

What A Google Places Expert Hopes Google Places Will Resolve To Do in 2011



Almost every small business owner in the world now needs Google Places. They may not know it, but they do. However, like so many things we need, the object of our affection can be a tricky relationship. This was true of Google Places in 2010.

Jan. 15, 2011 - [PRLog](#) -- In 2010, Google vastly improved the old Google Local Business Center with an upgrade in the name to Google Places, and with maybe 100 changes to the look, the rules, and more. Each change brought happiness to some and misery to others. But the reality is that the product is still as buggy as the beds in Washington DC, and the algo rewards companies who are spamming or who haven't even claimed their sites, and messes up the early adapters of Google Tags.

As a Google Places expert and consultant, Randy Kirk of [Page1Listings.com](#) says he rode the roller coaster last year with days of glee and days of heartache: "My clients and others who called me were as confused as they could be about Google's reason and intent. One thing they all knew for sure. They needed to be highly ranked to get the phone to ring or the door to swing.

Kirk says he has the following plea to Google: Consider these 10 ways to fix their fantastic tool.

1. Without question the number one fix would be to reconfigure the ranking system or the bot that evaluates the ranking to be far more, dare I say, fair. Ok. How about just? Currently it is common to find unclaimed sites with no website, no reviews, and no citations ranking above sites with solid optimization, multiple reviews from Google and other sites, and citations aplenty. This hurt credibility for Google, and drives businesses, SEO pros, and even consumers crazy.
2. Help the helpless. With Google being so critical to the health of its business clients, why should the rules and nuances of those rules be reminiscent of Mario Brothers. The forum is nice and all, and sometimes Google employees and unpaid consultants give some "cheats" to those who have not been able to decipher the code. Why not have serious tutorials to help companies do it right. Better Google Places Pages would be good for everyone. Facebook Fan Pages is charging for tutorials. Fine. Charge.
3. Enforce the Rules! The first lesson of making a law is that it must be enforceable. I just don't think that any business has a real name of Best Price Junk Cars Los Angeles. Why doesn't the bot kill that one before it ever goes live. If Google Places is going to know all about every place on earth, shouldn't it be a priority not to list a business at an address that doesn't exist or that is an empty building.
4. Fix the thumbnail pictures. Why is this even an issue? Squashed faces and weird shaped logos don't do anything to enhance this product. Google plans to change the energy delivery system for the entire planet. Can this be so hard?
5. Title the movies. Who wants to watch random movies? Just give us 30 characters. More would be better. A description would be fantastic. This would help the consumer immeasurably
6. Improve the look of the Google Place Page. Currently there is no serious reason for the consumer to go to the "page" other than reviews. Maybe there could be template choices for layout, more choices for pictures including products in the top section. And how about bigger or more interesting fonts for the section titles.

Currently it is a bit hard for folks to find the various reviews and citations, even if they want to.

7. Put the link to leave a review on the search page. It could go right under the stars.

8. Stop penalizing those who use Tags. Using mechanical scrutiny for every possible minor rule violation on Tags users while not using the same scrutiny on those who have not chosen to use Tags. I have no experience with Boost, so don't know if this is also happening with Boost clients.

9. Certify Google Places Consultants. Provide a course or a test or some method for determining who understands the system. Allow the certification # to appear on the listing page so that unintentional errors can be sorted out, and certifications can be lost if the errors are frequent or black hat.

10. Allow businesses to move their places listing from one Google Account to another. There are hundreds of legitimate reasons for this to be done, including the fact that no one who set up Google Places listings in the last two years knew this would be an issue. Many of them are associated with personal emails or multiple businesses.

"Google Places is a work in progress," says Kirk. While it may never be completely "finished" and allowed to be somewhat static for a while, I believe that by 2012, the site will be far less volatile and more predictable for business owners and their consultants.

Randy Kirk is available for speaking in the Los Angeles and OC areas. Call him at 310-910-1848

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Page1Listings is one of the fastest growing companies specializing in the area of local search marketing (SEM), local search engine optimization (SEO), optimizing local search engine listings (LSE), and all of this for the smallest of small businesses (SMB's).

The company uses every know method for maximizing new traffic into their clients businesses, both online and off. Google Places is the dominant player at this time and company co-founder Randy Kirk is a recognized expert in this category. (Do Google Search for Google Places Expert.) He can be reached at 310-910-1848. Kirk is also a noted author of small business books and is published by Warner Business Books. (See "Running a 21st Century Small Business" at Amazon).

The company creates websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts. They do articles, press releases, and YouTube Videos for their clients. In addition they are available to manage grand openings, or create monthly email blasts.

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