

A Manta eBook

# 10 Surefire Ways

to Get Your  
Company Found  
on the Web



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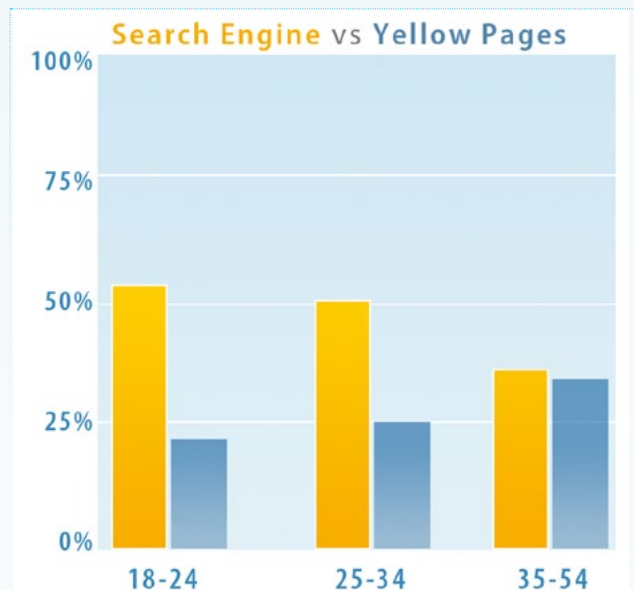
# 10 Surefire Ways to Get Your Company Found on the Web

By Pamela Springer

How do your customers find you? It seems like that should be a simple question to answer, but the reality is it can be tricky. Potential customers have more and more options to find the product or service they are looking for—and it's your job to make sure your business can be easily found.

**70% of consumers say online search is their preferred method for finding information about local businesses.**

A recent study by eMarketer compared how frequently people used search engines to find local businesses as opposed to using traditional methods such as yellow pages, print directories, store circulars, emailed coupons and newspapers. For all age groups under 55, consumers used search engines most often. For those under 35, search engines were used more than 50% of the time.



Obviously it is critical for small businesses to manage their online presence. The term Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is new to many small business owners, but understanding it can be the key to gaining new customers and increasing revenue. The concept might seem menacing to people not familiar with Internet marketing, but it really is quite simple when broken down into simple steps, which we do here.

By definition, SEO is the process of making a website as visible as possible in search engines. But SEO is important even if your business does not have a website. That's because your company is still listed on the Internet in various directories. You want those listings to be found because they can draw in new customers.

And "new customers" is the name of the game. SEO is not about someone typing your company name into Google, Yahoo or Bing and your website or directory listing popping up. The goal of SEO is to be found by people who DON'T know about your business. For example, if your business is Green Thumb Landscaping, you want your business to show up if someone searches for "green thumb," "landscaping services" or "new paver patio." It's also important to be found for localized searches such as "green thumb Columbus OH" and "new paver patio Columbus OH." SEO can help you do that.

As consumers become more Internet savvy, it's imperative that businesses take ownership of their Internet presence and manage it. Your company can show up in various places on the Internet without your knowledge through public records, directory listings, personal blogs, etc. No matter who put your company information out there, you should take it as an opportunity to increase awareness of your company. Following are 10 steps you can take to do just that.

## 1. Do an online search for your company.

Your first step is to understand where your company information is on the Internet and to take ownership of it. Search for your company name in any search engine. Be sure to search for common misspellings of your company name and possible abbreviations. Once you find the listings, check them for accuracy and completeness. Most directories allow and encourage business owners to “claim” or “own” your business listings online. Take advantage of those offers and update your information periodically, so it remains current and accurate. You should be in control of how your company is represented online, just as you do in your other marketing activities.

## 2. Remember to NAP.

The most important information you put online can be abbreviated as NAP:

- **Name**
- **Address**
- **Phone Number**

If you want to be found, you must have this information listed and it must be consistent in every occurrence. The spelling, abbreviations, formatting, and phone number must be exactly the same in every listing. Search engines look for clusters of reference information that are consistent. So the more consistent your information, the more easily your company will be found. Here are some examples of inconsistencies:

- (724) 555-1212 is not the same as 724.555.1212
- Road is not the same as Rd.
- CA is not the same as California or Calif.
- Pine Grove Drive is not the same as Pinegrove Drive



When displaying your address, make sure to paste it into a map website to make sure the correct address is displayed. This is exactly what your customers will do and if the mapping websites cannot locate your address, you will lose customers.

In terms of contact information, local phone numbers (as opposed to 800 numbers) should be used whenever possible as they are important for local searches. Also avoid using call tracking numbers. Email addresses should use your business domain. For example, if your website is [www.windowsforless.com](http://www.windowsforless.com), then your email address should be [janedoe@windowsforless.com](mailto:janedoe@windowsforless.com). This practice is simple to set up but very important because it validates you as a professional.

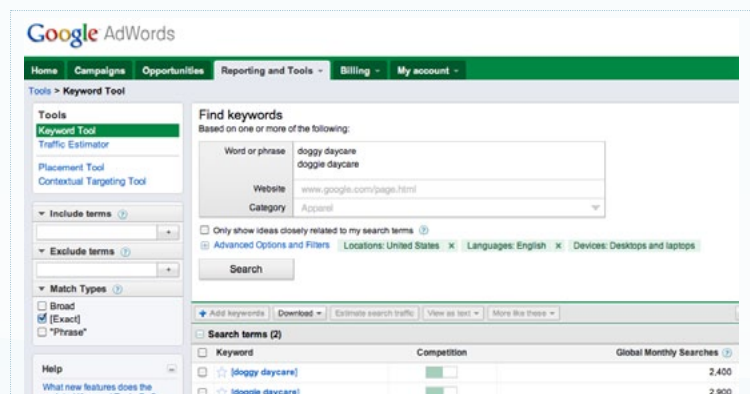
Although these tips may seem very elementary, they can make a big difference in optimizing search engine results. Think of search engines as young children. They have some intelligence, but they still need to be guided. So the clearer you can make the instructions, the easier it is for them to understand, and the easier it will be to find your business online.

### 3. Know your business' vocabulary.

Search engines look for common words when matching websites up to searches. So understanding what words or terms your customers use when they talk about you or your product or service is a critical component of SEO. That's because these are likely the words they will enter into the search engine to find products and services.

Most business owners have an idea of how their customers talk about their products and services, but how do you know if the information is right? There are several free online tools that will provide you with statistics on what words or terms people most often use when searching certain topics. For example, an animal hospital might offer day care services for pets. In order to understand what customers are searching for, you can use the Google Adwords Keyword Tool (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>) to search "doggy daycare" and find similar words and phrases and their frequency of use. In this case, you'd find that a significantly larger audience searches for "doggie daycare" vs. "doggy daycare."

Once you know what words and terms are common in your line of business, use them on your website, especially on your "About" page. Search engines will look for those terms and match them up to what people are searching for.



### 4. Don't try keyword stuffing.

"Keyword stuffing" is entering keywords or terms associated with your business in the company name field, such as "Smith Dental Care – Whitest Teeth in Smithville," or overly repeating those words in descriptions in an effort to get more visibility. Not only does this break the consistency rule described in Tip 2, it looks very unprofessional to prospective clients. It might even lower your website's ranking in search engines if it is attempted. Overall, this strategy is flawed, amateurish and likely to backfire.



### 5. Optimize your website.

There is value in partnering with someone who understands SEO. But if you choose to do it yourself, there are several tips that will help you maximize your investment on your website. The way to do that is to get people to visit it.

One way to direct people to your website is to build links to it. There are many ways to do this. You can do it through social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), advertising, vendor/partner/customer web pages, online directories, or through newspaper or magazine articles written about your company or industry.

The other way to drive visitors is through the design of your website. Be sure to put your company name on your homepage. It may

sound obvious, but there are many sites that overlook this simple rule and are not being found by search engines. Along the same lines, include some of the keywords and terms you researched in Tip 3. Test this by searching for those words on your favorite search engine. Does your website show up? Also include your city, state, ZIP code and local phone number on the website. This will help with local searches.

Once people arrive on your site, make them feel comfortable, so they'll come back. When writing the content, put yourself in your customers' shoes, or better yet, talk to one or two. Learn how to speak their language and write the text for the website like you are talking to them directly. Think about how your words would make them feel and make sure you create a positive atmosphere. For example, if your product is complex, simplify it in an effort to not belittle them with your intelligence. If the service is embarrassing, have tact when discussing the problem and make them feel like they are not alone.

#### **6. If you invest in an SEO provider, shop around.**

When selecting an SEO provider, you'll find there are a lot of them, but not all offer the same services nor provide the same results. Look for an SEO expert who fits your business model (maybe with a focus on small business or in your industry). Be sure you understand what services they will provide and what results you should expect. A good SEO company will be able to provide references and explain all of the work they do once engaged. One key thing to understand is that you should not expect immediate results. SEO is a process that builds upon itself and can take time to show value. If someone promises you immediate results or guaranteed rankings, be concerned.

## **SMBs and Social Media**

- **83%** of small business plan to use social media channels
- **40%** felt creating a profile on a social network was the most effective ad/marketing channel
- **58%** of small business that offered daily deals (such as Groupon) found it effective for customer acquisition
- **77%** of those small businesses would offer a daily deal again

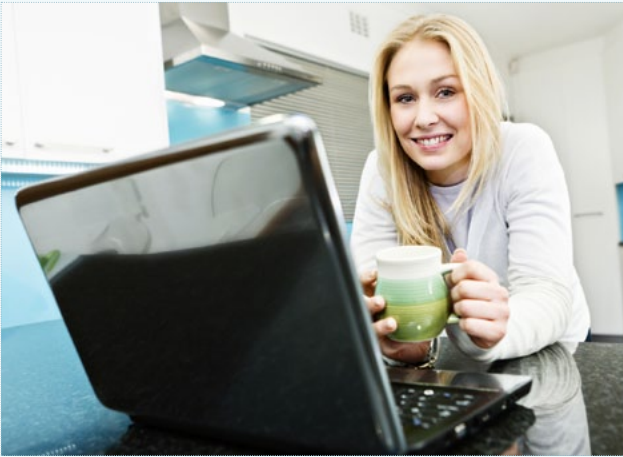
#### **7. Look at your competition.**

Look up your competition online. Start with the search engine. What are the results when you search their name? Their location? What words and terms are they using? Are they effective? Look them up on online directories. Are their profiles more comprehensive than yours? If you were a shopper and you came upon their profile and your profile, which looks more impressive? Why?

**Take in all you learn from the competition and apply it to your web strategy.**

#### **8. Set up Google Alerts for your company.**

Google offers a free service called Google Alerts that automatically emails you when it finds new results for topics that match your search terms. It alerts you when it finds your specified keywords in web pages, articles, blogs, etc. Google Alerts help you find mentions about your business. This gives you the opportunity to reach out to whoever wrote the content and ask them for a link back to your website or Manta profile. You also can use Google Alerts to respond to both positive and negative reviews online.



## 9. Consider social media.

Because the world is moving online, conversations are taking place about you whether you are aware of it or not. And much of that chatter is happening on social networking sites. The advantage of joining in is that you can engage and connect with your target audience while listening to what they are saying about you. This can be done through traditional sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc. or through blogs and forums that you author or participate in.

The marketing intelligence website eMarketer predicts that \$3.1 billion will be spent on social network advertising in 2011 and almost \$4 billion in 2012.

Most small businesses get involved through indirect advertising activities, such as creating “groups” or “pages” that users can choose to join. Facebook is a popular choice. The business then uses various tactics to build “subscribers” or “likes” of their page or group and uses it to market contests, new products or simply to build brand awareness.

Before deciding to jump on the social media bandwagon, you must determine if it is a good fit for your business.

Here are two considerations:

- The demographics of your customers: Is your audience on social networks?
- Social network management: Do you have the time and ability to create the content required and to participate in the conversations? On average, a small business spends an hour each day initially to do research, set up pages/groups, blog, have conversations, respond to inquiries, etc.

To figure out if your demographics fit those of social networkers, let’s use Facebook as a measuring stick. According to a Social Network Analysis Report published by Ignite Social Media, about 60% of users are women. Almost 75% are between the ages of 25 and 54 with an income ranging from \$25,000 to \$75,000, and well over 50% have at least some college education. MySpace and Twitter show similar statistics.

## 10. Be responsive, get positive reviews and referrals.

As your traffic grows on your website, you want those visitors to be pleased with their experience. That means that if you get an email or inquiry from a prospect, respond to it as quickly as possible. This immediate attention will show that your company is responsive, cares about its customers and is progressive in its use of technology. This practice will not only satisfy that potential customer but will hopefully lead to referrals.

If those prospects become clients, list them on your website as customer success stories and ask them to give a review or referral. Some 70% of Americans say they consult product reviews or consumer ratings before making a purchase, according to an October 2008 survey by Penn Schoen Berland, a research and consulting firm. Reviews give you the ability to turn success into more success.

## Don't Wait, Do It Now!

Your company is already on the Internet, whether you meant it to be or not. Take control of the situation and turn it into an opportunity. The worst thing you can do is nothing. In that scenario, other people are in control of your company's online reputation and your ability to gain new customers.

Most of the strategies discussed here are free; they only take time to initiate. But it could be one of the most effective uses of your time. As more and more people turn to the Internet to find a product or service similar to yours, it will now be easier for them to find you.

### BONUS STEP 11:

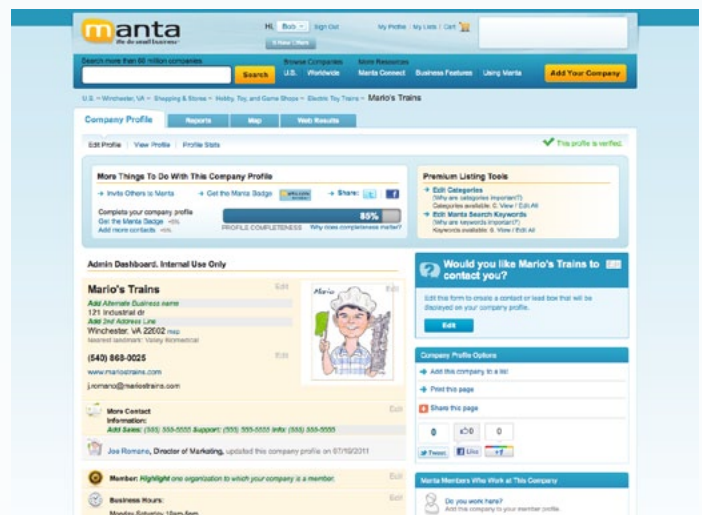
#### Promote Your Company on Manta

Manta can be a highly effective marketing tool for small businesses, especially when used correctly. This guide will give you tips for crafting a company profile on Manta in a way that will allow search engines to find you more easily, help you present your business in a positive and professional manner, and reach as many potential customers as possible. **(And if you're reading this and have not claimed your profile, do that now at: <http://www.manta.com/add>.)**

Quality information is the key to achieving these goals. Across your entire profile, pay close attention to correct spelling and grammar. Not only will this habit present your company as a professional organization, but search engines are beginning to take into consideration the quality of the text within web pages. Poor spelling and grammar may negatively affect your rankings in search results.

### Step 1: Get Found

The first step in creating a profile is to provide information that will get you found by search engines. People will search in a variety of ways for a product or service, so you need to make sure all of your bases are covered. Company name, location information, personal relationships, keywords or terms that relate to your business, specific products, services, or brands, and general business categories are all potential search options.



### Company Name

Enter the official name of your company exactly as you have it listed on your website and elsewhere. Search engines look for clusters of references of your company name across the web, so it's important that you maintain the same format to ensure maximum exposure. Make sure that spelling, capitalization and punctuation are correct because Manta does not alter entries. They are listed exactly as they are typed.

### Address

The address fields are very important in the matching process for both Manta and search engines. So again, be consistent with the format across all mentions of your address in Internet listings and on your website. This will help search engines identify your company as they find it listed across the web. It is also important to provide complete information, including a suite number in the second address field and the full city and state names. If you use abbreviations such as Dr., St. or Blvd., be sure to use them the same way in all references.

### Company Contacts

Manta users may search for a person's name based on a referral or personal relationship, so listing specific contacts and their roles is an important piece of your profile. For many small businesses, the business owner is the main contact. But if you have other people in your company who are reaching out and networking, such as a sales manager, marketing manager or business development manager, be sure to list them as well.

### Keywords or Terms

Be sure that keywords or terms that customers use to describe your business and your products and services are listed throughout your profile, especially in the short and long business descriptions and in your business category, if applicable.

### Products or Services and Brands Carried or Sold

Manta gives you the opportunity to list out five specific products. You should use all of these fields, if possible. If you have more than five products, list the top five that you're known to offer or that generate the most revenue. If you have fewer than five distinct offerings, use alternative names for them; for example, "purses" and "handbags." You should provide as many alternatives as possible for customers to find you. When you list specific brands, be sure to spell them properly. Your brand may be your company name. It is good practice to list that here, too.





## Business Categories

You can choose up to three business categories for your company profile. Your company will be listed under the preferred business category, so make sure that one is the most relevant and most closely represents your line of business. The other categories you choose will be displayed on your company profile page and can help people better understand the scope of your business. For example, My Company Inc. may choose “Landscape Designers” as the preferred category, but also may want to add “Landscape Planning Services” and “Arborist.”

### Step 2: Sell Yourself

The second step to creating an effective profile involves understanding your target customers and marketing directly to their needs. One of the most important things you can do is remember that your customer cares about them, not you. Sound harsh? Maybe, but it's true and when you are a customer you are no different. Keep the WIIFM factor high. WIIFM stands for What's In It For Me, so make sure they know what's in it for them to do business with you. You should include information that will encourage people to read more about you and contact you. Strive to provide complete and compelling descriptions of your company's products and services while representing the company as a professional and customer-oriented organization.

Be sure to fill out as many sections of your profile as possible. You never know what is going to appeal to a particular prospect. For example, we have found that companies that

list a year started (regardless of the year) tend to get more traffic and clicks. Completeness and accuracy matter, too.

## Business Description

The business description is a high priority area on your profile as it highlights the most pertinent information about your company and should entice users to view more about your business. In addition to describing what your company does, you should make the business description unique and appealing. Consider writing about your point of differentiation or competitive edge or maybe a promotion or specialty your company offers. Avoid grammatical and spelling errors, as well as excessive punctuation (such as more than one exclamation point). Also avoid excessive capitalization and overuse of abbreviations unless they're standard for your service or industry. You also should stay away from overly promotional language such as “BEST COMPANY IN COLUMBUS!!!” This looks unprofessional and can even deter clicks on your listing.

If your Short Business Description is greater than 60 characters, it may be displayed in Google and other search engine results pages under the page title.

## Products and Services, Brands Carried or Sold, and Business Categories

Use these areas to help people better understand what your company offers. Use common names when possible and be sure to utilize all available spaces. Potential customers want as much detail as possible.

## Logo

Upload your logo image to personalize your business and make your profile stand out. The final photo will be 170px by 170px. That's about 1-3/4 inches square, so plan accordingly. If your logo is not already in a square format, consider having someone work on the image so it will work in those dimensions. If the image you upload is not square, it will be displayed on a white background to fill out those dimensions.

## Extra Contact Information and Web Links

Include alternative phone numbers, such as sales or customer service. You also can include four other web addresses in addition to your main website address. For example, you could enter links to a customer service area, About page, blog or list of press releases. Search engines favor multiple links into your site, so it's beneficial to use the extra link areas to point to important, deeper parts of your website.



## Twitter ID and Facebook Business Page

If you have a Twitter ID and Facebook Business Page, you should add them to your profile. When entering your Twitter ID, you don't need the @ symbol. For Facebook, enter the full URL of your business page, including "http://". If you do not already have a Twitter ID or Facebook Business Page, you can skip these fields. Don't feel like you have to sign up just to add these fields.

## Links to Other Media

Manta offers up to six other search engine friendly links for you to include. If you run an ecommerce store, consider linking to your popular categories. Also consider your corporate blog, important press releases, your YouTube channel or news article or other resources about your company. When entering a media link there are three fields to enter: title, description (no more than 300 characters) and URL. Keep in mind that what you enter as the title will be linked as will the actual URL itself.

### Step 3: Expand Your Reach

Once you have claimed your profile, there are steps you can take to let potential customers know it's there.

## Upgrade Your Profile to a Premium Listing

Premium Business Listings offer many benefits above and beyond a standard profile, making it even easier for potential customers to find you. With a Premium Business Listing:

- Your company could be listed in three categories instead of one giving your company a much better chance of being found.
- You determine keyword phrases to advertise your company at a deeper level. When customers search for products or services using your keyword phrases, your profile will appear near the top of the search results. Be



**"Manta is such an inexpensive way to advertise and the ROI has been amazing!"**

**- Paige**

sure to understand the language your customers use when referring to your business when choosing your phrases. Utilize free online tools such as the Google AdWords Keyword Tool to research what terms people use to search with online.

- Expand your sales areas by listing additional locations along with your keyword phrases, such as suburbs and/or cities that may be close by.



Manta gives you the ability to place a link to your Manta profile, called the Manta Badge, directly on your website. This is an important feature for many reasons. Search engines not only analyze the types and quality of sites that link to your site, but also which sites you link to. As a general guideline, you should only link out to good quality sites that are related to your business. So installing the Manta Badge on your website improves the ranking of your website while improving the visibility of your Manta profile in the search engines. It also shows clients that you are associated with quality organizations. The combination of your website and the information in your Manta profile paints a comprehensive picture of your company for prospects.

The process of creating a successful and positive online experience for potential customers is known as Online Reputation Management. The practice encourages you to be proactive online to control how you are portrayed and to take action should there be negative information listed about your company.

**"If you can get stuff that you want people to see to out perform the stuff you don't want them to see, you'll be able to reduce the amount of harm that that negative or embarrassing content can do to your reputation."**

**Step 4:  
Take Control...  
NOW!**

Manta has more than 24 million U.S. companies listed, so there's a good chance that when people are searching for you, they also will be researching your competitors. It's important to make your company stand out and not appear as if you did just the bare minimum to get in front of a potential customer.

So be proactive and use your Manta profile to display what's positive about your company. Follow these guidelines to get the most out of your Manta listing. Try to submit as much information as possible and check to see that it is accurate and presented professionally with correct grammar and spelling. The more care you take and the more details you supply, the more confidence you will build in potential customers researching your business.

Get listed. <http://www.manta.com/add>

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