

Do it Yourself Local SEO Guide

An in-Depth Guide to Local SEO

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for anyone who is or wants to do their businesses local SEO and other online marketers who want to dominate Local SEO, win the Local Packs, and get as much local traffic as it possible.

What is this guide about?

A guide on how to do your Local SEO

You will learn:

- What are Local Packs and why you should get into it.
- What are local citations, why they are important, and how to manage them.
- How to optimize your website for local customers.
- How to track your results in your exact location.

What is Local Pack

What is Local Pack

Search engines use location to provide a better user experience. Gone are the days when you searched for “Emergency Plumber” and got a selection of results ranging across the country. Now, search engines use location based data (IP addresses and geo location) to provide a better search result.

By optimizing for local you can take advantage of search engines’ local intent for better visibility for the business within the search results.

Searching for a specific business or service in a location triggers what is called a Local Pack. This is a list of businesses that provide a service or product within the local area and adds an additional layer to the search results.

Local Pack = Extra Visibility + More Opportunities

There are several types of local pack, but they mostly contain the same blocks of information and do not differ substantially. We’ll be talking about two types: Local Teaser and Local Pack (or Local Finder). Their main difference is that Local Teaser does not have links, which complicates tracking your presence in them.

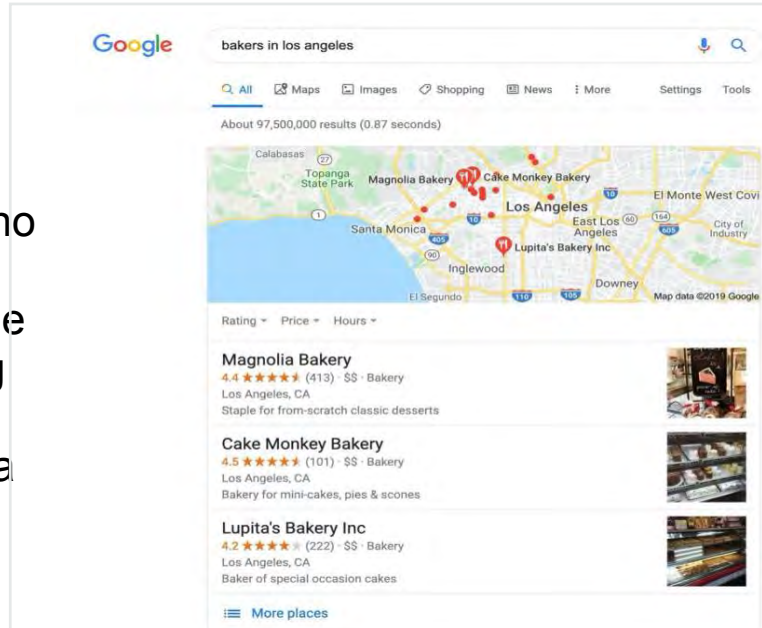
Work on all of the SERP elements together!

By combining local SEO with your search marketing mix and bringing all the elements together you can dominate the search result landscape.

Types of Local Packs

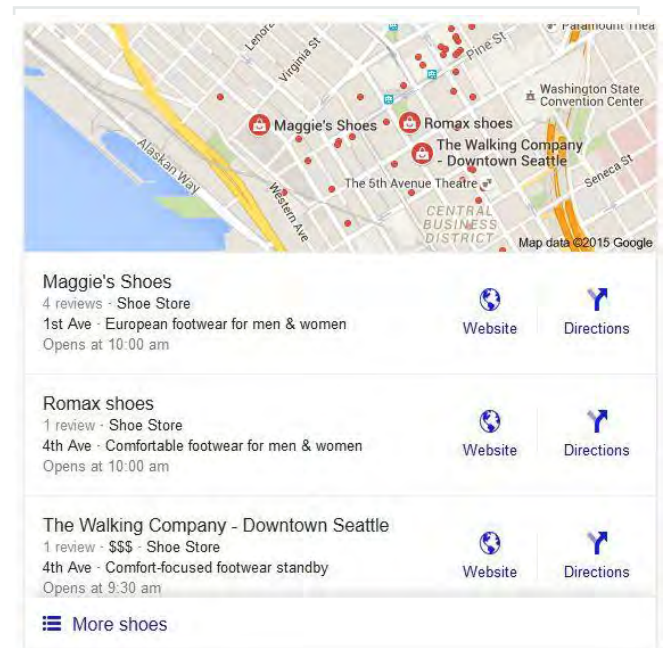
Local Teaser (also referred to as Local Snack Pack)

This is a local 3-pack for dining, hospitality, and entertainment businesses. Results have a photo, no phone number, and no links to the website, but if you click on one of the results, you will see a map featuring more businesses and an extended card of the selected business, with a link to their site.



Local Pack (or Local Finder)

This is the most commonly used type of Local Pack: a list of three (can be also two or four) businesses with their contact details and other valuable information. Beneath or beside the map, which is displayed on the Google search page, is the Name of Business, Address of Business, Phone Number of Business (NAP), unless marked as a Service Area Business (SAB), in which case only town and county (state) are displayed. Other information may be included, such as business hours, star rating, etc.



How to get into the Local Pack

In Local Packs, Google shows business listings, not websites, so to be featured in a Local Pack, you need to get a Google My Business page.

Also, it is assumed by many SEO pros that to get into the Local Pack you should be ranked within the top 10 results for your local search query, which implies a good share of website optimization.

Here is what you should do to get your business featured in the Local Pack:

1. Manage your business listings

- Create your Google My Business page
- Claim your Google My Business listing
- Verify your listing
- optimize your listing
 - Fill in business info
 - Select correct category
 - Add pictures
- Manage citations

2. Optimize your website

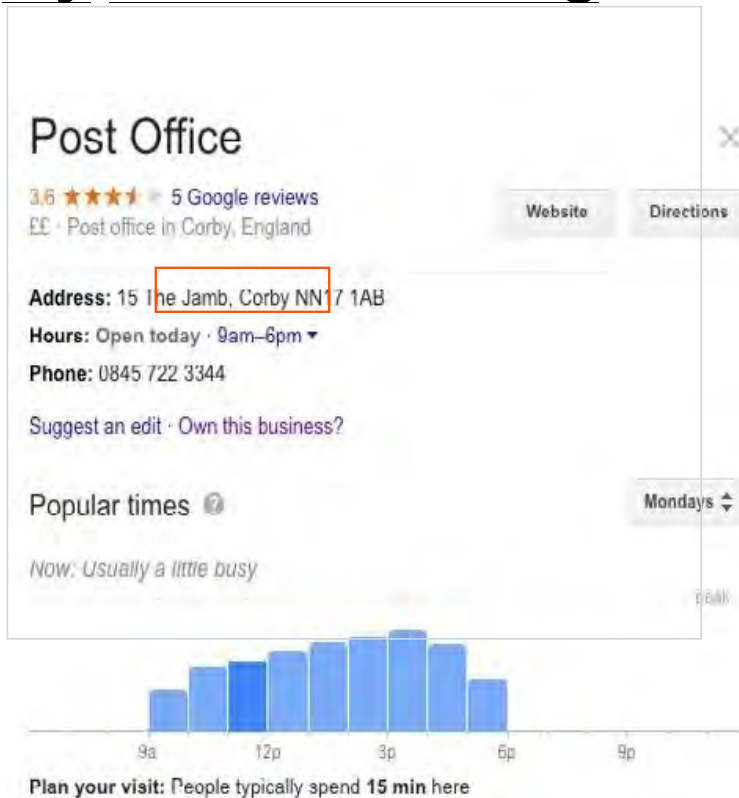
- Perform site audit
- optimize for local
 - Integrate NAP into the website
 - Obtain locally relevant backlinks
 - Add structured data markup

3. Track your results

- Create a rank tracking campaign
- Track for keywords with local modifiers
- Add local areas and different devices
- Track locally for keywords with no local modifiers

Creating and Managing Your Business Listing

Create, claim and verify your Google My Business listing



The Google business page is what appears within the Local Pack in organic searches and in Google Maps. Without a Google My Business page your business will not have a presence in Local Pack or Local Maps results.

Check to see if you have an unclaimed business listing. If you do, then claim it and verify it.

If you do not have a Google Business listing, then create a Google Business page — <https://www.google.com/business/>

If you are a service area business, then make sure you select “I serve customers at their location”. Then select your service area and/or a service area radius.

In both cases make sure that your NAP (Name of Business, Address of Business, Phone number of Business) are correct. It will be crucial when you start optimizing for local search.

TIP: Use the same Google account that has your website's Google Analytic and Google Search Console.

Optimize Your Business Listing

Once your business listing is verified, you can optimize it and start taking advantage of its benefits. Log into your Dashboard here: <https://business.google.com/manage/> Select the Business and click Manage Location.

Business Info

A proper and detailed business description is key to being a match to the relevant user search queries.

TIP: Don't skip fields. Try adding as much valuable information about your business as possible. Be thorough. Wrong business hours or fake pictures can harm your business's reputation.

Category

Refine the category if available. This is one of the most important business descriptions and allows Google to match your business to a search query.

Business Hours

Add business hours, making sure that these match the hours listed on your website. Pay special attention if you have several locations with different working hours.

Reviews

View and respond to reviews. Some businesses have a special review management policy, which allows them to control their online reputation.

URL's

Depending on the type of business you have selected, there will either be a single element for your website's URL or multiple offerings such as Menu URL, Order ahead URL and Reservation URL.

Photos

A picture is worth a thousand words and images play a very important part in the decision-making process by customers. Again, this section needs to be monitored as users are able to add images to your listing via Maps.

Insights

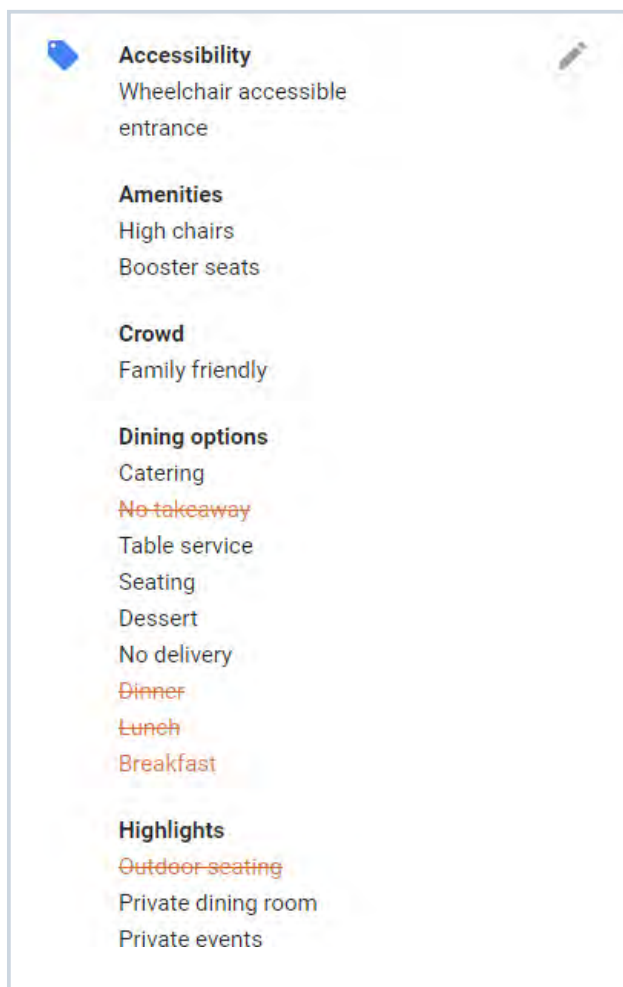
The Insights section provides some information on where customers found your listing and what action they took.

Business Attributes

These may not be immediately available to you, but as data is built up about your business, they will become available. You should regularly check these, as they are crowd sourced via Google Maps and do have the tendency to be incorrect.

Posts

Creating a post allows you to publish events, products and services directly and instantly in search and Maps.



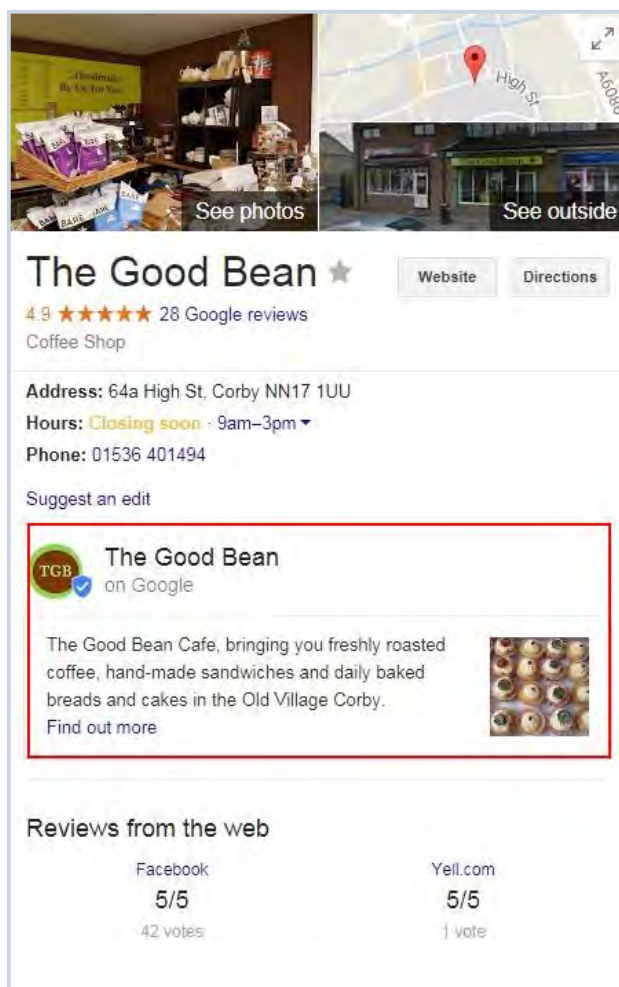
Accessibility
Wheelchair accessible entrance

Amenities
High chairs
Booster seats

Crowd
Family friendly

Dining options
Catering
~~No takeaway~~
Table service
Seating
Dessert
No delivery
~~Dinner~~
~~Lunch~~
Breakfast

Highlights
~~Outdoor seating~~
Private dining room
Private events



The Good Bean ★
4.9 ★★★★★ 28 Google reviews
Coffee Shop

[Website](#) [Directions](#)


Address: 64a High St, Corby NN17 1UU
Hours: Closing soon · 9am–3pm ▾
Phone: 01536 401494

[Suggest an edit](#)

The Good Bean on Google

The Good Bean Cafe, bringing you freshly roasted coffee, hand-made sandwiches and daily baked breads and cakes in the Old Village Corby.

[Find out more](#)



Reviews from the web

Facebook	Yell.com
5/5	5/5
42 votes	1 vote

Managing Business Citations

A citation is essentially a business profile of some description on a website other than your own. Typically, you will find citations on business directory type websites, such listings as Yelp or Localize, but your business info can also be present in maps, apps, search engines, voice assistants, and other intelligent services.

They may be paid citations or free ones. Each citation will consist of, at a minimum, the business name, address, contact details and, more often than not, a link to the official business website. Some directories will allow a short business description, additional information like business hours, and some of the better ones have calling functionality.

Important When Building Citations

Citations are a local search ranking factor, so it is critical that you keep your citations correct and up-to-date across all business listings. To rank well, it is crucial that you have your NAP consistent across all citations (Name of Business, Address of Business, Phone Number of Business).

Many of the maps, apps, and directories are constantly crawling for the most up-to-date information, which means you might find the listings you've just updated have changed back to incorrect information.

Since citations are external links pointing to your website, they fall within [Google webmaster guidelines](#). Concentrate on relevant high authority sites rather than several of low-quality citations which could harm your site.

Optimizing your website for local search

After you make sure your business listings are in order, the next big step is to optimize your website for local search queries.

To do that, you need to understand how Google ranks websites in the local SERPs (and listings in the Local Pack).

Google Local Ranking Factors

Google states that the main factors that influence a site's position in the Local Pack are:

Relevance

How well a local listing matches what someone is searching for. Adding complete and detailed business information can help the user better understand your business and will match your website to relevant search results. A large part of this cannot be influenced because Google knows where your business is located (as you've stated your address in the listing), but this can be overcome with properly optimized service area pages or business location within the website and structured data markup.

Distance

Just like it sounds, how far each potential search result is from the location term used in a search. If you don't specify a location in your search, Google will calculate the distance based on what they know about your location.

Prominence

How well-known or prominent a business is. This is based on the information Google has about a business from across the web (like links, articles, and directories). Some places are more prominent in the offline world, and Google tries to reflect this online as well.

For example, famous museums, landmark hotels, or well-known store brands that are familiar to many people are also likely to be more prominent in search results. We can certainly influence this, initially with business citations and then over time with relevant inbound links and online references to the business site.



Basically, what Google says is that in order to rank high on the local SERP (and possibly get featured in the Local Pack), your website should be highly relevant to the search query, your business should be in direct proximity to the searcher and it should have authority both online and offline.

However, when chasing local ranks don't forget about the general SEO requirements: the website's health, optimized content, and quality backlinks. In this chapter, we collected the essential steps that you should take to optimize your website for local search.

Ensuring Your Website's Health

You have to perform a site audit to find and fix site issues, some of which are particularly serious for local websites.

Use our free website SEO analyzer tool to check [your website's health](#).

These are the issues that require your attention first.

Crawlability

Nothing drives the search engines' bots and users away from a website like broken links and 404 pages. Needless to say, a broken home page can cost you a good share of your profits.

The list of crawlability checks includes:

- 4 xx errors
- 5 xx errors
- Broken internal links
- Redirect chain and loops
- Broken external links
- Temporary redirects
- Internal links with no-follow attributes
- Too many on-page links
- www domain configured incorrectly
- External links with no-follow attributes

Page Speed

Local searches have better conversions because users that search locally generally have more interest in making a purchase or using a service. One could even say that local searchers are more impatient about getting a result. Spending extra time waiting while the website is loading is not what they want.

These are the checks that you should pay attention to as the issues they notify you of influence the page load speed:

- Large HTML size
- Slow page load speed
- Flash content used
- Frames used

Also, if you connect your Google Analytics account to Site Audit, you can prioritize the pages with the most page views per day and optimize them before others.

Images

Local searchers are very keen on images of a business. In fact, recent, high-quality images of a business or a product quite often sway a user's opinion, even when another place may have more in its favor.

Watch out for the following notifications:

- Broken internal images
- Broken external images
- Missing alt attributes

If you are optimizing for mobile devices, checking that all your pages have viewport tags and can scale for various screen sizes is imperative. If a page does not have a viewport meta tag, mobile browsers will not be able to find the optimized version of the page and will show the desktop version, with the font too small or too big for the mobile screen and the images jumbled. This will scare away your visitors and will worsen your rankings, especially considering Google's concept of mobile-first indexing.

Internal and External Links

Broken links are annoying, and they can also harm your site rankings. Watch out for the following issues:

- Broken internal links
- Broken external links
- Links with no-follow attributes
- Too many on-page links

Duplicate Titles and descriptions

Remember relevancy? Duplicate titles and descriptions tell Google that two or more of your website's pages are not unique, that is, they provide no additional value to the user.

The following checks will notify you in case you have any duplications on your website:

- Duplicate content
- Duplicate title tags
- Duplicate h1 and title tags
- Duplicate meta descriptions

Security Issues

If your clients can make purchases on your website, having an HTTPS version of your website is crucial.

Watch out for the following notifications:

- Non-secure page

- No redirects or canonicals to HTTPS URLs

- SSL certificate registered to an incorrect domain name

- Expiring or expired SSL certificate

- HTTPS pages lead to HTTP page

- Homepage does not use HTTPS encryption

Optimizing on-page and off-page elements

Fixing errors that are making your site unusable is the most urgent thing. Once this is done, you can start thinking about optimizing it specifically for local search.

Relevance, distance and prominence – remember? This is what we are going to be working on.

City and County in Landing Page Title

The City and County (State in US) should be in the landing

page that you want to position in the search results. By including your city and county in your landing page title tag, you will be letting both search engines and human visitors know that your business serves and is located in a specific geographic location.

Quality and Authority of Inbound Links to Domain

We have already touched on this regarding citations. The quality and authority of a link pointing to your domain plays a part in your visibility in search results. The old adage ‘quality over quantity’ is very relevant in earning links that point to your domain.

A local business can earn links from a variety of sources: local and national media, local charity sites, local business citations, business associations, chambers of commerce, local high profile bloggers.

Physical Address in City of Search

A physical address in an area, city or county will greatly boost the relevance of that page for a search query.

Add the address to page or site and mark up with [Local Business schema](#) markup (See Structured Data section). Local citations will also be using the address, creating a strong signal for that business and its locality.

For a single location business we recommend having all the contact details within the footer; this can include up to two

locations. For a brand with nationwide stores you would have your locations page in the top navigation line and a footer link to the locations page.

Product and Service Keywords in Website URL

The URL for the product and service landing page should contain keywords (e.g. www.yoursite.com/your-keywords-here). Try to be consistent with the structure of your URLs.

City and County in Landing Page H1/H2 Tags

Ideally your main page H1 should include your name and overall service and the H2 would include your town and county. On a product-specific page the H1 would be the actual product / service and the H2 would ideally contain the area again.

City and County in Most/All Website Title Tags

By including your city and county (state) in your landing page title tag, you will be letting both search engines and human visitors know that your business serves and is located in a specific geographic location.

Using Local Business Structured Data Markup

Single Local Business Location:

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "http://schema.org",
  "@type": "LocalBusiness",
  "image": "Image URL",
  "priceRange": "Price Range",
  "address": {
    "@type": "PostalAddress",
    "streetAddress": "First Line Address",
    "addressLocality": "Town",
    "addressRegion": "State",
    "postalCode": "Post Code"
  },
  "description": "Brief Description of Business",
  "name": "Name of Business",
  "openingHours": "Mo-Fr 09:00-17:00",
  "telephone": "0800 000 000",
  "email": "info@yourdomain",
  "url": "https://www.yourdomain.co.uk",
  "hasMap": "Short link direct from your GMB listing",
  "sameAs": [
    "Social media channel",
    "Social media channel"
  ]
}
```

```
}  
}  
</script>
```

You can reinforce your location in Google and other search engines and make it easy for customers to find your location by adding your Business Details sitewide.

By adding the business details to a page, you can also mark up the details with structured data.

Check to see if your business type is supported, if it is not supported then use the Local Business as default.

APPENDIX

Appendix

```

<script type='application/ld+json'>
{
"@context": {
"@vocab": "http://schema.org/"
},
"@graph": [
{
"@id": "https://yourwebsite.co.uk",
"@type": "Organization",
"name": "Your Organization",
"url": "https://yourwebsite.co.uk",
"logo": "https://yourwebsite.co.uk/wp-content/themes/yourwebsite-theme-v2.0/assets/gfx/logo-clean.svg",
"sameAs": [
"https://twitter.com/YourOrganization",
"https://www.youtube.com/channel/YoUrOrGaNIzaTiON",
"https://www.facebook.com/YourOrganization"
]
},
{
"@type": "RealEstateAgent",
"parentOrganization": {
"name": "Your Organization"
},
"name": "Your Organization Leeds",
"description": "Your Organization Operating in Leeds",
"image": "https://yourwebsite.co.uk/wp-content/themes/yourwebsite-theme-v2.0/assets/gfx/logo-clean.svg",
"priceRange": "Monthly - Weekly Rental",
"address": {
"@type": "PostalAddress",

```

```

"streetAddress": "3rd Floor Big House, 155 Big Street",
"addressLocality": "Leeds",
"addressRegion": "West Yorkshire",
"postalCode": "LS1 5XX"
},
"openingHours": [
"Mon-Fri 09:00-17:30"
],
"telephone": "0113 222 0000",
"url": "https://yourwebsite.co.uk/lettings-leeds/",
"hasMap": "https://goo.gl/maps/YoURoRgaNlzATiOn",
"sameAs" : [
"https://plus.google.com/01010101010101001",
"https://www.yell.com/biz/your-organization-leeds-123456/"
]
},
{
"@type": "RealEstateAgent",
"parentOrganization": {
"name" : "Your Organization"
},
"name": "Your Organization Bradford",
"description": "Your Organization Operating in Bradford",
"image": "https://yourwebsite.co.uk/wp-content/themes/yourwebsite-theme-v2.0/assets/gfx/logo-clean.svg",
"priceRange" : "Monthly - Weekly Rental",
"address": {
"@type": "PostalAddress",
"streetAddress": "128 Little Road",
"addressLocality": "Bradford",
"addressRegion": "West Yorkshire",
"postalCode": "BD7 XXX"
},
"openingHours": [
"Mon-Fri 09:00-17:30",

```

```

"Sat 10:00-13:00"
],
"telephone": "01274 371 495",
"url": "https://yourwebsite.co.uk/organization-bradford/",
"hasMap": "https://goo.gl/maps/YouR111orgaNiZAtion",
"sameAs" : [
"https://plus.google.com/123456789098765432",
"http://www.zoopla.co.uk/find-agents/branch/your-organization-
bradford-12345/",
"http://www.rightmove.co.uk/estate-agents/agent/your-organization-
Ltd/Bradford-17526.
html",
"https://www.primelocation.com/to-rent/branch/your-organization-
bradford-32633/"
]
}
</script>

```

Service Area Local Business Structured Data

```

<script type="application/ld+json">
{
"@context": "http://schema.org/",
"@type": "TaxiService",
"provider": {
"@type": "LocalBusiness",
"name": "Awesome Taxi",
"telephone": "01244 421024",
"email": "book@awesometaxi.co.uk",
"url": "https://www.awesometaxi.co.uk/",
"hasMap": "https://goo.gl/maps/YoUrTaXiSeRvlce",

```

```

"image": "https://www.awesometaxi.co.uk/wp-
content/uploads/2017/07/Awesome-Taxi-
Service-Logo.jpg",
"priceRange" : "Book Online or Request Quote",
"address": {
"@type": "PostalAddress",
"streetAddress": "125 Greenish Drive",
"addressLocality": "Chester",
"addressRegion": "Cheshire",
"postalCode": "CH4 8XX",
"sameAs" : [
"https://plus.google.com/12534645756878010101",
"https://twitter.com/AwesomeTaxi",
"https://www.facebook.com/AwesomeTaxi",
"https://www.linkedin.com/company/awesome-taxi-service",
"https://www.yell.com/biz/awesome-taxi-service/"
]
},
"location": {
"@type": "Place",
"geo": {
"@type": "GeoCircle",
"geoMidpoint": {
"@type": "GeoCoordinates",
"latitude": "xx.xxxxxx",
"longitude": "-x.xxxxxxx"
},
"geoRadius": "xx"
}
},
"providerMobility": "dynamic"
}
</script>

```

Hotel Structured Data + Star Rating

```

<script type="application/ld+json">
{
"@context": "http://schema.org",
"@type": "Hotel",
"image": "http://www.YourHotel.com/files/2121/7575/1111/Hotel.jpg",
"starRating" : { "@type" : "Rating",
"ratingValue" : "5"},
"priceRange" : "Best Rate Available When Booking Direct",
"address": {
"@type": "PostalAddress",
"streetAddress": "11 Street 5, Town, City",
"addressLocality": "Province",
"addressRegion": "Island name",
"postalCode": "11111",
"addressCountry": "Country"
},
"description": "Great Hotel on the beach",
"name": "Your Hotel Resort & Spa",
"alternateName": "Your Hotel Resort and Spa",
"alternateName": "Your Hotel",
"alternateName": "Hotel Island",
"telephone": "+111 (0) 75 555 555",
"email": "mailus@yourhotel.com",
"url": "http://www.yourhotel.com/island/",
"sameAs" : [ "https://plus.google.com/+yourhotelisland",
"https://www.facebook.com/your.hotel",
"https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g1151155-d115115-
Reviews-Your_Hotel_
Resort_Spa_Island_Town_City_Province.html"]
},
"hasMap": "https://goo.gl/maps/YoUrHoTEI"
}
}

```

```
}
</script>
```

Hotel Structured Data + Reviews + Reservations

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
"@context": "http://schema.org",
"@type": "Hotel",
"image": "http://www.YourHotel.com/files/2121/7575/1111/Hotel.jpg",
"starRating" : { "@type" : "Rating",
"ratingValue" : "5"},
"priceRange" : "Best Rate Available When Booking Direct",
"address": {
"@type": "PostalAddress",
"streetAddress": "11 Street 5, Town, City",
"addressLocality": "Province",
"addressRegion": "Island name",
"postalCode": "11111",
"addressCountry": "Country"
},
"aggregateRating": {
"@type": "AggregateRating",
"ratingValue": "4.4",
"bestRating": "5",
"ratingCount": "53"
},
"description": "Great Hotel on the beach",
"name": "Your Hotel Resort & Spa",
"alternateName": "Your Hotel Resort and Spa",
"alternateName": "Your Hotel City",
"alternateName": "Hotel Island",
```

```
"telephone": "+111 (0) 75 555 555",
"email": "mailus@yourhotel.com",
"url": "http://www.yourhotel.com/island/",
"sameAs" : [ "https://plus.google.com/+yourhotelisland",
"https://www.facebook.com/your.hotel",
"https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g1151155-d115115-
Reviews-Your_Hotel_
Resort_Spa_Island_Town_City_Province.html"]
},
"hasMap": "https://goo.gl/maps/YoUrHoTEI"
},
"potentialAction":{
"@type":"ReserveAction",
"target":{
"@type":"EntryPoint",
"urlTemplate":"https://www.thebookingbutton.com.au/properties/
yourhoteldirect","actionPlatform":[
"http://schema.org/DesktopWebPlatform",
"http://schema.org/IOSPlatform",
"http://schema.org/AndroidPlatform"
]
},
},
"result":{
"@type":"LodgingReservation",
"name":"Book Now"
}
}
}
</script>
```


Restaurant within a Hotel or Brand

```

<script type="application/ld+json">
{
"@context": "http://schema.org",
"@type": "Restaurant",
"servesCuisine": [
"Thai",
"Western"
],
"image": "http://www.YourHotel.com/files/2121/7575/1111/Hotel.jpg",
"priceRange" : "Menu Items: USD 10 - USD 100",
"address": {
"@type": "PostalAddress",
"streetAddress": "11 Street 5, Town, City",
"addressLocality": "Province",
"addressRegion": "Island name",
"postalCode": "11111",
"addressCountry": "Country"
},
"name": "Restaurant Name",
"alternateName": "Restaurant",
"telephone": "+111 (0) 75 555 556",
"email": "mailus@yourhotel.com",
"url": "http://www.yourhotel.com/island/restaurants/name/",
"hasMenu":
"http://www.yourhotel.com/island/restaurants/name/menu/",
"hasMap": "https://goo.gl/maps/YoURrEsTaRAunT"
},
"branchOf":
{
"@type": "Hotel",
"url": "http://www.yourhotel.com/island/",
"name": "Your Hotel Resort & Spa",
"sameAs" : [ "https://plus.google.com/+yourhotel",

```

```
"https://www.facebook.com/hotel.island",  
"https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g1151155-d115115-  
Reviews-Your_Hotel_  
Resort_Spa_Island_Town_City_Province.html"]  
}  
}  
}  
</script>
```

Using Event Markup for Visibility in Knowledge Panel

A business can take advantage of having their Events (multiple) displayed in the knowledge panel over and above their Google Posts.

Event

Event Schema is then broken down into more specific event types. Event markup is always being updated and added to:

- Business Event
- Children's Event
- Comedy Event
- Dance Event
- Delivery Event
- Education Event
- Exhibition Event
- Festival
- Literary Event
- Food Event
- Music Event
- Publication Event
- Sale Event

Screening Event
Social Event
Sports Event
Theater Event
Visual Arts Event

Basic Event Structured Data Markup

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
"@context": "http://schema.org",
"@type": "Event",
"name": "The Festival of Summer 2017",
"image": "http://www.festivalofsummer.co.uk/wp-content/themes/alt-
fruity/dist/images/
logo.png",
"url": "http://www.festivalofsummer.co.uk/",
"description": "The Largest Festival in the UK",
"startDate": "2017-09-29T10:00",
"endDate": "2017-09-29T16:30",
"location": {
"@type": "Place",
"name": "The Festival of Summer 2017",
"address": {
"@type": "PostalAddress",
"streetAddress": "Summer street",
"addressLocality": "City",
"addressRegion": "County",
"postalCode": "XX1 2XX"
}
},
"offers": {
"@type": "Offer",
```

```
"url": "http://www.festivalofsummer.co.uk/fairs/friday-29th-august-  
saturday-30thaugustr-  
2017/"  
}  
}  
</script>
```

Do it Yourself Local SEO Guide

An in-Depth Guide to Local SEO