THE IMPORTANCE OF N.A.P.'S

TAMMY FINCH

TAMMY FINCH - WEB SERVICES, INC

Sometimes, I hear from clients who just don't seem to be making any progress with search engine optimization on Google, even in light of the recent algorithm changes that made it easier for local businesses to come up in search results. More often than not, my recommendation comes down to one thing: pay more attention to **NAPS**.

Unfortunately, I'm not advising you to sleep more in the middle of the day for online marketing purposes – although there's a chance that could help some of us to be a bit less cranky.

Instead, I'm talking about *Names*, *Addresses*, and *Phone Numbers*. If these aren't accurate, consistent, and up-to-date across the web, it could cause problems for you.

To give you a little more insight as to why NAPS can make or break your local marketing, here's what you need to know…

GOOGLE USES NAPS TO OFFER LOCAL OPTIONS

When google crawls the web, it isn't just looking for keywords and links. It's also categorizing your website by location, using addresses, ZIP codes, area codes, and even references to landmarks to determine where you are. Then, that data gets used to match you with local buyers in your area who need vendors or products. Given that nearly a quarter of Google's 2 billion daily search requests are for something local, earning a share of that traffic should be a high priority.

IT HELPS TO HAVE SEVERAL SOURCES OF NAPS INFO

Although Google will draw location data primarily from your website, it will also look for corroborating evidence elsewhere online. That's where local business directories and industry guides (like Yelp, Citysearch, Tripadvisor, and so on) come into play. If all of them agree on your business name, address, and phone number, then google can display that information prominently because there is a high probability of giving a searcher exactly what they are looking for.

OUTDATED NAPS CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS

Of course, if corroborating data points are a good thing, then missing or conflicting pieces of information are going to **hurt** your search visibility. After all, if Google can't be sure who you are, where you operate, or how customers should contact you, then how can they send traffic to your website without frustrating buyers? For that reason, skipping NAPS and leaving entries blank or with the wrong contact info can be a real problem.

It's easier than you might think to let your contact details get jumbled. When we moved offices last year, we discovered just how many entries there were for our business online, both in Peoria and beyond. And naturally, we have more time and attention to devote to online marketing the most of our clients do. Make sure your company is listed on the aggregators such as Factual and Facebook.

WHAT TO DO NOW

- Google your company and find your local page

- Match your NAPS exactly (St. vs Street) on your website and citations

- Create posts on Google Local to show it's active

- Categories match search terms

- Get some reviews

- Be on aggregators - Facebook, Factual, Acxiom, Yelp, YP

- RESOURCES

- Scan.Webservicesinc.Net
  Scan your company

- Moz.Com/local/search
  Citation Finder

- Whitespark.Ca
  best-citations-by-category
  best-citations-by-city