



# Create website content

FOR LOCAL SEARCH RESULTS

**AM:PM** | WEB & DIGITAL

# Here's what to write about and how to optimise it so you can boost your Google ranking.

There are many factors that can influence your business's visibility in local search results, such as having a robust Google My Business profile and your brick-and-mortar's proximity to the person searching.

Your website also determines how you rank in Google. That's because when Google crawls the web, it reads and analyses your site's pages. For better performance in search results, your content should be relevant and optimised because it can influence how customers view your business, too.

## CREATING CONTENT

Not only does great content help you rank higher in search results, it can increase your chances of converting those users to customers. Whether you're launching your site or just want to improve your content, here are a few pointers to get you started.

### **Answer potential questions**

If someone knows nothing about your business, how would you describe it to them? At the most basic level, website content should answer questions that might be asked.

You're the expert about your business, so sharing valuable knowledge can help people understand who you are and why they should do business with you. It also feeds Google information it can use to decide if you're a relevant search result.

### **Read your content out loud**

Your text should sound like something you'd say to a customer who just walked in your door. It's easier for people who are reading your site to follow, and it's what Google's algorithm expects to see when it crawls your content. When you read your writing out loud, it helps you hear when something doesn't sound quite right so that you can revise it.

This is especially important when it comes to using keywords, which are words or phrases people commonly search for on the internet. Many marketers and business owners try to "stuff" important keywords into their content to help it rank higher in searches. Back in the early days of Google, this tactic worked because Google would simply match the keywords in a search query to keywords on a web page. Now you need to ensure you have useful content that's conversational.

### **Prioritise quality over quantity**

Google's algorithm wants to see quality content, and it doesn't really matter how much there is. That means that occasionally adding a single page to your website can be more effective than adding 10 pages that target a bunch of keywords.

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## CREATE WEBSITE CONTENT FOR LOCAL SEARCH RESULTS

Take a look at your site. Is there enough on each page to explain what the page is about? Does the content answer any possible questions about your products or services? Will it help potential customers decide to do business with you? These questions can help pinpoint where you can include more information.

### **Stand out from your competitors**

To make sure your content is actually about your business, you can do an easy test. Copy the content from your homepage into a text document. If you changed your business name and city to your competitor's, would the content work if you dropped it on their homepage? If it can easily apply to another brand, change it to be more specific to your business.

### **Create unique content**

Contrary to what many people think, Google doesn't penalise duplicate content: It rewards unique content. Remember, Google is basically an advanced pattern detection program. If you copy another site's content and paste it to your site, it's incredibly easy for Google to see that it's identical, and you won't show up well in searches.

Even if you sell similar products or services as your competitors, having content that's relevant to your business on your site can improve your visibility in searches.

### **And make sure your content is local, too**

Google's local algorithm returns search results in a potential customer's area, so it's important that the content on your blog and main site pages is localised. Located on the main road near downtown or share a parking lot with another visible business? Let people know.

### **Include images**

Images make your site more engaging, so make sure every page has at least one image. Avoid stock photos whenever possible, because real pictures of your business or products are far more effective than generic images.

Upload your images at the size they'll be displayed on your site. If you upload a huge image and use the image embed code—the HTML code that displays a picture on your page—to shrink it down, the browser still has to load the entire image before it can resize it to the specified dimensions. This will make your page load more slowly, which can annoy customers (and Google).

### **Add schema markup**

Several years ago, search engines got together and came up with a shared classification vocabulary for websites. Schema is a special set of programming terms that specifically define elements on your website.

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Instead of relying on Google's algorithm to read and understand the content on your site, you can use schema markup to include definitions of various elements such as people, places, things, and products. Schema helps Google understand your content on a deeper level. It exists behind the scenes in the HTML code of a page and isn't visible to people. It can be coded manually, or you can use a schema code generator.

For local search, the most important schema to include is local business schema, which defines your business name, address, telephone, and hours of operation. You can also add event or product schema. If you really want to go in depth, head over to the local business section on [schema.org](https://schema.org) for an outline of every local business schema type.

## OPTIMISING YOUR CONTENT

Now that you've got helpful content written for your site, you need to optimise it for Google. There are various page elements that need to be structured correctly to maximise your chances of showing up in local searches.

At a basic level, you need a page on your site for every main topic that you want to show up in local searches. You'll need to determine the right keyword phrase to use to target that topic and use synonyms and close variations of the phrase when you write your content.

For each page on your site, you'll want to optimise the following elements:

**Title tag:** The title tag is the most weighted search engine optimisation (SEO) element on the page. It's displayed in the tab label above the URL bar in your browser, and it's what populates the blue link title when you show up in Google search results. Your title needs to accurately and succinctly describe what the page is about, including the important keyword phrase you chose. Make sure you include your city name and state abbreviation to show that you're a local business.

You don't need to list your business name at the beginning of your title tag. You're the only business with that name, so you don't need to optimise for that phrase. Instead, use the limited space to optimise for the topic your page is about.

**H1 heading:** The H1 heading is the 2nd most weighted element on the page. It's the bold headline just above your text and functions like the headline in a newspaper article. It should be short yet conversational, describing the main idea of the content on the page. Include the same keyword phrase you used in the title tag, and it's helpful to include your city and state abbreviation whenever possible, too.

**Page content:** Make sure you include your keyword phrase and close variations of it—and that your city and state abbreviation are added wherever it makes sense to add them.

**URL:** Keep your URLs as short as possible, but make sure they're optimised to look better to both search engines and people. Words should be separated with dashes, and it's important to include the same important keyword phrase you used in the title tag and H1 heading. If you can, include your city and state abbreviation as well.

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## CREATE WEBSITE CONTENT FOR LOCAL SEARCH RESULTS

**Image alt text:** Alt text is an element included in the image embed code. It should be a short description of the image, and it should include the same targeted keyword phrase you used in the other page elements. It's beneficial to include your city and state abbreviation here, too.

**Meta description:** The meta description is HTML code that isn't visible on your page. It tells Google what to include as the few lines of grey description under your blue link when you show up as a search result. Adding keywords (or stuffing them) won't have any effect on your rankings, because Google's algorithm doesn't include the meta description. It's still important to write one for each page, however, since a compelling description that includes your targeted keyword phrase will make users more likely to click through to your website.

## START CREATING YOUR CONTENT FOUNDATION

Now that you know how to create valuable content for your website, you can increase your local visibility, which can lead to more potential customers finding your business.

When you keep these writing and optimisation tips in mind, you'll be able to create engaging, high-quality content that sets you up for local SEO success.