THE ULTIMATE HOW-TO GUIDE FOR

Driving Traffic from Online to In-store

sweet IQ
by REACHLOCAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WE ALL KNOW that mobile and other digital technologies are changing the way every one of us shops. Our phones have become an essential part of shopping. But rather than turning all of us into full-time online shoppers, these technologies are actually putting the emphasis back on brick-and-mortar locations.

In fact, 93% of retail sales still take place in-store. But the shopping process starts online with local search. Whether they are looking for clothes, restaurants, doctors, plumbers, legal help, or a bank, customers research what to buy and where to shop on their mobile devices. Then, when the time comes to make a purchase, they show a clear preference to spend their money in a physical location.

But it's important to understand that these potential customers aren't searching for your brand first: for every shopper searching for a brand directly, three are Googling "Store Type + Location" or "Product + Location." If you're not easily found online, you're missing out on major sales opportunities.

The power of local search is precisely why it is so important for businesses to build their Online to Offline, or O2O, funnel now. Getting found online, and converting those online searches to offline purchases, is the biggest opportunity for any brand with physical locations.

New mobile and location-based marketing technologies are evolving quickly. So it's imperative to build your O2O funnel today. A strong local marketing foundation will serve you well now, helping you to turn online consumer activity into offline sales. It will also prepare you for the future of location-based marketing—ensuring your brand will be successful for years to come.

Don't know where to start? That's where SweetIQ by ReachLocal comes in. Our local marketing and analytics platform give you the tools you need to build your O2O funnel. We'll work with you to maximize your locations' findability, our local marketing experts will teach you strategies to capture shoppers' expression of intent at the critical moment just before they make a purchase, and ultimately we'll help you drive more customers through your doors.

We share a simple, two-step goal for your brand:
1 **Get more customers**
2 **Make more sales**

M. Barachi

Mohannad El-Barachi
*General Manager, SweetIQ
and Senior VP, ReachLocal*
SweetIQ by ReachLocal

93% of retail sales are still fulfilled offline — but the decision process starts online.[3]

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This guide is for any brand with physical locations, no matter what product or service you offer

Brick-and-mortar locations are more important than ever as they connect customers to your product and deliver your full brand experience

O2O conversions drive sales: Online to offline digital marketing influences up to 3.6 trillion dollars in consumer spending

Optimizing your locations for local search is essential, as it demonstrates your customers' clearest expression of intent

Offline transactions are driven by online research: price, brand, good reviews, and location

GET MORE CUSTOMERS

LET'S START WITH THE FACTS. Mobile and other digital technologies are changing the way we shop: Online and mobile media impact around 40% of offline shopping,[1] with online to offline digital marketing influencing up to 3.6 Trillion dollars in consumer spending.[2] Ecommerce gets a lot of press, but brick-and-mortar stores are still where the money is. Remember: 93% of retail sales are still fulfilled in-store.[3] Whether you've got 100 fast fashion retail locations, or 100 plumbing trucks with mobile service areas, or even 100 quick-service restaurants—this is all good news.

Mobile plays a huge part in the decision-making process—well before a customer ever walks through your doors. Brands need to learn to harness the power of local search, by building their O2O funnel, to drive shoppers to their front doors. The more shoppers that find you online, the more shoppers who walk through your front door and make a purchase.

Why is local marketing so critical?

IT'S THE CLEAREST AND MOST RELIABLE EXPRESSION OF CUSTOMER INTENT.

A LOCAL SEARCH on Google, Yelp, Facebook or other sites, is essentially a consumer telling a search engine (and the brands that know where to look) exactly when, where and what she wants to buy. Online search actions can include looking for nearby locations, comparing prices, looking for phone numbers, and getting directions to a store. Consumers then leverage what they find online to complete their purchase offline.

These online to offline transactions are driven by price, brand, good online reviews, and location.[7] All the key elements of good local marketing.
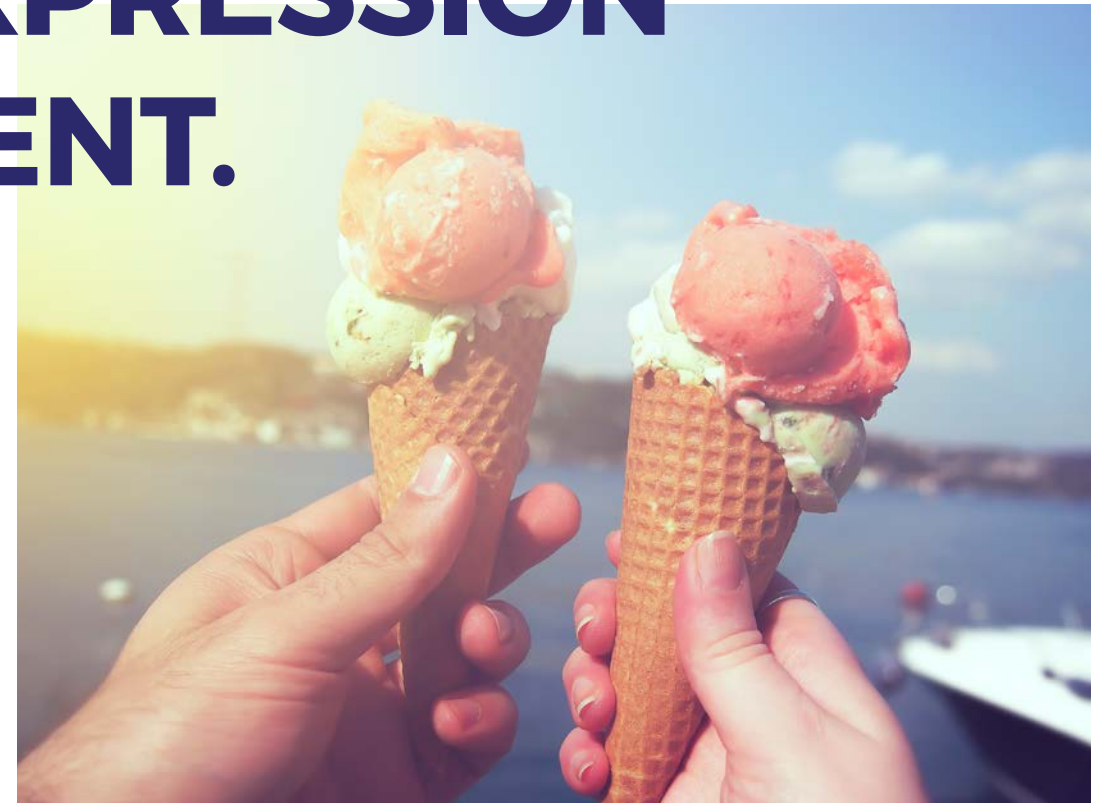
LOCAL SEARCH MATTERS

If you've got brick-and-mortar locations you can get a lot of value out of well-constructed local campaigns and a strong O2O Funnel. Local and mobile searchers are desirable consumers, converting at a high level and spending more than their non-mobile counterparts. **Here's the proof.**

76% of people who search on their smartphones for something nearby **visit a business within a day**

30 PERCENT

of all mobile searches are related to location

AND MORE THAN HALF OF ALL WEB TRAFFIC COMES FROM SMARTPHONES AND TABLETS
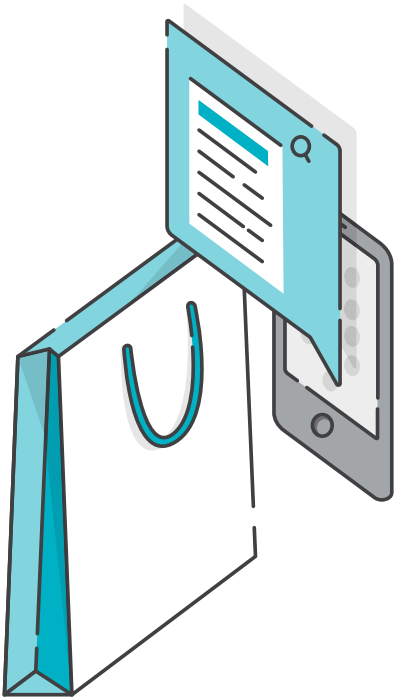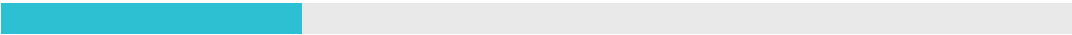
IN THE PAST YEAR

2.1x +

searches for
STORES OPEN NOW or FOOD OPEN NOW

1.3x +

searches for
WHERE TO BUY / FIND / GET

AND 28% OF LOCAL SEARCHES RESULT IN A PURCHASE

STEP ONE

CREATE A SOLID LOCAL MARKETING FOUNDATION

The only way to get local marketing working for your brand is to first make sure potential customers can find your locations. This is a straightforward concept – get listed accurately across the internet to help customers find your brick-and-mortar locations. Despite this being simple, some of the biggest brands in North America are not keeping up with the task. Their listings on Google+, Bing, Yelp and other sites are either incomplete or inaccurate - meaning when potential customers try to find their locations, they come up empty. These sales go to their competitors. Don't let this happen to your brand.

You can solve step one quickly by hiring a reputable local marketing platform, or you can handle all these tasks in house.

(Want more information on findability? Check out SweetIQ by ReachLocal's whitepaper on Findability here.)

ACTION ITEMS FOR FIXING YOUR FINDABILITY FAST

☐ **Check your listings across the internet, for every location. You need flawless NAPW (Name, Address, Phone and Website) data everywhere.**

☐ **Now look at where you're listed and where you aren't. Google, Bing, Yelp, Facebook, Apple Maps are good starts, but focus on 15-25 total directories with high page rank and Moz scores.**

☐ **Benchmark your listings accuracy and coverage - you're going to need this for later.**

☐ **Ensure your locations' hours of operation are listed and correct on every directory.**

OPTIMIZATION

Getting listed is not enough. Make sure your listings are optimized. Several directories allow brands to refine their pages or listings. This helps with your ranking as well as your customer experience. Don't just include your business's name, address and phone number, but take the time to enter hours of operation, descriptions, branding, and photos. For many potential customers, these directories, not your website, is where they will interact with your brand.

In fact, consumers are three times more likely to use a search engine to find a store's location than going directly to a company's website.[8]

Reviews also have a huge impact on your local marketing performance so you need to manage and respond to online reviews. Reviews let you know how your customers interact with and perceive your brand. Leverage this customer experience by implementing a review management strategy and responding to reviews appropriately.

*Need more help with reviews? Check out Review Management 201 **here.***

ACTION ITEMS FOR OPTIMIZATION

☐ **Find directories that allow brands to tweak the presentation of your listings.**

☐ **Get busy getting better - whatever they allow, you need to complete - photos, videos, house, logos. Get in whatever you can.**

☐ **Commit to a review management and responding strategy.**

☐ **Train your responders on the CAP response method found** *here.*

MEASURE ONLINE & IN-STORE METRICS

You're ready to start measuring local data and key performance indicators — listings performance, keyword rankings, keyword coverage, review and rating numbers. Think about competitor benchmarking as well. If you're very advanced you can sync your local data with your in-store metrics too. Then finally build yourself a dashboard that will display all of your data and in one place.

Data collection and analysis is key to measuring the performance of your O2O funnel moving forward. Learn to harness the power of local data and analytics: "The promise of omnichannel retailing is an explosion of new data from social, mobile and local channels. This provides an unprecedented opportunity to understand not just customer transactions but also customer interactions such as visits to the store, likes on Facebook, searches on websites, and check-ins at nearby establishments."[9] You need to use data and analytics to gather the impressions you are creating, and tie those together with your in-store impressions and customer engagement.

ACTION ITEMS FOR MEASUREMENT AND METRICS

☐ **Start tracking and improving listings coverage and accuracy month over month.**

☐ **Benchmark your performance against your competitors.**

☐ **Build yourself a clear, concise dashboard with your key metrics.**

☐ **Tie your store performance KPIs to your local marketing numbers.**

LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

This is the fun part. Use the information you gained from your data analysis to create engaging and exciting local marketing campaigns. We know consumers use their mobile and digital devices while out shopping. In a survey conducted by Deloitte 84% of shoppers used some type of digital device for shopping-related activities before or during their most recent store trip.[10] But we also know that mobile users often only have a general idea of what they're looking for – leaving a lot of room for influence through marketing campaigns.[11] Local marketing campaigns can include loyalty programs, discounts, coupons, promotions, or anything else your savvy marketing team can dream up to entice online searchers to become in-store shoppers.

By building a strong local marketing foundation, you can also learn the best ways to share, and target, your local marketing campaign. If you know that the majority of your customers are accessing your brand through a Google search and using your Google Maps page, share discounts and promotions on Google maps. It's time to leverage the inherent power of your local search channels.

ACTION ITEMS FOR A LOCAL CAMPAIGN

☐ **Start mixing in branded and unbranded local ads on Google Maps with your regular AdWords buys. Then measure the dollar for dollar performance.**

☐ **Target high-value keywords with local landing pages for each of your locations.**

☐ **Integrate a rewards-based loyalty program into your local marketing activities. Sync data between the two platforms.**

☐ **Link call tracking data with your other O2O metrics.**

☐ **Get creative. Local searchers are ready to buy now, so start winning them over to your brand with great local campaigns.**

CONVERSIONS & FINANCIAL IMPACT

THIS IS ULTIMATELY WHAT YOUR O2O FUNNEL IS ALL ABOUT—turning online activity into offline sales.

You need to measure increases in impressions and activities on the key directories. Facebook, Yelp and Google can give you some enhanced metrics. This is how you complete the loop of your O2O funnel. This will allow you to calculate the revenue return for your O2O funnel, and show you how optimizing your local marketing game can lead to major increases in customers, and ultimately sales.

ACTION ITEMS FOR CONVERSIONS

☐ **Start measuring impressions (Google, Bing, Facebook, Yelp and Foursquare all have some variation of this number).**

☐ **Track clicks to call, clicks for directions, and clicks to your site or social pages (Google, Facebook and Yelp are better at these type of numbers than the others).**

☐ **Add these metrics to your dashboard in the form of a funnel.**

We've all been told a thousand times that there are no shortcuts in marketing.

WELL, IN THIS CASE THERE IS.

Instead of taking on all of those action items yourself, find a local marketing platform who has the funnel built into their toolkit. It's a plug-and-play shortcut that will have you reaping the benefits of an O2O funnel immediately.

Building your O2O funnel is essential to keeping your brick-and-mortar locations competitive. Consumers are using mobile and other digital devices to lead them to their offline purchases; Brands must learn how to guide this process and turn it to their advantage.

The first step is to get found online. This is an important step, but it alone is not enough. Brands also need to collect and analyze data to learn how to capture customers' expressions of intent and influence their offline behaviour. A strong local marketing platform will allow you to convert online searches into offline purchases. ■

SOURCES

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7   **Nielsen, 2014. Mobile Path to Purchase.**

8   **Mediative, 2013.**

9   **Erik Brynjolfsson, Yu Jeffrey Hu and Mohammad S. Rahman. 2013. Competing in the Age of Omnichannel Retailing. MIT Sloan Management Review.**

10   **Deloitte Digital. 2014. New Digital Divide.**

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SweetIQ by ReachLocal helps you leverage the power of local search to increase your findability and convert online traffic to in-store shoppers.

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