

# Local SEO Services Checklist & Local Advertising Online

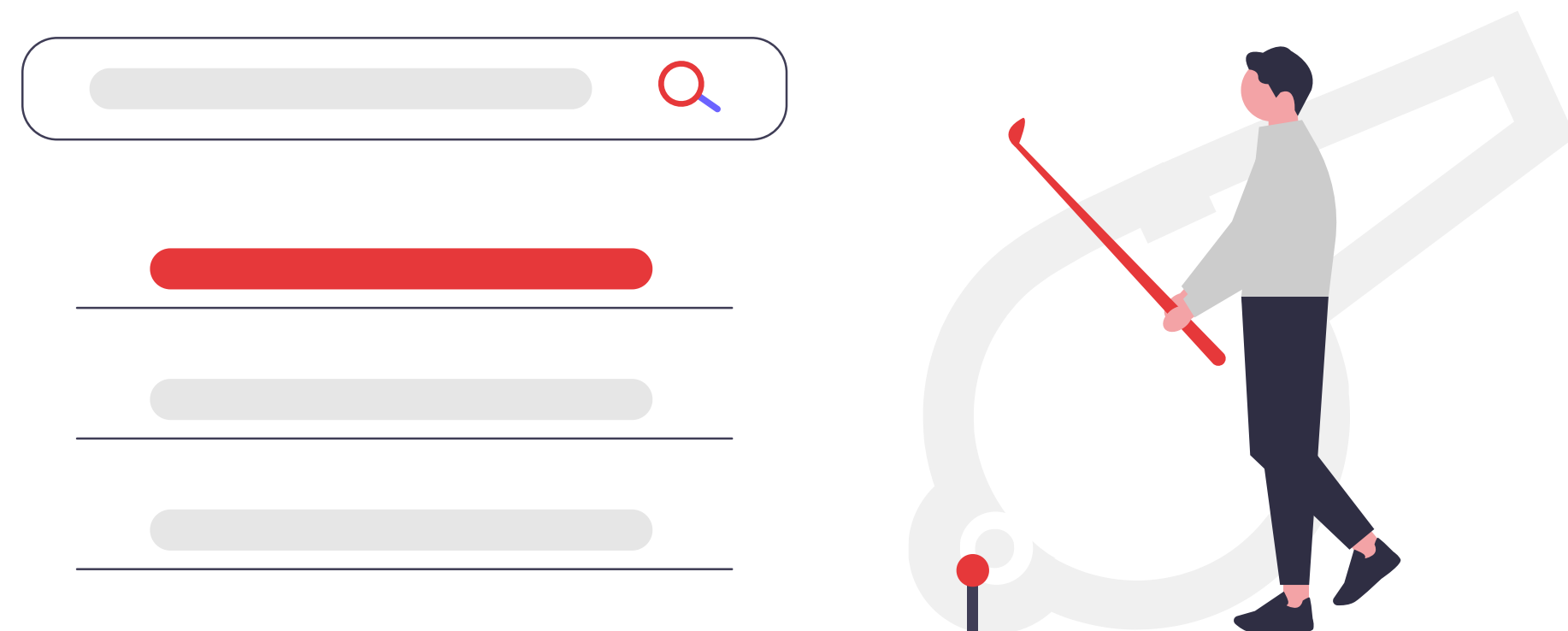


# Customize Local SEO to your Business Type

The sole objective of local SEO is to exhibit your business on local search results. This can be achieved by following specific local SEO checklist. As per SEO Tribunal, 97% of people learn more about local companies online than anywhere else.

SERP can be that of Google, Bing, Yahoo, but going by Moz's latest report, Google appears to be the "new homepage" for local businesses.

While it is reducing the burden for local businesses to maintain a website, it is demanding local SEOs to feed information to Google. Here, we as a local SEO agency have outlined the local SEO checklist for optimizing your business for local search results.



## STEP 1 Determine Business Model

### Brick & Mortar Store

(restaurants, local hardware, general merchant store)

### Service Area Business

(Appliance repair services, cleaning services, general maintenance work)

### Multi-Practitioner Business

(hospitals, schools, legal firms)

### Home-Based Business

(individual ecommerce, hobby artist)



## STEP 2

# Inform Search Engines about Your Business

Google Local Service Ad

Local Knowledge Panel

Local Link Building

Featured Snippets

Social Media & Reviews

-

Google My Business

-

## STEP 3

# Letting Search Engines “Find” Your Business Website for Local Searches

Technical Checks

On-Page Checks

Keyword/Content Checks

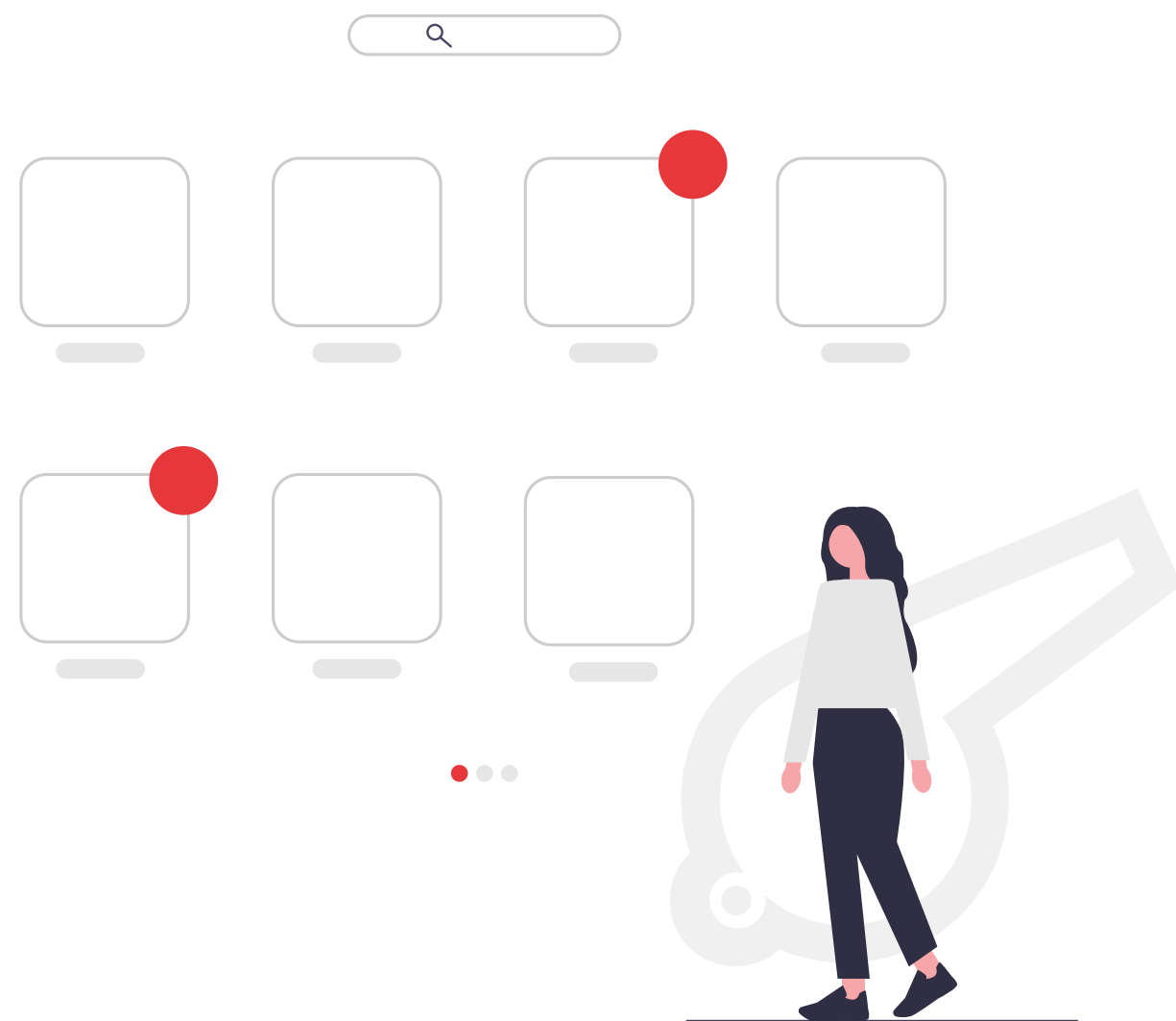
Google Analytics & Google Search Console



And thus...

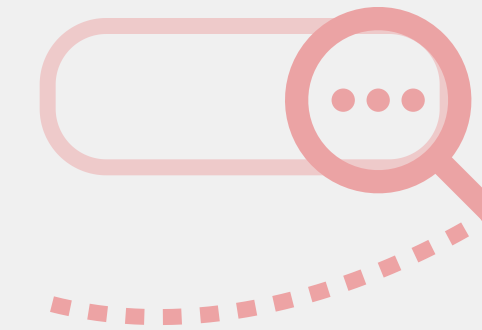
Optimizing websites, business profiles for “Google” becomes even more important today. It warrants SEO experts and digital agencies to include the ranking criteria of Google in their local SEO checklists.

And here is why, using our years of experience in implementing digital solutions for multiple businesses, we bring to you a curated approach to local SEO and checks that must be included in your local SEO strategy.



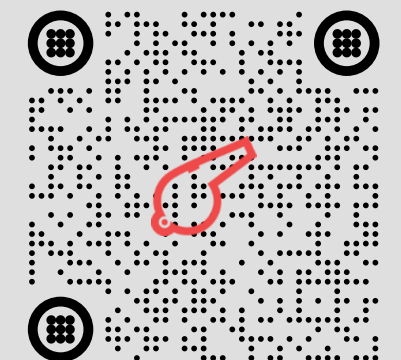
### “Informing” Search Engine Checklist

- ▶ *Google My Business*
- ▶ *Local Knowledge Panel*
- ▶ *Featured Snippets*
- ▶ *Local Services Ad*
- ▶ *Social Media & Reviews*
- ▶ *Local Link Building*



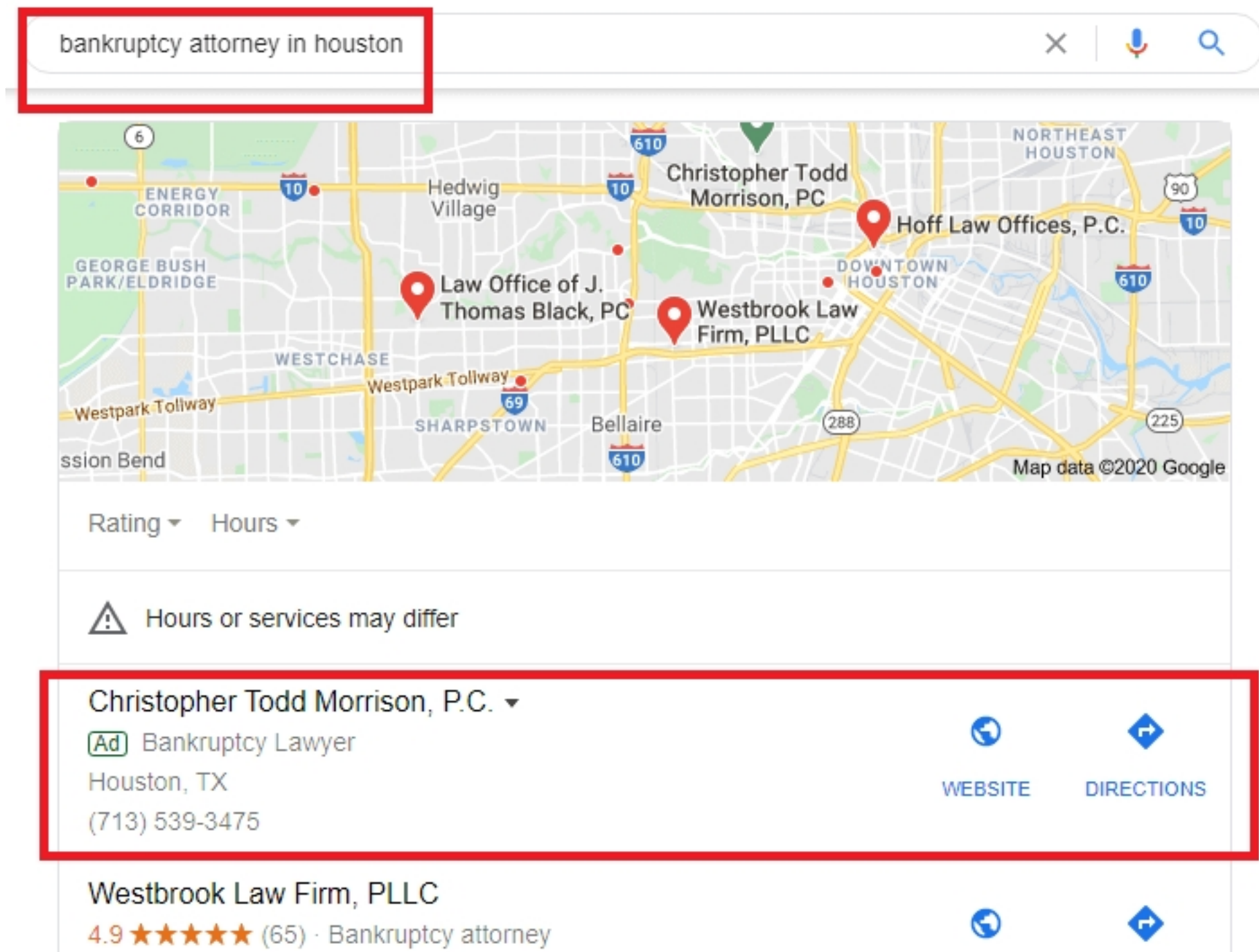
### Also Read

*Digital Solutions For Multiple Businesses*



# 1) Google My Business

Google My Business, or popularly known as GMB, offers greater visibility for any local business. The free listings of any local business on a Google search may look like this,



“ Studies in the recent past have shown that about 84% of the customers find local business on a **“discovery search”**. ”

A discovery search is something where a customer searches for a specific category, product, or service that you (as a local business) may offer.

With an average business appearing in over 1,000 GMB searches each month, not including GMB to your local SEO checklist may deprive local businesses of the following benefits:

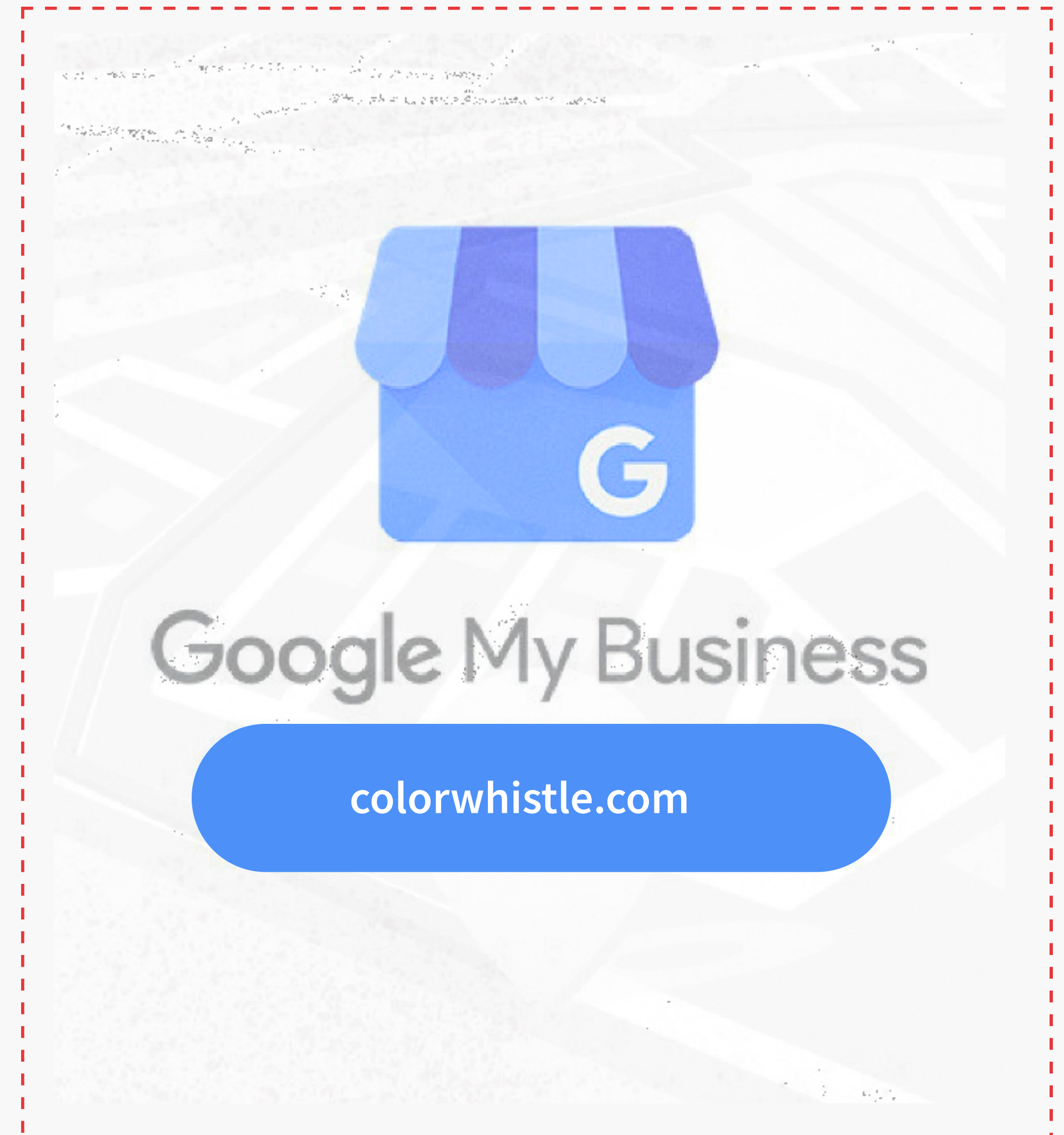
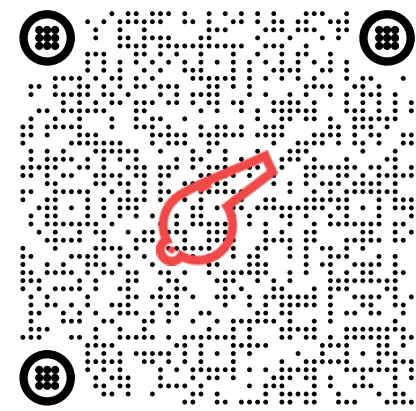
- ▶ *Get placed on Google Maps Searches*
- ▶ *Show up in Google’s Local 3-Pack which appears before organic results*
- ▶ *Increased engagement, more foot traffic to your local business*



Here is our setup guide on GMB listing. Once the setup is complete, you may want to fully optimize the listing on GMB to improve local ranking. Which is why we suggest you to have a quick read on this blog from WordStream.

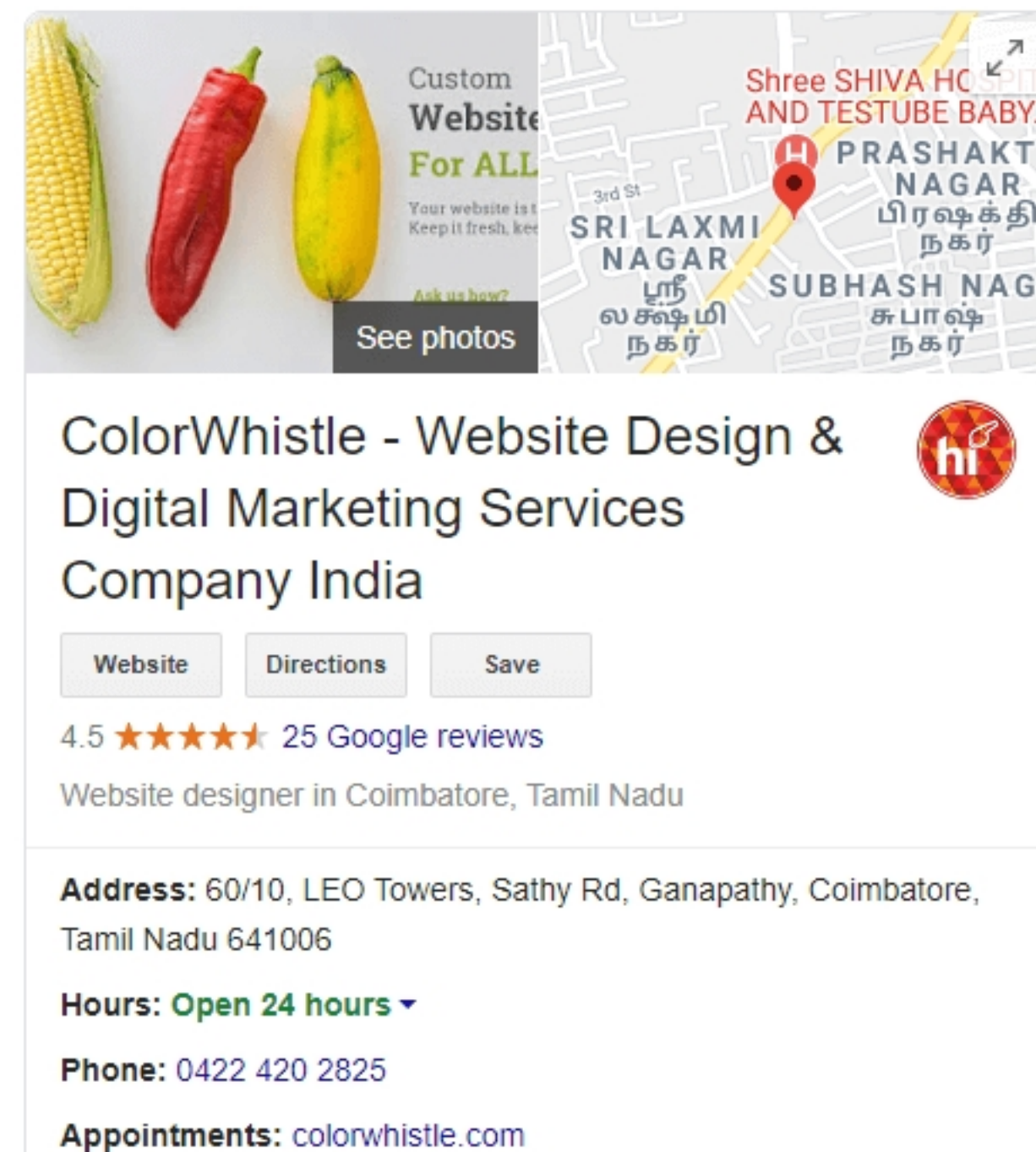
## Also Read

*The Powerful Advantages Of Local SEO For Small Businesses*



## 2) Google Knowledge Panel

Information boxes that appear for queries with a “local intent” on search engines like Google, Bing are called Local Knowledge Panels. These panels act as a business profile within the SERP and contain information such as hours, location, contact info, reviews, and images. think of them as business profiles that appear within the search results.

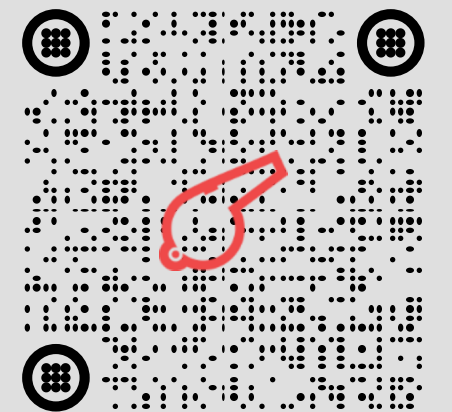


Optimizing for the local knowledge panel must form an important part of the local SEO checklist. Here is an ultimate reference blog to optimize business profile on Google to show all the necessary information upfront.

We would also encourage you to go through the in-depth analysis from Ahrefs on Google Knowledge Panel for your local business.

### Also Read

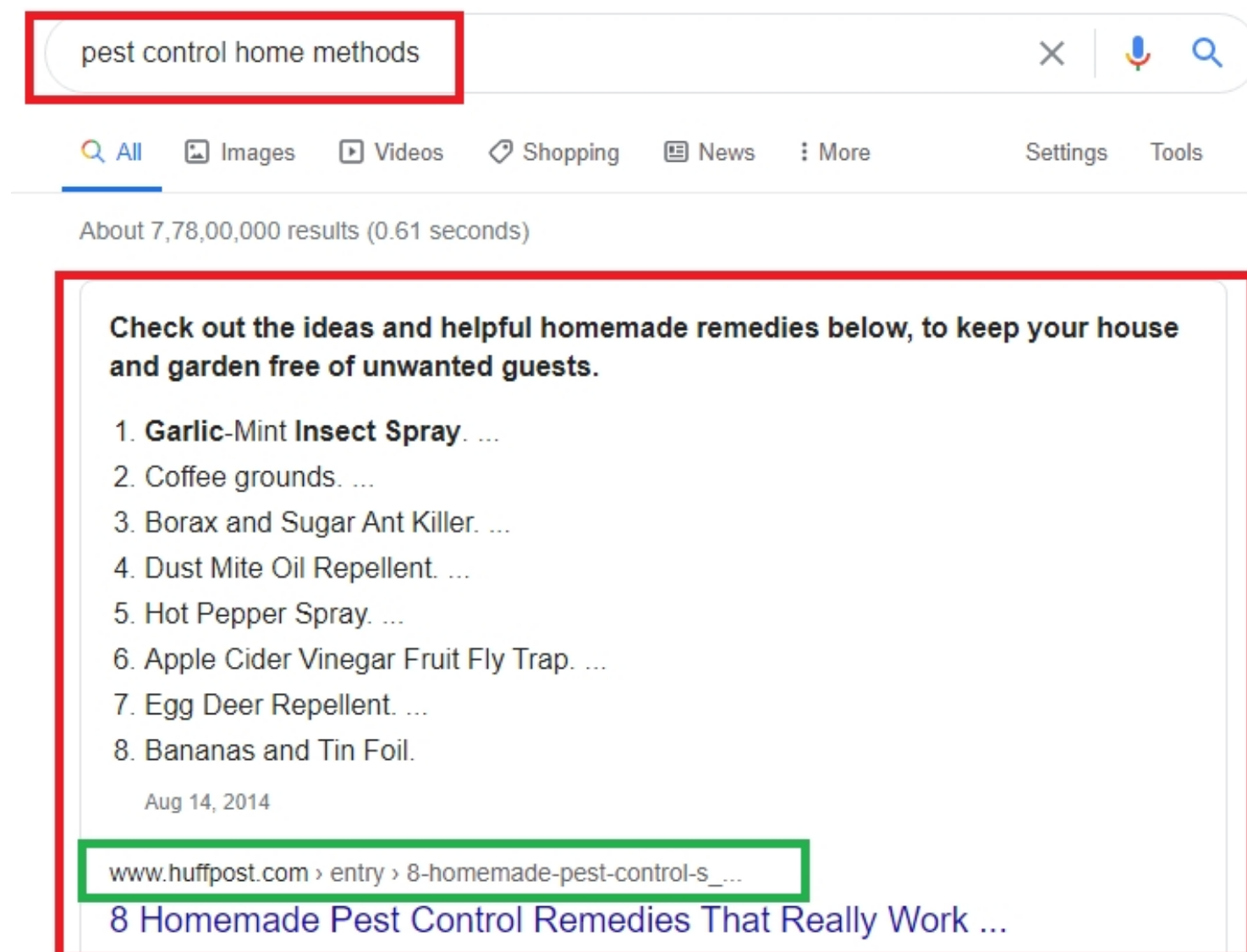
*Digital Solutions For Multiple Businesses*



# 3) Google Featured Snippets

Including featured snippets to your local SEO checks can be an interesting move. This Moz study reveals 165% jump in features snippets in all search result pages.

A featured snippet will look like this:



Now imagine that a local business provides pest control management services. On a related search query, if their website had a similar content on pest control remedies, their content could appear in the featured snippets.

Following Neil Patel's tips for ranking in Google's featured snippets, local businesses can attract potential leads as well as optimize their content for local SEO.

Justin

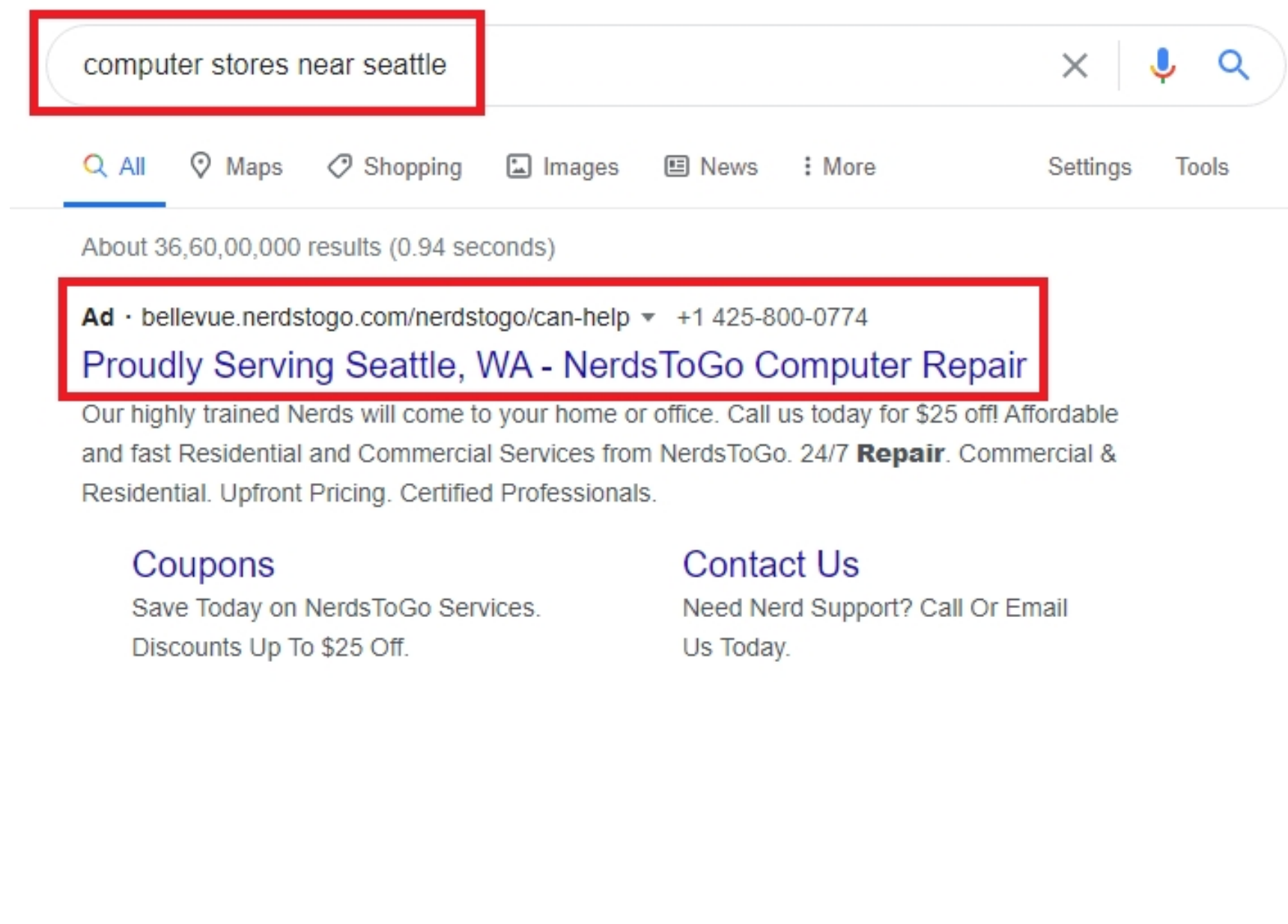
Google announced major changes to its featured snippets. You may read this analysis from **BrightLocal** to understand its impact on local businesses.





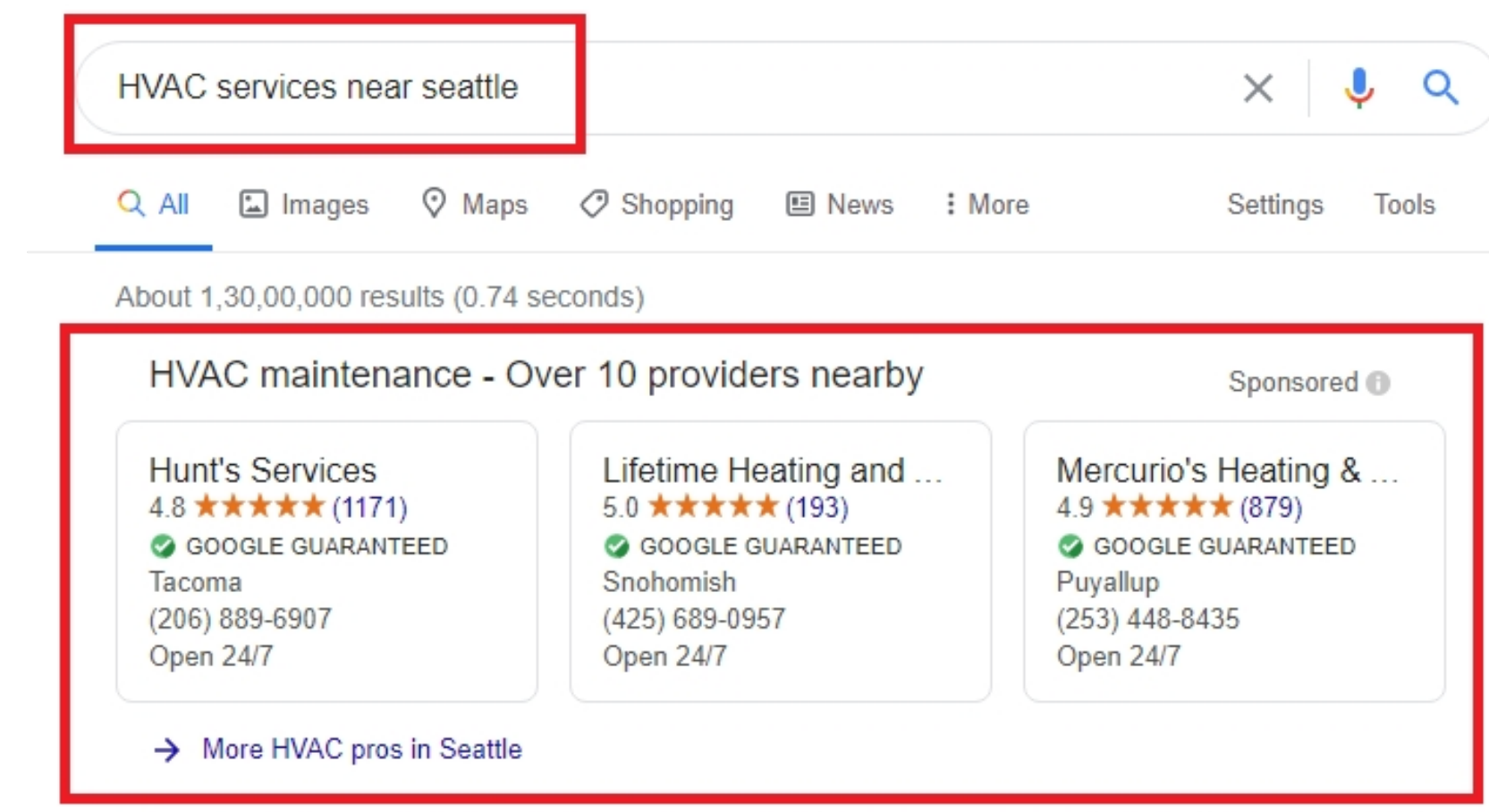
# 4) Google Local Service Ad- An Upgrade Over Traditional Text Ad

The following screenshot of a Google search result shows Pay Per Click (PPC) ads that have been optimized for local search.



PPC is a convenient model of online marketing in which the advertiser pays only for the click made by the visitor on their ad. Possibly, it is a way of procuring visits to your site or business when you find it difficult to do it organically (it's possible but demands time).

While PPC ad is an important tactic for local SEO, today's Marketers must also look to embrace Google's new Local Service Ads feature. It looks something like this:

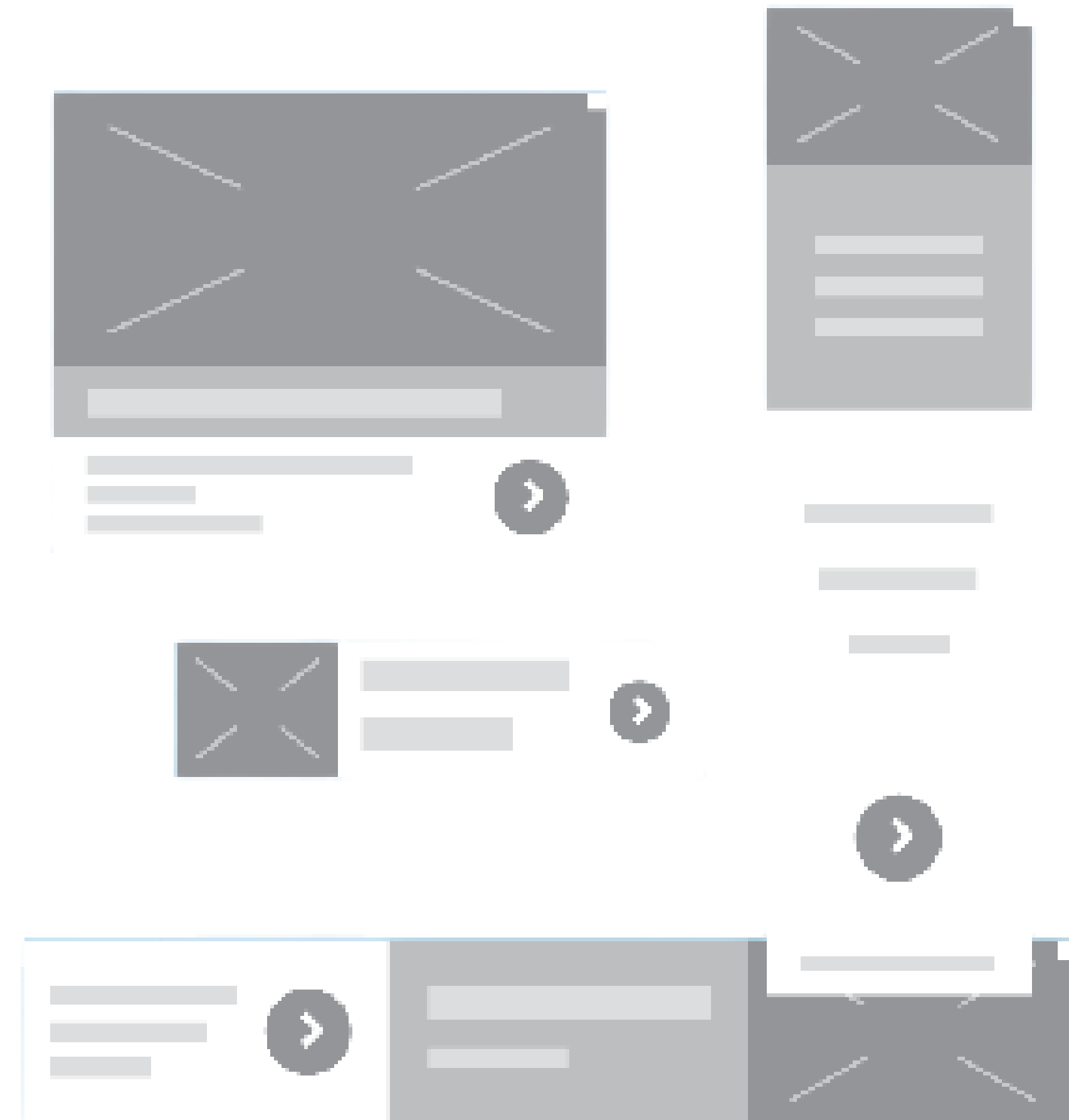


## Local Service Ads feature offers benefits like:

- ▶ *Advertisers can now pay per lead and not per click!*
- ▶ *Appear on top of search results, above PPC ads & Organic results*
- ▶ *Have services “checkmarked” that go on to prove its legitimacy*
- ▶ *Get your services listed on a voice-search result*
- ▶ *Free yourself from Keyword optimization*
- ▶ *Show User Ratings upfront*

This feature cannot be enabled through Google My Business account and may require a separate Business Profile. Including this in your local SEO checklist will enhance your service business visibility.

To get started with Google’s Local Service Ads, read this blog from WordStream.



## 5) Leveraging Social Media & Reviews

Social media's influence is quite contributing to improving the search ranking of your local business. Ensure your presence in social media because it can gain more backlinks and contribute to acquiring high ranking. Therefore, it acts as an effective check for local SEO.

Leveraging social media also creates a strong channel for creating brand awareness and a healthy customer relationship. Get started with the following approach:

- ▶ *Competitor Analysis*
- ▶ *Map Social networks to target audience demography*
- ▶ *Encourage customers to review you on GMB*
- ▶ *It is equally important to respond to every review*
- ▶ *In fact, Google and other search engines give some weightage to reviews, social media links in local SERP.*

## 6) Local Link Building

Local link building goes hand-in-hand with Social Media strategy. Thereby, it will also contribute to any local SEO strategy. Some common ways to increase popularity of your business in locale may be to:

- ▶ *Sponsor a Local Event and embed your company URL into every information regarding it*
- ▶ *Give Testimonials on Manufacturer/Supplier Page and request on attaching your business website URL in credits space*

For more such ideas on local link building, visit Robie Richard's blog [here](#).

When a third party (here Google) controls so much of the user experience, digital agencies must focus on ways to negotiate with it. However, it is also true that while a local SEO check ideally begins with Google My Business, we would equally recommend to “localize” the organic SEO parameters as well.

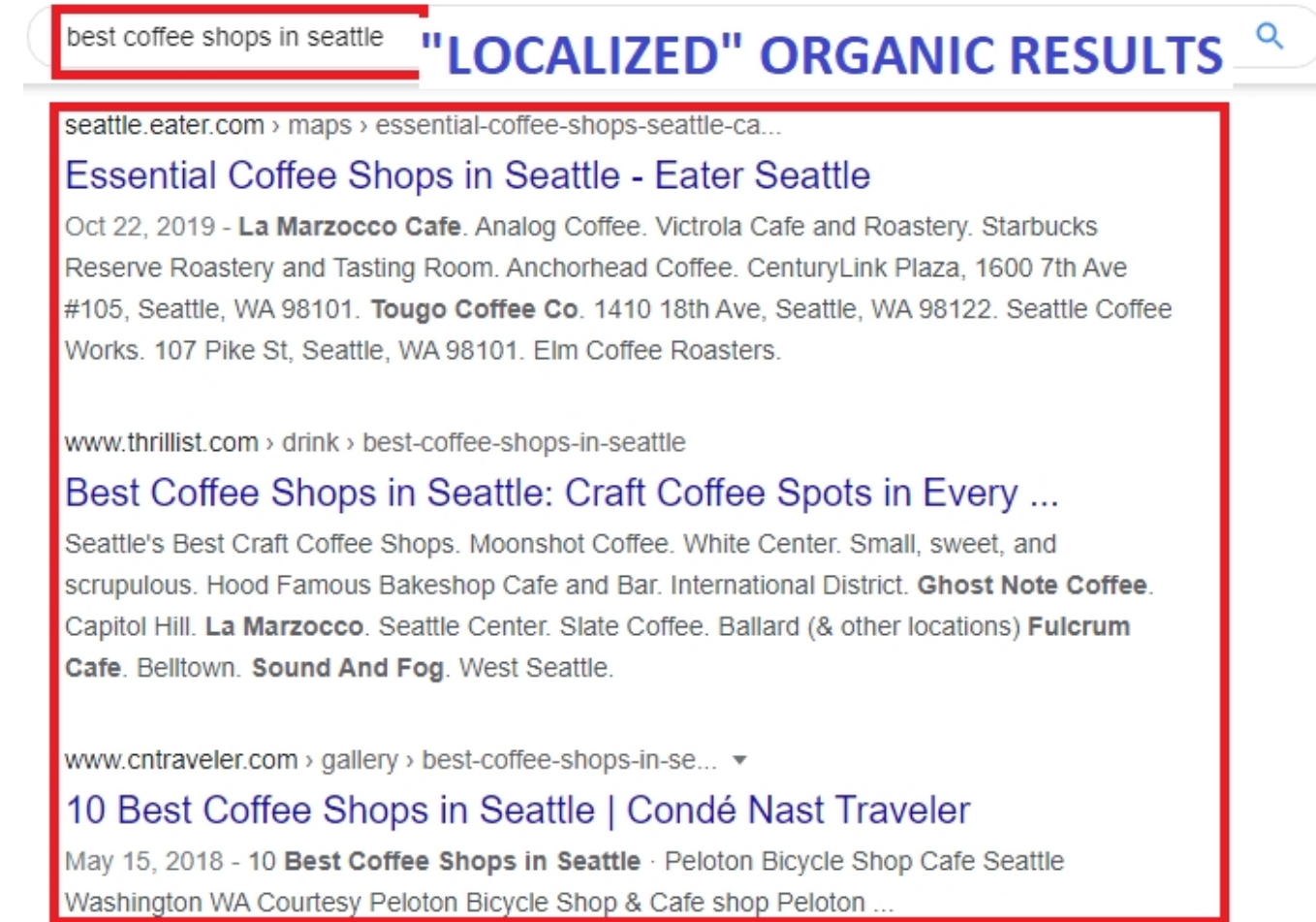
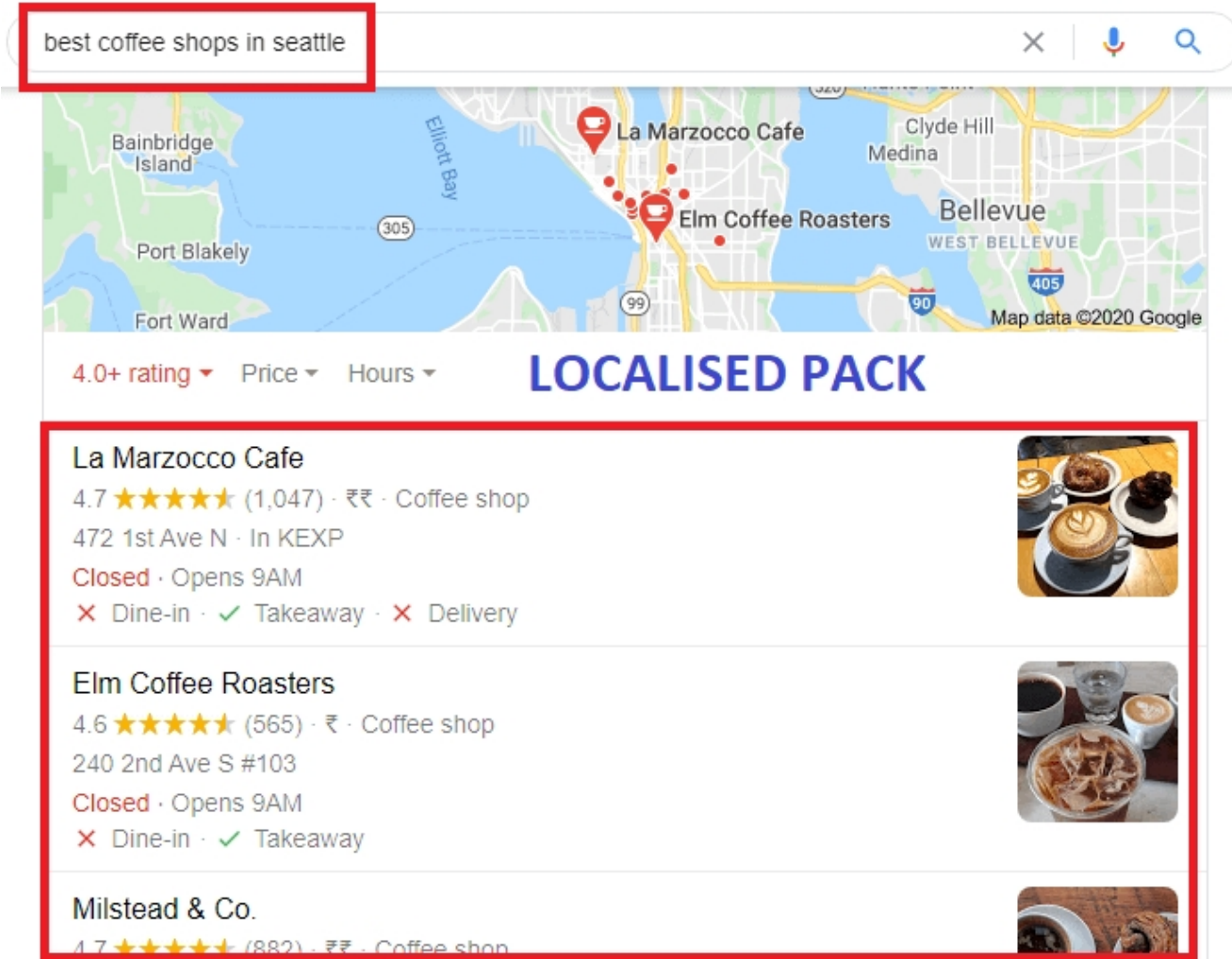
*In a world where Google can flip a switch and change everything, a strong organic presence is a saving grace.*

The State of Local SEO Industry Report 2020, Moz.



Now that the search engines are duly informed about a local business, it is time to manipulate optimize business website content to appear on the SERP.

‘But before that, here is what Google’s famous 3-pack and localized Organic results look like:



Observe the below local search ranking factors determined by Moz. It is seen that both follow the same parameters with only the weightage corresponding to each category differing.



## Local Pack/Finder Ranking Factors

19%

### My Business Signals

(Proximity, Categories, Keyword in business title, etc.)

17%

### Link Signals

(Inbound anchor text, linking domain authority, linking domain quality, etc.)

14%

### On-Page Signals

(Presence of NAP, keywords in title, domain authority)

13%

### Citation Signals

(IYP/aggregator NAP consistency, citation volume, etc.)

## Localized Organic Ranking Factors

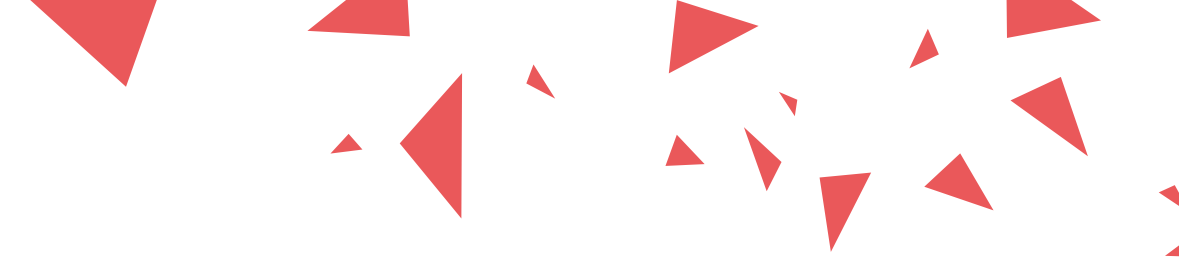
7%

29%

24%

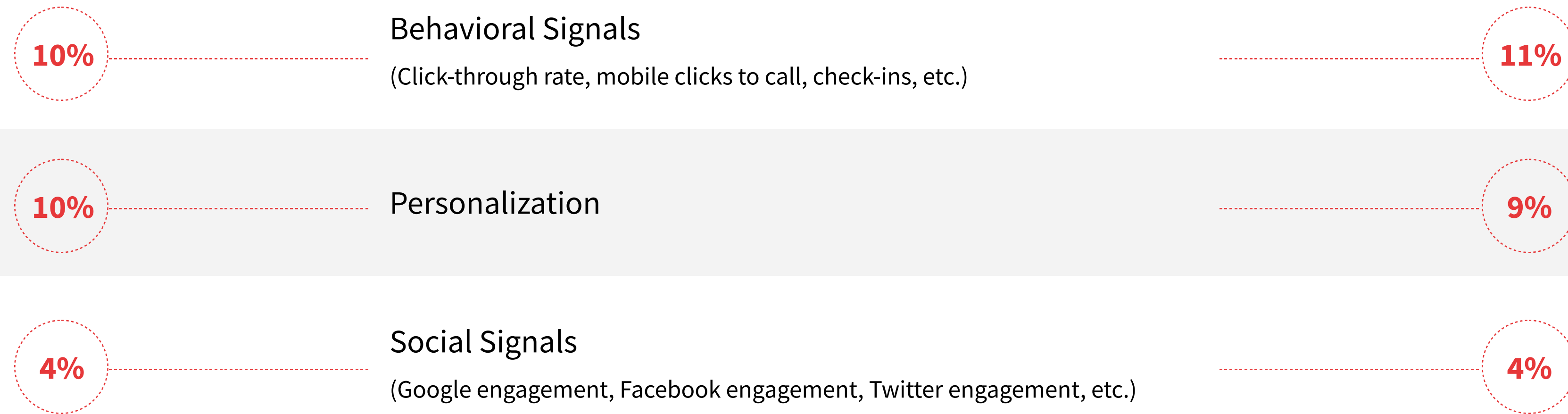
8%





## Local Pack/Finder Ranking Factors

## Localized Organic Ranking Factors



### “Negotiating” Search Engines Checklist

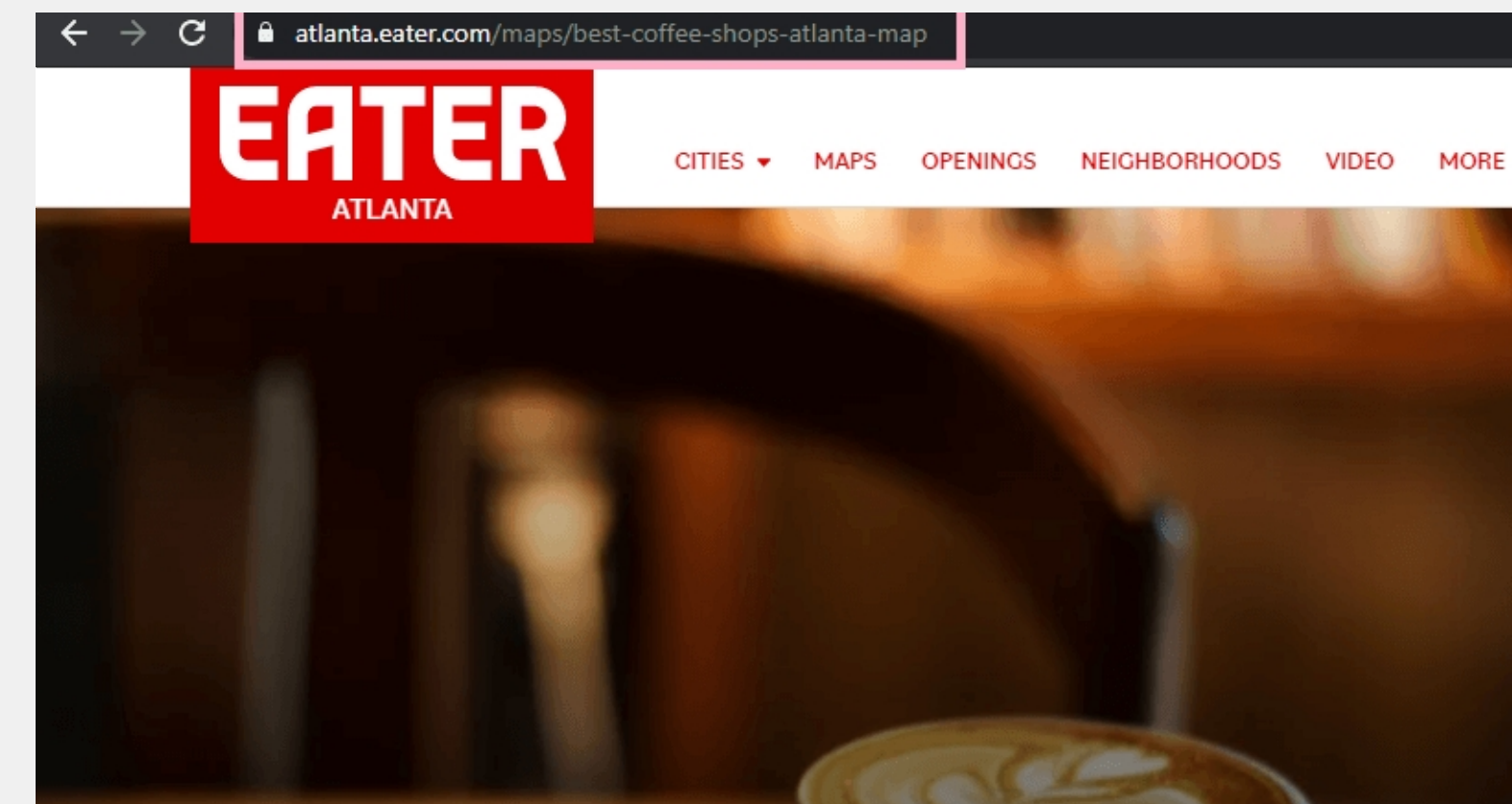
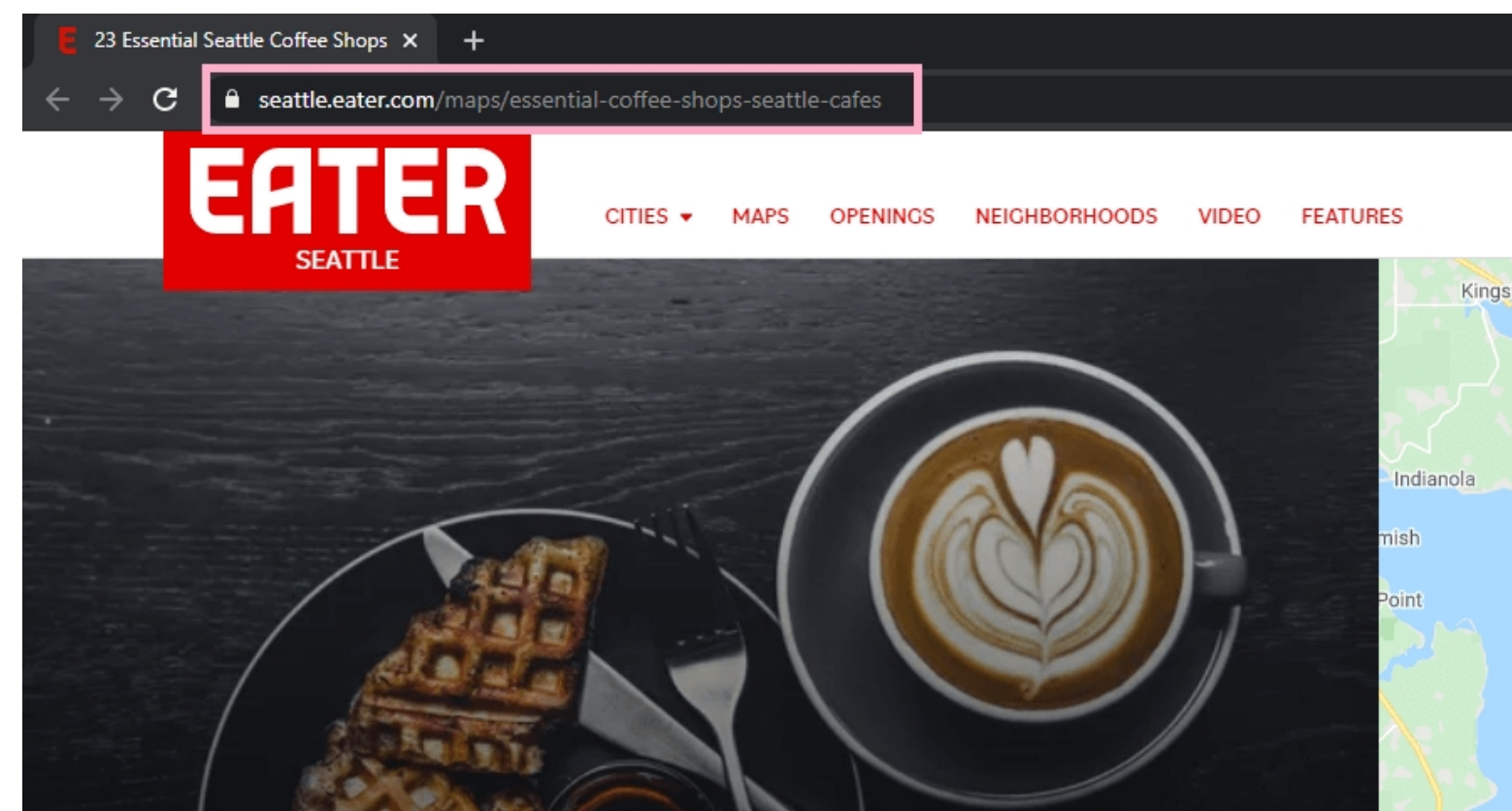
- ▶ *Technical Checks*
- ▶ *On-Page Checks*
- ▶ *Keyword/Content Checks*
- ▶ *Google Analytics*
- ▶ *Google Search Console*



# 7) Short, Simple, And Descriptive Urls With Local Intent

URLs that are shorter rank better.

Expert SEO specialists recommend placing the keywords as the URL which is shorter and also descriptive and contribute to perform better on SERP.



## What did you observe?

For any local SEO strategy, consider to place “local search intent” in the URL structure itself. By this way, you can “fight” with the search engine to rank your website higher on the SERP.



## 9) Alternative Text For Images With “Local Intent”

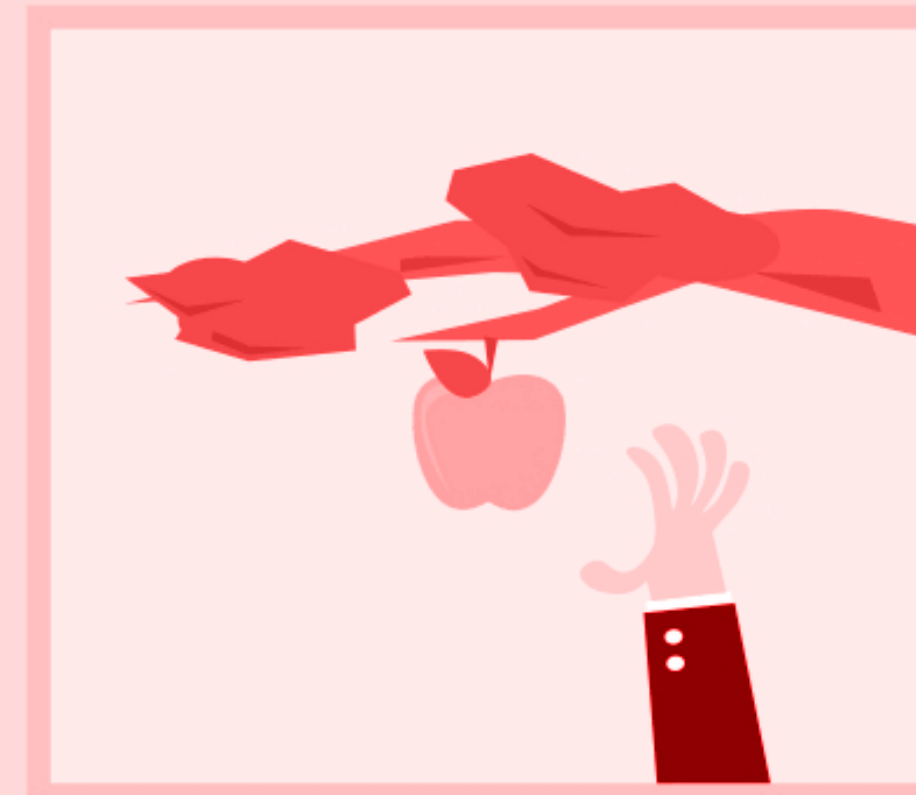
Alt texts give the reader the context to interpret the topic the page reads when the image fails to load. If alt text is combined with “local intent” it will help in improving Google image ranking.

Justin

*Google’s Possum Update is here and you can read here on how will it affect your local SEO?*

The following SEO elements are best suited for conventional SEO techniques. They have an indirect consequence to local search rankings and therefore do not form a part of our local SEO checklist.

### IMAGE ALT TEXT FOR SEO



✘ **alt="yellow apple"**

✔ **alt="hand reaching for a yellow apple hanging from the tree"**

Image by  Mangools





## ON-PAGE SEO ELEMENTS

### System Elements

- ▶ *Page speed score*
- ▶ *Page load time*
- ▶ *Domain Age*
- ▶ *Dynamic URLs*
- ▶ *Canonical URLs*
- ▶ *Robots.txt & Sitemaps*

### Content & HTML Elements

- ▶ *Content Duplication*
- ▶ *Content Optimization*
- ▶ *Meta Title*
- ▶ *Meta Description*
- ▶ *H1 Tags*
- ▶ *H2&H3 Tags*

### CSS Elements

- ▶ *Size of page HTML code*
- ▶ *On-page SEO score*
- ▶ *Image Alt Attribute*
- ▶ *HTTP headers*
- ▶ *301 redirects*
- ▶ *302 redirects*

## TECHNICAL SEO ELEMENTS

### Links Elements

- ▶ *Backlinks*
- ▶ *Broken Links*
- ▶ *External & Internal Links*
- ▶ *Responsive Design*

### Trust Elements

- ▶ *Page Authority*
- ▶ *Domain Authority*
- ▶ *Pages Indexed by Google*
- ▶ *W3C & CSS Validation*

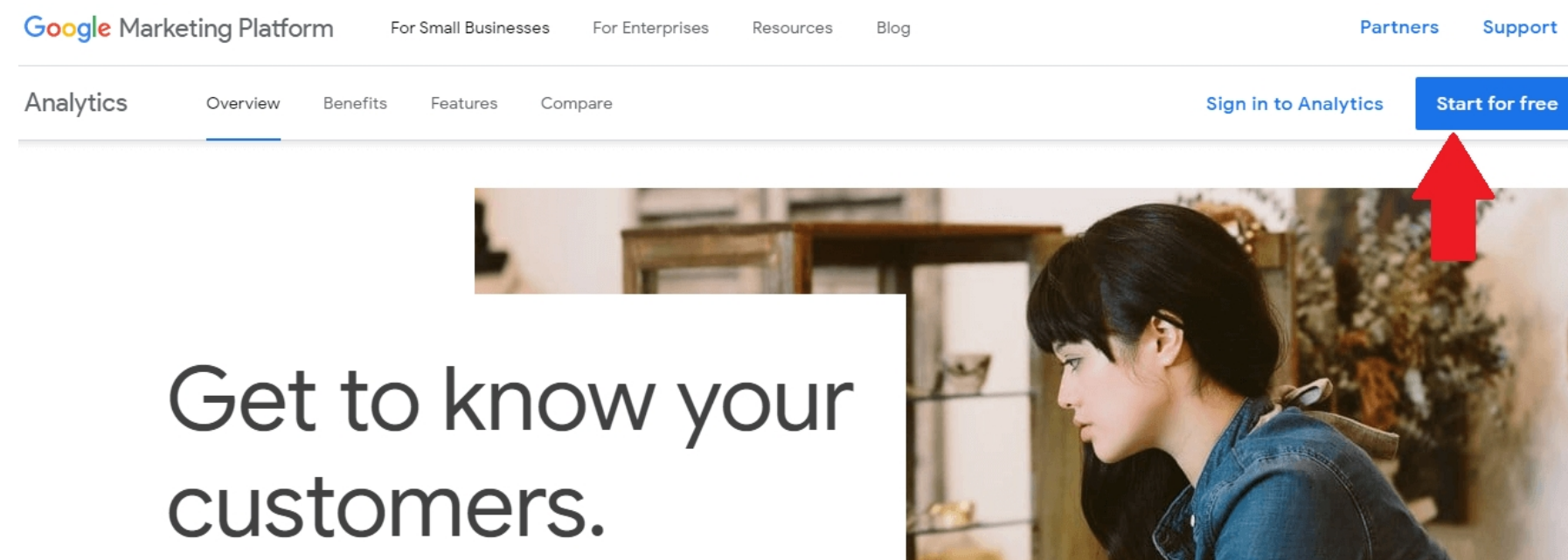
### Social Elements

- ▶ *Alexa Rank*
- ▶ *Voice Search*



# 10) Google Analytics

Google Analytics helps you to identify the exact source of traffic on a website. As the overall performance of a website is implicated by its usability, it also helps in analyzing the same, viz a viz which online campaign/pages got the most clicks, determine worst performing pages, cart abandonment, etc.



The key features of Google Analytics include,

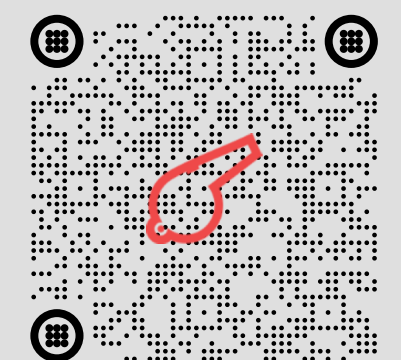
- ▶ *Monitoring the traffic of the site from Google- demographic profile, etc.*
- ▶ *Finding the pages that direct more traffic to the site*

- ▶ *Other sites and search engines responsible for diverting traffic*
- ▶ *Page reviews, bounce rate, and the timestamp of the user being present on the site and much more.*

There may be other alternatives to Google Analytics but the baseline shall remain the same – Traffic analysis is the guiding needle of any Local SEO strategy. Hence, it ought to be a part of any local SEO checklist.

## Also Read

*Alternatives To Google Analytics*



# 11) Google Search Console

Search Console is a tool designed to track the search performance of a website on a Google search. Having it on a local SEO checklist will enhance data analysis done by digital agencies to optimize their clients' website for local search.

Using the Search Console, SEO providers can monitor their client's site performance to:

- ▶ *Make sure that Google can access the content*
- ▶ *Submit new content for crawling*
- ▶ *Create visually engaging search results*
- ▶ *Fix the bugs & resolve spam issues*

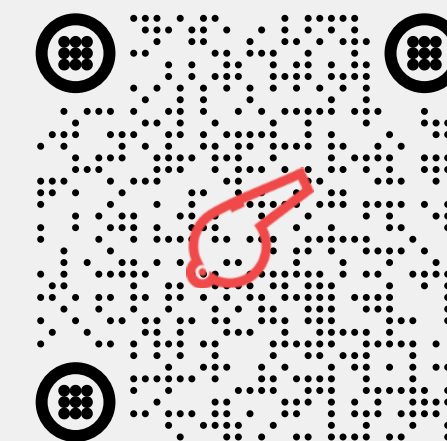
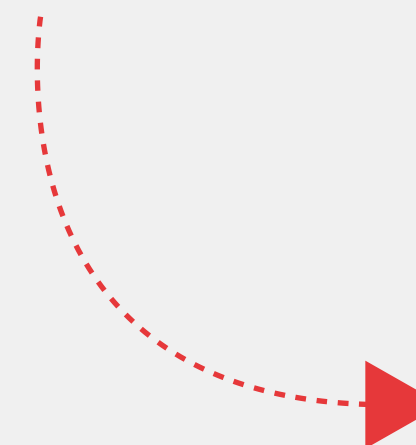


*Google Analytics can be integrated with Google Search Console which will bestow a lot of valid and helpful SEO information on the website. To make the best use of Google Analytics, you can read our previous blog.*

Following which Digital Agencies can discover how Google Search – and the world- sees their clients' site through:

- ▶ *Which queries enable sites to appear in search results?*
- ▶ *Is the mobile site optimized well for visitors searching on a mobile device?*
- ▶ *Is contact information, events highlighted in search results?*

Here is a 10-minute long YouTube video from Ahrefs explaining the best usage of Google Search Console for SEO.



YouTube video from **Ahrefs'** Channel



# Summing It Up

Any Marketer looking to optimize search engines for local searches may need a checklist to follow. A local SEO checklist must first determine the type of business that is to be optimized. It must further feed information about the business to the search engines. Later it should look to “localize” organic SEO techniques in order to negotiate with the search engines to appear higher up the SERP.

But as Google rules every roost, a startling majority of local marketers rely on Google tools to track, analyze, and report on their work, as well as determine ROI. Therefore, it is only natural to include more Google-centric techniques to conduct local SEO checks to get the desired results.

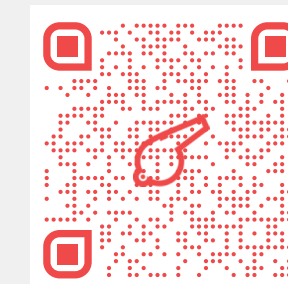
But...

Google’s algorithm may be pushing in bigger brands and businesses to capitalise the local space. Local businesses have nothing but to fight for their due on the SERP.

Implementing the above discussed local SEO checklist should make a difference. Contact ColorWhistle via message or call at **+1 (210) 787-3600**. We are happy to assist you further!



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