



# Online Directory Secrets

*For The Local Business*

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# The Power of Online Directories and How to Get Started Fast!

Online directories have been around for some time. And just like anything that becomes a huge trend, at some point business owners start to wonder whether or not they're still worth it. The answer to that question is 'yes!'

Online directories can be a great addition to your current small business marketing strategy. They can improve website traffic for a small business and increase your bottom line.

If you haven't taken a look at online directories and considered how your small business could use them to increase its market presence, now is the time to start. And if you're already listed in several online directories and are beginning to wonder if they're worth all the work, or if they continue to get you new customers, the answer to that is also 'yes!' Competition for businesses today is fiercer than ever, and online competition even more so. If you aren't listed in online directories, you'll be giving the advantage to your competition.

## What Are Online Directories?

In recent years, there has been a lot of talk about online directories for businesses. And it seems that more and more directories are popping up every single day. So, what are they? And why are they so important?

An online directory is essentially an online phone book; but it's also so much more. Online directories are websites that hold the information of different businesses. Business owners can submit their business information to these websites making sure to include things like their business name, their phone number, their website, their physical location, and the types of products and services they offer.

Then when customers are looking for a particular company, or a particular product, they'll easily be able to find it. It's an effective strategy for business, too. Over 80% of all purchases made by customers start with an online business directory.

All businesses should be listed in at least a few online directories. There's a potential for a huge loss in revenue if they're not. And while there are hundreds of them out there, there's no need to be listed in everyone and in fact, it's better not to be. One listing appearing across too many directories can get that website marked as spam by Google and the other search engines. But businesses should be listed in about ten directories in order to ensure that they're not losing customers, and in the end, sales.

# How Do Online Directories Work?

The concept of online directories is actually a pretty simple one. Online directories are very similar to the Yellow Pages in the real world, only these listings are only online. (Actually Yellow Pages.com is now one of the largest online directories.)

A directory is a listing place for a number of businesses. Any type of business can be listed in an online directory. Some online directories are huge and cover every industry, while others are very small and specific to a specific niche.

Imagine you are a homeowner and you need the name and phone number of a local plumber. You could look through a huge online directory such as Google My Business and find several local plumbers. Or you could look for an online directory that is niche-specific, which means that the entire online directory would include only businesses directly related to plumbing. With a niche-specific directory you may find even more businesses that are based on your specific interest than you would on larger directories.

Online directories are meant to apply locally to the user. Someone in Phoenix likely doesn't need the name of a plumber in New York. With a hyper focus on local businesses, online directories make it easy for customers to find businesses in their immediate area.

Online directories direct users to the businesses they want to find. All consumers have to do is perform a search in the online directory for a specific topic or browse through the various categories until an appropriate business is found. When performing a search, users will be given a list of the businesses related to their search term. Along with those businesses, there may be a description of the business, contact information, and more.

Anyone can use an online directory to find a business. As a small business owner, it's important to know that this is the main way potential customers will find your business. Now that you understand how online directories work, it is time to see how they can work for your business.

# How Do Online Directories Benefit Small Businesses?

The benefits of using an online directory for your business are many. When a business is listed in multiple directories, there are even more benefits to reap. Below are just a few of the benefits business owners will see when using online directories.

## More exposure for the business

Ask any business owner if they want more exposure and the answer will likely be 'yes!', 'of course!', or 'doesn't everybody?' There's a chance that as a business owner, you want more exposure too. After all, the more exposure a business gets, the more potential customers they're reaching. And being listed in an online directory can help them get it.

Online directories are long lists of businesses. And when a potential customer is searching for a business, whether in an online directory or in a search engine, they'll likely come across many options. But the chances of this increase exponentially when that business is listed in an online directory.

So many business owners put an immense amount of work into their website. This allows them to rank higher in the search engines which in turn, provides more exposure for the business to potential customers. Online directories can help with this and promote a business and their website to more customers.

## More traffic to the website

This goes hand in hand with businesses getting more exposure. When customers find a business in an online directory, they are very likely to visit the business' website.

In addition, when the business website is listed within those directories, it will increase the search engine ranking for that website. That means that the website will appear even higher in the search engines, more customers will visit the site, and traffic numbers could potentially spike.

## Reach Out to Your Customers

When your business is listed in an online directory, customers are able to leave reviews about your company and your products or your services. This is beneficial to business owners for many reasons. The first is that it allows you to see the areas your company is exceling at, and those in which it needs improvement. By understanding what customers want and giving it to them, you will get even more customers.

You can also reply to reviews that are left, whether they are good or bad – and you should! Replying to customers shows that you care about them. They will appreciate that and are likely to use your business again, even if their first experience was not so positive. Other customers that visit your online directory listing will also see this and know that you will show them the same attention you showed other customers. That in turn, will also bring in more business for your company.

## Affordable advertising

Just like all business owners want more exposure, all business owners would happily run more advertising campaigns if they had the budget to do so. Unfortunately, many business owners don't.

Being listed in an online directory though, can give business owners free advertising. Having a business listing in an online directory increases brand awareness every time a visitor or potential customer sees the listing. And while not all online directories offer their services for free, those that do charge for their service typically only charge a minimal fee. This is what makes online directories much more affordable than some other types of advertising, such as purchasing a TV or radio spot.

## Appear more professional

Online directories allow customers to learn more about a business. Customers can find an actual address, a professional-looking website, contact information and more. All of this can help a business appear more professional, which establishes trust among its customers, particularly new leads.

Online directories are considered to be some of the most reputable websites due to the measures these directories take to verify businesses and ensure they are only listing legitimate businesses. Consumers know this, which is one reason why online directories are often one of the first places they turn to when searching for a business, product, or service.

## Increased revenue

All of the above-mentioned benefits do one thing for a business – they drive customers to a website and greatly increase the chances that those customers will actually make a purchase from the business. So, while there are many benefits that come with online directories, it really all comes down to one: increased revenue for the business. And that's really all business owners are looking for.

# Why Your Business Needs to be Listed in an Online Directory

The reasons for listing your business in an online directory are many.

Online directories will directly increase your business' exposure. They help keep the name of the business in front of customers. So, when they need a product or service, one particular company will be top of mind.

Online directories make it easy for customers to find businesses online. Customers may start searching for a business online. When it's time to make a purchase from a local business though, 78 percent of customers do so offline.

This is what makes online directories such an effective form of targeted advertising. The customer already needs or wants the product or service you offer, and you can help them locate you by simply having an online business listing.

Online directories also offer an excellent ROI. The website traffic they generate will provide extra profit, but the real revenue will be from the increased numbers of customers coming to your business.

## How much do online directories cost?

There are thousands of online directories out there. Of these, hundreds of them are completely free for the business owner that wants to create a listing. These directories offer their services for free so that when consumers use them, they make profit solely off of internet traffic. Some of these free directories, such as Google My Business, are also some of the most reputable.

Not all online directories are free, though. It's important that you keep an eye out for monthly or one-time fees. There are some terrific free online directories, and there are many that are worth paying for.

Typically, if an online directory requires a monthly or one-time fee, they're offering something of better value than their free counterparts. These directories often have additional features, such as free websites, included for the price.

In addition to these two options, there is some middle ground found with online directories. These are the online directories that offer a free service but give you the option of paying a small fee for an upgrade.

So, what's best for the business owner? To be listed within a mixture of free services, paid services, and those that have an upgrade option. The best online directories do not always fall into the same category. Ensuring there is a good mix will not only make sure the business is listed on the best directories across the board, but also that the business has access to the most features possible.

# What Online Directories Should You Use for Your Small Business?

Even though listing your business in many online directories will improve your website's exposure and SEO ranking, it is not effective to just spam your business into every single online directory you can find. You want to take some time to consider which specific online directories will give you the best ROI.

A business owner just starting to list their business in online directories should start with the biggest ones out there. These are directories such as Google My Business, Yelp, Bing Places for Business, and the Yellow Pages.

These are the largest directories and as such, they are going to have the highest search engine page ranking. It is much better to be listed in a directory that has a high SERP, because that will make it much more likely to be seen by customers searching for businesses online.

Once a business is listed in all the major online directories, business owners can then branch out and determine if they want to be listed in other directories as well. This is when they can start considering whether a niche-specific directory is appropriate, or if they want to try paid services.

Another way to determine which specific online directories your business should be listed in is to start with your competitors. Take a look at your local and niche-specific options and figure out if your competition is already listed. If they are, you need to be listed too. If they are not listed, you may want to list your website as a way to beat them to the punch.

In some cases, it may not make sense for you to have a listing in a specific online directory, even if your competitors are listed in it. Your goal should be to be listed in every relevant and niche-specific directory you can find as well as many of the major directories, but not so many directories that your business starts to appear as spam.

In addition to listing your business in online directories, you also need to maintain these listings. It is important for your online directory listings to be up to date and accurate, or you could just be wasting your time. If your directory information seems out of date, your customers will probably look elsewhere.

It will probably take some time to see the results of listing your small business' website in so many online directories, but eventually you will start seeing the benefits. The best way to find the perfect combination of online directory listings for your business is to use some sort of tracking or analytics system.

You want to be able to see how many people clicked on your website links from within the directory, if your website traffic has improved since creating a listing, and if more customers have heard about your business because of a listing. You want to stop wasting your time with online directories that are not producing results and increase the time and effort you spend on online directories that are productive.

# The Importance of NAP/NAP+W

NAP is crucial when it comes to online directories. It's the backbone of all listings. NAP stands for name, address, and phone number. And when there is a website address included as well, that acronym becomes NAP/NAP+W. While business owners likely know their NAP and their NAP+W, there are some things to consider when using them within online directories.

For instance, if a business is located on Main Street, is the business owner going to use 'Street' or the short form, 'St.'? With just this one example, it's easy to see how a business' NAP could quickly become confused. And confusion with this most important information could wreak havoc on the efforts of a business owner creating business listings. While there are many best practices to use when creating business listings in online directories, NAP and NAP+W are so important, they really deserved their own section. Here's how to ensure that your business' NAP never becomes confused.

## The business name

When listing in online directories, the business name should appear exactly as it does on business cards, letterhead, and any marketing material the business uses. Extra information, such as locations should never be used, even if the business has multiple locations. There will be another area where this can be added so if the location isn't actually part of the business' name, it shouldn't be used.

## The business' address

The business address can quickly become confused in online listings. This is because many businesses have a physical location, but they're not often at that location. Landscaping services, plumbers, other home contractors, and other business owners often go to visit their customers instead of their customers coming to them. Although this may be the case, terms like 'remote' should never be used, and the location field should never be left blank. The chances are good that even these business owners have a physical location of their business; they need to in order to get their mail. Business owners should use that physical location and never use P.O. boxes or cross streets.

## Phone number

The phone number is a crucial part of NAP. This is how customers can get in touch with you! Remember when providing a phone number, you want to provide one that will allow customers to reach you. If you're a plumber that is often out on different jobs, leave them your cell phone number. Or, if you have someone at a main office that can take messages and answer basic questions, that phone number might be appropriate. No matter what phone number you decide to list in online directories, make sure it's one your customers will appreciate. Make sure it's one where they can get basic questions answered and that encourages continued interest in the business. Forcing them to leave a voicemail, that likely won't get answered, is going to leave them frustrated, and turning to your competitors.

## Website information

Lastly, the website can become confusing because one website is typically made up of several different webpages. So, which page should the business owner send customers to?

If the business listing is for a specific location and the website has a webpage for that location specifically, that is the web address that should be listed. Pages that should not be used include contact pages, as the user will be visiting the website in order to learn more information, not to contact the business.

Facebook and Twitter addresses should also never be used, as there will likely be a separate area for that within the listing. Marketing or promotion pages should never be used as those will also likely not be helpful to the customer. When in doubt, use the home page. This is often the best option.

# Domain Authority for Different Online Directories

When choosing which online directories to list your business in, there are several things you'll need to consider. One of these is the domain authority of a specific directory. This is the ranking the directory holds, dictating how high they will appear on the search results page. The higher the ranking, the higher they will appear. That means the higher your business listing will appear if you have listed with that directory. Keeping this in mind, below are the domain authority of some of the biggest and best online directories.

- **Facebook:** 100
- **Google My Business:** 98
- **LinkedIn:** 98
- **Better Business Bureau:** 96
- **Mapquest:** 95
- **Bing Places for Business:** 94
- **Yelp:** 93
- **YellowPages:** 91
- **Foursquare:** 90
- **YellowBook:** 90
- **Angie's List:** 89
- **Yahoo!:** 88
- **Citysearch:** 87
- **WhitePages:** 86
- **Manta:** 86
- **SuperPages:** 85
- **Merchant Circle:** 83
- **Local.com:** 75

# Why Hire a Marketing Consultant to Help with Online Directories?

When many business owners hear about getting their company listed in online directories, they think it is a fairly easy job. After all, you are only required to enter some basic information about your business. How hard could that be? It's not difficult, but there is a reason so many business owners choose to hand off this task to a marketing consultant.

The first reason is that, while it's not difficult to list your business in online directories, it does take time. Consider that listing your business in one directory might take you 20 minutes, and even more if you want to include many extras, such as photos and videos. If you are going to list your business in two or more directories, that could take several hours.

So many business owners simply don't have this kind of time. When they are working, they want to focus on their business and actually helping their customers. When they are not working, just like everyone else they want to relax and not worry about business for the time-being. A marketing consultant will completely take over the task, so whether you are working or playing, you won't have to worry about it.

Another reason so many business owners leave the task of online directories to a marketing consultant is because simply creating a listing isn't enough. Those directories must be continuously updated and managed, and this too, takes a great deal of time. Marketing consultants will also recognize when those directories should be updated.

Did you just have a staff barbecue or a holiday party? A marketing consultant will add pictures from that event to your online directory, which customers love to see. Did you just change the name of your company? A marketing consultant will understand that all of your listings must be updated, while you may be focused on other things, such as promoting your new name so customers know where to go to get the service they love.

# Best Practices for Listing Your Small Business in Online Directories

So now you understand why your small business should be listed in online directories. You may have also started locating the directories that you want to be listed in. Now, you are ready to begin creating your business listings.

Here are some tips and best practices that will help you do it.

- Start with the online directories that have the best search engine ranking. These include large, general directories such as Google My Business, Bing Places for Business, and Yelp.
- Once your business is listed with the biggest directories, look into smaller directories that may be more niche-specific.
- Include all of the relevant information regarding your business in your listing's description. This should include your business' name, location, telephone number, contact information, possibly reviews, business hours and anything else that is relevant. Add in photos, maps or other interactive features if the directory allows it.
- Keep your information consistent across all of your online directory listings. This will help your website to retain its credibility and will assist with your SERP rankings. To keep that information consistent, store it in a place you can refer to often as you make your directory submissions, such as on your phone or in a place that's easy to locate on your computer.
- Try to make your business stand out by offering an explanation of your business or any specific message the customer should know in your description.
- Keep all of your information up to date. This may mean frequently updating all of your listings several times per month.
- Allow customers to leave reviews and use them in your listing if the directory allows it.
- Always be professional and consistent with your business' listings and message. This includes any information regarding your brand.
- If you sell products or services to a local market, make sure your business is listed in a local business directory. Include geo-specific keywords and information. An example would be: "Dave's Plumbing Service in Phoenix".
- Optimize your website for SEO purposes and include the relevant keywords in your meta titles and listing descriptions. Keyword research is important.

# Get Listed in the Top Online Directories

Now is a great time to get your small business listed in the Top Online Directories. There are few other Internet marketing techniques that will offer so many benefits for such a small investment on your part.

Listing your business in an online directory will increase your website's online presence and help more people find you, which can help you increase your business's revenue.

Contact us today to get your Free copy of the Top Online Directories Presentation

Phone: 518-396-5885

Email: [james@localclickads.com](mailto:james@localclickads.com)

Website: <https://LocalClickADS.com>

## Recommended Resources

We know the idea of submitting to online directories can be intimidating. While we hope this guide has provided you with everything you need to give you the confidence to do it, we understand you may need further information and assistance. You can always contact us directly.

In addition, we recommend these helpful resources as well.

Famous Reputation Business Ranking and Online Reputation Report –FREE  
<https://famousreputation.com/tod>

FREE professionally designed banner to place in directories to advertise your 5 star reputation, product/service, or special offer. <http://ad.localclickads.com/l/free>