

Your Website is Dead - Google Changes Making Websites Invisible Says Los Angeles Author Randy Kirk

By Randy Kirk & Associates

Dated: Mar 26, 2009

If you aren't on the first page of a Google search under key words and phrases important to your customer, you won't be found! The revolutionary change taking place: local company websites like yours are increasingly UNLIKELY to be seen on page one.

YellowPages.com, Yelp, CitySearch, and Merchant Circle are dominating the top spots on searches for local businesses like realtors, insurance agents, clothing stores, bike shops, and restaurants.

Get out your computer, go to Google, and check it out. Type in the most important keyword for your business. What do you see? Now try again adding the city you are located in. Does your website appear anywhere on the first page? Second Page? Third Page?

Go back to the first page and try to find any reference to the name of your company. Are you invisible? Second Page? How about your competition? Are they showing up? Once? Twice? Maybe more?

Now take a closer look at the URL's of the websites on that first page? Are most of them company websites? Very unlikely. Most of them are probably LSE's or local search engines. You know the names or at least some of them. Yellowpages.com, CitySearch.com, Yelp.com, or Superpages.com. They are grabbing all of the top spots on searches for local barbershops, lawyers, doctors, and restaurants. That's because their websites are far more powerful than yours.

One more exercise before we discuss solutions to the INVISIBILITY problem. When you enter your key word and city (eg. locksmith Springfield Mo), you'll notice a little map in the upper left. This is the kingpin of all LSE's. This is Google Maps Local Business Center. It is the most important LSE because of its location and appearance. Being number one or even one of the top 10 on Google Maps may dramatically effect how much your phone is ringing.

Randy Kirk is the author of several business books dealing with small companies. His latest is titled "Running a 21st Century Small Business: The Owner's Guide to Starting and Growing Your Company." He has been watching this trend for over a year.

"If you are a small local business and you don't address the issue of being visible on Google Maps and the other local search engines AND optimize your website, you will find it increasingly difficult to compete in local markets."

Word of mouth will always be important, according to Kirk. "Networking clubs and online networking options like LinkedIn and Twitter will offer alternative ways to get the word out about you. But the LSE's are today's equivalent of the hard copy Yellow Pages of 20 years ago. This is where your customer is going to get information about the products and services you offer. If your invisible here, you are at a major competitive disadvantage."

"NOW WHAT?" You may be asking. "How in the world am I going to learn about all these local search engines, get listings on them, optimize each of them and my website, and keep current on the changes that are happening almost daily.?"

Kirk admits the task seems daunting, "I spend at least 10 hours a week just keeping informed on the changes taking place in the way to be seen on Google searches. Most small businesses can't spend that kind of time just keeping informed about it, much less making the necessary changes to be optimized."

So Kirk devised a solution: "I was already doing this for my own marketing clients, but over time it became clear that the process needed to be streamlined and offered to every local business at an affordable price. Otherwise the early adapters and larger businesses will just bury the smaller ones."

The process isn't all that simple. There are at least 15 important LSE's, and each one has a different listing protocol. And each one has little tricks and insider things that only hours of research expose. Then there are new LSE's trying to become the latest greatest LSE. Some of the older LSE's are losing their magic. And, of course, Google is always changing the game.

The goal, says Kirk, is to make each business special so it will stand out. "Your website needs to be created with both Google and your customer in mind. You need to have a difference whenever possible on every LSE listing, not just look like your competitor. Therefore careful thought, excellent professional marketing, outstanding copy writing, and knowledge of the LSE world are needed."

"We are talking about the most important marketing dollar you can spend," continues Kirk.. This is the doorway into your business. Studies show that Google Search is the NUMBER ONE way that people are making their initial research into buying products and services. If you aren't there, you aren't really in business.

So Kirk set up a business to optimize the local business owners listings on the top 15 LSE's. However, what most other LSE set up companies won't tell you is that your website is an integral part of the LSE game. So Kirk's new business, SearchPage1.com, also helps you optimize the website. If you don't have a website, SearchPage1.com can help with that, too.

Kirk concludes, "You can do all this yourself. In fact, I have various websites, blogs, and YouTube Videos accessible from <http://www.searchPage1.com> that will help you through the process if you want to do it yourself. Our new company was set up to help those who don't normally do their own legal work or brain surgery. If you like to employ experts to do jobs requiring substantial knowledge, skill, and training, then you may prefer to have SearchPage1.com help with this marketing effort.

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SearchPage1.com was created for the purpose of helping small businesses compete with their local competitors and large national competitors on the internet. Every small business owner recognizes the importance of being seen in the top 10 or first page of a Google search for their kind of business. In the last two years, the rules have all changed, and those top spots are dominated by local search engines. Being listed on those local search engines is one more way for a small business to be visible in the top 10. Knowing how to optimize those listings to create maximum visibility is the expertise of SearchPage1.com

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