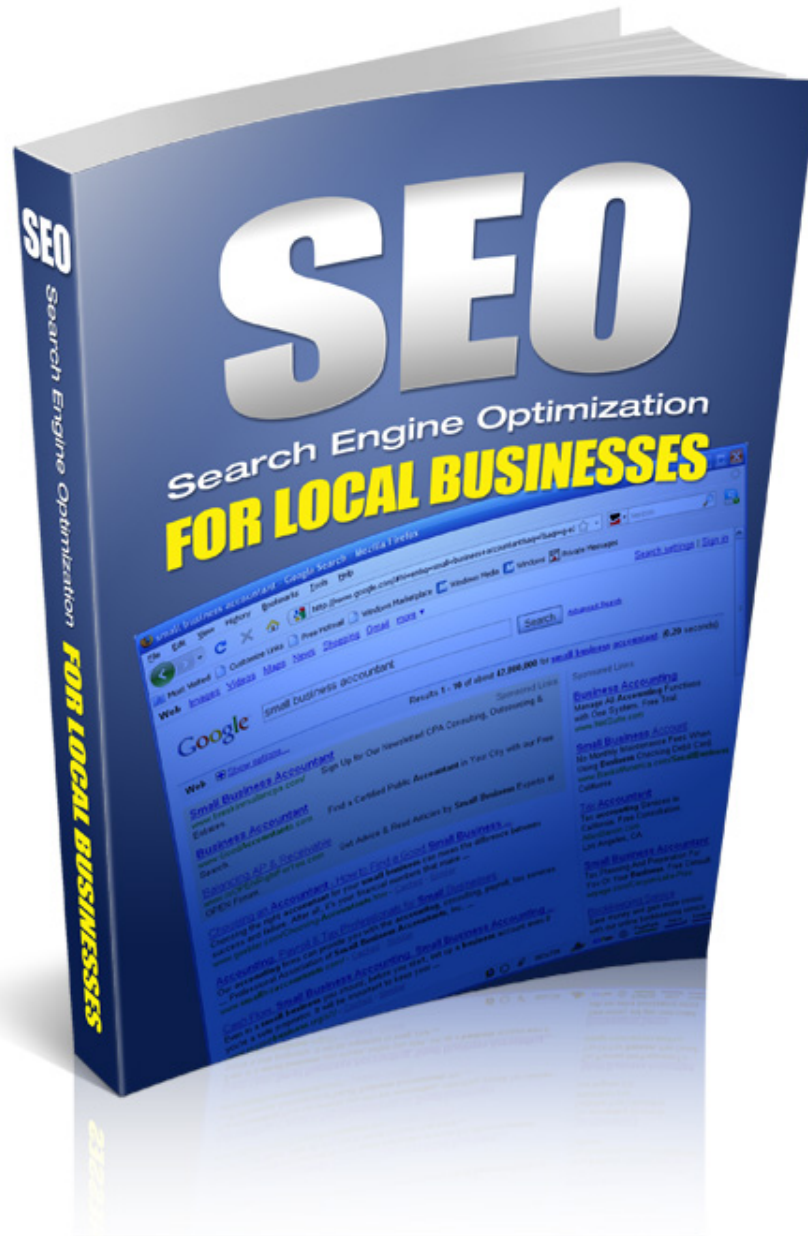


Search Engine Optimization For Local Businesses



By Jake Lawson

RaiseYourRank.ca

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Introduction

As a fellow business owner, you already know that marketing is important for business growth and in today's climate that's especially true.

More and more, your prospects are turning to the Internet to locate businesses in their own backyard. In fact, according to a Piper Jaffray 2008 research paper, 30 percent of all search engine queries contain a city, state/province or zip/postal code.

With approximately 2.6 billion local searches performed each month, the Internet has now surpassed print Yellow Pages and newspapers as a primary source for local consumer service information and that trend is on the rise.



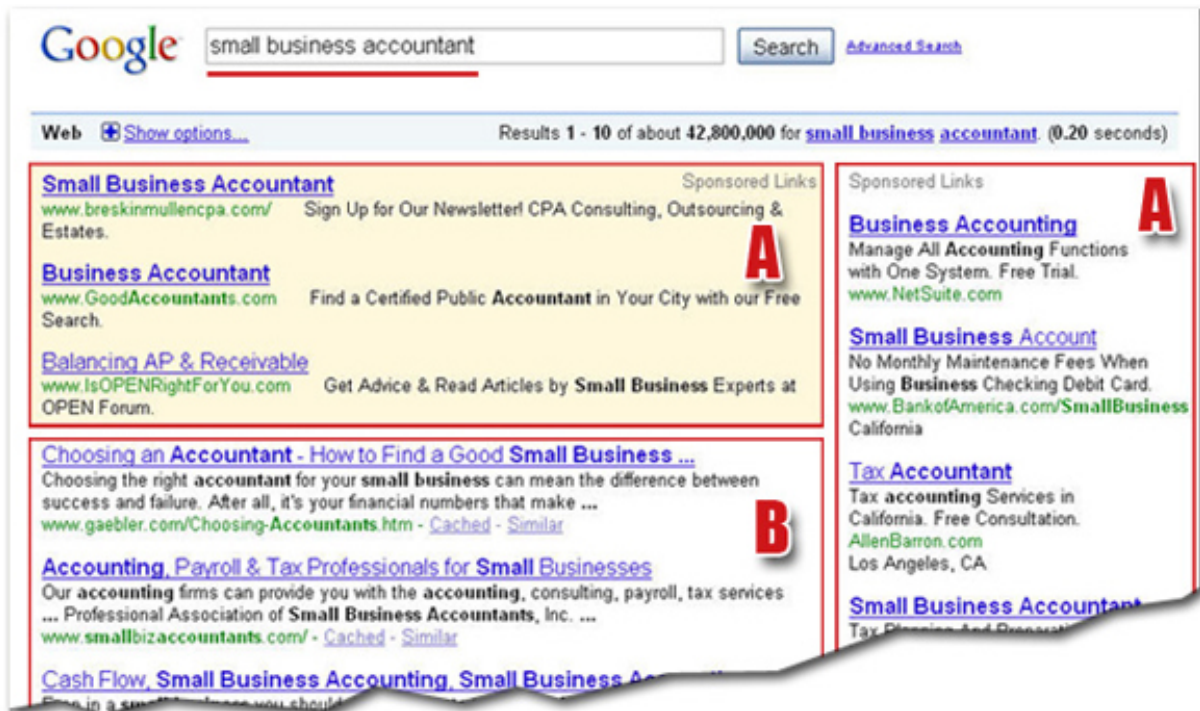
The popularity of web-enabled phones (like the iPhone) will only add to these numbers as 27 percent of all mobile searches are for local information.

It's for this reason that I wrote "Search Engine Optimization For Local Businesses." To give you, the business owner, a clear understanding of what Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is and why it's something you should care about.

To your success,

Jake Lawson

What Is Search Engine Optimization?



Search Engine Optimization (aka SEO or Search Engine Marketing) is the process of getting one's website ranked high in the search engines (with a primary emphasis on Google).

As nearly all search engines sell "Sponsored Ad Space," it is important to note that SEO is designed to help improve your "organic rankings" (aka the placement you get for free).

In the example, above, I've done a search using Google.com for the term, "small business accountant." The areas denoted by the letter, "A," are "Sponsored Links" and are therefore not affected by Search Engine Optimization. They are what are referred to as "Pay-per-click" ads (aka PPC). The businesses you see listed are paying Google a pre-defined amount for every "click" (i.e. visitor) they receive.

The area denoted by the letter, "B," is the start of the "organic search engine listings" and this area IS controlled by search engine optimization techniques.

While there is nothing wrong with buying Pay-per-click ads, and it is something I recommend you consider, it is very important that your website/web pages rank well in the organic search engine listings as this can bring you lots of qualified website traffic completely free of charge.

There are two main aspects to search engine optimization. The first is referred to as "on-page SEO tactics" and the second, "off-page SEO tactics."

In the next section, we'll discuss the basics of "on-page" search engine optimization.

On-page SEO Tactics

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/
<html lang="en-US">
<head>
<title>Walmart.com: Save money. Live better.</title>
<meta name="Description" content="Shop Walmart Online for Low Prices on Top Br
">
<meta name="Keywords" content="Walmart, Walmart.com, Books, Fitness, Equipment
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
<!-- RSS link tags -->
<!-- canonical url -->
<link rel="canonical" href="http://www.walmart.com/" />
<link href="http://i2.walmartimages.com/css/global.css" rel="stylesheet" type=
<!--[if lt IE 7]>
<link href="http://i2.walmartimages.com/css/global_ie6.css" rel="stylesheet" t
<![endif]-->
<!--[if IE 7]>
<link href="http://i2.walmartimages.com/css/global_ie7.css" rel="stylesheet" t
<![endif]-->
<meta name="verify-v1" content="eG8Lf3u0H7c1EaP5caxTDaJP2XGU+12EOhq+FzzKud4="
<meta name="y_key" content="3fb23d43bbb2352f" />
<meta name="msvalidate.01" content="BOAA8C6FAC5A619517
<script type="text/javascript" language="
```

On-page SEO is primarily technical in nature and needs to be applied to every page of your website. Websites are not optimized as a whole but rather one page at a time (but with a global perspective of what is trying to be achieved).

I'm not going to go into great detail as to what is specifically done to each page but I am going to give you a good overall understanding.

Basically, your on-page SEO should accomplish three main objectives:

- Your website's code (illustrated by the code from Walmart.com above) should be well-coded. By this, I mean that it should be easily read and understood by search engines.
- Each page of your website should be built around "intelligent keyword phrases" that are likely to draw targeted visitors to your page/site.
- Your site's design should be attractive and your content found useful to visitors so as to encourage them to stay as long as possible on your site.

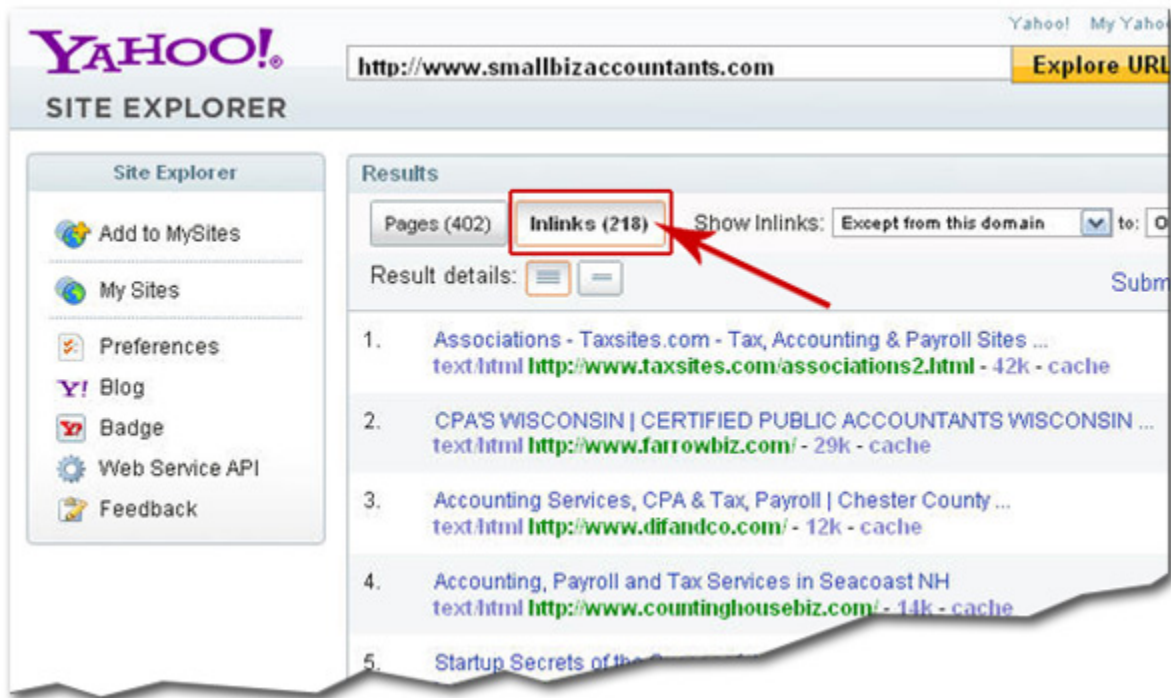
Through website analytics, you have the ability to track how long the average visitor stays on your website. While this does not affect your website from an SEO standpoint, if the majority of your website visitors hit the "BACK" button after being on your site for only three seconds, it could be assumed that they either didn't like what they saw or they didn't find something they felt was relevant to what they were searching for.

This means that you lose out on a potential new customer.

Your website needs to be set up in a way that will engage your visitors and compel them to perform your specific "call-to action". Whether it is to sign up for a mailing list, fill out a contact form or simply call you up on the phone – You need your visitors to do something that will eventually turn them into a paying customer.

After all, there is no point in sending traffic to your website if in the end it does not result in a new customer.

Off-page SEO Tactics



There are a number of "off-page SEO tactics" but the most important one is how many links your site has "pointing at it" from other websites/pages across the internet.

If you'd like to get a general idea of how many links the search engines have found for your site, do this...

1. Go to Yahoo.com and enter the following into the search box:
link:www.yourdomain.com (replacing "yourdomain.com" with your actual domain name).
2. Click the button to conduct your search.
3. This will take you to the "Yahoo Site Explorer" as shown above. Once on this page, select "Except from this domain" from the "Show Inlinks" drop-down menu so Yahoo will only show you the links it found from the other sites that are linking to you.

The more links your site has, the better.

This is because each link can be thought of as a "vote" for your site. The search engines figure that if others like your site well enough to link to it, then it probably contains valuable information.

This is why we use Article Marketing, Web 2.0 Strategies and a variety of other techniques to continually build links for our clients.

Traffic Generation Strategies

Even the most attractive of websites is useless without visitors and that's why we utilize many different traffic generation strategies on behalf of our clients. We do our best to help you dominate the search engine results in an effort to bring you targeted traffic that is meaningful to your business.

Just a few of these strategies include...

- Search Engine Optimization (both on-page and off)
- Google Places
- Bing Business Portal
- Local Business Directories
- Review Websites
- Social Media Marketing (Twitter.com, Facebook.com, etc.)
- Video Marketing (like YouTube.com, Viddler.com, etc.)
- Online Classifieds (like Craigslist.org, Kijiji.com, etc.)
- And a whole lot more!

Whether you are looking to make direct sales from your website, build leads or encourage your visitors to stop by your store or office, we can develop a traffic generation strategy to meet your objectives.

Where Do We Go From Here?

If you're ready to build a solid online presence and attract new business using the internet, we'd love to discuss your individual needs.

To get started, give us a call at: (888) 630-RANK or visit: <http://www.raiseyourrank.ca> for more information and to fill out our consultation request form.

We'll set an appointment at a time that's convenient for you (typically 30 minutes in length) to go over an Online Marketing strategy that is best suited for your specific business. Our strategies are very in-depth and have been proven to help our client's get a positive return on their investment in as little as 21 days.

About The Author



Jake Lawson is a 12 year veteran to the internet marketing world. In 1999 he got his start working for a successful dot com in Intermix Media that pioneered the social networking revolution by creating mySpace.

Lawson is currently dedicating his time to helping local businesses implement internet marketing and local search engine optimization strategies through his consulting firm, RaiseYourRank.

Lawson has experience building and developing online marketing and search engine optimization strategies for everyone from local small contractors to large international businesses that sell \$100,000+ monthly.



RaiseYourRank
SEO & Internet Marketing For Local Businesses

www.raiseyourrank.ca

Email: info@raiseyourrank.ca
Toll Free: 1-888-630-RANK