

E-BOOK -

The Ultimate Guide To Driving ROI From **Digital Profiles**



Everything you need to know to drive revenue from digital profiles



Digital Profiles are the biggest drivers of customer engagement across industries. But many times marketers tend to focus on the consistency of core attributes (name, address, phone number and hours), rather than leveraging them as a source of traffic, conversions and revenue.

This "set it and forget" attitude leaves many opportunities to happenstance. There are many new avenues that marketers can successfully employ to stand out from the competition and actively leverage digital profiles for success.

In this guide, we hope to offer advice around specific strategies that brands and marketers can employ to drive incremental results and Return On Investment (ROI).

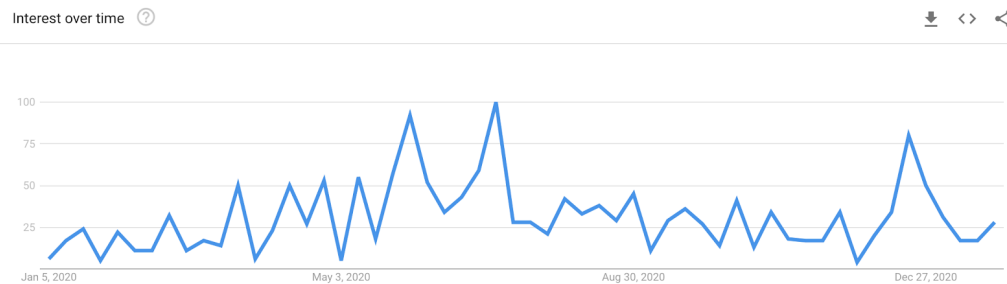
At Synup, we advise some of the most recognizable brands to help them get better results from local search and their digital profiles, including techniques to improve share-of-voice, rankings, ratings and optimizing for conversions.

Traffic and interest in "near me" searches have exploded since the onset of COVID-19

A major shift that we witnessed in 2020 was the growth in the number of people searching on Google for services near them. This means that consumer interest is still very high and they are actively researching for products and services near them.

Increase in near me searches in 2020

(January - December 2020)



In 2020, consumer searches were highly related to grocers, essential businesses, retail outlets and healthcare services that were "near them". Similar trends are shown for searches that included "opened+near me".

A closer look at trends across industries

150%

Increase in 'near me' searches related to drive-throughs (google trends)

800%+

Increase in searches related to 'open take-out near me' (google trends)

140%

Increase for pharmacies "near me" offering COVID vaccines (google trends)

There's a whole universe of sites where you can list yourself

The digital profile landscape has many players - starting with traditional search sites, maps applications, GPS systems, vertical specific search engines and review sites.

It's important for a brand to determine which of these sites really matter, and the easiest way to do this is to focus on the following attributes:

- Any source that has significant traffic and Alexa rank
- Any source that has significant app downloads on the Apple and Google Play Store
- Any source that shows up in Google when searching for industry and brand specific keywords

It is recommended to not go for a one-size-fits-all approach for your mix of profile sites to focus on, while ensuring that the top five are covered (Google, Apple, Bing, Yelp & Amazon Alexa).

Examples of the most used Digital Profiles

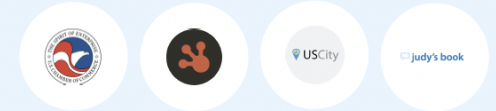
SEARCH & MAPS



SOCIAL & REVIEWS



DIRECTORIES



INDUSTRY SPECIFIC



Traffic on profiles convert - especially when done on mobile devices

Today's customer journey starts with **search**. These searchers tend to trust their own research before wanting to speak with a brand representative or make a purchase decision. Customers on average will have eight intractions with a brand before making a purchasing decision and over 80% of these searches happen on third-party profiles.

Profiles could become a top ROI converter for your brand

50%

of all searches in Google do not result in a click

(SearchEngineLand)

Over 200%

more mobile searches for "where to buy" & "near me" in 2019 vs. 2017

(Google)

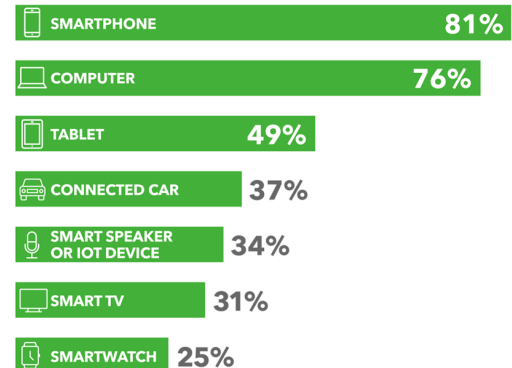
Over 100%

more searches for "available near me" in 2020 vs. 2019

(Google)

MOST IMPORTANT DEVICES FOR CHOOSING RETAILERS

Respondents ranked the following devices as highly important



81% of shoppers rely on **smartphones** to find and choose a retailer.

Many consumers make a buying decision without ever visiting a brand website

As consumers go through their buying journey, they prefer to make a decision without having to visit a brand's website for further research. This is proliferated by the fact that over 50% of searches are zero-click and 70% of the top five results on Google for industry keywords link to a Google profile or other third-party profile sites.

Brands cannot afford to ignore their digital profile strategy

70%

of searches never visit your website.

(Google)

94%

of consumers identified the ability to find information pertaining to product reviews as critical in their search journey.

(Synup Consumer Survey)

46%

of customers rely on customer reviews before making a purchase decision

(Synup Consumer Survey)

48%

of your customers will visit your website during their buyer journey.

(Google)



PRO TIP:

Use Synup's suggestion cards to optimize your listings at scale

Our Feed automation populates suggestive attributes that you can add to your locations at scale. By using Synup tags you can customize your location offerings with a click of a button.

Strategies to drive more traffic to your profiles

As consumers go through their buying journey, they prefer to make a decision without having to visit a brand's website for further research. This is supported by the fact that over 60% of searches are zero-click and 80% of the top five results in Google for industry keywords link to a Google profile or other third-party profile sites.

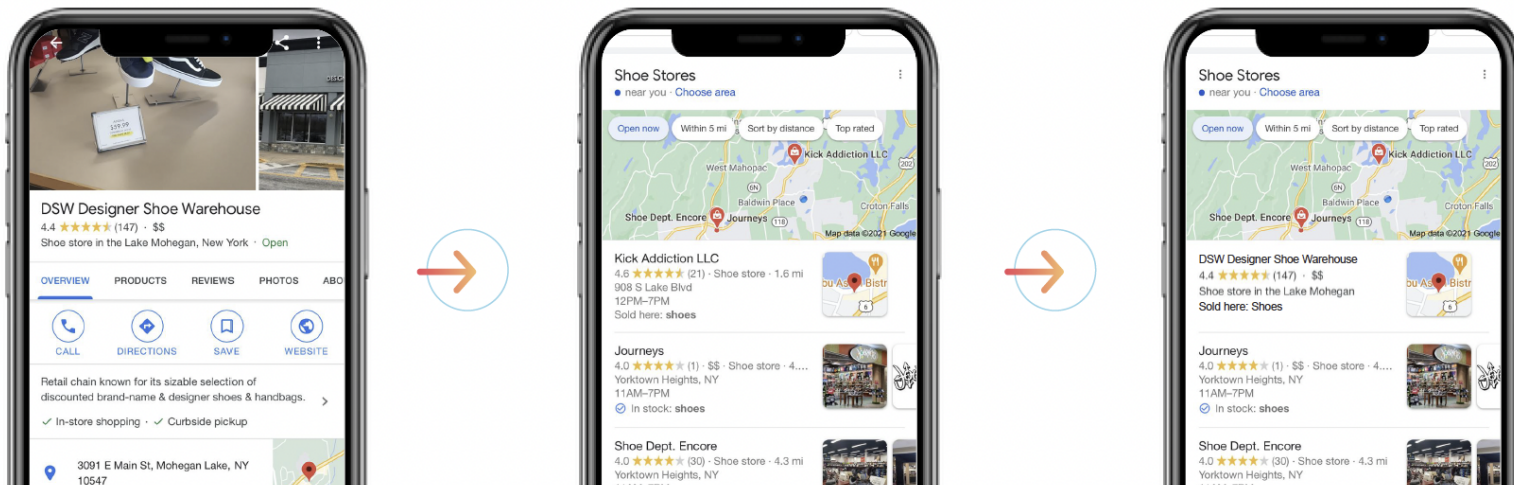
01

Start by benchmarking your profile rankings and share of voice

The first step before you implement steps to improve your digital profile traffic is creating a benchmark of where your brand stands today.

Begin by identifying how accurate your information is for core fields (name, address, website link, phone number and hours) in major profile sites like Google, Bing, Facebook, Yelp & Apple. An additional third-step would be to identify your average rating across profiles and compare this against your competition to identify opportunities.

The end result of this exercise will give you a benchmark of where you stand today, what are areas of concern you should be focusing on and will enable you to track progress as you continue optimizing your profiles.



02

Optimize for depth of information in profiles

There is a common misconception that the accuracy of profiles matters a lot more than depth of information. This is not true - when it comes to high traffic sources like Google, a majority of your results will come from optimizing for depth. For instance, if you do not publish attributes, you are less likely to show up on long-tail searches.

1. Add deeper attributes to your profiles:

You can add additional insights on your profiles on major sites including whether you offer online bookings, accept credit cards and if a face-mask is required to enter your establishment. This article gives you a list of all the fields that are available in order of importance.

2. Don't ignore any media options:

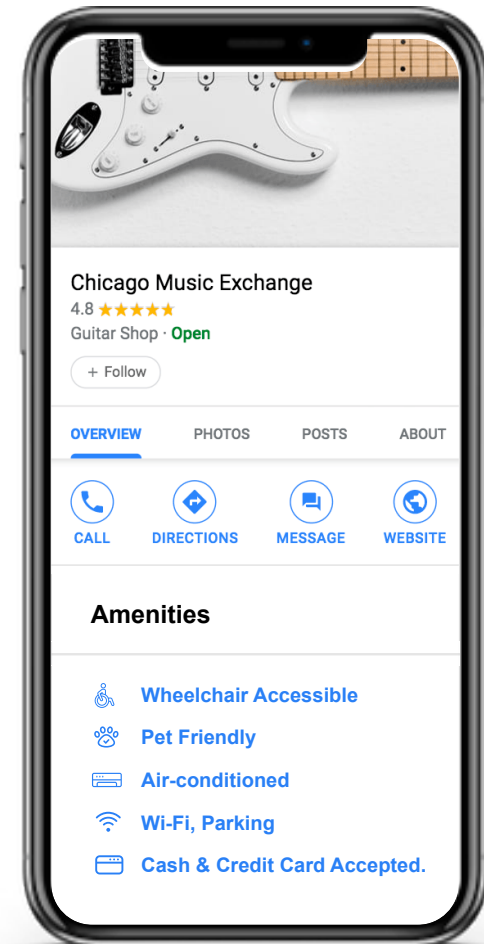
On top of structured data and attributes, look at any rich media options that may be available within each profile that you can add or optimize. For instance, Google & Facebook allow you to add a cover image that is prominently displayed in search results.



PRO TIP:

Automatically Add Call Tracking Numbers to Your Yext Listings

If you use Yext to manage your business listings, DialogTech's integration with Yext enables you to upload call tracking phone numbers to all your Yext-managed listings in bulk automatically.



03

Monitor and respond back to reviews

Reviews have gradually become a major ranking factor across digital profile sites. According to a BrightLocal Survey in done in 2020, a profile with a well rounded reviews strategy is likely to have a 13% edge when it comes to ranking in the top results.

1. For monitoring reviews:

It is recommended that you utilize a tool like Synup that can aggregate and send you alerts any time a review is posted on the major profile sites. If you do not want to invest in a tool, a best practice would be to have all of your reviews flow into the same email inbox.

Most review providers will allow you to set notification preferences to accomplish this.

Ensure that you also set up a regular cadence to do a deeper check on consumer insights and feedback from reviews. One way to do this is by exporting all of your reviews to a spreadsheet and utilizing Google Data Studio or Tableau to visualize a tag cloud of common phrases based on sentiment.

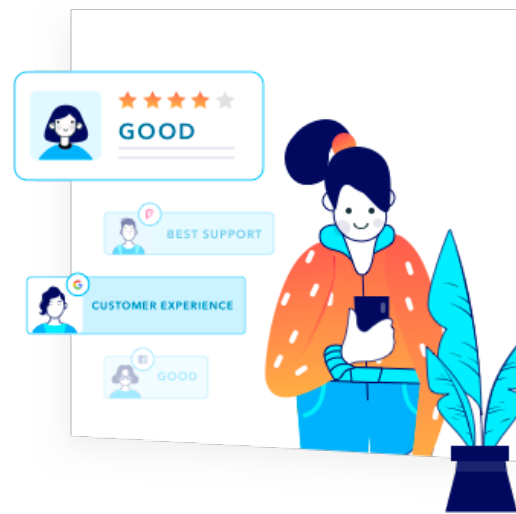
2. When responding back to reviews:

It is always recommended that you personalize the reviews and appear human as opposed to posting the same response irrespective of customer sentiment.

Keep in mind that your response will need to cater to specifics about

that particular reviewer's experience with your brand and also needs to change based on the rating they have provided (anything that is 3-stars or below is a bad review).

We've put together a few links for responses templates that can help you along the way.



04

Acquiring new reviews is especially important

While tracking and monitoring should be critical components of your review strategy, nothing moves the needle as much as getting happy customers to write reviews about your business. Just a one-star average rating improvement on Yelp can result in a 5% - 9% increase in business (Harvard Business School Survey, 2016).

1. Connect your CRM or POS to automate review invites:

Tools like Synup allow you to connect your CRM or point-of-sale system to automatically generate new reviews. An alternative is to build this workflow internally. Most review providers will allow you to set notification preferences to accomplish this.

2. Schedule time to send out review invites manually:

A workaround is to schedule time every week to export customer data from your system of record and send out emails and text messages through a provider of your choice. Don't forget to personalize these invites. A quick and easy way to accomplish this is by using mail-merge and templates.



PRO TIP:

Recycle happy customer reviews to increase conversions

One technique we have seen working is to automatically add any happy customer reviews on your website and share them on social media profiles. Nothing beats social proof when it comes to driving conversions.

Review summary Write a review

5 **4.5**
 4
 3
 2
 1

★★★★★
196 reviews

"Definitely a place to check out."

"Good food and friendly service."

"I bring new people in the door."

Snappy Tomato Pizza
4.2 ★★★★★ (128) • Your match: ?
Pizza restaurant • \$
Open • Closes at 11PM

OVERVIEW MENU REVIEWS PHOTOS ABO

Mike Helton
Local Guide • 63 reviews
★★★★★ 8 years ago
I only had Snappy's twice, once in New Mexico, and once in Seaman. It's my favorite pizza anywhere, and this location was exceptional! Please open a store in Michiga...

Gary Nantz
Local Guide • 65 reviews
★★★★★ 4 months ago
I tried this place already with my friend and I am addicted ever since. I like the great mood and flavorful dishes and drinks. 5 stars.

05

Diversify to focus on other critical sources

Your quality and quantity of what Google considers to be citations is a factor that drives rankings in their algorithm. Outside of this, it's also important to specifically optimize other high value traffic sources.

1. To build citations:

Look at investing some time to build citations using thirdparty digital profiles. While there are benefits to using an automated solution for this, you can also choose to build them manually. We've built a section on our website that you can use as a reference for this.

2. In order to optimize for other high value sources:

You should ideally list yourself in any high traffic site relevant to your industry (example: Healthgrades if you're in healthcare) - additionally, consider listing yourself on any source that comes up frequently for your brand and vertical specific keywords.



BONUS:

Get a bird's eye view of your current business listings with our free scan tool.

You can scan your business listings now:

[Scan Now](#)

06

Indexing your profiles matter

When it comes to many of the digital profiles that you create and manage one key element that is often ignored is getting them indexed successfully in the primary search engines. If your profiles aren't indexed, they are likely to never be found by consumers or by the search engines to improve your profile rankings.

Indexing your profile can often lead to better results from any optimization effort. So, beyond getting your profiles published and completed, focus on the below tips to impact your digital marketing.

1. Learn which of your profiles are indexed:

One way to check to see if a profile you published is being found by search engines, is to enter the URL of the link into the appropriate search engine and see if any results are showing.

2. Inform the search engines of the profiles you've published:

Several search engines like Google provide an application programming interface where you can let them know that they will need to crawl and index a profile that has been published.

3. Augment the authority of your profiles by building links:

While getting indexed profiles is a major component to profiles and their authority in search, another way to make this happen is by building some backlinks to the profiles you've published while you are doing so for your brand website. It is recommended that you build 3 - 5 backlinks to each profile over a two month period. Also, adding your published profiles to each branch page on your website will help.

07

Benefit from your user generated content

A lot of the information in your profile will come from users who are contributing their own content. Especially media, including photos and videos. These are a major factor that contribute to profile rankings as well as conversion.

1. Audit your media:

Based on our analysis, we've seen that up to 15% of media for many brands (uploaded by users) aren't brand approved or correct. The first step is to audit your existing media and report anything that may be off.

2. Create a workflow to report and add media:

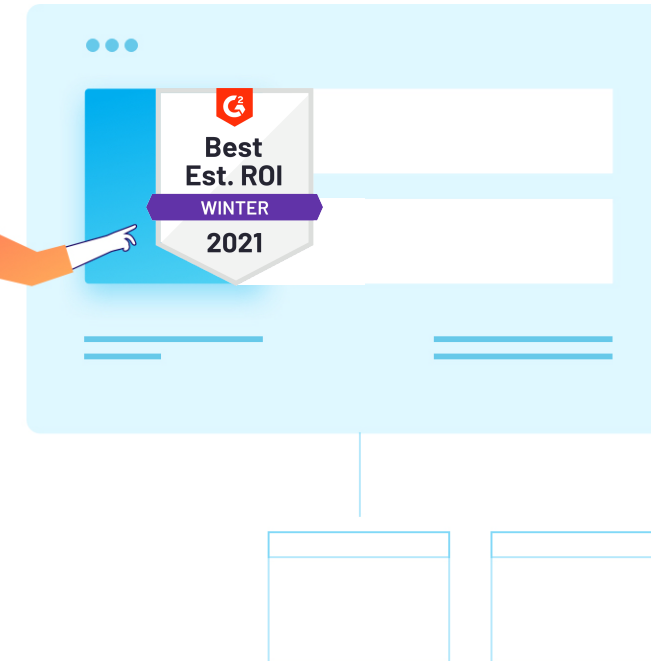
Once you've completed a preliminary audit and cleanup, setup a regular cadence to have branch managers log in and report media that may be off and encourage staff to post pictures and videos to your profiles. This can be automated if you use a tool like Synup.



PRO TIP:

Encourage customers to post media on top of reviews

If you are actively encouraging customers to post positive reviews, reward them if they also include a photo or video as part of the review. These show up prominently on profiles.



08

Optimize your profiles for voice search

Here's an interesting fact: 50% of all searches today are voice searches. Consumers are using voice search for recommendations, directions, and more important answers.

The key difference between how you are optimized for voice search and how you are optimized for traditional search is the long and short tail keywords. Consumers are conditioned to search with phrases like "Pizza opened near me", unlike when they are using voice search and speaking more naturally, "what restaurants are still open around me?". Below are couple of things that you should do to optimize for voice search.

1. Embed schema code on your website:

Adding structured markup data to your website not only helps your brand stand out on search engines, but also helps you control the data that search engines can extract from your website. The Google Assistants and Cortanas of the world then can give exact answers to your customer's questions.

2. Publish FAQs on your website and profiles:

Since voice search queries require long-tail keywords, a great way to do this is through FAQs. Taking the most commonly asked questions about your brand first and embedding them into your website is a great way to start optimizing for voice search.

3. Sync your listings with Yelp:

Yelp has an API connection with Amazon Alexa, which means claiming and optimizing your listings on Yelp will automatically help you get found when consumers are searching with an Amazon device.

Some tips to convert more of your profile traffic

Improving rankings and driving more traffic is one thing, but all of this has no impact on your ROI if you are unable to convert these profile views into your desired conversion (website visit, store visit or phone lead).

In this section, we will cover strategies you can employ to improve conversions on your profile.

1. Implement UTM parameters for all profile links
2. Ensure that you have a specific landing page for each local profile
3. Capitalize on posts & offers to drive conversions
4. Implement remarketing for profile visitors
5. Implement a call tracking solution
6. Optimize your posts and offers to focus on events
7. Personalize profile content for buyer intent
8. Integrate shopping feeds within your profiles

01

Implement tracking for all your profile conversion activities

1. Tag your website links using Urchin Tracking Module (UTM):

One common mistake we see with brands is that they do not utilize UTM parameters on the website link they publish within profiles. This makes it extremely hard if not impossible to attribute conversions that happened as a result of a profile visitor. In the case of one Fin-Serve customers of ours, we noticed that after implementing UTM tracking, their profiles became their top conversion channel (it was previously fifth highest).

2. Invest in a call tracking solution:

While one conversion path for profile visitors is clicking on the website link, we notice that several other industries are extremely call heavy (example: beauty services). If your brand falls into that category, it is highly recommended that you invest in a call tracking solution. Not only will this give you visibility into conversion challenges, but it will also allow you to remarket back to prospects who didn't convert during the call.

3. Take control of all other links from your profiles:

Other than your primary website link, there may be up to five additional external links from your profiles (Synup internal study, 2020). A majority of these may be to third party booking or reservation services. Attempt to update your profile settings to switch these to assets that are controlled by your own brand.

4. Utilize short-links for any posts you do on your profiles:

Another avenue for conversions from profiles are posts (especially on Google & Facebook). We see that brands rely on the service they post on for attribution and conversion data, which can be tricky if clicks from these posts aren't tracked well. One way to solve this problem is by using short-links for any post being published on a platform. This allows brands to attribute well without having to rely on unreliable reporting from search engines and social media sites.

02

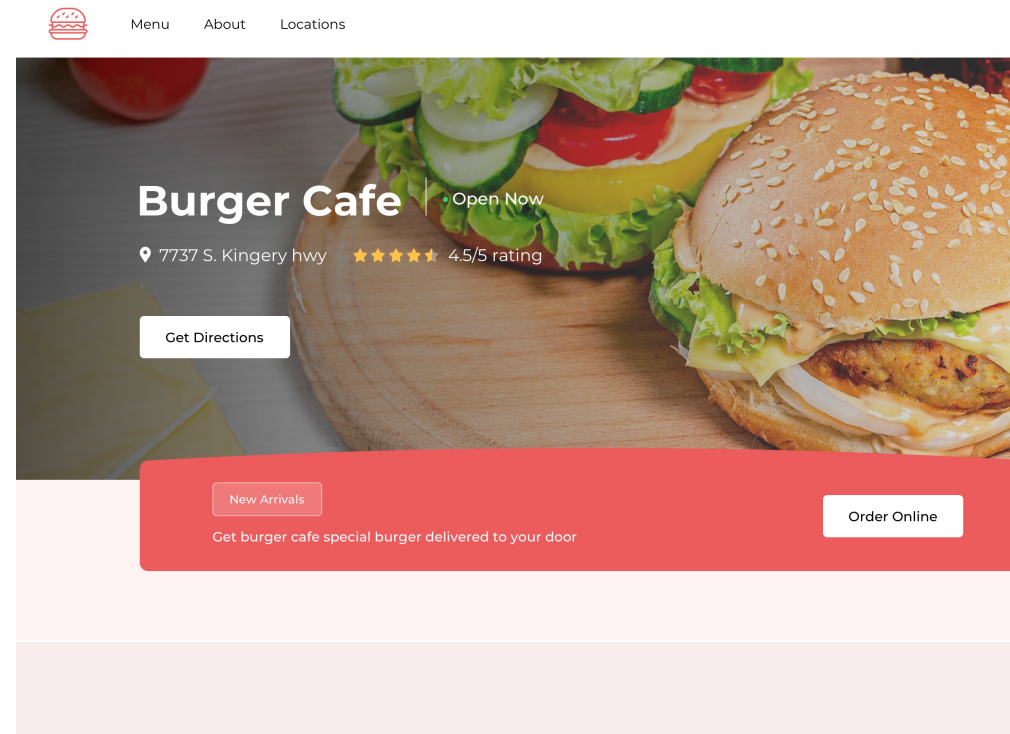
Ensure that you have a specific landing page for each local profile

Many brands choose to link out to their website homepage from profiles. This often leads to a poor customer experience where the user is forced to take additional steps to reach the information they are looking for.

A way to solve this problem is by creating unique pages for each branch or store on your website and using them to link out from your profiles.

On an average brands see a 20% lift in conversions (Synup internal data, 2020) when they send profile visitors to a location specific page as opposed to the brand's website homepage.

Another benefit from creating location specific pages is that they also rank very highly on organic search leading to more visibility.



03

Capitalize on posts & offers to drive conversions

One trend we've seen is that brands focus on making regular posts on social media sites, while search and review sites are often ignored. It was very hard to generate posts at scale and schedule in advance in the past outside of social sites like Facebook and Instagram, but this can be solved using a tool like Synup or integrating with the endpoints offered by Google, Yelp and other profile sites.

1. Post regularly:

A good number to stick to is at least five posts weekly to all your profiles. It is recommended that these posts are also personalized based on market dynamics.

2. Establish a calendar:

With the powerful tooling options available today, marketers should establish a calendar to populate posts into all of their profiles and ensure that it mimics the brand's overall content calendar.

Popular posts formats available include:

1. Information & news posts:

Every major profile site will allow you to add a post about any new information or news which may be organization-wide or specific to a brand.

2. Offers & events posts:

These post types show up prominently especially in mobile search and can be used to announce any specific deals or events happening at a local branch or store.

3. Products & services posts:

These are extremely powerful for brands that may not sell physical products, but have services that they offer. Products & services posts show up prominently above the fold on desktop and mobile searches.

04

Implement remarketing for profile visitors

Remarketing can be extremely useful to convert browsers into customers. This can be done specifically for anyone who visits your web property from a profile or calls your business (if call tracking is implemented).

Not only do retargeting ads boost your conversion rates by up to 150% (Dataxu study, 2020), but consumers also like them, with 30% reporting a positive experience, compared to 11% who feel negatively about them (eMarketer study, 2013).

1. Retargeting:

For website visitors or users who browsed, but didn't convert, put them into a custom audience you can utilize to run search, display and video advertising. Provide a strong incentive for them to choose you over the competition - offers and discounts work well in these scenarios.

2. Cross-sells:

For any existing customers that have converted, consider expanding your strategy to promote any other products that may be relevant to them using retargeting ads.

3. Look-alikes:

Further expand your remarketing audience by targeting look-alikes from your existing segments. Clicks from this channel are between 2 -10x less expensive compared to traditional ads (Wordstream client data, 2019). Additionally, you can reach out to prospective customers who haven't reached out to your brand yet.

05

Optimize your posts and offers to focus on events

Posts can become a lot more powerful for your brand as a conversion channel if you tie them to specific events.

1. Posts based on events:

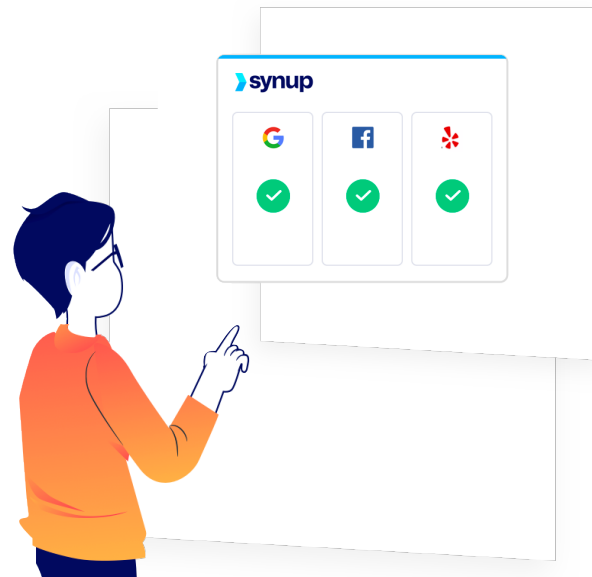
If your brand is dynamic where users look for something specific based on time of year (example: Black Friday), optimize your calendar to focus on offers specific to that - this will lead to higher conversions and a better customer experience.

2. Posts based on location:

This is especially relevant if customers in a particular geography are looking for something during times of the year. For example, we work with a home builder whose users from a particular region were more likely to look for a retirement community as opposed to younger searchers. Our strategy was to construct a calendar to focus on this trend to drive 20% more conversions from the brand's posts strategy.

3. Posts based on weather:

Several industries are impacted by weather conditions (restaurants, for example) and it may make sense to promote any weather sensitive offerings during this time. Tools like Synup can automatically connect to weather systems to auto-populate posts based on conditions.



06

Personalize profile content for buyer intent

Beyond orchestrating posts based on season, weather and location, it is also possible to show a specific message on your profile based on the keywords buyers search for.

By including a specific keyword in your posts, it is possible to show a clickable message (redirecting to your brand's website) to improve profile conversions.

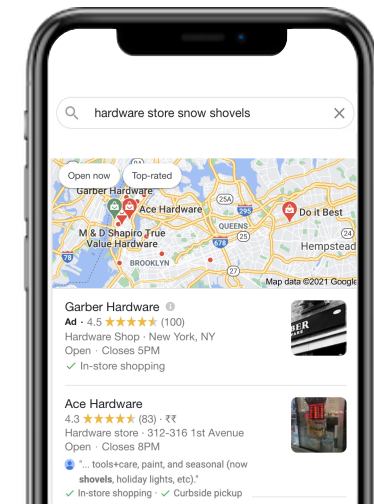
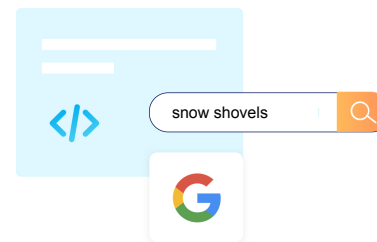
With one grocery brand we work with we noticed that a majority of their customers were looking for their offers and circulars primarily over the weekend. These customers were looking for something specific, which we could identify based on historical data, and we incorporated that into their profile strategy.

We were able to successfully show anyone searching for a circular or offer a specific page on the brand's website. This cut down steps in the customer journey and lead to a significant increase in the number of engaged shoppers.

This lead to a significant increase in the number of engaged shoppers.

You can do this for your brand by:

- ▮ Pulling historical keyword search data for your profiles (Google My Business analytics allows this)
- ▮ Identify patterns in spikes based on location and date-time
- ▮ Include posts that contain keywords linked with specific landing pages on your website to drive higher traffic and conversions



07

Integrate shopping feeds within your profiles

If your brand offers physical products, it is recommended that you publish these on shopping feeds and link them to your primary local profiles. Google, Bing & Facebook allow this type of integration.

The most exciting thing about shopping feeds is that they show up prominently within profiles, and are personalized based on the keyword that the user has been searching for.

While traditional posts require two clicks before a prospective customer can navigate to a brand's website, shopping feeds only require a single click that results in the searcher navigating directly to the brand website.

This experience is extremely useful for potential customers, and also allows your brand to control a larger portion of the customer experience (as opposed to relying on a search engine), optimizing the experience for conversions.

Synup allows you to do this seamlessly, but your brand can do this without any software by:

- ▮ *Linking your primary product inventory system to Google Shopping, Bing Shopping and Facebook Store*
- ▮ *Establishing a one-time connection between your shopping feed and your primary profile*
- ▮ *Ensuring that local search insights are integrated with product insights and your primary e-commerce website to drive conversions*

Key Takeaways



Traffic on Profiles via Mobile Devices Convert

Customer on average will have eight interactions with a brand before making a purchasing decision. Over 80% of these searches happen while on mobile and through third-party profiles.



Customer's Aren't Visiting Your Website

70% of searchers get to your profiles, but never to your website.



Optimize Your Profiles

Your profiles all have easy optimization tactics, such as attributes. Use them!



Respond to Your Reviews

Reviews aren't just there for your customers. They are there for your rankings, reputation, and profile authority. Make sure you are actively managing this.



Indexing Your Profiles Matters

It doesn't matter how many places you are listed if you are not being indexed. Make sure Google knows to crawl your 3rd party sites.



Optimize for Voice Search

The world is shifting rapidly to voice as a preferred channel. Don't wait to be behind the curve. Optimize for voice now.

About Synup

Synup transforms a brand's ability to deliver relevant and trustworthy business content across all of their locations, devices, and digital media channels. Brands can now analyze and optimize how consumers engage with their businesses - from reviews to reputation, videos to voice search, menus to product recommendations - with an easy-to-use SaaS platform.



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